



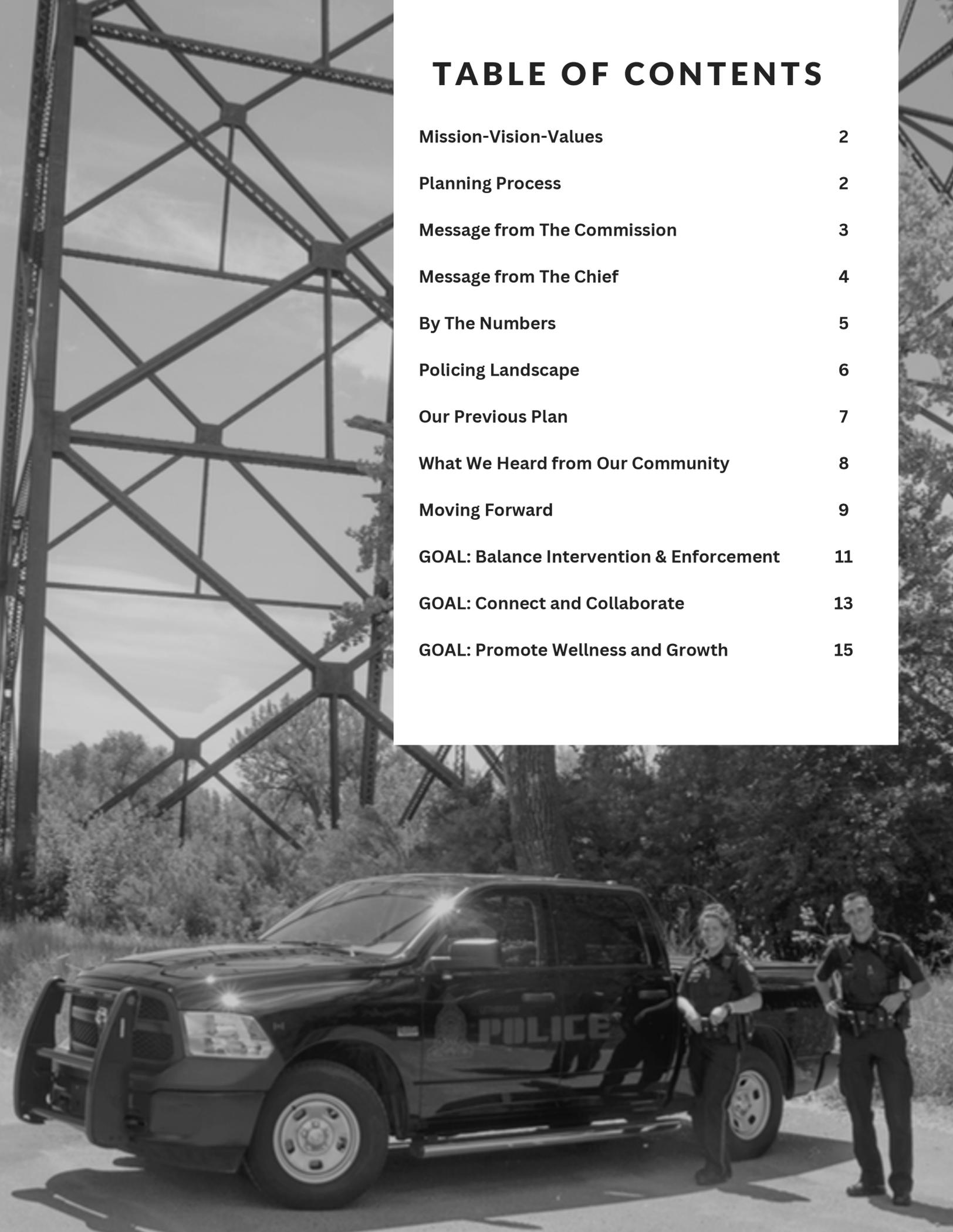
# LETHBRIDGE POLICE SERVICE

2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



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## MISSION

Through partnerships and collaboration, the Lethbridge Police Service strives to create a safe community for all.

## VISION

Guided by the highest standards of policing, we are committed to supporting our community by addressing crime, maintain public safety and strengthening public trust.

## VALUES

- Respect
- Courage
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Collaboration



# PLANNING PROCESS & PROGRESS REPORTING

The Lethbridge Police Service 2023-2027 Strategic Plan will guide the next four years of organizational and operational decision-making.

An Annual Policing Plan will be developed each year, following a comprehensive consultative process with the Lethbridge Police Commission, LPS employees and the community, to outline specific, measurable initiatives to achieve the organization's overall goals and objectives.

The Strategic Plan details organizational direction, areas of focus and outcomes that will be achieved through the implementation of initiatives, projects and services. How LPS will deliver this work will be detailed in the Annual Policing Plan, which will be presented to the Commission in the first quarter of each year. Progress will be reported to the Commission in an Annual Report.

The Strategic Plan and Annual Policing Plans are living documents that will be reviewed and updated regularly based on data and evidence in line with changing pressures and challenges facing the organization and community.



Dawna Coslovi

## MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE COMMISSION CHAIR

On behalf of the Lethbridge Police Commission, I am pleased to support the 2023-2027 Lethbridge Police Service Strategic Plan. The priorities identified within this plan were determined in consultation with members of the Service, stakeholders/partners, citizens and the Police Commission. It has been developed in alignment with the Commission's Strategic Plan.

The 2022 Community Survey completed by citizens clearly showed that while the majority are satisfied with policing services, safety within our community is paramount on their minds.

This plan has identified goals which the Police Service will focus on in the coming years. LPS takes a balanced approach between intervention and enforcement which includes collaboration and partnership with social programming to address mental health and addiction challenges faced in our city. The Service will increase frontline and civilian staffing to address capacity issues while ensuring the well-being and resilience of all employees. The effective utilization of technology to analyze and respond will also assist in reducing crime.

Moving forward, citizens will see more opportunities to engage with LPS to discuss their needs and concerns as well as initiatives to promote and raise awareness about what individuals can do to enhance public safety and create a safer place for everyone to call home.

The Commission supports the Police Service as they embark on this new plan and we are confident that they will fulfill their goals.

The mandate of the Commission is to ensure efficient and effective policing services through good governance and oversight. With the recent increase to the police budget the Commission knows that fiscal responsibility and transparency is paramount. The Lethbridge Police Commission is committed to oversee and govern the Lethbridge Police Service as they effectively perform their duties to enhance safety in Lethbridge now and into the future.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

It is my privilege to present the Lethbridge Police Service 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Our plan sets out the direction of the Service over the next four years as we work to create a safe community for all.

The Strategic Plan has been developed in consultation with citizens, stakeholders and the Lethbridge Police Commission through a collaborative process to review the current state of the Lethbridge Police Service, the pressures and challenges facing the organization and community, identify policing priorities and set measurable goals. It is aligned with the Commission's key priorities – engagement, partnership and organizational excellence.

It continues to be my honour to lead the LPS and our sworn and civilian members who are committed to our core values of respect, courage, accountability, professionalism and collaboration. We are a strong team and I am proud of our collective accomplishments and ongoing efforts to serve our community both on and off duty.

Policing is very much a partnership and the success of this plan is contingent upon collaboration with community partners and all levels of government to develop and implement strategies that address the root causes of crime, reduce recidivism and provide meaningful, long term change that benefits all of our citizens.

As an organization we are committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all of our staff, effectively deploying resources to reduce crime and engaging the community to strengthen public trust and foster new partnerships.

Moving forward with this plan we will continue to be leaders in public safety, evolve to respond to the changing needs of our citizens and remain at the forefront of community policing to champion relationships with our diverse communities and explore opportunities for innovation.



Chief Shahin Mehdizadeh

## EXECUTIVE TEAM



Deputy Chief  
Gerald Grobmeier



Inspector  
Robin Klassen



Inspector  
Russ Lawrence



Inspector  
Jason Walper

# OUR COMMUNITY



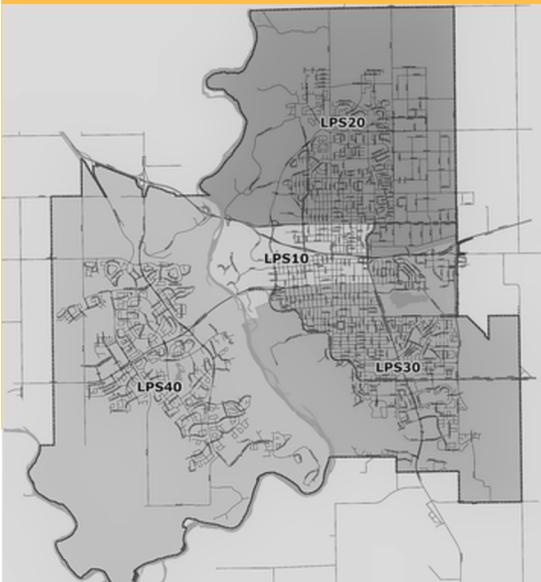
100,324 people



111,500 by 2026



124 Sq. Kilometers



# BY THE NUMBERS

## OUR PEOPLE

### Police Officers

160 Actual / 188 Funded



### Community Peace Officers

4 Actual / 15 Funded



### Civilians

70.5 Actual / 92 Funded



### Volunteers

42 Victim Services / 20 The Watch



## OUR WORK



On average LPS responds to more than 36,000 calls for service each year



In excess of 8,000 Criminal Code charges are laid



More than 2,300 collisions are investigated



Nearly 7,000 traffic tickets are issued



# POLICING LANDSCAPE

## ***Impacts of the drug crisis on crime and disorder***

The community continues to be impacted by drug use and abuse resulting in spin-off property crime targeting citizens. Opportunistic crimes, including break-ins and thefts, are committed to fund addictions and a lack of support and treatment options contribute to an inability to permanently break the cycle of crime.

## ***Increases in mental health calls***

Police continue to encounter an increasing number of individuals who would benefit from mental health and other support services instead of enforcement. Police are also the first responders to these calls and have a responsibility to protect people and property. Policing and social supports both have a role to play in finding long-term solutions.

## ***Perceptions of police***

Highly publicized incidents, predominantly involving police in the U.S. that have resulted in tragic outcomes for racialized communities, have led to public calls for greater accountability in policing and a decline in public trust.

## ***Technology challenges***

Increasingly sophisticated crime, including frauds and identity theft, create investigational challenges both in the pursuit of offenders and recovery of property. Criminals operate globally, across jurisdictional boundaries and rely on rapidly evolving technology to thwart law enforcement efforts.

## ***Increase in public order issues***

An increase in social disorder including protests has resulted in capacity challenges for police resources. Large-scale events require significant planning and coordination to balance public safety with the actions of those exercising their right to peaceful assembly. Further, these issues have led to a politicization of policing with opposing viewpoints on what police should do to keep people safe.

## ***Lack of social supports***

Many of the calls police attend are rooted in social issues that cannot be addressed by enforcement alone. Agencies across North America are experiencing encampments at unprecedented levels due to the lack of supportive housing.

## ***Challenges to the frontline***

Law enforcement agencies are experiencing significant staffing shortages resulting in pressures to frontline policing and call response. Re-deployment of officers from non-frontline units in an effort to bolster the frontline and maintain response times has led to increased workloads in other areas and position vacancies resulting in a reduction in service levels.

## ***Recruiting***

Across North America agencies are experiencing challenges recruiting qualified applicants. Police agencies have faced significant challenges meeting the demands for new officers. It is imperative law enforcement agencies reflect the demographics of the communities they serve and work toward increasing diversity within the ranks.

## ***Employee wellness***

Police officers and civilian staff are tasked with managing increasingly stressful workloads and there has been a shift to provide supports and wellness programs to promote and maintain employee well-being which is critical to the health of the organization.



# OUR PREVIOUS PLAN

The 2019-2022 LPS Business and Strategic Plan outlined five strategic priorities – people, processes, technology, crime and community – each encompassing a number of goals with measurable outcomes.

LPS worked diligently over the previous four years and completed most of its planned initiatives despite a number of unexpected challenges, including the impacts of policing during a pandemic and staffing shortages that caused significant pressures to the frontline.

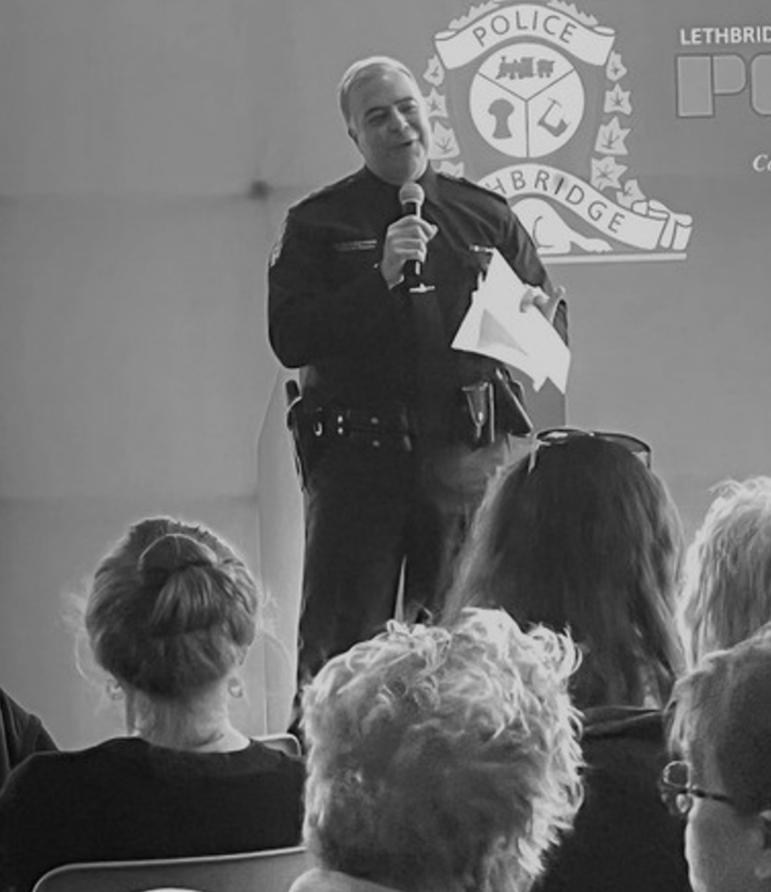
In spite of those challenges, in 2021 the crime rate for the Lethbridge Census Metropolitan Area (Lethbridge, Coaldale and Picture Butte) decreased by seven per cent with reductions in thefts under \$5,000, break and enters, possession of stolen property and traffic violations driving changes to the crime severity index.

Between 2019 and 2022 LPS hired 31 police officers, 25 Community Peace Officers (CPOs) and 61 civilian employees.

Progress on all measures in the previous plan are reported in LPS Annual Reports and the yearly Focus Initiatives.

The previous plan was built to evolve and adapt to meet the changing needs of the community and set LPS on the right track moving forward as evidenced by strong public support for police performance reported in the 2022 Community Survey. The most notable difference in the 2023-2027 plan is a refinement of our goals to focus on three key areas – Community Safety, Community Engagement and Healthy Organization.

LPS is committed to continuing to learn from our community, adapt to address evolving crime trends and work collaboratively with stakeholders to balance enforcement with appropriate diversion within a restorative justice model.



# WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR COMMUNITY

## POLICE PERFORMANCE

The 2022 Community Survey showed 78 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the services provided by LPS, with 86 per cent ranking the Service's performance as adequate to good. Of those who ranked performance lower, high crime rate and slow response times were listed among the top reasons why.

## PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

A majority of citizens – 71 per cent – believe Lethbridge is a safe community overall, however directional comparisons with previous surveys shows a downward trend. Specifically, perceptions of safety prior to 2020 consistently tracked above 90 per cent. Among the top reasons attributed to safety concerns were drugs, an increase in crime, homelessness and police staffing issues. Nearly one in four respondents also indicated LPS was understaffed.

## POLICING PRIORITIES

Property crime, drug crime and crimes against persons were identified as the top three policing priorities and a majority of respondents indicated they'd like to see police focus more on crime prevention strategies and increase community visibility. About one-third indicated they'd also like to see more traffic enforcement.



# MOVING FORWARD

Over the next four years, in line with projected population growth and to address retirements and attrition to maintain service levels, LPS will need to increase its ranks by 48 sworn police officers. In addition, seven more Community Peace Officers and 15 full-time civilian employees will be required.

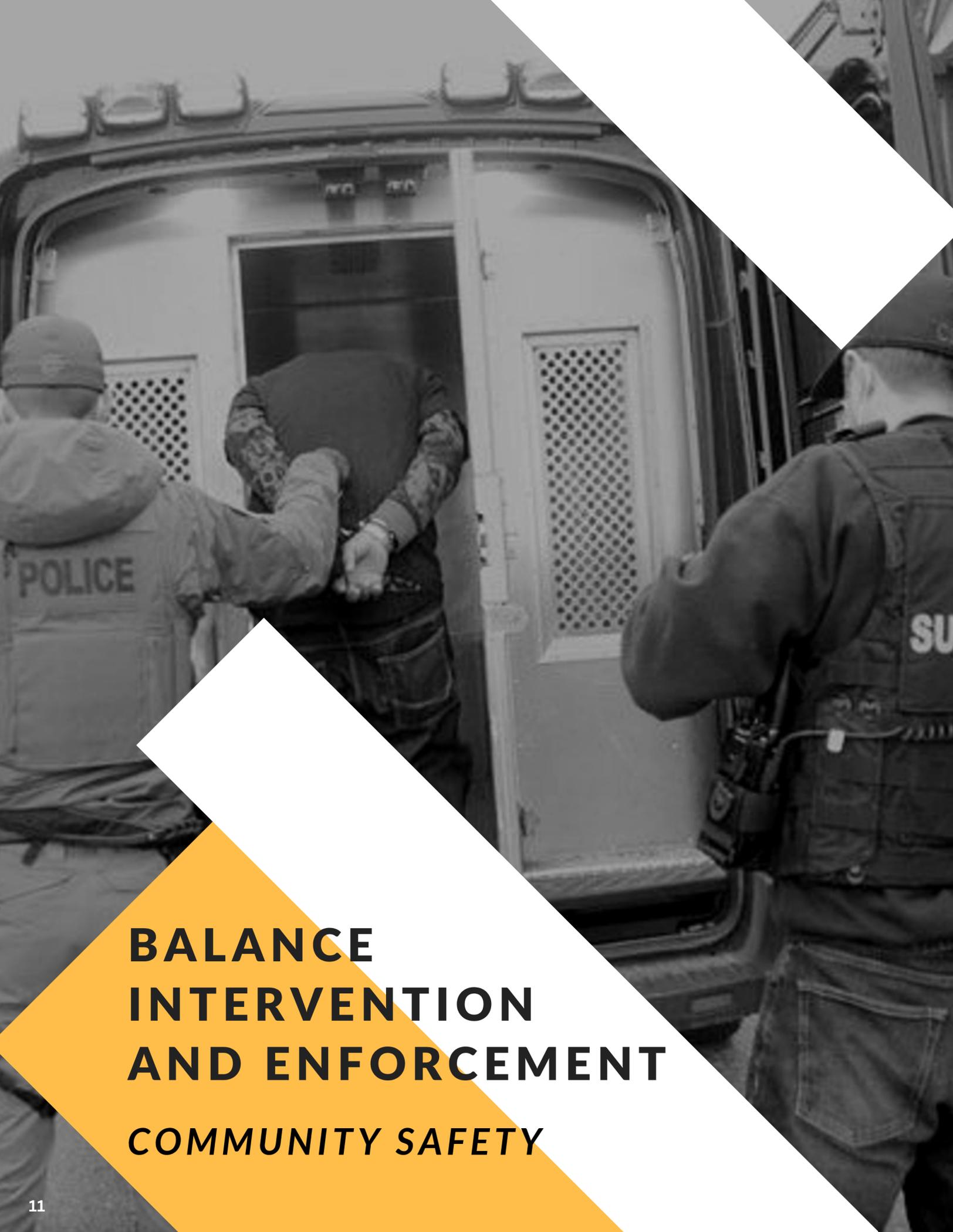
LPS is currently well-below its authorized strength and the addition of sworn and civilian staff is necessary to address the need for organizational growth, account for attrition and create capacity for more balanced workloads.

## LETHBRIDGE POLICE BUDGET PROJECTIONS

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027* (STUB YEAR)
<b>Revenue</b>	\$4,522,600	\$4,522,600	\$4,522,600	\$4,522,600	\$6,005,600
<b>Wages and Benefits</b>	\$37,881,700	\$39,829,500	Body \$40,692,300	\$40,682,400	\$43,481,100
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$7,121,900	\$7,343,700	\$7,515,400	\$7,694,400	\$10,982,500
<b>Tax Support</b>	\$40,481,000	\$42,650,600	\$43,685,100	\$43,854,200	\$48,358,000

\*UNAPPROVED





**BALANCE  
INTERVENTION  
AND ENFORCEMENT  
*COMMUNITY SAFETY***

All communities are faced with a variety of crime, harm and social disorder ranging in complexity and severity. Each situation requires an understanding of unique circumstances to ensure an appropriate response that balances supports and intervention with enforcement in order to address root causes and enhance community safety. While enforcement is a primary function of policing and a critical element in creating a safe community for all residents, enforcement alone is not a solution. Arrests and detention may immediately address issues of crime and disorder, but in many cases they are not long term solutions and do not lead to meaningful change for the individual involved or the broader community.

LPS is committed to a balanced approach between enforcement and interventions to help transition people to health or social systems resulting in a better outcome for individuals and the community as well as a reduction in demands on the justice system and police.

## **OUTCOMES:**

- LPS effectively uses data analysis to identify, respond to and reduce crime in the community
- LPS works to reduce recidivism through proactive policing and early intervention to help divert individuals to appropriate supports within a restorative justice model
- LPS is committed to providing adequate staffing and the appropriate deployment of resources to address crime trends and meet community expectations

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

### **Crime rate**

- *This measure highlights the state of crime, harm and disorder in Lethbridge. It also indicates the progress that enforcement and intervention support activities make in stabilizing or reducing the crime rate.*

### **PACT referrals and case management**

- *This measure shows LPS and its health partners provide support to vulnerable individuals struggling with mental health issues and connect and transition them to appropriate services to provide the care needed, reduce contacts with the justice system and calls to police and emergency services.*

### **Youth interventions**

- *This measure strikes a balance between enforcement and diverting youth to a restorative justice model.*

### **Weighted clearance rates**

- *This measures LPS' investigative success and signals how well the organization is performing and solving crime.*

### **Citizen perceptions of safety**

- *The efforts of police within the community influence perceptions of citizen safety gauged by responses in the annual LPS Community Survey.*



**CONNECT AND  
COLLABORATE**  
*COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT*

The police are the public and the public are the police – one of Sir Robert Peel’s principles of policing that continues to be the foundation of law enforcement throughout the world. With public opinion on policing in modern society under debate, it is critical the LPS serves as a source of truth to bridge gaps that exist between perception and reality and enhance understanding about the role of officers and the impact of police.

LPS must engage with both internal and external partners and stakeholders to increase awareness and promote greater understanding of safety priorities, needs and the different perspectives of community members. Providing information and education on LPS activities, increasing understanding about crime trends, what drives community safety and working in partnership to achieve mutual safety goals is critical.

Humanizing LPS officers and civilian staff by sharing our stories is an important step to help strengthen public trust and build confidence. Conversely, LPS is committed to understanding unique circumstances, history and cultures to meet the needs of diverse groups within our community. LPS-led collaboration with citizens, partners and stakeholders is key to addressing issues of mutual concern and developing strategies and solutions that provide more meaningful outcomes for individuals and the community.

## **OUTCOMES:**

- Greater understanding of LPS role and citizen responsibilities to enhance public safety is increased through LPS-led community engagement sessions
- Community feedback is used to inform operations and strategic planning
- Connection and collaboration with community partners is the foundation to developing wholistic strategies to address crime and disorder

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

### **Community and public engagement sessions**

- *LPS works to understand the concerns and needs of community members to inform organizational planning and decision-making.*

### **Citizen participation and satisfaction in engagement sessions and surveys**

- *This measure indicates how effective community and public engagement sessions are in listening, informing and connecting with citizens.*

### **Social media reach on education and awareness campaigns**

- *Audience engagement indicates the successful reach of online campaigns to inform and educate the community.*

### **Development of partnerships and collaborative relationships**

- *This measure demonstrates the progress made by LPS in building relationships with community stakeholders and partner agencies to collectively work towards the shared goal of enhancing community safety and well-being.*



**PROMOTE  
WELLNESS  
AND GROWTH**  
*HEALTHY ORGANIZATION*

The mental and physical health of all LPS employees must be prioritized as the foundation for a strong and healthy team capable of achieving the Service's long-term goals and outcomes. LPS employees continue to demonstrate their commitment and resilience, but as human beings internal and external stressors over the past few years, including policing during a pandemic, challenges within the organizational culture and significant staffing shortages, have resulted in fatigue.

LPS must ensure the appropriate supports are coordinated and in place for all employees to help them thrive and grow in their careers. Further enhancement of mental and physical well-being support programs, better preparation for new cadets and existing members and greater opportunities for career and leadership development will help increase employee retention and recruitment.

An equitable, diverse and inclusive workforce is also critical to ensuring LPS represents the community we serve. LPS is continuing its EDI journey to harness the strengths and values of diversity, define what EDI means, build strategies that identify and remove barriers and promote greater inclusivity.

## **OUTCOMES:**

- LPS enhances the well-being of employees through meaningful health and wellness programs
- Coordination of health and wellness supports
- LPS employees are provided opportunities for career and leadership development
- LPS workforce is strengthened by greater diversity and inclusivity to reflect community demographics and increase a sense of belonging
- LPS addresses policing needs through an enhanced approach to recruitment

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

### **Percentage of under represented officers hired**

- *These measures help highlight LPS' progress towards a diverse and inclusive workforce by supporting or growing under-represented population groups within the sworn ranks to better reflect community demographics.*

### **Civilian support for police**

- *Civilians offer skillsets that support the work of police officers and proportionate staffing is critical to meeting workload demands.*

### **Employee absenteeism**

- *This measure highlights the state of employee emotional and physical well-being and reflects if there is adequate support to address underlying causes of absenteeism.*

### **Employee job satisfaction and engagement**

- *This measure indicates support, empowerment and growth opportunities for employees. Engaged employees care about their work and feel respected, listened to and supported, contributing to the overall wellness of the organization and the ability to meet demands and achieve objectives.*

# CONNECT WITH LPS



General Inquiries: [inquiries@lethbridgepolice.ca](mailto:inquiries@lethbridgepolice.ca)

Switchboard: 403-327-2210

**EMERGENCY 911**

Non-emergency: 403-328-4444

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