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Municipal Consultations

Spring & Summer 2013 Focus Groups and Online Survey

Background:

In response to concerns raised about the determination of policing costs in Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), in partnership with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS), launched the Billing Review Project to examine potential changes to municipal billing.

A two-fold approach was used to consult with municipalities. In April and May of 2013, stakeholders and municipalities across Ontario participated in focus groups to provide input on the process of cost recovery for municipal policing

Input from these focus groups was used to develop an electronic survey, which was issued in June and July 2013. This consultation approach meant that all OPP-policed municipalities had an opportunity to provide input and become part of the billing review process.

Focus Groups:

- Sixty-five (65) randomly selected municipalities (23 per cent of the OPP's municipal clients) were invited to send one delegate to participate in focus groups regarding municipal policing billing. A stratified, random sampling technique was used to select both contract Police Services Act (PSA) Section 10 municipalities and non-contract PSA Section 5.1 municipalities from each of the OPP's five geographic regions.
- Forty-eight (48) municipalities participated in the focus groups (fifteen per cent of the OPP's municipal clients). The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Ontario Association of Police Services Boards (OAPSB), Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA) also participated in the focus groups.
- A total of seven focus groups occurred from April 28 to May 17, 2013. Each meeting was three to four hours in length and consisted of a presentation and a round table discussion regarding municipal policing billing.

**Focus Groups
Total Municipalities Selected & Attended¹**

Region	Status	# Municipalities	# Selected for Consult	% Selected for Consult	# Attended Consult	% Attended Consult
Central Count	Contract Count	28	6	21%	5	18%
	Non-Contract Count	18	6	33%	4	22%
		46	12	26%	9	20%
Eastern Count	Contract Count	33	6	18%	4	12%
	Non-Contract Count	41	6	15%	5	12%
		74	12	16%	9	12%
North East Count	Contract Count	24	7	29%	2	8%
	Non-Contract Count	76	9	12%	5	7%
		100	16	16%	7	7%
North West Count	Contract Count	11	7	64%	6	55%
	Non-Contract Count	20	6	30%	5	25%
		31	13	42%	11	35%
Western Count	Contract Count	55	6	11%	3	5%
	Non-Contract Count	17	6	35%	3	18%
		72	12	17%	6	8%
	Grand Count	323	65	20%	42	13%
	Contract	151	32	21%	20	13%
	Non-Contract	172	33	19%	22	13%

¹ Information does not include municipalities represented on the Billing Review Working Group or other stakeholders.

Focus Groups Randomly Selected Municipalities

Central Region – 9 Attended			
Municipality	Detachment	Status	Consult Date
Alnwick/Haldimand, Mun*	Northumberland	Contract	May 9
Bracebridge*	Bracebridge	Non-Contract	May 9
Caledon, Twn*	Caledon	Contract	May 9
Clearview, Twp	Huronias West	Non-Contract	May 9
Dysart et al, Twp*	Haliburton Highlands	Non-Contract	May 9
Minden Hills, Twp	Haliburton Highlands	Non-Contract	May 9
Mulmur, Twp*	Dufferin	Contract	May 9
North Kawartha, Twp*	Peterborough County	Contract	May 9
Orillia, City	Orillia	Contract	May 9
Port Hope, Mun*	Northumberland	Contract	May 9
Severn, Twp*	Orillia	Non-Contract	May 9
Springwater, Twp*	Huronias West	Non-Contract	May 9

Eastern Region – 9 Attended			
Municipality	Detachment	Status	Consult Date
Arnprior, Twn*	Arnprior	Non-Contract	May 14
Carleton Place, Twn*	Lanark County	Contract	May 14
Casselman, Village of*	Russell County	Contract	May 14
Central Hastings, Mun*	Central Hastings	Non-Contract	May 14
Faraday, Twp*	Bancroft	Non-Contract	May 14
Greater Madawaska, Twp*	Renfrew/Killaloe	Non-Contract	May 14
Greater Napanee, Twn*	Napanee	Contract	May 14
Head, Clara and Maria, Twp	Upper Ottawa Valley	Non-Contract	May 14
Quinte West, City*	Quinte West	Contract	May 14
Russell, Twp	Russell County	Contract	May 14
South Algonquin, Twp*	Killaloe	Non-Contract	May 14
South Glengarry	Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry	Contract	May 14

* Attended

Western Region – 6 Attended			
Municipality	Detachment	Status	Consult Date
Arran-Elderslie, Mun	South Bruce	Non-Contract	May 17
Bluewater, Mun*	Huron	Non-Contract	May 17
Chatsworth, Twp	Grey County	Contract	May 17
Dutton Dunwich*	Elgin County	Contract	May 17
Huron-Kinloss, Twp	South Bruce	Non-Contract	May 17
Ingersoll, Twn*	Oxford	Contract	May 17
Leamington*	Essex	Contract	May 17
Perth, East, Twp *	Perth County	Non-Contract	May 17
South Perth, Twp	Perth County	Non-Contract	May 17
Town of Erin	Wellington County	Contract	May 17
Warwick	Lambton County	Contract	May 17
Zorra, Twp*	Oxford	Non-Contract	May 17

Northwest Region – 11 Attended			
Municipality	Detachment	Status	Consult Date
Alberton, Twp	Fort Frances	Non-Contract	April 29
Ear Falls, Twp*	Red Lake	Non-Contract	April 29
Emo, Twp*	Fort Frances	Non-Contract	April 29
Ignace, Twp*	Dryden	Contract	April 29
Kenora, City*	Kenora	Contract	April 29
Red Lake, Mun of*	Red Lake	Contract	April 29
Sioux Narrows/Nester Falls*	Kenora	Contract	April 29
Conmee, Twp*	Thunder Bay	Non-Contract	April 30
Machin, Twp*	Dryden	Contract	April 30
Nipigon, Twp*	Nipigon	Non-Contract	April 30
Red Rock, Twp	Nipigon	Contract	April 30
Shuniah, Twp*	Thunder Bay	Contract	April 30
The Municipality of Greenstone*	Greenstone	Non-Contract	April 30

Northeast Region – 7 Attended			
Municipality	Detachment	Status	Consult Date
Dubreuilville, Twp*	Superior East	Non-Contract	April 30
Hearst, Twn	Kapuskasing	Contract	April 30
Hornepayne, Twp*	Superior East	Non-Contract	April 30
White River, Twp	Superior East	Non-Contract	April 30
Bonfield, Twp*	North Bay	Contract	May 13
Chamberlain, Twp	Temiskaming	Non-Contract	May 13
East Ferris, Twp*	North Bay	Contract	May 13
Elliot Lake, City of	East Algoma	Contract	May 13
Gordon / Barrie Island Twp	Manitoulin	Non-Contract	May 13
Hilton, Twp*	East Algoma	Non-Contract	May 13
Laird, Twp	Sault Ste. Marie	Contract	May 13
Mattawa	North Bay	Contract	May 13
Nairn and Hyman, Twp*	Sudbury	Non-Contract	May 13
Powassan, Mun	North Bay	Contract	May 13
Sables-Spanish River, Twp*	Sudbury	Non-Contract	May 13
Strong, Twp	Almaguin Highlands	Non-Contract	May 13

Municipalities Represented on the Billing Review Working Group (9):

- *Kenora*
- *Red Lake*
- *Bancroft**
- *Tiny Township**
- *Wasaga Beach**
- *Penetanguishene*
- *Tecumseh**
- *Greater Napanee**
- *Muskoka Lakes**

Other Stakeholders (4):

- *Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)**
- *Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association (NOMA)**
- *Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM)**

* Attended

Municipal Policing Online Survey:

- Focus group input was rolled up into a bilingual survey open to all OPP-policed municipalities as well as three upper-tier municipalities, for a total of 326 survey recipients.
- The survey was active from June 20 to July 10, 2013. Each municipality was allotted one response per municipality.
- One-hundred and sixty-eight municipalities (fifty-two per cent) responded to the survey.
- The survey asked respondents to rank and comment on four billing concepts, solicited new ideas and provided a forum for general feedback.

Summary of Municipal Input:

Feedback obtained through focus groups and the survey was largely consistent. It provided the OPP and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services with municipalities' criteria for successful billing reform as well as highlighting areas of potential concern.

Municipal feedback regarding the criteria for billing changes:

Municipalities across Ontario indicated through this survey that any change in the OPP's billing process should:

- Fairly distribute municipal policing costs among all users of the OPP's police services
- Be transparent
- Be implemented gradually
- Recognize unique municipal and regional characteristics
- Recognize that municipalities have limited funds

Municipal feedback regarding the ranking of potential billing concepts:

The survey asked respondents to rank the following four billing concepts; overall results are shown to the right of each concept:

Billing Concept	Overall Ranking (by first choice)
A. Cost recovery for OPP municipal policing services does not change.	2
B. OPP calculates municipal policing bills using a “base” amount + a charge for service calls.	1
C. OPP calculates municipal policing bills based on municipalities’ total property assessments.	3
D. All municipalities pay an equal amount.	4

- There were a range of opinions regarding which billing concept would be most appropriate. Comments supporting and objecting to each concept were submitted.
- Many municipalities in the North Region preferred the OPP’s current billing model while others from across the province preferred a billing model that includes a base amount plus a charge for service calls.

General Feedback:

- The province should fund all, or a greater portion of, OPP municipal policing costs.
- The province should address the root causes of rising police costs.
- Rising police salaries need to be addressed.
- All users of OPP services should contribute to cost recovery.

- Cost recovery should consider municipalities' local characteristics and ability to pay.
- Municipalities should have the ability to determine service levels.
- A province-wide billing approach is needed for all OPP-policed communities.
- There are differing opinions on how to fairly distribute policing costs.
- The province should consider alternate models for delivering policing services.

Overall, municipalities expressed frustration with the rising cost of policing, a readiness for fair change, and a desire to ensure the OPP is operating as efficiently as possible.