

Recommendations of the Community Advisory Panel on the Hamilton Police Service Race and Identity-Based Data Strategy

18 May 2026

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Foreword

The Hamilton Police Service Race and Identity-Based Data Community Advisory Panel was established to support the development and implementation of the Hamilton Police Service's Race and Identity-Based Data strategy. The panel consisted of, in alphabetical order by surname, Kingsley Audu, Marlene Dei-Amoah, Shaila Jamal, Ateeka Khan, Yasmeen Mirza, Juanita Parent, Jean-Jacques Somwe, Natalie Stravens (Chair), and Clifton van der Linden.

The Community Advisory Panel met more than 50 times between June 2024 and May 2026, both independently and with Hamilton Police Service officers and staff including, but not limited to, Inspector Jim Callender, Jasbir Dhillon, Staff Sergeant Ryan Hashimoto, Ala Mohamed, Daniel Monsannef, Staff Sergeant Darren Murphy, Chloe Nyitray, Inspector Carolyne Rashford, and Rahim Samnani. Over the course of this work, panel members reviewed documents, discussed research and analytical approaches, participated in use-of-force training, contributed to community engagement materials, and took part in conversations with Hamilton residents and community organizations. The panel also supported public-facing engagement intended to help explain what Race and Identity-Based Data collection is, why it matters, and how community members could become involved.

We came to this work as community representatives with diverse lived experiences and professional backgrounds, including experience in research, analytics, advocacy, social services, and community-based work. We also came to this work with humility. While members of the panel are connected to Black, Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, youth, and other communities across Hamilton, we do not claim to speak on behalf of those communities. Rather, we understand our role as one part of a broader process of listening, interpretation, accountability, and public engagement.

Race and Identity-Based Data is important because it can help public institutions better understand the nuanced and complex dynamics of systemic discrimination. Data alone cannot explain lived experience, and lived experience alone cannot reveal every pattern embedded in institutional practice. The value of this work lies in bringing both together. As described in the panel's community engagement materials, Race and Identity-Based Data collection combines empirical research with community interpretation: numbers can help identify whether disparities exist, while community knowledge can help explain how those disparities are experienced, why they may occur, and what changes may be required.

This work is especially important in policing, where decades of reports, commissions, public inquiries, and studies have documented the overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities in the criminal justice system. The purpose of Race and Identity-Based Data collection is not simply to produce statistics. It is to support transparency, accountability, and meaningful change by helping the Hamilton Police Service, the Hamilton Police Service Board, and the broader community better understand whether outcomes differ across communities, contexts, and interactions—and whether those differences are connected to policy, practice, training, decision-making, or other systemic factors.

The recommendations in this report were developed collaboratively by a diverse group of panel members who approached the work with seriousness, care, and a shared commitment to improving public safety and community trust. We encourage readers to consider the report as a whole. Individual recommendations should not be separated from the broader context in which they were developed, nor should they be used in ways that obscure their potential impacts on different communities. Where these recommendations inform policy, training, programs, or future analysis, they should be interpreted with attention to both evidence and community experience.

During our time on the panel, Hamilton was also confronted with the death of Erixon Kabera. Mr. Kabera's untimely death underscored the urgency of this work and the profound consequences of public trust, accountability, transparency, and the relationship between policing and community. We extend our condolences to his family, loved ones, and all those affected.

We offer this report in the hope that it contributes to a more transparent, accountable, and equitable approach to policing in Hamilton. We also recognize that the publication of recommendations is not the end of the work. The true measure of this process will be whether the recommendations are implemented, whether progress is measured and shared publicly, and whether communities continue to be meaningfully engaged in shaping how data is collected, interpreted, and used.

1. Background

1.1 Racial and identity-based disparities in policing

Police services across Canada face longstanding concerns about racial and identity-based disparities in enforcement outcomes, particularly in the application of use of force. While there is a vast scholarly literature analyzing racial disparities in U.S. policing data, Canadian empirical research to date has focused largely on self-reported accounts of racial profiling and identity-based discrimination in policing (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2014; Wortley, Laniyonu, & Laming, 2020). One of the central themes in the Canadian literature has been the persistent lack of access to standardized policing data, which has limited the ability to draw robust inferences about the dynamics of systemic racism in Canadian policing (Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011; Wortley, Owusu-Bempah, Laming, & Henry, 2021).

In this context, race and identity-based data initiatives such as the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Race and Identity-Based Data (RIBD) Strategy are emerging at a moment when the need for evidence is widely recognized but the infrastructure for generating and analyzing that evidence is still being built. Communities are asking not only whether racial and identity-based disparities exist in enforcement outcomes, but also how such disparities arise, what they reveal about institutional practices and broader social inequalities, and how they can be addressed in concrete and accountable ways.

1.2 Legislative and policy framework

The move toward systematic race and identity-based data collection in Ontario policing is rooted in a clear legal and policy framework.

At the provincial level, the *Ontario Anti-Racism Act, 2017* mandates race- and identity-based data collection for designated public sector organizations, including police services. The purpose of this framework is to:

- identify and monitor systemic racism, and
- develop and evaluate measures to prevent and address systemic discrimination.

In 2020, Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General directed police services to record the race of individuals in use-of-force incidents. In parallel, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police developed a province-wide framework for race- and identity-based data collection in coordination with human rights bodies, academic experts, and community stakeholders (Hamilton Police Service, 2025). This framework establishes expectations for what information can be collected, how it should be collected (including an emphasis on self-identification), and how it should be protected, analyzed, and reported. It also stresses the importance of disaggregated data so that disparities affecting particular communities can be detected rather than obscured within broad categories.

As a municipal police service, HPS operates under provincial policing legislation and is thus required to:

- implement a Race and Identity-Based Data Strategy;
- collect, analyze, and publicly report race and identity-based data on specified police interactions in a manner consistent with provincial requirements; and
- seek and incorporate community advice on the design, implementation, and oversight of this work.

Race and identity-based data collection in Hamilton is therefore not a discretionary initiative or pilot project: it is a legal and policy obligation for which HPS and the Hamilton Police Services Board remain publicly accountable.

1.3 HPS RIBD Strategy and the Community Advisory Panel

In 2023, HPS formally announced its commitment to develop an action plan to assess and address inequities in police–citizen interactions, with an initial focus on use-of-force incidents (Hamilton Police Service, 2023). The RIBD Strategy is the vehicle through which HPS intends to fulfill its provincial obligations and Board policy commitments. Its stated aims are to:

- collect race and identity-based data on defined police interactions in a systematic, consistent manner;
- analyze that data to identify inequities in outcomes; and
- use the findings to inform changes to policies, procedures, and practices, with the goal of advancing equity and building trust between HPS and the communities it serves

The Strategy acknowledges that collecting race and identity-based data carries real risks if not governed carefully. Data can be misinterpreted or misused, reinforce stereotypes, or intensify surveillance of already over-policed communities. For that reason, the Strategy commits HPS to grounding its work in strong legal safeguards, clear governance, and meaningful community involvement at every stage.

To help meet these commitments, HPS established the Race and Identity-Based Data Collection Community Advisory Panel (RIBD-CAP). The CAP is a volunteer panel composed of Hamilton residents with diverse lived, professional, and academic experiences related to policing, racial justice, community advocacy, and data. Members are expected to bring both their own expertise and the insights of the communities they are connected to, with particular attention to Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities that are disproportionately impacted by police interactions.

According to its Terms of Reference, the purpose of the CAP is to advise, provide perspective, and make recommendations to HPS on matters directly concerning race and identity-based

data collection, analysis, and reporting in order to identify, monitor, and address systemic discrimination and help advance equity in the Service’s policies, procedures, and practices. Within this purpose, the CAP’s mandate is to support HPS in implementing the RIBD Strategy and to provide community perspectives, experiences, and subject-matter expertise that inform HPS decision-making in accordance with Board policy.

More specifically, the CAP’s responsibilities include:

- providing feedback and strategic advice on the design of race and identity-based data collection, analysis, oversight, and public reporting related to police interactions with Black, Indigenous, and other racialized peoples;
- reviewing and commenting on materials such as analysis plans, methodologies, findings, and public reports;
- identifying options and making recommendations regarding community engagement, communications, the public release of data, and the development of action plans in response to identified inequities;
- reviewing relevant policies, procedures, and training to provide community perspectives on how service to the public can be improved and how the HPS’s own structures and training can be updated and enhanced;
- advising on strategies to address inequitable outcomes and contributing factors identified through analysis; and
- helping to facilitate relationships between HPS and communities directly impacted by police interactions, and to promote efforts to address inequities in outcomes.

The CAP is **advisory rather than operational**. It does not direct police operations or make binding decisions. Its advice and recommendations are meant to be clearly identified and considered by HPS and the Board alongside other inputs, with ultimate responsibility for the RIBD Strategy and for decisions arising from it resting with HPS leadership and the Hamilton Police Services Board.

The CAP’s work is guided by a set of principles—including respect, equity, inclusion, fairness, curiosity, openness, humility, and generosity—that serve as a “social contract” for how members relate to each other and to the Service. These principles, together with expectations around confidentiality and accommodations, underpin how the CAP fulfills its mandate. This report is offered in that advisory capacity: it reflects the CAP’s assessment of the current context and its recommendations on how race and identity-based data should be collected, governed, analyzed, and acted upon to advance equity in policing in Hamilton.

1.4 Analytical and theoretical context

1.4.1 Empirical and organizational research on use of force and race

International research on police use of force provides important guidance on how race and identity-based data should be interpreted. In the United States, a wide array of outcomes related to police use of force have been examined, including excessive or unnecessary force (Alpert, Dunham, & MacDonald, 2004), deadly force (Jacobs & Britt, 1979; Jacobs & O'Brien, 1998), and the prevalence of force across jurisdictions (Eitle, D'Alessio, & Stolzenberg, 2014; Hickman & Piquero, 2009). Researchers have compared force and non-force encounters (Friedrich, 1980; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002), studied repeat or "problem" officers (Harris, 2009, 2010, 2012), and examined the relationship between subject behaviour, weapon presence, and levels of force used (Garner et al., 1995, 2002; Terrill & Paoline, 2013). Although methods vary, this literature consistently finds that use of force is influenced by a combination of suspect, situational, and officer characteristics (Klahm & Tillyer, 2010; Riksheim & Chermak, 1993; Sherman, 1980).

A substantial body of U.S.-based research has specifically examined whether race influences the likelihood or severity of police force. Some studies report no independent effect of race after controlling for situational factors (Engel et al., 2000; Garner et al., 2002; Lawton, 2007; McCluskey et al., 2005; Sun & Payne, 2004). However, many others find that Black, Indigenous, and other non-White civilians are more likely to be subjected to force, particularly non-lethal and high-severity interventions (Alpert et al., 2004; Crow & Adrion, 2011; Garner et al., 2002; Paoline & Terrill, 2007; Terrill & Mastrofski, 2002; Terrill & Reisig, 2003). More recent studies reinforce this finding: Edwards et al. (2019) estimate that Black, Indigenous, and Latino individuals in the U.S. face significantly higher lifetime risks of being killed by police than White civilians, and Fryer (2016) finds that Black civilians are 21% more likely to experience less-lethal force, even after controlling for behaviour. Importantly, disparities often increase with the severity of force used; while some differences diminish when situational controls are introduced, others persist, suggesting that race continues to influence outcomes in ways not fully explained by incident context (Paoline et al., 2018; Kramer & Remster, 2018; Wright & Headley, 2020).

By contrast, the Canadian research base remains comparatively underdeveloped. Existing work relies heavily on self-reported experiences of profiling (Owusu-Bempah & Wortley, 2014; Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011) or on partial datasets that highlight overrepresentation of Black and Indigenous residents in serious use-of-force encounters (Pedicelli, 1998; Wortley, 2006; Carmichael & Kent, 2015; Wortley, Lanijonu, & Laming, 2020). One of the most consistent findings is that systemic discrimination in Canadian policing cannot be reduced to the attitudes or behaviours of individual officers alone. Rather, it must be understood as the outcome of broader institutional and social dynamics—including structural inequalities in housing, education, health and wellness, and employment, as well as patterns of police deployment and enforcement across neighbourhoods (Owusu-Bempah, 2017; Wortley et al., 2021). What remains missing is an empirical framework that links race- and identity-based policing data to these broader systemic drivers. Whether certain groups appear more frequently in police data is, in itself, an empirical question. A responsible race and identity-based data strategy must endeavour to explaining *why* these differences arise—scrutinizing how structural factors may contribute to observed disparities—rather than treating those disparities as evidence of inherent group tendencies.

Recent Canadian research on police training and culture further reinforces this point. A qualitative study of racial trauma-focused anti-racism training for new police recruits finds that, while officers initially expressed genuine critical self-reflection immediately after a two-hour training session, these effects largely dissipated within 12 to 18 months (Samuels-Wortley et al., 2025). Over time, recruits were socialized into an action-oriented, enforcement-centred police culture in which anti-racism material was viewed as peripheral to “real” police work. Officers frequently reverted to colour-blind narratives (“I treat everyone the same”), local exceptionalism (“our service is not like others”), and discursive strategies that minimized the role of race in their own practice. The authors conclude that one-off training modules, even when thoughtfully designed, cannot by themselves address racial inequities in policing in the absence of structural changes to organizational incentives, accountability mechanisms, and everyday operational priorities.

Comparative theoretical work outside the Canadian context points in a similar direction. McCall’s (2025) model of police department design, political pressure, and racial inequality in arrests shows how racial disparities in discretionary enforcement can arise from the interaction between departmental structure and political conflict, even when officers are motivated to reduce crime and learn from experience. McCall’s concept of context-constrained learning highlights how officers may selectively treat some directives as credible guidance while discounting others, particularly in racially charged contexts. Although McCall’s work draws on a U.S. setting, its core insight—that organizational design and internal information flows shape how equity-oriented directives are understood and implemented—remains relevant for interpreting race and identity-based data in Canadian policing.

Together, this body of work suggests that:

- disparities in use of force and other enforcement outcomes are shaped by a mix of situational, organizational, and structural factors;
- racial inequities cannot be fully explained by incident-level context or by individual officer attitudes alone; and
- efforts to reduce disparities must attend not only to measurement and training, but also to police culture, organizational incentives, deployment practices, and the ways in which guidance about equity is communicated and perceived within police services.

1.4.2 Implications for the HPS RIBD Strategy and the CAP

This literature has direct implications for the RIBD Strategy and for the CAP’s role.

First, it reinforces that descriptive statistics alone are not enough. Simply documenting disparities without a clear analytic framework risks normalizing them, inviting overly individualized explanations, or leaving structural drivers—such as deployment patterns, neighbourhood-level inequalities, and organizational rules—unexamined.

Second, it suggests that training and communications, while necessary, are insufficient on their own. Without corresponding changes to organizational incentives, accountability structures, and the credibility of equity-oriented directives, even well-designed anti-racism and bias training is unlikely to produce lasting changes in practice.

Third, it underscores the need for causal models that can isolate the independent effects of race and identity while accounting for situational and organizational factors, and for governance mechanisms that can translate those findings into credible, enforceable changes to policy and practice. While HPS has made significant progress in establishing procedures for systematic data collection, there remains substantial work to be done in conceptualizing how the resulting data will be analyzed to identify the root causes of disparities. Without appropriate analytic frameworks, descriptive statistics may obscure rather than illuminate patterns of systemic discrimination.

The RIBD Strategy, and the CAP's advisory work, respond directly to this gap. By embedding rigorous causal analysis within the Strategy—linking race and identity-based data to situational factors, deployment and supervision practices, and broader social inequalities—HPS and the CAP can move beyond measurement to explanation and accountability:

- identifying where, when, and how race and identity independently shape use-of-force and other enforcement outcomes;
- connecting those patterns to specific organizational rules, practices, and decision points; and
- recommending reforms that are both evidence-based and responsive to community experience.

In doing so, race and identity-based data in Hamilton can be used not only to describe existing inequities, but to help transform the institutional conditions that produce them.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Revise disproportionality benchmark

2.1.1 Recommendation

Adjust the primary disproportionality benchmark so that the comparison is between:

- the percentage of a specific group's involvement in use-of-force incidents, and
- that group's percentage within the population of police interactions in Hamilton (i.e., within the HPS jurisdiction), rather than that group's percentage in the general Hamilton population.

The benchmark required under the *Ontario Anti-Racism Act, 2017*—which compares enforcement outcomes to the general residential population—should continue to be reported to meet statutory obligations, but the interaction-based benchmark should be treated as the primary measure for assessing equity in police decision-making.

2.1.2 Rationale

(a) How the current benchmark is calculated

Under the current approach, disproportionality is assessed by comparing:

- the share of use-of-force incidents involving a given group (e.g., Black residents), to
- that group's share of the overall population in Hamilton.

For example, if 10% of Hamilton residents identify as Black but 25% of recorded use-of-force incidents involve Black subjects, the ratio of 25% to 10% (2.5) is interpreted as evidence of disproportionality. This population-based benchmark aligns with the requirements of the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*, which is focused on identifying and monitoring systemic racism in public sector services at the population level.

(b) Limitations of the current benchmark

While the population-based benchmark is useful for describing broad disparities, it combines two conceptually distinct phenomena:

1. Who comes into contact with police (patterns of deployment, calls for service, and broader structural inequalities in housing, income, health, etc.), and
2. How people are treated once contact occurs (officer decision-making, escalation, and use of force during an interaction).

Because it does not distinguish between these two stages, the current benchmark can:

- overstate disproportionality if a group has higher contact rates due to factors outside the immediate control of police, or
- understate disproportionality if, despite similar or lower contact rates, a group is subjected to force at higher rates once interactions occur.

To that end, the current benchmark is a blunt instrument: it is important for monitoring structural inequities, but it does not directly measure whether police apply force equitably conditional on contact.

(c) How the revised benchmark should be calculated

The Panel recommends introducing a primary benchmark that compares:

- the share of use-of-force incidents involving a given group, to
- that group's share of all police interactions (e.g., calls for service, stops, arrests, or other defined contact types).

Formally, this benchmark estimates the probability of use of force given contact with police, by race or identity group. It therefore speaks more directly to potential bias in police decision-making during encounters, rather than to disparities in exposure to policing that may be driven by wider social conditions.

(d) Why this change is necessary

Shifting the primary benchmark to an interaction-based denominator has several advantages:

- It aligns the measure with the decisions police can most directly influence—whether and how force is applied in a given encounter.
- It supports more precise analysis of where in the “pipeline” disparities arise: at the point of deployment and contact, at the point of escalation, or both.
- It reduces the risk that population-level disparities—rooted in factors beyond the immediate control of HPS—are mistakenly used to explain away or minimize inequities in how interactions are handled.

Importantly, this recommendation does not suggest abandoning the population-based benchmark. Both are needed:

- The **population-based benchmark** (required by the Act) helps identify and monitor overall systemic disparities in contact and outcomes.

- The **interaction-based benchmark** helps assess whether, once people are in contact with police, decisions about the use of force are being applied equitably across groups.

The CAP's view is that, for the purposes of guiding policy, training, supervision, and accountability within HPS, the interaction-based benchmark should be treated as the primary metric of disproportionality, with the population-based benchmark retained and reported alongside it to satisfy legislative requirements and to contextualize findings within broader structural inequalities.

2.2 Institutionalize advanced RIBD analytics and independent oversight

2.2.1 Recommendation

Ensure that analysis of race and identity-based use-of-force data goes beyond simple descriptive statistics and is grounded in robust, established statistical methods that have the demonstrated capability to capture the nuanced dynamics that are involved in the identification of both systemic and other forms of discrimination (e.g., multivariate/logistic regression and other causal inference techniques), combined with qualitative analytical reasoning and community-engaged interpretation.

To support this:

- Maintain and resource a dedicated function for RIBD analysis within the HPS staffing complement with a clear mandate to design, implement, and document advanced analytical approaches;
- Establish an independent academic advisory role or partnership, involving a researcher with demonstrated expertise in advanced statistical analysis who can be seen as a neutral arbiter of the validity of the data, methods, and inferences produced by HPS.
- Maintain structured, ongoing avenues for community engagement (for example, through a CAP or successor body, regular consultations, and co-developed reporting mechanisms) so that community experiences:
 - help to shape the questions that are asked of the data and the hypotheses that are tested; and
 - provide a critical lens for interpreting results and deciding what kinds of qualitative follow-up or additional analysis are required
- Commit to ongoing transparency by making all analytic code and appropriately de-identified, aggregated data used to produce RIBD analyses open to the public, subject to privacy, safety, and legal constraints.

2.2.2 Rationale

Simple descriptive statistics—such as raw percentages of use-of-force incidents by race—are easy to communicate but can be deeply misleading. They fail to account for confounding factors

like neighbourhood characteristics, call type, officer assignment, time of day, or the presence of weapons or mental health crises. If accountability and transparency are built on statistics that are superficial or technically weak, several risks arise:

- **Misinterpretation:** Apparent disparities may be overstated, understated, or incorrectly attributed if key contextual variables are ignored.
- **Erosion of trust:** Communities, officers, and decision-makers are more likely to distrust findings that appear simplistic, inconsistent, or easily challenged.
- **Policy drift:** Training, supervision, and discipline may be directed at the wrong problems if the underlying analysis does not distinguish between structural, organizational, and individual drivers of disparity.

By contrast, advanced analytical methods allow HPS and the community to ask more precise and meaningful questions: for example, whether race and identity continue to predict use of force after accounting for situational factors; whether certain deployment patterns or units are associated with higher risks; and where in the decision-making chain disparities emerge.

However, the power of these tools depends on how they are used and governed. That is why institutional roles matter:

- A **dedicated internal RIBD analysis function** is needed to ensure that data are properly prepared, methods are correctly applied, assumptions are explicit, and results are reproducible and well-documented. The CAP has seen first-hand how the introduction of Dr. Daniel Mosannef to this role has transformed what is possible within the RIBD Strategy. His expertise has enabled HPS to move beyond basic descriptive statistics to the kind of complex, rigorous analysis required to meaningfully identify and interrogate patterns of systemic discrimination. Sustaining a position of this calibre is essential to the integrity, credibility, and continued advancement of the RIBD work.
- An **independent academic advisor or partner** with strong methodological credentials can review analytic plans, stress-test models, and provide external validation. Their relative neutrality makes it easier for both community members and officers to see the analysis as credible, even when findings are difficult or politically sensitive.
- The application of **open data principles** to make RIBD methods and findings transparent, enabling independent scrutiny and, where appropriate, replication by external analysts and community members.

Together, these roles help ensure that:

- accountability rests on statistical work that would withstand academic peer review;
- transparency is based not just on releasing numbers, but on clearly explaining how those numbers were produced; and

- public debates about race and policing in Hamilton are grounded in careful, methodologically sound analysis rather than selective or superficial statistics.

2.3 Dynamically link officer and subject data to use-of-force records

2.3.1 Recommendation

Design the use-of-force reporting system so that each record is dynamically linked to structured officer and subject datasets in a way that primarily supports officer-level, context-sensitive longitudinal analysis, while also permitting appropriately governed organizational analysis for benchmarking and oversight. This recommendation is not a call for simple aggregate breakdowns of use of force by officer, nor by aggregate officer characteristics such as race. Rather, the purpose is to enable rigorous analysis of whether particular officers display patterns over time that diverge from appropriately defined baselines, after accounting for the contexts in which they work. This requires HPS to:

- maintain a structured officer database that includes, at minimum, socio-demographic information (e.g., race, gender, age), years of service, rank, unit and assignment history, shift schedules, training history, and relevant specialization;
- maintain a structured subject interaction database that records individuals' prior police contacts (e.g., calls for service, stops, arrests, apprehensions), with appropriate legal, privacy, and retention safeguards;
- ensure that each use-of-force record automatically links, via secure, pseudonymized unique identifiers, to the relevant officer(s) and subject(s) in these databases so that patterns can be analyzed over time rather than only at the level of isolated incidents;
- explicitly design the system to support officer-level reporting and analysis using the same advanced statistical methods recommended elsewhere in this report, so that an individual officer's pattern can be assessed relative to comparable peer groups and relevant operational contexts, rather than through raw counts, simple percentages, or unadjusted aggregate comparisons;
- ensure that any organizational or service-level analysis derived from these linked data is used to support benchmarking, oversight, and hypothesis generation, and is not treated as a substitute for the officer-level, context-controlled analysis that is the central purpose of this recommendation; and
- replace the current form-fillable PDF use-of-force report with a secure, web-based electronic form that writes directly into these underlying databases and can be centrally updated as needed.
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2.3.2 Rationale

To understand how race and identity shape use-of-force outcomes, it is not enough to know what happened in a single incident, or only at the level of the organization as a whole. Analysts and community members need to see how incidents fit into broader patterns of officer behaviour and subject contact with police, across time and across contexts. The central value of dynamically linked data is therefore not to produce broad descriptive statements such as what percentage of use-of-force incidents involve officers of a given race. Standing alone, such aggregate tabulations risk inviting misleading or stigmatizing interpretations and do little to identify where accountability, support, or intervention may actually be required.

Maintaining structured officer and subject databases and linking them dynamically to use-of-force records allows HPS to:

- examine individual officers' use-of-force patterns over time in light of their experience, training, assignment, and shift patterns;
- distinguish between patterns that are driven primarily by individual officers, by deployment and scheduling practices, or by repeated police contact with the same individuals or groups; and
- support more precise, context-sensitive interpretations of racial and identity-based disparities, rather than relying on one-off incident snapshots.

A key benefit of this architecture is that it enables officer-level accountability without reducing complex patterns to simple, potentially misleading descriptive statistics. The purpose is to determine whether an individual officer appears, over time and relative to similarly situated peers, to be more likely to use force in ways that adversely affect particular racialized groups, after accounting for relevant contextual factors such as assignment, call type, neighbourhood, shift pattern, and other operational exposures.

Instead, officer-level data can be analyzed using the same kinds of advanced statistical techniques recommended elsewhere in this report—methods that:

- take into account differences in assignment, call types, neighbourhoods, and shift patterns;
- allow comparison of an officer's pattern to appropriately defined peer groups; and
- can help infer when disparities in an individual officer's record are unlikely to be explained by context alone and therefore warrant closer review.
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Used in this way, officer-level analytics can:

- support early intervention (e.g., coaching, support, training) when patterns appear problematic;

- identify potential unconscious bias at the officer-level to allow for the prospect of tailored interventions;
- identify positive outliers whose practices are associated with lower-risk, more equitable outcomes; and
- provide a fairer basis for accountability decisions, grounded in careful analysis rather than headline numbers.

In the current system, form-fillable PDFs limit what can be collected and how quickly forms can evolve. Fields are essentially “frozen” until the underlying PDF is redesigned and redistributed, and data often have to be extracted or re-entered before analysis. Moving to a secure, web-based form that writes directly to the underlying databases has several advantages:

- it reduces errors and missing data by enforcing required fields and standardized response options;
- it allows analysts to add or adjust fields relatively easily in order to test new hypotheses, respond to emerging patterns, or address community-based inquiries without overhauling the entire reporting process; and
- it supports version control and documentation, so that changes to the form—and their implications for analysis—are transparent over time.

With strong privacy, security, labour, and governance safeguards, dynamically linking a web-based use-of-force form to officer and subject databases—and using that linkage to support both officer-level and aggregate analysis with robust methods—is therefore essential to moving from static, form-based reporting to flexible, analytically powerful, and community-responsive use-of-force data.

2.4 Develop validation mechanisms for officer-reported subject race

2.4.1 Recommendation

Develop and implement formal mechanisms to improve and validate the quality of officer-reported subject race in use-of-force and related datasets. At a minimum, HPS should:

- provide clear policy guidance and training on when and how to record perceived race, including the distinction between perception and self-identification;
- require the use of standardized race and identity categories, with explicit options for “unknown” and “not recorded” so that uncertainty is not masked;
- conduct periodic data quality audits, comparing officer-reported race to self-identified race where such information is collected, and reviewing patterns of missing or generic categories (e.g., “Other”);

- track and report basic data quality indicators (e.g., rates of “unknown” by unit, shift, or officer; frequency of implausible or inconsistent combinations); and
- establish procedures for providing feedback, clarification, or additional training where consistent patterns of misclassification or data quality concerns are identified.

2.4.2 Rationale

Most race and identity-based policing data, including use-of-force records, rely on how officers perceive the race of the people they interact with. These perceptions are analytically important—because they shape how officers respond in real time—but they are also fallible. If officer-reported race is routinely inaccurate or inconsistently recorded, analyses of racial disparity can be distorted in two directions:

- Real disparities can be hidden if racialized subjects are misclassified into broader categories or coded as “unknown”.
- Spurious disparities can appear if misclassification is patterned (for example, if some groups are more likely to be coded as “White” or “Other” in certain contexts).

Without validation, neither HPS nor the public can have confidence that observed patterns—or apparent absences of patterns—are real rather than artefacts of poor data.

Robust validation mechanisms serve several purposes:

- They improve analytic accuracy by identifying and addressing systematic sources of error (e.g., habitual use of “Other”, inconsistent application of categories across units).
- They protect community credibility: communities should not have their experiences discounted on the basis of data that may itself be unreliable.
- They support officers, by making expectations clear and providing feedback where more guidance is needed, rather than treating misclassification solely as an individual failure.

2.5 Provide accessible, plain-language reporting of RIBD analyses

2.5.1 Recommendation

Ensure that every major RIBD analysis is accompanied by a plain-language public report that is accessible to community stakeholders. At a minimum, HPS should:

- produce a non-technical summary for each analysis that explains, in clear language:
 - what questions were asked and why;
 - what data were used and what important data were *not* available;

- how the analysis was conducted (e.g., benchmarks, key variables, main assumptions);
- what the main findings are, including where the results are uncertain or mixed; and
- what steps HPS will take in response, and how progress will be monitored;
- use simple, clearly labelled visualizations that highlight key patterns without requiring statistical training to interpret;
- clearly distinguish between:
 - descriptive findings (what the data show at the aggregate level),
 - interpretation (what those findings may mean), and
 - commitments (what HPS will do as a result);
- explicitly explain that statistical models describe probabilities and patterns, not individual cases, and that they are used to test whether community experiences reflect broader systemic patterns, not to validate or invalidate any person’s lived experience; and
- provide translations of key plain-language summaries, where feasible, into the main languages spoken in Hamilton (e.g., French, Arabic, Somali, Punjabi, Urdu, Mandarin, and others identified through local demographic data and community consultation), so that communities most affected by policing can meaningfully engage with the findings; and
- maintain a publicly accessible archive of past RIBD analyses and their plain-language summaries so that community members can follow how the work and findings evolve over time.

2.5.2 Rationale

Rigorous analysis alone does not build trust. For communities most affected by policing, what matters is not only whether the numbers are technically correct, but whether:

- they can understand what the numbers mean;
- they can see how the findings relate to their own lived experiences; and
- the results are visibly linked to concrete changes in policy and practice.

Plain-language reporting helps ensure that:

- Methods are demystified. Non-technical summaries can explain why particular benchmarks, models, or controls were used, what their limitations are, and what kinds of questions the data cannot answer.
- Misinterpretation is reduced. Clear explanations can prevent both over-claiming (“the data prove there is no racism”) and under-claiming (“any disparity automatically proves racism”), and can situate findings in the broader social and legal context.

It is also important to be explicit about the relationship between individual experience and system-level evidence. Community members may have profoundly negative experiences with police that are not always reflected in aggregate statistics. Plain-language reports should therefore:

- affirm that lived experiences are real and important, regardless of whether the data show a strong statistical pattern at the system level;
- explain that statistical models operate on probabilities and patterns across many interactions, and cannot adjudicate what “really happened” in any one encounter;
- clarify that the purpose of RIBD analysis is to test whether individual and community experiences are indicative of broader systemic issues or reflect more localized or specific problems—not to disprove or dismiss those experiences; and
- acknowledge that community narratives often shape the questions that are asked of the data in the first place, and that discrepancies between experiences and aggregate findings should trigger further inquiry, not dismissal.

By consistently providing clear, accessible explanations of what RIBD analyses show—and what they cannot show—HPS can help create a shared understanding of how data and lived experience fit together. Done well, plain-language reporting becomes a tool for joint sense-making, rather than a shield behind which technical expertise is used to silence or outweigh community voices.

2.6 Extend RIBD analysis across the policing continuum

2.6.1 Recommendation

Gradually extend race and identity-based data collection and analysis beyond use-of-force incidents to a broader range of police interactions and decision points. At a minimum, HPS should:

- develop a phased plan to collect perceived (and, where appropriate, self-identified) race and identity data for additional categories of interaction, such as:
 - calls for service and call-centre triage decisions (e.g., priority level, response type);

- street checks / non-custodial stops and questioning;
- arrests, charges, and diversions;
- mental health and wellness-related calls; and
- youth-related interactions (e.g., school-based contacts, referrals);
- identify key internal decision points where race and identity may shape outcomes indirectly (e.g., dispatch triage, resource allocation, assignment of specialized units), and design RIBD-informed analyses to assess those processes;
- prioritize expansions in consultation with the CAP and community partners, focusing first on interactions and decision points where racialized communities report the greatest concern; and
- ensure that any expansion of collection is accompanied by clear communication, privacy safeguards, and plain-language explanations of why these data are being collected and how they will—and will not—be used.

2.6.2 Rationale

Focusing RIBD exclusively on use-of-force incidents captures only the most extreme and visible outcomes of policing. Community experiences of racism and discrimination often arise earlier and more frequently in the routine, lower-level contacts that never escalate to force, e.g., stops, questioning, dispatch decisions, and the ways calls are prioritized and resourced.

Limiting analysis to use-of-force data creates several risks:

- it may understate the scale and nature of racial inequities by ignoring disparities in *who is stopped, questioned, or arrested in the first place*;
- it may misidentify the “location” of the problem, attributing disparities solely to frontline officer behaviour rather than to upstream decisions in call triage, deployment, or policy design; and
- it can inadvertently communicate that only the most severe forms of harm “count” as relevant to equity as least intrusive interactions can still activate a large and lasting impact.

Extending RIBD across the policing continuum makes it possible to:

- trace where disparities first appear—at the point of dispatch, initial contact, arrest, charging, or use of force;
- examine how race and identity intersect with internal processes (such as how calls are categorized, which units are dispatched, and how quickly) that may never be visible to the public but strongly shape outcomes; and

- design organizational interventions that target the right decision points (for example, revising call-centre protocols, deployment models, or diversion criteria, not only frontline officer training).

This recommendation is not a call for indiscriminate data collection. It is a call for a deliberate, phased extension of RIBD to those parts of policing where community experience and theory suggest that race and identity are likely to matter. Done with clear safeguards and community input, extending RIBD beyond use of force will allow HPS and Hamilton residents to see a more complete picture of how racial inequities emerge—and where they can be most effectively addressed.

2.8 Design body-worn camera deployment to support RIBD analytics

2.8.1 Recommendation

As HPS introduces body-worn cameras (BWCs), design the program from the outset so that BWC data can be used—under strong safeguards—to improve RIBD analytics and understanding of race and identity-based disparities. At a minimum, HPS should:

- develop, before deployment, a clear policy and governance framework for the analytic use of BWC footage in RIBD, co-designed with community representatives, the CAP, oversight bodies, and relevant labour partners. This framework should specify:
 - what kinds of equity-related questions BWC data may be used to address;
 - how footage will be selected, sampled, coded, and stored for analytic purposes; and
 - safeguards against function creep, over-surveillance, or misuse;
- build the technical architecture so that each BWC-recorded incident is linkable to RIBD datasets through secure, pseudonymized identifiers, allowing footage to be connected to use-of-force reports, officer and subject data, and contextual information (e.g., location, call type) without exposing more personal information than necessary;
- develop structured coding protocols and piloted coding schemes for BWC footage that capture analytically relevant features, such as:
 - initiation, escalation, and de-escalation cues;
 - verbal and non-verbal communication patterns;
 - references to race, identity, or community;
 - timing and type of force options used;

- carefully explore the use of AI techniques (such as computer vision and automated video coding) at an aggregate level to identify systematic differences in police–citizen interactions and use-of-force incidents across communities and contexts, subject to:
 - prior ethical review;
 - documented bias and error testing; and
 - mandatory human review of outputs;
- plan to use BWC footage primarily for:
 - validating and improving the accuracy of key fields in administrative records (e.g., sequence of events, subject behaviour, officer actions);
 - informing mixed-methods analysis of how encounters unfold across different communities and contexts;
 - creating training materials that highlight both effective and problematic practices; and
- communicate publicly, from the beginning, how BWC data will and will not be used in RIBD analyses, including how privacy, fairness, and due process will be protected for both community members and officers.

2.8.2 Rationale

Because HPS is still in the planning phase for BWCs, there is a critical opportunity to design the program so that:

- it can be used to identify and address inequities in service and outcomes, not only for evidentiary purposes; and
- community expectations are shaped by clear, up-front commitments about governance and limits.

Administrative records alone provide a structured but partial view of police–citizen encounters. BWC footage, if governed properly, can:

- provide a richer record of communication, escalation and de-escalation, and the context around decisions to use force;
- help distinguish between differences in behaviour, differences in officer interpretation, and differences in how similar behaviours are handled across communities; and
- make training and supervision more concrete by rooting them in real interactions.

At the same time, BWCs and AI tools carry real risks—especially for communities already subject to intensive policing. Without clear limits, they can:

- deepen feelings of being constantly watched;
- be experienced as tools primarily for disciplining individual officers rather than addressing systemic issues; or
- gradually be repurposed for uses far beyond what was originally discussed.

For that reason, any exploration of AI techniques (such as computer vision applied to BWC footage) must:

- operate at the level of aggregate analysis, not real-time surveillance or automated decision-making about individual officers or subjects;
- be transparent about training data, limitations, and error rates;
- be subject to ongoing community and expert oversight; and
- never be used to override or dismiss community testimony or individual experience, but rather to test hypotheses about broader patterns.

2.9 Expand RIBD Strategy to include broader community datasets

2.9.1 Recommendation

Use the specialized RIBD analytic capacity within HPS to systematically link use-of-force and other RIBD datasets to broader police, municipal, provincial, and public data in order to understand how structural conditions intersect with policing. At a minimum, HPS should:

- work with the City of Hamilton, provincial ministries, and other public bodies to identify relevant external datasets (e.g., neighbourhood-level socio-economic indicators, housing and homelessness data, health and mental health service availability, school and youth indicators, land use and transit patterns);
- link RIBD datasets to these external indicators at appropriate levels of aggregation (e.g., neighbourhood, patrol zone, census tract), using privacy-preserving methods and avoiding any unnecessary sharing of identifiable personal information;
- incorporate these structural indicators into RIBD analyses to distinguish, as far as possible, between:
 - disparities driven primarily by policing practices and decisions; and
 - disparities that reflect or are amplified by broader social and economic inequalities;

- produce integrated findings that show where patterns of racial and identity-based inequity in policing align with, or diverge from, other forms of disadvantage in Hamilton; and
- share these synthesized insights with municipal partners, school boards, health and social service agencies, and community organizations to support coordinated, cross-sector strategies to advance equity and reduce harm.

2.9.2 Rationale

Systemic discrimination does not occur in a vacuum of policing. Patterns in stops, arrests, and use of force are shaped not only by officer decisions and organizational culture, but also by:

- where people live;
- who has access to stable housing, income, education, and health care;
- where services are (and are not) available; and
- how other institutions—schools, hospitals, social services—respond to crises, including how crises are communicated to dispatch and how context is relayed to responding officers.

If RIBD analysis focuses only on what happens *within* HPS datasets, there is a risk of either:

- over-assigning responsibility to individual officers or units for patterns that are heavily structured by broader inequalities; or
- attributing everything to “social conditions” in a way that obscures where police policies, deployment choices, and practices are making inequities worse—or better.

Linking RIBD data to broader community datasets allows HPS and the public to:

- locate policing patterns within a wider landscape of inequality, seeing where racial and identity-based disparities in police interactions are concentrated in areas that also experience high poverty, housing instability, gaps in services, or other inequities in social determinants of health;
- identify situations where police are being used, de facto, as a response to social failures elsewhere (for example, where high rates of police contact correlate with limited mental health or youth services), and where change outside HPS is needed to meaningfully advance equitable policing;
- test whether reforms within HPS—such as changes in deployment, supervision, or training—are associated with reductions in disparities after accounting for neighbourhood-level conditions; and

- build a shared, data-informed understanding across institutions of who needs to change what to reduce racial and identity-based harm.

Developing a specialized and sophisticated RIBD competency within HPS is therefore not only about improving internal accountability. It creates a capacity that can help the city as a whole:

- understand how policing intersects with social drivers of health;
- identify where targeted changes inside HPS are most likely to make a difference; and
- clarify where meaningful progress will require broader, cross-sector action beyond the police service and identify existing initiatives that can advance this work.

When RIBD analysis is explicitly connected to structural and community-level data, HPS can present a more honest and nuanced picture: one that acknowledges the Service's own responsibilities, recognizes the limits of what police reform alone can achieve, and invites other institutions to share in a coordinated effort to advance equity in Hamilton.

2.10 Develop a dedicated RIBD community engagement strategy

2.10.1 Recommendation

Develop and resource a formal RIBD community engagement strategy so that engagement is planned, sustained, and tailored rather than ad hoc. At a minimum, HPS should:

- adopt a written RIBD Community Engagement Strategy that:
 - sets out clear objectives for engagement (e.g., informing analysis, testing interpretations, identifying emerging concerns, co-designing responses);
 - recognizes that different communities experience policing differently and therefore require distinct engagement approaches, not a one-size-fits-all model;
 - commits to multiple formats of engagement (e.g., small group dialogues, community-hosted meetings, online feedback mechanisms, youth-focused sessions), rather than relying solely on formal town halls;
- allocate a dedicated budget line for RIBD-related engagement (e.g., honouraria, childcare, food, transportation, interpretation, and space rental), so that participation does not depend on unpaid labour by community members;
- designate a RIBD community rapporteur or engagement lead function with responsibilities including:
 - coordinating engagement activities and ensuring follow-up;

- systematically documenting community feedback and communicating it back to the RIBD analysts, HPS leadership, and the CAP;
- closing the loop by reporting back to communities on how their input shaped analysis and decisions;
- provide cultural safety and humility training to HPS personnel and external facilitators involved in engagement, including guidance on:
 - respecting cultural practices, protocols, and traditions;
 - being thoughtful about the timing, location, and format of events;
 - understanding power dynamics and historical harms in police–community relations; and
 - consider ratio of police-to-community participants as well as attire (e.g., uniform or non-uniform, casual versus business dress) in community engagement sessions; and
- commit to regularly reviewing and updating the engagement strategy in collaboration with community partners, so that it evolves with changing needs and feedback.

2.10.2 Rationale

No matter how rigorous the RIBD analytics, they will not build trust on their own. Communities are more likely to see the work as credible and meaningful when:

- they have had a say in what questions are asked of the data;
- they can see their lived experience reflected in the hypotheses being tested; and
- there is a clear, visible connection between what they say, what the analysis shows, and what HPS does.

At present, much of the engagement around RIBD occurs through the CAP and a small number of structured events. This is important, but it:

- does not reach all communities equally;
- risks over-relying on a narrow set of voices and community leaders; and
- can inadvertently reproduce a one-size-fits-all approach to engagement.

A dedicated engagement strategy, budget, and rapporteur role would:

- make engagement systematic rather than episodic, ensuring communities are involved throughout the cycle of analysis, reporting, and response;
- support community-specific approaches, acknowledging that Black, Indigenous, Muslim, Jewish, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer, and other communities have distinct histories, harms, and expectations in relation to policing;
- create a clear institutional point of contact and responsibility for RIBD engagement; and
- help ensure that community insights inform what is analyzed, how it is interpreted, and how results are communicated, without compromising the independence or integrity of the statistical analysis itself.

2.11 Report LECA complaints related to use of force by race and identity

2.11.1 Recommendation

Require HPS to publicly report, on a regular and standardized basis, information on complaints concerning alleged officer misconduct in relation to use-of-force incidents that are filed with the Law Enforcement Complaints Agency (LECA), disaggregated using the race and identity categories collected and reported by LECA.

At a minimum, HPS should:

- report the number of LECA complaints concerning alleged officer misconduct related to use of force that arise from incidents involving HPS officers, broken down by the race and identity categories used by LECA;
- report whatever additional case-level administrative information LECA makes available to HPS regarding those complaints, including, where available, the status or stage of review of the complaint (for example, whether it has been screened, is under review, has been referred, has been retained, has been closed, or has resulted in another recorded disposition);
- report these complaint data alongside HPS's own use-of-force and RIBD reporting so that community members can compare patterns in formally filed misconduct complaints with patterns in police-recorded use-of-force incidents;
- clearly identify the source of each data element, distinguishing between:
 - information generated by HPS through its own use-of-force and RIBD systems, and
 - information originating from LECA or other external oversight processes;
- provide clear explanations of what complaint data can and cannot show, including that complaints reflect reported concerns about officer conduct and oversight-system processing, not findings of misconduct in themselves; and
- work with LECA and, where necessary, the Hamilton Police Services Board and relevant provincial bodies to establish data-sharing, privacy, and reporting protocols that make such reporting possible on an ongoing basis.

2.11.2 Rationale

A race and identity-based data strategy focused only on police-generated records provides an incomplete picture of how communities experience use of force and how concerns about improper force are formally raised. HPS's current RIBD work is designed to collect and analyze information about use-of-force incidents as recorded by the Service itself. That is important, but it does not capture a distinct and equally important part of the accountability landscape: complaints alleging officer misconduct in relation to use of force that are brought through external oversight channels.

Reporting LECA complaint data disaggregated by race and identity would make it possible to examine whether concerns about improper use of force are reported at different rates across identity groups and whether those patterns align with, or diverge from, the patterns shown in HPS's own use-of-force data. This comparison is important for several reasons:

- it helps assess whether the distribution of formally reported concerns about improper force mirrors the distribution of police-recorded use-of-force incidents, or whether some groups appear more likely to experience force as improper, excessive, or worthy of complaint;
- it creates a bridge between internal administrative data and external accountability data, allowing a fuller understanding of how use of force is experienced, reported, and processed;
- it can identify potential gaps between what HPS records and what community members experience as problematic, which may in turn point to issues in policy, communication, trust, or complaint accessibility; and
- it strengthens transparency by showing not only how force is used, but also how allegations of misconduct related to force move through oversight processes.

It is also important to report whatever additional information is available regarding the status of these complaints. Communities are concerned not only with whether complaints are filed, but with what happens afterward. Reporting status information, where available, helps illuminate whether complaints are moving through the system in a timely and intelligible way and whether there are patterns in review or disposition that warrant further scrutiny.

At the same time, these data require careful explanation. Complaint data are not the same as proven misconduct findings, just as the absence of a complaint does not establish that an interaction was unproblematic. Complaint patterns may also reflect differences in public awareness, trust in oversight systems, capacity to pursue complaints, and access to information or support. For that reason, LECA complaint data should be presented as a complementary source of evidence—one that can be meaningfully contrasted with HPS's own use-of-force and RIBD data, but not substituted for it.

Used in this way, reporting LECA complaints related to use of force by race and identity would strengthen the RIBD Strategy by expanding the evidentiary base for understanding inequity,

improving transparency around external accountability processes, and helping identify where further analysis, policy change, or community engagement may be required.

2.12 Standardize RIBD public reporting

2.12.1 Recommendation

Standardize how RIBD findings are presented to the public so that reporting is regular, understandable, and responsive to community questions. At a minimum, HPS should:

- adopt a public reporting schedule for RIBD-related outputs, including:
 - annual use-of-force and RIBD reports; and
 - interim updates (e.g., semi-annual or quarterly) where appropriate;
- specify, in policy, the core questions each annual report will address, such as:
 - overall patterns and trends in use-of-force incidents;
 - disparities by subject race, identity, age, gender, and neighbourhood;
 - patterns by officer assignment and characteristics at an appropriate level of aggregation and privacy (e.g., by unit, years of service, shift, and selected socio-demographic attributes, without identifying individual officers);
 - key findings from advanced statistical analyses (e.g., whether disparities persist after controlling for context); and
 - what actions HPS will take in response to the findings, including timelines and evaluation metrics;
- develop a public RIBD dashboard that:
 - presents key indicators in an accessible, interactive format;
 - allows users to see disaggregated patterns (subject to privacy safeguards);
 - is accompanied by plain-language explanations and “how to read this chart” guidance; and
 - is updated on a predictable timetable;
- ensure that reports and dashboards are accompanied by plain-language summaries, as recommended elsewhere, including translations into key community languages where

feasible; and

- provide clear explanation of limitations (e.g., missing data, measurement issues, uncertainty) so that the data are neither overstated nor weaponized.

2.12.2 Rationale

Community members, advocates, and officers consistently ask:

- What questions are being asked of the data?
- How often will we see results?
- How will we know if anything is changing?
- How can we understand the numbers without being statisticians?

At present, RIBD-related reporting is still evolving. Without clear standards for frequency, content, and format, there is a risk that:

- analysis remains largely internal, shared only sporadically;
- different audiences receive different levels of information; and
- important nuances about officer characteristics, assignments, and context never make it into public conversation.

Standardizing public reporting and dashboards:

- turns RIBD from a one-off project into an ongoing public accountability tool;
- helps ensure that officer-level and contextual information (e.g., assignment, unit, shift patterns) are reflected at an appropriate level of aggregation, supporting fairer interpretations of disparities;
- gives communities predictable opportunities to engage with and respond to the data; and
- reinforces that the goal of RIBD is not just to generate numbers, but to drive changes in service delivery and outcomes, and to show transparently whether those changes are working.

2.13 Reconfigure community advisory function using deliberative mini-publics

2.13.1 Recommendation

Transition from a standing, long-duration Community Advisory Panel model to a structured program of deliberative mini-publics (DMPs)—such as citizen lotteries and intensive multi-day workshops—that engage a broader cross-section of Hamilton residents in the interpretation and governance of race and identity-based policing data.

Under this model, HPS should:

- convene recurring deliberative mini-publics (e.g., weekend or three-day sessions) composed of randomly selected and demographically stratified Hamilton residents, with particular attention to ensuring meaningful inclusion of communities disproportionately affected by police interactions;
- provide participants with structured learning sessions that equip them to engage substantively with the issues under consideration, including:
 - how use-of-force decisions are made in practice;
 - the objectives, design, and limitations of the RIBD Strategy;
 - the structure, strengths, and limitations of the available data; and
 - the basic principles required to interpret statistical analyses responsibly;
- facilitate guided deliberation among participants on:
 - how to interpret RIBD findings;
 - what forms of transparency, accountability, and policy response are appropriate; and
 - what additional data, analyses, or contextual information are needed to support public understanding and trust;
- produce clear, public-facing outputs from each mini-public (e.g., summaries, recommendations, areas of consensus and disagreement), and formally respond to these outputs within HPS governance processes;
- use successive mini-publics as an iterative mechanism, allowing insights from earlier sessions to inform the design, focus, and materials of subsequent engagements; and
- maintain a limited, clearly defined advisory or liaison function (which may include former CAP members) to support the design, continuity, and integrity of the deliberative process, without relying on a standing body as the primary vehicle for community representation.

2.13.2 Rationale

The current Community Advisory Panel model has played an important role in shaping the early development of the RIBD Strategy. However, the Panel's experience highlights several structural limitations that constrain its long-term effectiveness.

First, the model places substantial and sustained demands on members' time, requiring regular participation over a period of one to two years. In practice, this has contributed to attrition and uneven participation, which can limit continuity and the diversity of perspectives represented over time.

Second, CAP members have expressed concern about being perceived as representatives or spokespersons for broader communities, or as intermediaries conveying HPS positions back to those communities. This creates tension between the Panel's advisory role and expectations—both internal and external—about representation, legitimacy, and accountability.

Third, a standing panel necessarily engages a relatively small and fixed group of individuals, which limits the breadth of community input and may constrain the range of perspectives brought to bear on complex and evolving issues.

A deliberative mini-public model addresses these challenges by reconfiguring community engagement along three key dimensions.

(a) Breadth and inclusiveness

By recruiting participants through citizen lotteries and stratified sampling, deliberative mini-publics can engage a wider and more diverse cross-section of Hamilton residents over time. Each iteration brings new participants into the process, reducing reliance on a single standing group and broadening the base of community input.

(b) Depth and quality of engagement

Unlike traditional consultation models, deliberative mini-publics combine structured learning with facilitated discussion, enabling participants to engage with complex topics—such as use-of-force decision-making and statistical analysis—in an informed and reflective manner. This is particularly important in the context of RIBD, where meaningful participation requires some understanding of both policing practices and the interpretation of data.

(c) Time-limited and intensive participation

Short, intensive sessions (e.g., over a weekend or several consecutive days) reduce the long-term burden on participants while still allowing for sustained, high-quality deliberation. This structure makes participation more accessible and reduces the risk of attrition associated with extended commitments.

(d) Legitimacy and independence

Because participants are selected through transparent and broadly inclusive processes, and because each mini-public is time-limited, the model reduces the perception that a small group is speaking on behalf of entire communities or is institutionally aligned with HPS. Instead, legitimacy is derived from the fairness of the selection process, the quality of the deliberation, and the transparency of the outputs.

(e) Iteration and responsiveness

A program of recurring mini-publics allows HPS to test, refine, and revisit key questions over time. Findings from one session can inform subsequent engagements, creating a feedback loop between data analysis, community interpretation, and policy development.

Importantly, this recommendation does not eliminate the value of sustained relationships with community members. Rather, it repositions that function: instead of relying on a standing panel as the primary mechanism of engagement, a smaller advisory or liaison structure can support the design and continuity of the deliberative process while ensuring that the core work of interpretation and feedback is grounded in broader, periodically refreshed community participation.

In the context of race and identity-based data, where both technical complexity and community trust are central, deliberative mini-publics offer a model that is better aligned with the goals of transparency, accountability, and legitimacy than a traditional advisory panel structure alone.

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