

## Toronto Police Association Takes a Collaborative Approach to Find a New Patrol Shift Schedule

During 2015-2018 bargaining negotiations, the Toronto Police Association and the employer, the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) agreed to review the Primary Response Unit (PRU) compressed workweek (CWW) schedule. Officers assigned to the PRU are chiefly responsible for answering citizen-generated calls for service in addition to self-initiated proactive policing responsibilities. The CWW was introduced in 1983 and has remained unaltered since then, but for minor changes to shift start times. However, much has changed since then:

- The population of Toronto has grown from 2.1 million to over 3 million people
- Policing demands have increased and continue to rise, year over year
- Uniform staffing levels have fallen from 5,615 officers in 2010 to 4,730 in 2019 (almost 900 officers)

This agreement led to the formation of a Toronto Police Service (TPS) and Toronto Police Association (TPA) joint committee (the Committee) to review the CWW. The Committee's goal was to gradually phase out the CWW by implementing a process where an informed and engaged membership would select and vote on an alternative PRU shift schedule that would:

- Provide an appropriate balance between a member's work, personal/family time and include the consideration of fewer consecutive shifts
- Strike a balance between the TPS's needs for the effective and efficient deployment of personnel and the individual needs of the membership, and
- Allow the TPS to deploy human and financial resources in the most efficient and effective way while respecting the individual needs of the members

The joint committee agreed to the following objectives:

- To reach consensus concerning the selection of an alternative shift model or modification to the current CWW that would provide additional coverage during peak demand hours
- To explore alternative shift schedules for divisions across the city, applying the same methodology to create a fair and consistent process
- To ensure that the process was fair and impartial, and was conducted transparently and with integrity to maintain confidence in the review

The challenge for the Committee was finding a shift schedule or schedules, that would meet the operational needs of the Service while considering member preferences, work-life balance and health and safety issues. The Committee surveyed uniform members as part of the broader shift schedule review. The purpose was to identify member preferences and opinions, including schedules the membership would like the Committee to explore. Almost 4,800 uniform members

were surveyed with a 40% response rate. The survey indicated that overall, 42% of respondents were dissatisfied working the CWW, with significant variations by division. Dissatisfaction ranged from three-quarters (75%) at one division to 25% or less at two other divisions. The takeaway from the survey was that the current CWW did not meet the member's needs and expectations or the operational demands of the TPS. The members wanted a change.

The Committee engaged a subject matter expert, Strategic Direction Ltd, a U.K. based company, and asked them to put forward alternative schedules that might better meet our member's needs and the operational needs of the Toronto Police Service. Strategic Direction specializes in resource allocation, demand (workload) analysis and work scheduling primarily for police services. Strategic Direction's analysis included:

- Examining levels of demand in each of the 16 divisions and establishing the staffing levels required to provide an appropriate level of service
- Establishing the numbers of officers that need to be on duty throughout the day
- A review of the literature regarding the health effects of shift work
- Analysis of call for service data based on call priority, hour of the day, day of the week
- Analysis of seasonal variations (e.g. summer months)
- Desired response times and performance targets
- Review of average officer service time and number of officers attending each call by priority
- Officer administrative time and proactive time

Based on the findings and recommendations of Strategic Direction, the Committee selected a pilot division and presented six alternative shift models for officers to review. Shift options included a selection of fixed shifts, 8, 9 and 10 hours shifts, 11-hour shifts and 12-hour shifts. The alternative shifts considered the Service's operational demands and member feedback and shift preferences from the CWW Shift Survey.

The Committee visited each PRU platoon at the pilot division, explained the process, answered officer's questions and provided each member with a comprehensive member information package, listing the pros and cons of each alternative shift schedule put forward, a visual "fit" of their division's workload to staffing levels, as well as shift attributes. Officers were provided with a comparison chart with the shift characteristics for each option. This allowed members to compare the shift options quickly. For example, members could see how one shift compared against the other in the number of shifts worked annually and the number of rest days, weekends off in a cycle, number of consecutive shifts, including night shifts, and the minimum number of staff on duty (after abstractions/detractors). Members were given a few weeks to review the package with their peers and family, followed by a majority vote where each member had an opportunity to vote on the shift option they wanted to work. Because the Committee does not

support a “one size fits all approach” alternative schedules were based on a division’s demand (calls for service) and member preferences. This means that divisions could work different shift schedules, determined by majority vote at each division.

During the platoon visits, members at the pilot division suggested modifications to some schedules or suggested other schedules to look at. Based on the member feedback during the review process, modifications were made to a few of the shifts presented. Some member-initiated modifications worked, others did not. One member suggestion did work with one of the 12-hour models, (moving the first day of day shift back a day). This modified 12-hour shift is the model now piloted at two divisions, selected by the members through a majority vote.

The Committee is replicating this process, with the remaining divisions across the police service. Where an alternative schedule is approved, the Committee coordinates and oversees the implementation of the alternative shift schedule within the division. Alternative shift schedules are piloted through fixed-term pilot projects, the terms of which are set out in a shift accord.

This process facilitated a level of cooperation and collaboration between the TPA and the TPSB that was ground-breaking. Historically, the TPA and the TPSB took a siloed approach to the exploration of alternative shift schedules. This approach resulted in the use of different shift modelling experts and methodologies, inconsistent data and analysis, and differing interpretations and findings of the data. Both parties agreed that this process was cumbersome, grindingly slow, and members had little input into the type of shift they wanted to work.

The Committee continues to work collaboratively with divisions, to identify a PRU schedule that best fits the requirements of the TPS and the preferences of PRU members. There are hundreds of different work schedules in use, but there is no one schedule that will meet all operational requirements, member preferences and health and wellness considerations. Finding an ideal schedule requires careful detail to the process of shift schedule design and take into account the operational needs and characteristics of each division. Who chooses the shift schedule and how the schedule is chosen has been key to the success of this project. Success is only achieved by involving members and the employer in the process.