

February 13, 2018

Mr. Wayne Anderson
Member of the Legislature of Alberta for Highwood
5th Floor, 9820 107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5K 1E7

Sent via email: highwood@assembly.ab.ca

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Did you know that some municipalities in Alberta receive policing services at no direct cost? Under the current police funding model, policing costs are only paid by urban municipalities with a population greater than 5,000, and those municipalities with their own police forces. Small urban municipalities, as well as all municipal districts and counties, are exempt from paying for policing. Additionally, although the province provides support to offset policing costs through the Municipal Police Assistance Grant Program, there have been chronic shortfalls in funding as this program has not kept pace with growing populations and increasing crime rates.

The Town of Okotoks believes that this police funding model is both unfair and unsustainable. We support the “everyone should pay” concept, using a formula based on population and property assessment, with any resulting surplus funds being reinvested in crime prevention and response. Furthermore, a more equitable funding model could potentially generate additional revenue to address the current rural crime epidemic.

In March 2017, the Honourable Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, committed verbally to begin a review of funding models this fall. Although Ministry staff have researched options for a new, more equitable funding model, we understand that any consultations on police funding are not likely to take place until after the 2019 provincial election.

The Town of Okotoks feels that we have already waited too long for the province to resolve the inequities in police funding, and that an issue this urgent in nature should not be put off any longer. We are therefore calling on the Government of Alberta to immediately begin public consultations on a new police funding model, and for implementation to take place before the next provincial election. As our MLA, we hope you will join us in championing the need for a new, more equitable funding model for police services in the province of Alberta.

Sincerely,

Wm. (Bill) B. Robertson
Mayor

c: The Honourable Kathleen Ganley, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
The Honourable Shaye Anderson, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Barry Morishita, President, Alberta Urban Municipalities Association