

THE EDMONTON POLICE SERVICE

external community feedback report

Input Received from the
LGBTQ2S+ Community



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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the comments, ideas, and suggestions received from members of Edmonton's LGBTQ2S+ community to ZGM, acting on behalf of the Edmonton Police Service (EPS), regarding:

- The status of current relationships between the EPS and members of Edmonton's LGBTQ2S+ community;
- Recommendations on how to strengthen relationships between the EPS and members of Edmonton's LGBTQ2S+ community;
- Advice to the Chief of EPS on priorities as it relates to EPS's current and future relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

All input was received by ZGM independently of the EPS. The engagement occurred between September 7 and October 22, 2019, following EPS Police Chief Dale McFee's May 3, 2019 apology to the LGBTQ2S+ community for past injustices.

Engagement included one-on-one interviews, small group interviews, and focus groups involving a broad range of LGBTQ2S+ community members. An online community survey was also used to solicit insight. In total, 45 people were interviewed face to face and there were 235 inputs to the first question in the online survey, along with significant numbers of input to the other two survey questions. Design of the engagement was influenced by advice provided in consultations with the LGBTQ2S+ community during the month of May and June (see Appendix A).

A number of key points emerged:

- The EPS relationship with the LGBTQ2S community was seen to be significantly more negative when factors of race, gender identity (i.e. transgender), age (primarily youth) and poverty were considered.
- Intersectionality contributes to feelings of vulnerability and cynicism towards the EPS.
- While negative feelings towards the EPS were more likely to be expressed by intersectional/specific minority individuals, members of the LGBTQ2S community at large also expressed concerns about the relationship with the specific minority groups, even when they described their own relationship with the EPS as positive.
- There is considerable support for changes that have been made in the EPS over the years—including the apology itself. Many believe the EPS is moving in the right direction.
- People did however made frequent reference to a police culture that was still

too often seen as hyper-masculine, hierarchical and uncollaborative and thus unwelcoming to many within the LGBTQ2S community.

- Recruitment and diversity represented significant concerns for the LGBTQ2S+ community who felt that EPS needed to better reflect society's diversity, and place greater emphasis on vetting systems to weed out inappropriate recruits.
- Education and training were the other most identified areas for improvement. This included not just new recruits but seasoned officers as well – in particular, helping officers understand the experience of being a member of the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- Police accountability was seen to represent a barrier to change by many members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. They said that a perceived lack of internal response to anti-LGBTQ2S+ police behaviours contributed to negativity and distance.
- Past trauma and negative experiences continue to represent a barrier for stronger relationships between the EPS and many members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. It was difficult for some community members to overcome past negative interactions, making engagement with the EPS problematic for them, even on those occasions when connection to the police was necessary.
- Many stressed the importance of the EPS building relationships with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Respect was frequently identified as the key ingredient in building trust with the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- Many expressed the desire for more visibility by the EPS, both for their own security as well as in creating opportunities for positive interaction between the LGBTQ2S+ community and EPS members. However, this desire was not universal. As an example, while it was not a part of the mandate of this community engagement, the topic of EPS presence at the Pride Parade and other events was often expressed as a continuing and divisive topic within the Edmonton LGBTQ2S community itself.

Overall, the process allowed for candid and diverse input from many members of the LGBTQ2S community.

Not all identified barriers were historic - some were considered to be current. There were also those who were unconvinced of the potential for real change in the relationship in the near future.

However, even for many who expressed some negativity about the EPS, there was a broadly-based desire to see the relationship build and for greater goodwill to exist between EPS and the community.

Consultation Process

ZGM was hired as an external consultant by the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). The mandate was to seek input from the LGBTQ2S+ community regarding the current state of its relationship with the EPS and to solicit input from the community on how best to strengthen relations between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The main consultation was prompted by EPS Police Chief Dale McFee as part of the apology provided to members of the LGBTQ2S+ community on May 3, 2019 for past injustices committed against the community by the EPS.

In advance of the consultation, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community were given opportunity May 3 – June 3, 2019 to provide input into the design of the community consultation process. A summary of the input can be found in Appendix A.

The consultation occurred during the months of September and October along with a parallel review, undertaken by Matrix Consulting Group, which evaluated internal attitudes within EPS regarding relations with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The ZGM consultation involved one-on-one interviews, small group interviews, and focus groups. An online community survey was also used to solicit insight from the LGBTQ2S+ community. The survey was promoted via LGBTQ2S+ serving organizations and networks and through paid Instagram advertisements directed at members of the LGBTQ2S+ Edmonton community.

These are key facts about the consultation:

- 45 individuals were interviewed or participated in small group interviews or focus groups. These were conducted independently of the EPS, meaning that groups and interviews happened without anyone from EPS present – and individuals are not be identified in any reporting back to the EPS.
- Every effort was made to be broadly based. A few groups indicated that they could not be available to provide input or did not respond to the invitation to participate. By the end of the process, however, interviews and focus groups had included a wide representation of the LGBTQ2S+ community, including people who were:
 - Gay
 - Lesbian
 - Bi
 - Transgender
 - Indigenous/Two-Spirit
 - People of colour, including recent immigrants and refugees
 - Seniors
 - Youth
 - Street workers

An important objective was to have a good number of individuals who intersected across these segments, and that did occur.

Other groups, individuals and organizations that were involved in the interviews included:

- LGBTQ2S+ Community Leaders and Advocates
 - LGBTQ2S+ health and social service's organizations
 - Business owner catering largely to the LGBTQ2S community
 - LGBTQ2S+ Social Club representative
 - Pride Festival Representatives
 - Edmonton Police Commissioners
 - The EPS Sexual Minorities Liaison Committee
 - Pride Centre of Edmonton Representative
 - The EPS Police Chief, Dale McFee
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- A critical consideration in the survey was that it be neutral – not designed to encourage responses which were either favourable or unfavourable to the EPS.
 - The survey had 235 responses. It was widely available and responses reflected the diversity of the LGBTQ2S community. A broad range of experiences and views were expressed.
 - As with the groups and interviews, the survey was independent, meaning that individual responses were not provided to the EPS.

Community Responses

Question 1

How would you describe current relations between the Edmonton Police Services (EPS) and the LGBTQ2S+ community?

Overview

Answers to this question were as diverse as the community itself. Many felt that the current relationship with the EPS was dependent on which group you represented within the LGBTQ2S+ community. For many gays and lesbians, the relationship fell into a range of “good” to “excellent” yet for Trans people, people of colour or Indigenous people, the relationship was more likely to be negative. Younger LGBTQ2S+ people were also more likely to be critical of the relationship.

Most people agreed that there was tension at this time between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community. However a good number felt the tension was more specific to groups within the broader community.

Conclusions were not universal and participants identified that the tension had also affected relations within the LGBTQ2S+ community itself.

General Themes

1. *Fractured, Polarized and Tense*

“Fractured”, “Polarized” and “Tense” typify the words used to describe the current relationship between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community. Those assessments were threaded throughout interviews, focus groups and the survey. They focused primarily on tensions between the EPS and specific communities — particularly involving people of colour, Indigenous, transgender and youth.

Many participants/respondents indicated that the challenged nature of the relationship was rooted in different types of interface. For example, there were expressions that certain members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (i.e. “white” gays and lesbians) held positions of privilege, compared to others, in their interactions with the EPS.

Particularly in the survey, there was a level of intensity expressed about the EPS relationship by people of colour, Indigenous and transgender individuals – which reflected their lived experiences and realities.

Many “white” gays and lesbians also agreed that there were legitimate concerns affecting people of colour, Indigenous and transgender. However, that did not necessarily mean that they were themselves negative to the EPS. There were also some inputs that community negativity to EPS was disproportionate and this issue had led to some fracturing of relationships within the LGBTQ2S+ community itself.

That being said, there was a broadly based view there was a greater need for the EPS to strengthen the relationship with people of colour as well Trans and Indigenous members of the community. There was also a broad acknowledgement that younger people would be more inclined to describe the relationship between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community as negative or hostile.

2. Intersectionality a Major Concern in Relationship Building

Intersectionality had these repercussions:

- When factors of age, race, poverty, sexual orientation or gender identify were combined, there was a greater likelihood for individuals to feel negatively about relations with the EPS – often involving a high level of distrust.
- There was also a broad consensus that intersectionality affected the way individuals were treated by the EPS. While there was acknowledgment that attitudes toward intersectionality reflected wider society attitudes, there was the expectation that the EPS had higher standards to meet. For example, skin colour was frequently cited as a contributing factor in how the EPS treated an Indigenous person, let alone if that intersected with other factors.

3. Acknowledgment of Positive Shifts by EPS towards the LGBTQ2S+ Community

Notwithstanding these tensions, and the strength of concern from some participants, a good number of people did feel a more positive relationship with the EPS and frequently described the interaction as “respectful.” They indicated that relations between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community had greatly improved over the years and that as society has shifted its thinking towards the LGBTQ2S+ community, so too has the EPS.

For those who were more favourable to the EPS, some continued to struggle with trust issues in their impression of the EPS but recognize that strides had been made.

Many felt that EPS Police Chief’s McFee’s apology to the community was a good first start in conciliation. A number of people indicated that the LGBTQ2S+ community itself also has a role to play in strengthening relations with the EPS and indicated their frustration with some members of the community who refuse to engage with the EPS.

4. Past Trauma and Negative Experiences Still Complicate Relationships with the EPS

Despite the progress felt by a good number of respondents and participants, without question, the issue of past trauma experienced - either here locally or in other parts of Canada or the world - has influenced the community's perception of the EPS. Repeatedly, even among those who were most positive to the EPS, community members made reference to past mistreatment from people in authority (including police) and how this mistreatment greatly impacts their impressions of police and those who hold power positions in general.

A widely held perception was that past EPS behaviours were not just reflective of society and its laws, but also represented prejudice and overzealousness from EPS members. There was still reluctance for people to engage with the Police when they are needed because of past negative encounters that they had experienced with police officers.

Thus, reporting injustices to the EPS by the LGBTQ2S+ community appears to be a substantive issue for many LGBTQ2S+ members – and not just for those who are Indigenous, transgender or people of colour – although their concerns are especially pronounced. Resistance to accessing the EPS during difficult situations also appears to have contributed to a negative impression of the EPS and the ability for some members of the LGBTQ2S+ community to forge relationships with the EPS.

For some, past victimization often saw members of the LGBTQ2S+ community internalize and normalize their trauma. Trans street workers for example who experienced past harassment by some members of the EPS were less inclined to connect with the EPS when they encountered difficult situations, notwithstanding the needs they might have for protection.

5. Perception of Different Rules for Different Communities

From the inputs received in this process, this was a profound issue – the relationship of the EPS with LGBTQ2S+ people who are Indigenous, transgender, people of colour or young. A good number of people within the LGBTQ2S+ community believe that the EPS applies different rules when engaging with different subsets.

For example, frequent reference was made to the Trans community and how the EPS was less inclined to take issues presented by the Trans community seriously. People spoke to the issue of frequent misidentification of Trans people including the refusal on the part of some members of the EPS to use chosen names and pronouns.

Especially in the survey, there was also a level of intensity regarding the EPS treatment of racial minorities within the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Some people who spoke to this issue made reference to the positions of privilege that some members of the LGBTQ2S+ community hold and that it was important not to presume that the community's encounters with the EPS were homogeneous.

6. For Many, Police Culture Undermines Relationships

For some, the EPS culture and that of police services in general impacted their impressions. Words used on this point included: hyper/toxic masculinity, militarism, ego-driven, hierarchical, white, uniformed, and “old-fashioned impressions of the world” all of which made relationship building with the EPS problematic at best and impossible at worst.

A number referred to the uniform, and the force’s reliance on weapons over negotiations, as barriers to having a positive relations with the EPS as it reinforced a power imbalance.

There were also those who felt that the power imbalance between the EPS the community in general made it difficult to fully embrace a relationship with the EPS no matter how far society had moved in its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

However, there were some counter views from those who believed the police needed to have authority, and the symbols of authority, in order to protect society - including people within the LGBTQ2S+ community.

7. The Pride Parade Remains a Symbol of Discord

This was not part of the mandate of the consultation. But it was a recurring point of reference both from those supportive of the EPS, and those with more negative views. While a few comments were directed at the EPS and how it should approach pride events, if anything, the comments more focused on the divisions this issue has created within the LGBTQ2S+ community.

8. Four Critical Factors

These were four areas in particular which respondents/participants believed were underlying causes for problematic relationships between the EPS and LGBTQ2S+ community:

- Existing culture, as already described.
- Lack of diversity within the EPS – and the essential need for more diverse recruitment. Even for those who acknowledged that the EPS was making some progress in this regard, diversity went beyond LGBTQ2S+ individuals to also mean more people of colour, more Indigenous and more women, as examples – and more representation of intersection.
- Training – EPS training was considered by many to lack depth and sustainability. Existing training has not necessarily exposed EPS members to actual lived experiences.
- Lack of accountability for intolerant behavior. While recruitment and training might have longer term benefit, they would not solve many of the current issues. For example, even for those who believed the EPS was making significant progress, there was still a concern that some older members of the force carried over prejudices and behaviours from the past.

These four areas receive more substantive attention in the next section.

Question 2

What needs to change within the EPS?

Overview

These were some key inputs which are detailed further in this section:

While a number of respondents and participants felt that the Chief's apology was an essential first step in the process to building trust, many people need to see the EPS follow-through on its commitment to the community.

- People spoke frequently of the importance of professional development for the EPS in order that the service gain a better understanding of both the community's unique and often challenging history as well as current challenges.
- Trauma informed approaches to policing were cited as essential in order to improve interactions between the LGBTQ2S+ community and the EPS.
- Recruitment, specifically how the EPS recruits and the composition of its recruits, needs careful attention according to the community.
- People asked that the EPS be seen more frequently in non-policing environments as these types of connections went a long way in fostering understanding and in leveraging commonalities rather than differences. However, there were mixed inputs regarding participation at LGBTQ2S+ events – with some welcoming EPS visibility but others not. There were requests that EPS members who are LGBTQ2S+ be more visible and invested in the community.
- A number of people felt that the EPS needed to focus on its internal culture and adjust how it provides services to reflect changed cultural norms.
- Systems and personnel accountability were key themes presented in the conversations we held and the community stressed that both needed to be addressed if meaningful change to relationships were to occur.
- Many spoke about the need to strengthen the role of the EPS Liaison Committee and to find ways that could take down the barriers of community access to EPS services as entry points continue to intimidate and frustrate LGBTQ2S+ members.
- Others spoke about the need for patience on the part of both the EPS and the community, and to accept that positive change to the relationship would be incremental. However, this call for patience was not universal.
- Without question one of the most common requests was for the EPS to make its relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ a priority, and not just at the Chief's level. Relationships would build the necessary trust to create conciliation.

General Themes

1. The Importance of Respect to building relationships and trust

An overarching theme present in our discussion with LGBTQ2S+ community members was that respect shown towards the community was the most important requirement to strengthening relations between the community and the EPS. “Treat us with respect...we are humans,” said one person. “Their approach to us means a lot,” said another person. “Respect me,” said yet another person.

People repeatedly spoke to their concerns about EPS insensitivity to members of the community and how this represented a major barrier to building positive connections. The use of appropriate pronouns was frequently raised by Trans people and by the community in general. Community members also raised concerns about the general tone of how the EPS interacts with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community at large, when faced with challenging or difficult situations. People frequently spoke of the EPS’ inability to take their issues seriously, their lack of understanding of the unique differences between members of the community, and their general lack of understanding of the impacts of trauma faced by the community including discrimination, harassment and judgement.

2. Apology a good first step, however...

Many people felt that EPS Police Chief’s McFee’s apology to the community was a good first start in conciliation between the EPS the LGBTQ2S+ community. Others, however, said that the apology needed to be followed by a demonstration of actions within the EPS if positive change was to occur.

Participants also said that the EPS must be committed to publicly addressing issues that surface between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community, outline their plans to attend the issues and follow up with the community after the fact. Said one person, “it is important that the EPS publicly demonstrate their commitment to the issues faced by the (LGBTQ2S+) community.” Another individual in the survey emphasized the vital need for “transparency” around the next steps of the process.

In the survey, there was a call for further apology related to “people of colour, black and Indian people, especially. Apologize for past injustices against women.”

3. Training and Professional Development

Professional development was a recurring theme for improvement in the conversations and some questioned how much emphasis the EPS was actually placing on bettering the knowledge of the LGBTQ2S+ community among its members. Understanding the history of the LGBTQ2S+ community was crucial and the EPS was urged to ensure that new recruits and members had a full understanding of the impacts of past injustices and challenges faced by the community as part of regular training.

Cultural sensitivity was also frequently broached when the issue of professional development was raised. While many people felt that building insight into the LGBTQ2S+ community was important during new recruitment orientation, it was also important that regular professional development be provided to ongoing members of the EPS and that LGBTQ2S+ training needed to be part of a police officer's personal growth plan.

Regarding the depth of professional development, a theme was that EPS members needed to understand the issues, not just from a briefing or teaching process, but one where they would be exposed to individuals from the community and their lived experiences.

There were specific suggestions, including: EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) training for all recruits; training from organizations like SACE; and gender studies courses. Others asked the EPS to bring in specific community groups, on a paid basis, to provide training.

4. Specifically - Trauma Informed Training and Professional Development

Many saw the lack of understanding about trauma as a substantive barrier in ensuring that the EPS' interaction with the community was respectful. People urged the EPS to introduce trauma informed approaches to policing as part of its recruitment process, as part of the regular professional development received by the EPS members, and as part of how it delivers services.

A number of community members expressed frustration with the EPS' "preoccupation" with over-criminalizing people who commit minor misdemeanours as a result of mental health issues and how a trauma informed approach to policing would mitigate this tendency.

5. Recruitment and Diversity

Recruitment was constantly raised as an area for change. Recommendations related to recruitment fell into two basic areas: The first involved addressing the recruitment priorities of the EPS. Many felt that recruitment of new officers was based on models that did not serve the LGBTQ2S+ community well. It was widely believed that the recruitment process placed a disproportionate value on militarism, masculinity, hierarchy, aggressiveness, competitiveness and ego rather than democratization, gender equality, sensitivity, and collaboration and that this emphasis only served to create an internal culture that was not typically aligned with the values of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

The second area of advice, repeatedly, was that the EPS give a greater emphasis to ensuring diversity within recruits. This request included diversity of race and colour, creed, sexual orientation and gender identity. One person indicated that they had only ever seen one person of colour in an EPS police uniform. Others made reference to the relative invisibility of LGBTQ2S+ EPS members and that they were not convinced that LGBTQ2S+ members were accepted within the EPS.

One person said that the EPS “needs to define the type of police we want and then recruit accordingly” rather than recruit first based on misaligned requirements and applying standards later.

Another asked that the EPS recruit former professionals from helping sectors such as teachers and social workers. A number asked that the EPS look more closely at screening systems that would better identify inappropriate recruits, saying that vetting systems needed to be a crucial part of EPS’ recruitment process.

One suggestion from the survey was that “recruit applicants get points for volunteering with marginalized communities”.

6. Cultural Shift within the Forces

As referenced, people spoke of how police forces in general promoted a type of hyper masculinity which often got in the way of their ability to forge relationships and that a cultural shift away from defensive, ego-driven behaviours was required in order for true relationships to be formed between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community. “Humanity and humility” were words one person used to describe what’s necessary to improve relations between the community and the EPS.

Beyond that, shifting culture meant different things for different people. One person said that culture change starts first with the removal of negative and traditional approaches used by some members of the EPS towards the LGBTQ2S+ community. A few people made reference to the title of the EPS “Wives” Association as an example of an old-fashioned culture that had not adapted to shifts in cultural norms.

A few people indicated that they believed that EPS continued to harbour people who were anti-LGBTQ2S+ including those at the highest level within the EPS ranks.

Others challenged some of the fundamental approaches to policing including a reliance on guns rather than mediation and on the perception of EPS’ militaristic or hierarchical approaches to citizen contact.

Cultural shift for some people was about instituting ways to correct what they reference as a “power imbalance” between the EPS and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community which they felt reinforced an “us” and “them” mindset. Uniforms, for example, were frequently raised as triggers for members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and people asked that the EPS consider opportunities to engage with officers out of uniform. However, there were some inputs which said the presence of uniforms gave a greater sense of security in specific situations.

One person spoke about the need for the EPS to explore other approaches to engagement including, for example, Aboriginal circles that allowed for everyone’s voice to be heard, ensuring diversity in a power neutral environment.

Many others talked about the power of symbols in adjusting cultural shift including rainbow badges or pins for police officers, rainbow stickers on police vehicles and pride flags at detachments.

In the survey, a number of comments were as much about policing in general as they were specific to the LGBTQ2S+ community. One example was addressing the different experience for “wealthy vs poor citizens”.

7. Culture Shifts Specific to Race and Gender

Particularly in the survey, there were a number of inputs regarding race – calling for the EPS to “stop racial profiling”, or “end carding”. In a few instances, words such as “colonialism” and “oppression” were used.

Similarly, there were calls to “allow transgender folk to identify as transgender, should they be arrested, otherwise they face horrific evils in prison” – and also “protecting trans people of colour and trans people in general. Tell people this is a priority and then do something about it.”

8. Accountability for actions/behaviours/systems

For a number of people, the EPS must put in place clearer accountabilities with regards to its relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ community. Many believed that police officers were not typically held accountable or that discipline was tepid at best when they fell out of line in their connection with the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Others spoke to EPS systems which reinforced discriminatory practices and behaviours. One person said that true conciliation would not be possible until such time as the EPS “cleaned up its own house” and made its staff more accountable when they acted inappropriately.

For some, accountability was closely related to culture – not just at the top but throughout the force. One respondent said: “If you hear a colleague say something transphobic or queerphobic, stop them. If you think they are harassing someone, STOP THEM. If you are letting them get away with it and not doing anything about it, you are telling the queer and trans community that you care more about a bigoted colleague, then the community you say you care about...”

9. Structure and Policies

A few of the groups and individuals raised the role of the EPS’ Sexual Minorities Liaison Committee. While most appreciated the existence of the Committee, a number indicated concerns about its overall use and effectiveness. One person described the Committee as “window dressing.” Others talked about its lack of power and limitations in creating meaningful change for the LGBTQ2S+ community. Everyone who raised the issue of the Committee asked that its role be redefined and that it be “given teeth” including a direct report to the Chief of Police.

A few people asked that the EPS institute a system that uses a third-party independent review of LGBTQ2S+ complaints brought against the EPS with one person advocating for the creation of an Ombudsman position with the EPS.

Another suggested the implementation of best practices, using “Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ communities in Ontario” as a starting point.

One survey respondent said to “continue to support the EDHR office reporting directly to the Chief and ensure the unit is well resourced, but is also accountable back to the larger community beyond the police service.”

There were some concerns which related less specifically to the LGBTQ2S+ community and more to policing in general. For example, a number of people made reference to the frequent transfer of staff within the EPS which required people to “re-start” an investigation into their issue multiple times.

10. Interaction and Visibility of the EPS with the LGBTQ2S+ Community

Repeatedly, people stressed the value of and impact in creating opportunities for positive interaction with members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. Frequently people spoke of how community social interaction with the EPS served to bring down barriers and strengthen the understanding of EPS value with and among the LGBTQ2S+ community. While widespread, this desire for more interaction was not universal.

A number of people mentioned the value of EPS presence at the Pride Festival Parade. For example, in the survey, one transgender person said “I would actually prefer a police presence as I feel safer with the presence ...” However, particularly in the survey, there were those who continue to oppose police presence, particularly in uniform. “Accept you are not welcome in LGBTQ spaces or pride event” said one. This topic remains a lightning rod for differing opinions within the community.

Some made specific reference to EPS’ involvement in youth sporting activities and how this type of engagement played a huge role in shaping the community’s impression of the EPS. Others talked about the value of seeing the EPS in civilian attire and at LGBTQ2S+ social events or gatherings and how this interaction served to bring down walls. Others said that the presence of the EPS Police Chief was important and urged him to be more visible in places where LGBTQ2S+ people gather.

Others spoke about the need for contact with the EPS beyond social or recreational activities. Some people urged the EPS to be more accessible to members of the community and to prioritize an open-door policy. “Keep talking to the community,” said one person. “Build connection to those that feel unsafe,” said another person.

A few people spoke of the importance of community policing and EPS street presence. One person recommended that the EPS be more present on community committees and that EPS members be afforded opportunities to represent the EPS on boards or LGBTQ2S+ organizations in the city. A few people urged the EPS to hire cultural advisors and to lean into their insight as a way of building access into the communities.

11. Visibility of the EPS's own LGBTQ2S+ community members

A number spoke about the importance of the visibility of the EPS' own LGBTQ2S+ members. Some also spoke asked that EPS' LGBTQ2S+ staff be given a greater profile in the EPS's services that directly involve members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and felt that their presence would be a demonstration of the EPS support.

Placing LGBTQ2S+ members in communities where LGBTQ2S+ people live and frequently socialize was also put forward as a way of strengthening relations. Recommendations were also put forward that asked that identified LGBTQ2S+ EPS members be used to support LGBTQ2S+ individuals when police services were required.

12. Accept Limitations

A number of people said that change could only be incremental and that while it was important to keep raising the urgency of issues involving the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+, that change would take time for some people. "Accept limitations", said one person. "It will not be possible to appease everyone," said another. This in part was a call for patience within the LGBTQ2S+ community as well as in the EPS.

However, especially in the survey, this call for patience was not universal – with some individuals saying that until major changes occurred, especially related to race and gender identity, the relationship could not be significantly improved.

13. Security and Community Protection

Especially in the survey, there were calls for greater protection, for example "seeing more openly gay officers working with local 2SLGBTQ+ community organizations to help provide safety for the gay community..." Another said: "We also need more beat cops continually taking time to become part of the community they are serving."

There were a few contradictory views to this, asking uniformed police to stay away. But the greater calls were for protection – ranging from "a presence at any rally for public safety", "better response times" and police attention to "physically bullying in schools". One other respondent said: "Please help the homeless LGBTQ+ youth. They need resources and protection more than anyone."

In groups and interviews, individuals raised the complexity of reporting incidents or issues with the EPS, citing fear and the potential for retaliation as primary impediments. A number asked that the EPS explore the development of an LGBTQ2S+ entry system that could be used when members of the community need police services or to seek redress in negative encounters with the EPS.

Question 3

What Advice would you have for the Chief of the EPS?

Overview

One essential input to this question was that the EPS need to take a long-term view in strengthening its relationships with the community. Just as it took years for disharmony to be created, it will take time to bring relationships to a better place.

Whether people were advocating patience in the community towards EPS, or were impatient about change, there was virtually a universal response that the relationship would not be transformed overnight.

Most were advocating patience within the community itself. They also asked that the EPS not to lose sight of the issues LGBTQ2S+ people face and continue to give LGBTQ2S+ issues a priority over time.

In groups and interviews, many of the other responses to this question were expansions upon the answers to Question 2 and these will not be repeated. However, the responses to this question demonstrated the depth and critical importance of specific topics, in particular:

- Placing a priority on relationship building – in particular, that the values of humanity, sensitivity and respect should drive interactions with LGBTQ2S+ community members.
- Training was an essential concern – an example being that individual EPS officer growth plans include regular mandatory training which gives thoughtful input and understanding of the LGBTQ2S+ community.
- Likewise, recruitment and vetting were consistently high priority concerns for the community. Prioritizing diversity within the force was consistently talked about in groups and interviews as well as in the survey.
- While there were a few inputs which did not endorse this view, the vast majority of participants wanted a more visible presence by the EPS and more interaction.
- Relative to marginalized communities – understanding that these groups often have the most difficulty with public experiences.

General Themes on How to Relate to the Community

In the survey, respondents were asked how the EPS could better relate to the community, a topic which was also discussed in many of the interviews and groups.

1. Listening

This was a widely repeated observation. “Talk to queer people and take what they say to heart...” typified many of the responses. “Be humble. Keep engaging. Listen to the community. Learn from the community.”

Beyond listening overall, there was the added point to “make sure when you listen to the LGTB+ community that you are listening to people of all colours equally, and not just white LGBT+ people who may not have the same depth of negative experience that other racial groups may have faced.”

While not broadly stated, there was the input to “start listening to LGBTQIA2+ and radicalized people for once. There is no lack of strong and smart activists in our city who have been telling you how to do your jobs for years, yet you continually ignore them.”

2. Communication

References were made by a few people that the EPS needed to better use its social media assets and its website to forge relations with community members. Updates, including a weekly blog from the EPS Police Chief on the website, were proposed as was more regular LGBTQ2S+ references on the EPS’ twitter feed.

While communications from the EPS to the LGBTQ2S+ community was seen as important, others talked about the need to foster two-way conversations between the groups. Two-way interaction creates “opportunity for understanding,” and in particular gives the EPS insight into the issues that matter most to the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Also identified was the need for the EPS to be more transparent and honest in its relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community. People indicated that the current EPS culture did not allow for openness in its dealings with the LGBTQ2S+ community and that a shift to creating a more honest service was necessary in order for relations to strengthen.

3. Consultation

These were some of the inputs on consultation:

- Engaging with specific groups such as the “Edmonton Men Health Collective, Rainbow Alliance for Youth in Edmonton, and Rarica Now”, and in another instance “Shades of Colour would be a great organization to listen to.”
- Engaging specifically with Indigenous organizations “like Edmonton Two Spirit Society and Two Spirit leaders in the community”.
- One person wrote: “Try and find ways to have dialogue with the Community. And not just prominent figures like... but with the average LGBT citizen. Things like this online survey are appreciated and should happen more.
- There was some input to “pay us consultation money”.

4. Understand the LGBTQ2S+ Experience

One person wrote: “Walk in civilian clothes and hold hands with members of the same sex, especially in conservative neighbourhoods. Until someone knows the fear and hate that LGBT community feels and how frequent it can come and from how many sources, EPS will not be able to effectively understand and prevent active and passive discrimination against the LGBT.”

Appendix A

Input into Consultation Process

Engagement and Feedback to the Process

As Chief Dale McFee said in his statement, *“To make sure we get this right, it has to be guided and informed by those in our community. By those who have spoken out before, and by those who haven’t yet had the opportunity to share their voices.*

We are requesting advice, guidance and partnership.”

INITIAL SURVEY

Between May 3 and June 3, 2019 we asked people for input into two questions:

1. If you were the Chief of Police, what would you change quickly and immediately in terms of EPS’s relationship with LGBTQ2S+ community and
2. What are the different ways we should engage the LGBTQ2S+ community?

Please see the summary below.

INITIAL SURVEY SUMMARY

Question No. 1

If you were the Chief of Police, what would you change quickly and immediately in terms of the EPS relationship with the LGBTQ2S+ community?

1. Greater Emphasis on Education – Incorporate history of the community, sensitivity training as part of both recruitment and on-going interaction with and service to the LGBTQ2S+ community.

2. Increased visibility of support for the LGBTQ2S+ community – Campaigns and symbols like rainbow stickers on vehicles which show how the EPS supports the community. Celebrate accomplishments and build profile of examples of positive relations with LGBTQ2S+ community.

3. Bolster connection to the community – Consult with the members of the community on issues and look for insight among older community members.

4. RESPECT – Make it imperative that the EPS show respect to the community– that includes things like appropriate use of pronouns and how to engage and support the Transgender community.

5. Understand doubt – Recognize that some of the community’s doubt about the EPS (and involvement in Pride)–is related to the past mistreatment and lack of support of LGBTQ2S+ community members.

6. Strengthen Race Relations – Understand that the LGBTQ2S+ community is diverse. Stop carding.

7. Responses to Groups – Do not get caught up in over accommodating single-minded groups.

8. Diversity in EPS – Promote diversity in hiring practices and consider affirmative action programs.

9. Accountability within EPS – Pre-screen recruits, establish complaint systems for members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, following through on consequences for mistreatment of community by EPS members and establish a task force to provide oversight on LGBTQ2S+ relationships

Question No. 2

What are the different ways we should engage with the LGBTQ2S+ community?

Facilitation Design – Use skilled facilitators and engagement processes that allow for stories to be shared. Ensure that EPS responds to public engagement input provided. Consider funding opportunities for queer people to participate.

Respect Diversity – Use appropriate pronouns and preferred names. Ensure that the engagement process does not shame members of the community. Understand intersectionality and its significance in the understanding the community.

Engagement Activities – Ensure open, SAFE environments and include multiple access channels for input including those that are fearful of participating publicly. Use tools like forums and town halls, focus groups and surveys. Ensure that there is outreach to difficult-to-reach groups including transgender, non-binary, refugees, Indigenous communities and people of colour and that the engagement includes a broad representation of the community. Do not give into single-minded groups.

Other:

Public Campaign and Raised Visibility – Forge relationships with the LGBTQ2S+ community by being present at events and on important occasions such as Transgender Pride Week. Explore opportunities to cross brand at existing LGBTQ2S+ events. Use social media to demonstrate the EPS’ support of the community. Place a greater emphasis on raising visibility, improving liaison opportunities and general dialoguing with the community.

Supporting Relations within Community’s Diversity – Don’t give into single-minded groups. Play a role in building bridges between marginalized and non-marginalized members of the community.

Using EPS’ own Diversity – Ensure that the EPS has diversity within its ranks and tap into this diversity when responding to police matters involving the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Response Mechanisms – Ensure that EPS has established mechanisms to respond to complaints from the LGBTQ2S+ community.

History and Education – Place a greater emphasis on ensuring that the EPS understand the history of the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Appendix B

Summary of Community Survey Responses re: the Edmonton Police Service's Relationship with the LGBTQ2S Community

Key Observations

Every effort has been made to select comments representative of the overall community response. Responses are quoted verbatim but because of the large number, some have been edited.

The survey asked three questions of the LGBTQ2S community in Edmonton. There were 235 responses to the first question, 198 to the second and 174 to the third. The survey was conducted from September 13 through October 15, 2019.

A majority of responses describing the relationship (Question 1) were not positive or were mixed. Some responses were more intense than others but a key conclusion is that there remains an underlying distrust of the EPS amongst a considerable number of people within the LGBTQ2S community. Issues of greatest concern related to transgender, people of colour and marginal groups in general, as well as youth within the LGBTQ2S community.

However, there were also a significant number of positive responses.

While some responses focused on history, a far greater number spoke to more recent issues, in particular those surrounding the Pride Parade. In this case, responses tended to be more positive to the EPS.

These are background facts about the survey:

- The survey was conducted independently from the EPS.
- Questions were neutral, and this was considered essential to the integrity of the process.
- The survey was designed as a “qualitative” instrument where people could provide input in their own unfiltered words. The identity of individual respondents was confidential.
- The survey was distributed through a range of groups and also advertised to make it widely available to the LGTBQ2S community to provide input. Since this was not a purely “random” research instrument, it is important to NOT assign specific numerical results. However, recurring themes can be seen.

Responses to Question 1

How would you describe the relationship between the EPS and the LGBTQ2S+ community today?

These are representative comments:

Relationship and EPS Overall

| Positive | Negative | Mixed |
|--|---|--|
| <p>“We need the EPS in the community; if we don’t the homophobes will try to run us out of town.”</p> <p>“I personally think as a lesbian that it’s just fine. I don’t feel uncomfortable or anything and they have a job to do, and for the most part they do it well. I appreciate the steps they’ve taken to be more inclusive and supportive and that they continue learning more to understand everything. Thanks EPS for keeping my family, friends and myself as safe as you can.”</p> <p>“It is getting stronger. Still a lot of work going forward but we are headed in the right direction.”</p> <p>“I just wanted to say how much I respect the EPS and work you do to protect our community. I am also glad the new chief is approaching us and trying to bridge differences.”</p> <p>“As far as I’m aware, EPS is very supportive of the LGBT community and I have never personally had a bad experience with EPS. There may still be a minority of members who still view our community as controversial and treat us as such, but I wouldn’t go so far to say that it’s an institutionalized issue.”</p> <p>“I have a great deal of respect for EPS and am grateful to them for protecting the LGBTQ2S+ community, regardless of the past. We need to focus on the future.”</p> | <p>“Tense. EPS are resistant to hearing the feedback and the LGBTQ community has decades of pain experienced at the hands of EPS. Naturally, we (the LGBTQ) are angry.”</p> <p>“Pretty lousy. The EPS doesn’t have a good relationship with anyone in the city. They overstep their boundaries often, which makes them an unsafe presence on the streets.”</p> <p>“... I have had homophobic slur from EPS when I was engaged in criminal activities way back in my addiction. Some things I recall being said to me were: “you f***ing little faggot”, “your going away to get your ass raped in prison now”. There were other incidences so at times I am sceptical and cautious in what I share or say around the police.”</p> <p>“EPS’s relationship is insincere, lip service, tokenistic, self serving, duplicitous in nature. A couple of weeks after the official apology from EPS to the Edmonton LGBT community, one of your officers were filmed telling someone to ‘get off the group faggot’. All talks of reconciliation are ways of restoring public confidence in the police in order to increase funding.”</p> <p>“... Sex workers included in this spectrum definitely are not treated with the respect they would show other human beings.”</p> <p>“Colonial and insufficient.”</p> <p>“Cancerous.”</p> <p>“GROSS. WE HATE U. ACAB.”</p> | <p>“I personally have had some positive experiences with police. I will NEVER forget constable ... because of how well she treated me and how much kindness she showed me when I really needed help. There have been other officers who treated me like garbage... ”</p> <p>“... I have seen EPS take some pretty big strides, especially in the last year since the protests, but sadly the mistrust is still there. And sadly, some individual members of EPS continue to perpetuate the negative stereotypes of policing in the oppressive ways they act towards the community, especially the most marginalized in the community... ”</p> <p>“Not great. Not terrible. EPS could be doing more.”</p> <p>“I don’t feel as safe as I should regarding EPS and as a young lesbian I am scared for myself sometimes and don’t know if I would rely on the EPS. But I would like to.”</p> <p>“I appreciate Edmonton being better than a lot of places but nobody’s perfect.”</p> <p>“... We are not America, but sadly their police tactics seem to be creeping into our world. I know you can be better. I believe in EPS very much.”</p> <p>“... The police play an essential role in any community. Can the yeg police be better? Absolutely!”</p> <p>“Okay but not amazing. I have heard of instances where officers did not do their job properly when it was LGBTQ+ people being harassed regarding their sexual orientations.”</p> |

| Positive | Negative | Mixed |
|---|--|--|
| <p>“... police are the ones keeping us safe and alive. As a gay person I respect and have only respect to give to the police.”</p> <p>“... The police are really trying to be part of the community and I’m proud of that.”</p> <p>“It is getting stronger. Still a lot of work going forward but we are headed in the right direction.”</p> <p>“I have been out in drag, and encountered a police officer along my walk in downtown and I feel like the officer went out of his way to say hello and hoped we had a good evening.”</p> <p>“The biggest thing you can do to support a minority properly is to ask the stakeholders and members of the community how you as the EPS should be engaged. And I think that’s what you are doing, so hats off to you.”</p> | <p>“... seeming support of far right and nationalist movements contradicts the efforts so far.”</p> <p>“... EPS has singled out Gay men before with bath house raids and EPS needs to make personal apologies to those people and not a public apology... Can we get an apology for indigenous people who have had their lives ruined and their livelihoods destroyed?... ”</p> <p>“...efforts being made by EPS being completely symbolic. If officers are not reprimanded for hurling slurs at citizens while conducting brutal arrests, it’s clear what the values truly are.”</p> <p>“Not good...Your officers need extensive sensitivity training amongst other things.”</p> <p>“...I know an EPS officer who is a bisexual cis man who can’t come out to his colleagues because they’ll think he’s a ‘fag’ and not trust him to protect them in dangerous situations...”</p> | <p>“More accepting but needs more improvement.”</p> <p>“A train wreck. Although there are very supportive and nice people.”</p> <p>“...Better than it was five years ago, but I know that there are some irreparable parts of the relationship for some of us.”</p> <p>“I think it depends on the situation and the officer involved. It’s not a black or white answer that you’re looking for. There’s no one specific path. There’s major grey areas.”</p> |

Intersection and Specific Minorities

| Positive | Negative | Mixed |
|--|---|---|
| <p>“As a transgender male, I’ve never had any problems with the service eps has provided. EPS has been respectful and treated me like any other person.”</p> | <p>“... Trans and 2 Spirited people have a much harder/tense relationship. Furthermore, members of the LGBTQ2S community that aren’t white (POC/QTBIPOC) have a greater likelihood of being targeted by police OR have had more negative experiences with EPS. We do not feel as comfortable with you compared to our white community members.”</p> <p>“It’s very disconnected and although they think what they are doing is right it comes off as ‘fake woke.’”</p> <p>“A little scary at times. As a transgender woman, I feel if the police ever need to talk to me, they won’t recognize my status as transgender.”</p> <p>“it’s crap. unless you are a rich white guy – even then it’s questionable. they’re racist, homophobic, hate indigenous folks, hate poor folks, transphobic , etc etc.”</p> <p>“... I also get stared at aggressively by officers when I am minding my own business, and I’m a queer and trans person. EPS is particularly abusive of queer people of colour, and the intersection of queerness and radicalization is the main tension between EPS and the queer community...”</p> <p>“Bad. Police need to change their practices against the most marginalized in the community (transgender, sex work, people of color, refugees, homeless). Too many community members report bad experiences – including not policing hate crimes committed by others.”</p> <p>“I think EPS is a group of bullies that targets more than just the LGBTQ community. They also target immigrants, native Canadians and low income/ homeless individuals. The lack of empathy that I have experienced from all of our police officers is astounding...”</p> | <p>“Tenuously positive... Unfortunately most non white and gender non-conforming folks tend to be either a little wary of police and police seem to be wary of them.”</p> |

| Positive | Negative | Mixed |
|----------|---|-------|
| | <p>“Generally the police force is full of domineering men who make my friends (specifically black queer people) very uncomfortable. I’ve heard of some really spooky run ins with police...”</p> <p>“Terrible. There is a lack of listening from the police, and I don’t know a single queer person who feels comfortable around the police (including myself). ESPECIALLY THE PEOPLE OF COLOUR. That relationship is possibly never gonna heal, the police have to work a LOT harder to even start the process...”</p> <p>“Despicable. A system built against the lgbt+ and POC peoples.”</p> <p>“... We fall prey to their classism, racism and ableism as much as non-queer people...”</p> <p>“ Not good between the police and the Indigenous Queer or Two Spirit Community.”</p> | |

Pride and Community Events

| Positive | Negative | Mixed |
|--|--|---|
| <p>“I feel like overall it is strained but personally, I know quite a few other LGBTQ members who have no qualms with police. I think the EPS have every right to march with the parade. There’s EPS members a part of this community and they shouldn’t be pushed away because of the badges they wear. I’m disappointed in the LGBTQ community, you think we’d be able to recognize that excluding officers isn’t “social justice” but instead discrimination.”</p> <p>“... I feel safe around them and don’t believe I would be discriminated against. I love that they want to participate in the pride event and no matter how much they are rejected, they still do reconciliation processes like this survey...”</p> <p>“... The actions in the so called ‘community’ in the past few years, involving banning uniformed folks from the Pride Parade was despicable... a few folks who are often angry and accusatory have had more than their share of the attention.”</p> <p>“... I empathize with EPS in trying to navigate the shift... The parade for example was always about inclusion – now they dictate who to exclude. Pissed me off.”</p> <p>“I would say we find the EPS very helpful during our parades.”</p> <p>“I’m disappointed you cannot walk in the parade.”</p> | <p>“No uniformed cops in pride...”</p> <p>“This isn’t a gay issue. It’s a f***ing race issue. Keep cops out of pride.”</p> <p>“Actually start listening to the public and accept that you are not welcome in LGBTQ spaces or pride event.”</p> | <p>“I think as a whole the relationship is positive, but I know there are people in the community who are also part of the more vulnerable populations in the city (homeless or almost homeless, first nations, etc.) that don’t have trust in EPS because of how they’ve been treated personally or how the system has treated them historically. It’s frustrating to see the community shut the police out of public events like the parade, when there’s officers who are out and open and supportive... ”</p> |

Responses to Question 2

*If you believe there are concerns, what do you believe should change in the EPS?
This can include any thoughts you have on policies, structure, diversity, culture, behaviours of the EPS, or other topics.*

A broad range of topics were addressed by respondents. Two of the most common topics were recruitment and training. References to transgender, POC and marginal communities were also woven into a large number of responses, as were references to Pride events.

Again, responses are representative of others who expressed similar views.

Training and Education

- “I believe the biggest change could come from education on the part of EPS. Educating yourself on how to interact with different gender identities and sexual orientations could go a long way in bridging the gap.”
- “Ask the queer & trans community for training and assistance but also compensate them! ...”
- “teach the history of the police with the community, let them know what’s happened and keep them informed.”
- “... Educating the police force on the history of systemic discrimination towards queer people (pisces bathhouse raid in the 80s) and people of colour (literally go anywhere in Edmonton and watch how First Nations people are treated in Edmonton) so that officers understand how they’re viewed by the community and what they’ll have to do to gain that trust back.
- “... Ensuring senior members understand why they are taking sensitivity training and mental health first aid is important so they buy in. Cops under 40 for the most part “get it” when it comes to accepting queers and treating them equally... ”
- “... more indepth training to broach the intersectional challenges that poc and trans* folks face... ”
- “My number one concern... is that the EPS should be REQUIRED to take training from organizations like SACE (sexual assault centre of Edmonton)... ”
- “I think there should be more education into queer issues and reasons why people can get super worked up about things. I know a lot of activists or people standing for social justice can become extremely defensive in their life and if EPS aren’t shown information that makes them empathize with them in that state, they can become easily irritated at them... ”

- “I think officers should have diversity training. They need to protect all citizens equally, especially marginalized groups such as LGBTQ +.”
- “... Also, to get into the police force, I think it should be required that they take a few gender studies courses focusing on LGBTQIA+ groups and a sociology course or two... ”
- “I think EDI (Equity, diversity and inclusion) training should be mandatory for all recruits...”
- “While the EPS is better than say, the States, there is still the fear that will forever remain... Specifically the EPS needs to have more sensitivity training ESPECIALLY towards the QPOC of our city... ”

Recruitment

- “It’s a tough situation. Things have to be completely overhauled. The police force is mainly populated by cis white men which inherently are threatening to queer folk. We need more visibly queer people on the force. We need more POC on the force.”
- “You can’t expect recruits to UNLEARN bigotry and biased in a two or three hour diversity training session. Better to make it a policy that recruit applicants will get points for volunteering with marginalized minorities.”
- “Hire more members of the LGBTQ2S community!... Have more people of colour on the force!”
- “Hire leaders that are not police officers. You can’t change the core if you don’t introduce creative leaders. Pick someone with high EQ and without the rage.”
- “Stop hiring right wing fascists who are drunk on power for one... ”
- “Waaaay more diversity in the police force... ”
- “... Hire more QPOC.”
- “... Encourage more women and set up funding and programs for women to join the force... ”
- “Stop asking LGBTQ folks to join the force just to improve your diversity ratings. LGBTQ people aren’t safe on the force, let alone at the hands of the force...”

Apology and Reconciliation

“... I would especially love to see transparency with the public around this process. The fact of the matter is that nothing you do will ever be good enough in the eyes of those who want to stay mad at you to enforce their own internal narratives of someone who has been likely violently oppressed in many ways for generations, but to those who are interested and actively support your reconciliation process, transparency will mean a lot.”

“... Finally, apologize and acknowledge your mistakes. Don't give a half hearted apology and make it out like you're the victims.”

“Take responsibility for past actions. Acknowledge what they've done wrong. They cannot be part of the parades if they do not treat community equally.”

“... Apologize for years of continued benefit and injustice against people of colour, black and Indian people, especially. Apologize for past injustices against women, especially regarding sexual assault cases and the lack of follow through on rapes.”

Attitudes and Culture

“... I know words like “oppression” and “colonialism” tend to make folks shut down and get defensive, which is understandable as it can feel like a personal attack and become quite emotional. But it has to be frankly stated that unless EPS – on an individual and organizational level – comes to a place where you can unpack the harms that have been done and continue to be done by the way many of your organizational traditions uphold colonialism and continue to oppress 2SLGBTQ+ folks and communities (especially those communities of colour and who are disabled), the trust that has been lost may never repair. “

“It doesn't matter what the administrative level of EPS does. There needs to be a MAJOR culture shift in the homophobia happening at the front level of EPS and I'm not sure that's possible. Misgendering/insulting someone is going to start interactions on the wrong foot... On top of that, being aware of the language used in news releases regarding people in the community is important... All of EPS needs a big wake up call about how they treat anyone who is not a cis white straight conservative person with money.”

“... Set aside the power you think you hold above everyone else, in order to fairly treat ALL HUMAN BEINGS you need to be completely neutral in all things you believe in. For example. A white, male, religious officer that doesn't agree with homosexual shouldn't treat a trans woman victim any less than the white, young male victim. Officers need to realize their privilege... ”

“Transparency and work towards the toxic behaviours of the old boys club in EPS... ”

Specific to Race

“Stop racial profiling, idiots.”

“Protect us from white nationalists. Be kind to indigenous people.”

“Stop targeting people of colour. It’s blatantly obvious and I’m f***ing white”.

“... I believe that police need to treat homeless people with more respect and indigenous people with more care... ”

“End carding. Stop asking for black, indigenous and people of Colour consultation without paying them – the police are traumatic to many people.”

“Police shouldn’t focus on a diversity... Police should understand the importance of their duty on a first place and not a culture of their people.”

Specific to Transgender

“Yes, the ability to allow transgender folk to identify as transgender, should they be arrested, otherwise they face horrific evils in prison.”

“Restorative justice. Effort towards protecting trans people of colour and trans people in general. Tell people this is a priority and then do something about it.”

Pride Events

“I am not a fan of cops (acab) but if they get the help they need my views could change. If EPS could come to pride next year in reconciliation, I would welcome them.”

“I’m a transgender male and I fully support eps being involved in community lgbtq events! I would actually prefer a police presence as I feel safer with the presence... ”

“I wanted to say that I believe you should be allowed to march with us during the pride parade. It baffles me how you are integrated in many indigenous celebrations, like pow wows, and yet we have issues in our community.”

“Nothing, aside from joining the parade again.”

“... find ways to participate in the pride parade and festival, including a return to hosting a Chief’s Pride Reception... ”

“Don’t force yourself into their events. Wait to be invited... Many of these people see you as a threat to their safety... ”

“do NOT try to relate to us. do not march in our parades. do not pretend that you care about us when Pride season comes around and do not try to engage with our right to protest against the culture of policing... ”

“... attending events outside of Pride, dialogue with queer organizations, and possibly organizing own queer events outside of Pride month...”

“What about members of the force who are LGBTQ? They deserve representation and also the opportunity to show pride too. I don’t believe banning presence in uniform is the answer...”

Standards/Policies/Practices

“The EPS must hold its members to high standards in how they treat marginalized communities. There needs to be education/training for all, plus methods to report infractions safely, and consequences for inappropriate behaviour.”

“Develop policies on best practice (see Best Practices in Policing and LGBTQ communities in Ontario as a starting point)... ”

“Stop name and shaming innocent people...”

“... Zero tolerance policies for bigotry and excessive force...”

“The cops need to actually detain self identifying neo nazis at Queer centred, women centre and P.O.C. centred events...”

“Develop policies developed by LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, hire external consultants who are critical of your organization. Pay them.”

“... Stop protecting bad cops ...”

“... If you hear a colleague say something transphobic or queerphobic, stop them! If you think they are harassing someone, STOP THEM! If you are letting them get away with it and not doing anything about it, you are telling the queer and trans community that you care more about a bigoted colleague, than the community you say you care about...”

“Less violence. I see so much unnecessary violence from the police. The police should not be able to cuss. It is far too common to hear police officers out citizens during arrest. It is disturbing to see their use of power used for abuse.”

“Police should learn how to deal with mentally ill people. I have been terribly treated by the cops when I have been called on by my family for mental health related things. They are scary. They are insensitive. They are rude. They are racist and homophobic.”

“Treat hate crimes as hate crimes, and don’t laugh at queer people who get assaulted on the street, such as whyte ave...”

Policing in General

“I don’t think it is the issue with the queer community specifically but the intersection of wealthy vs poor citizens... I’m not in the most affluent neighbourhood but I deserve to not have to be on the edge or anxious. What is my recourse though? I don’t feel safe here and I don’t feel safe reporting to the police for fear of reprisal... so... I think a lot of queer and poor folks end up at the same crossroads...”

“Focus on violent crimes and significant issues and stop focusing on minor issues like parking and speeding tickets.”

“... Stringent mental health checks need to be done on officers, with points of interest looking at personality disorders...”

“Cops shouldn’t carry guns, wear authoritative or militarized uniforms...”

“... maybe they should have body cameras as well.”

“I believe police should not be allowed to carry guns.”

“... Less ticketing in general as we know it’s just to take in money. Less sneaky photo radars...”

Structure and Programs

“... A fully transparent community accountability program with an independent investigator aimed at accurately portraying police actions should be a minimum...”

“An independent committee should be formed... Any inquiry led and fully evaluated by police only discredits efforts and erases trust...”

“I believe a mental health care worker should be placed on every police team...”

“... Continue to support the EDHR office reporting directly to the Chief and ensure the unit is well resourced, but is also accountable back to the larger community beyond the police service.”

“... you can also address colonialism, sexism, and ableism within your structures and policies.”

“Please help the homeless LGBTQ+ youth. They need resources and protection more than anyone.”

“the police have always scrutinized queer, trans, racialized and otherwise marginalized communities (i.e. sex workers, drug users) more closely. I think this is due to a structure of xenophobia. If I had my way, the entire structure of the police as we know it would be dismantled... the police exist to uphold a white nationalist state...”

Community Protection

“Seeing more openly gay officers working with local 2SLGBTQ+ community organizations to help provide safety for the gay community...”

“... More care and priority for the protection of our community.”

“... We also need more beat cops that continually take the time to become part of the community they are serving.”

“I believe sexuality has nothing to do with policing. Police must make a presence at any rally for public safety. I would expect officers to maintain respect any values of any rally – and same goes for individuals of the community in rally

“Physically bullying in schools (when it’s bad enough to get police attention) and how it’s dealt with.”

“Better response times.”

Disbanding EPS

“Abolish police.”

“WE DON’T NEED POLICE. JUST GAYS WITH GUNS.”

“dismantle eps”

Not Supportive of LGBTQ2S+ Community or Questioning the Process

“They should stop apologising to a group that gains a letter or number every time it goes through a menstrual cycle.”

“The city shouldn’t assimilate to lgbt culture, the lgbt should assimilate to the city.”

“I seriously have no idea what is happening. Did someone shoot a lgbtq2s+?”

Within the LGBTQ2S+ community itself

“Change needs to come within the LGBTQ community. We have become so judgmental and not open to hearing thoughts or solutions from anyone who doesn’t toe the line by the few in charge of the community.”

“Please don’t allow bad apples to sour your perception of our community. I have nothing but respect for EPS and many others feel the same. There are some who will complain about literally anything but it’s just pointless whining.”

Responses to Question 3

As the engagement moves forward, do you have any advice for the EPS on how it can better relate to the LGBTQ2S community?

Note: Before responding to Question 3, a number of respondents had made suggestions about relating to the LGBTQ2S community in Question 2 and those have been incorporated into this section.

Listening

“... The first real step is saying ‘we aren’t listening like we should and we want to own up to that...’ ”

“Start listening to LGBTQIA2+ and radicalized people for once. There is no lack of strong and smart activists in our city who have been telling you how to do your jobs for years, yet you continually ignore them!”

“... Even if you think we secretly think we look or act funny, most of the people in our community are really wonderful and appreciate your service very much :) and if you’re afraid of offending, or not sure what to say, usually genuine curiosity goes a long way, so just ask!”

“... You are all VERY bad listeners. You interrupt, jump to conclusions, or straight up don’t hear a damned word we say.”

“Do your research but also talk to queer people and take what they say to heart... ”

“Be humble. Keep engaging. Listen to the community. Learn from the community... ”

“... Make sure when you listen to the LGBT+ community that you are listening to people of all colours equally, and not just white LGBT+ people who may not have the same depth of negative experience that other racial groups may have faced.”

EPS Visibility in the Community

“The EPS should involve themselves in more queer events and volunteer to help the community. Especially outside of pride season. If you show us you stand with us, then we could develop a better relationship.”

“Some changes need to come from the EPS and some from the queer community. If we go back to having Pride Week again, I would like the police to have an information and recruiting booth. We need each other and we need time to interact.”

“... The EPS need to demilitarize, APOLOGIZE to queer communities, and slowly disappear from queer vicinities.”

“Host a mixer for officers out of uniform and members of the public.”

“Outreach, diversity. Get involved with the community the way you would a visible/religious minority group.”

“EPS to host a drag show as Edmonton is immensely involved in drag... ”

“I think holding meetings would be interesting. Mandatory for officers/staff... ”

“Well, perhaps a news feed or articles available to folks on line or through various feeds to the community. Eg. Pride centre facebook, Team Edmonton facebook pages, Primetimers (for oldsters).”

Visibility of LGBTQ2S Individuals in the Force

“Find ways to acknowledge and celebrate the LGBTQ members already in EPS so we clearly see that diversity and inclusion are not just slogans.”

“I would love to see EPS members who are allies or part of the community wear a pin to show their commitment... ”

Consultation

“Try and find ways to have dialogue with the community and not just prominent figures but with the average LGBT citizen. Things like this online survey are appreciated and should happen more.”

“Pay us consultation money – so many of us have advocated for years and we’re burnt out – we don’t want to participate in this process for free... ”

“... Reach out to organizations such as Edmonton Men Health Collective. Rainbow Alliance for Youth in Edmonton, and RaricaNow.”

“Engaging with Indigenous Two Spirit organization like Edmonton Two Spirit Society and Two Spirit leaders in the community.”

“Engage with Macewan University, their Human rights and diversity office if a different kind of training is needed perhaps? Or the Inclusion area at norquest.”

“Shades of Colour would be a great organization to listen to.”

About Pronouns

“The best way to learn what pronouns we prefer is by simply talking to us.”

“Pronouns should be asked always.”

Understand the LGBTQ2S Experience

“Walk in civilian clothes and hold hands with members of the same sex, especially in conservative neighborhoods. Until someone knows the fear and hate that LGBT community feels and how frequent it can come and from how many sources, EPS will not be able to effectively understand and prevent active and passive discrimination against the LGBT.”

