

Ottawa Interfaith Safety Forum

June 18, 2019

Report prepared by Anita Grace
for Community Engagement Team
Diversity and Race Relations
Ottawa Police Service

Table of Contents

- 1. Event Overview 1
- 2. Security plans and networks 3
- 3. Proactive security measures for faith groups 4
 - Security committees and trained volunteers 4
 - Access control 4
- 4. Responses to hate crimes and incidents 6
 - Emergency preparedness for active killers 6
- 5. Police response to hate crime and violent extremism 8
 - MERIT 9
- Appendix A – Programs and initiatives 11
- Appendix B – Suggestions for moving forward 12
- Appendix C – Feedback 13
- Appendix D – MERIT responses 14
- Appendix E – Forum Speakers 15

1. Event Overview

Ottawa Police Services hosted the *Ottawa Interfaith Safety Forum* on June 18, 2019. The aim of the event was to share information with faith communities in Ottawa about security, to hear their safety concerns, and to examine opportunities to move forward together with the aim of making Ottawa safer for all communities of faith. The day-long event at St. Elias Centre drew almost 80 participants, of which 40 percent were members of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) and the Ottawa Police Service Board. Other participants represented leaders and members of various faith communities in Ottawa.

The forum began on a sombre note, with a minute of silence to recognize those who have lost their lives in places of worship. Facilitator Adrian Harewood listed some of the many sites of violence, including Christchurch, Pittsburgh, and Quebec City, and acknowledged the vulnerability felt by many members of faith communities. Yet following the moment of silence and reflection, Indigenous Elder Irene Compton led participants in singing the Eagle Song, which lifted spirits and set a tone of collaboration and harmony for the rest of the day's proceedings.

While the forum focused on safety measures faith groups can adopt to increase their security, throughout the day participants noted the particular challenge their communities face: **How can faith groups provide security to their members while promoting an 'open door' environment of inclusiveness and outreach?** How can they create a culture that embodies both security and openness?

During the forum, participants were asked to provide suggestions about specific areas of safety on which OPS and the faith community should focus. Their recommendations primarily focused on the need for training, assessments, the sharing of information, and increased visibility of police (see Appendices A-D for details on participant feedback). For example, participants suggested that police and faith communities could work together to develop training for security team volunteers. Police could also help with assessments of vulnerability and general security at places of worship. With regard to sharing of information, participants not only want reliable information from police, but more transparency and communication in general. Additionally, at several times during the forum, participants expressed their desire to have the police more visibly present around their places of worship, particularly during times of worship and at occasions where large numbers of community members are expected.

During the forum, various speakers from OPS and the community provided participants with detailed information about developing security plans and safety measures (see Appendix E for list of speakers). Faith groups were encouraged to develop their plans and security measures in consultation with police, as well as with human rights organization and other faith groups.

Developing a security plan requires addressing multiple aspects of security – there are human elements and structural elements to consider. For the former, faith groups can form security committees and train volunteers as greeters and patrollers. For the latter, groups were encouraged to focus on controlling access to buildings, particularly through CPTED. Security plans should also include proactive measures to deter and deny access to those who might harm members of the community. Plans also need to address how communities should respond when incidents happen. Forum speakers repeatedly stressed the importance of reporting incidents to police, even if incidents seem small or if the threat was not

realized. Speakers also provided information about the 'run, hide, defend' approach to an active shooter.

The forum also provided information about how the OPS responds to hate crimes and violent extremism, including what constitutes a hate crime within the *Criminal Code*, and how the police are working with community members to address radicalization and violent extremism through the MERIT initiative.

This report provides information for faith groups about developing safety plans (section 1), and the proactive measures such a plan should address (section 2). Information is also provided about responding to hate crimes and active shooter incidents (section 3), as well as how police are working to address hate crimes and extremism (section 4). Appendices are included which provide details on participant feedback gathered during the forum.

2. Security plans and networks

“Generally speaking, there is no specific threat or concern in Ottawa,” said Deputy Chief Uday Jaswal. “But we know that every incident of hate, here or around the world, impacts us all.” Communities of faith have legitimate concerns about safety. Vandalism, racist graffiti, and threatening messages are some of the ways in which local faith groups have been targeted. Their challenge is to develop safety plans that are balanced with the goal of being places that are open and welcoming. Multiple participants expressed concerns that fortifying their places of worship will make it harder to be accessible to those interested in learning more about or joining their community. At the same time, members of each faith committee have to feel and know that the security is in place. Making security measures visible and known to members can increase feelings of safety.

Gerry Almendrades, Security Advisor for Toronto’s National Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said security plans should be built on accurate, local information. In other words, make plans that are based on facts, not fears. He added that having an annual hate crime report, such as that which has been developed by the Toronto Police, is helpful to ensuring plans can be based on local facts. By learning about local incidents and threats, religious groups can, “Plan for the ‘most likely’ threat/event, while taking some steps to counter the ‘most dangerous’ threat.” Faith groups can also reach out to faith organizations such as the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the League for Human Rights of B’nai Brith Canada for information about threats and risks specific to their community of faith.

Security plans should also be done in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency services. “You can’t do it alone. Police can’t do it alone,” said Mr. Almendrades. “It’s a two-way relationship.” He encouraged faith groups to get to know their community police officer and to reach out to OPS units and programs like Diversity and Race Relations (DRR), MERIT, Community Engagement Team (CET), and Community Equity Council. Faith groups who develop a security planning committee can inform police of its key members, and share some details of their plans. They can also give police tours of their building to gain advice about bolstering their security while allowing police to become familiar with the site. Groups can also appoint a police officer an ‘agent of the property’, which makes it easier for police to enforce trespass laws.

Huda Alsarraj, Human Rights Officer with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), also encouraged faith groups to reach out to local politicians. For groups who have experienced threats, vandalism, and other incidents that make them and their members feel unsafe, it is especially important to communicate their concerns to law enforcement and politicians. Police are often unable to provide the requested degree of presence and proactive support due to lack of funding and resources. Faith groups can lobby city councillors for increased resources for police, and emphasize the need for more community police officers.

Ms. Alsarraj also encouraged faith groups to build coalitions with interfaith and minority groups to develop community support networks. Coalitions can provide each other not only with moral support; they can also share resources and training. For example, they can collaborate to hire a security trainer to teach their volunteer security teams. Interfaith groups can also jointly lobby politicians for funding increased investment in security measures.

3. Proactive security measures for faith groups

Developing a security plan requires addressing multiple aspects of security. The following are proactive measures faith groups can consider when developing their own plan.

Security committees and trained volunteers

Hold meetings to discuss security concerns within your community of faith; invite police to attend some of these meetings. Create a security committee from among your members. Build an emergency contact list and inform community members and law enforcement of key individuals.

“Training saves lives,” said Mr. Almendrades. “All the best equipment is nothing if you don’t know how to use it and your staff is not properly trained.” Training can include operation of security equipment; risk assessment; First Aid; Trauma First Aid; and response to active shooters. Yet while encouraging faith groups to invest in training, Mr. Almendrades urged them to be discriminating about whom they hire to provide this training. “Make sure it is with someone who is aligned with local law enforcement,” he said.

Additionally, it is important that faith groups build good relations with neighbours. Allied neighbours can be part of Neighbourhood Watch support. They may also be able to offer safe spaces in cases of emergency and be alternate points of contacts for emergency responders (see below on responses to incidents).

Access control

Control access to your place of worship through structural and physical elements. **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** is the “manipulation of the physical environment for the purpose of influencing certain desired human behaviour.” Cst. Matt Hunt explained that this means physical changes or adjustments in and around a building in order to improve security and deter criminal or unwanted activity. He said the guiding questions are: “What are you trying to do? How can we help you do it better?” He added that CPTED is effective in reducing crime, fear, and liability.

CPTED has three key elements:

1. **Surveillance.** Surveillance measures can involve strategies aimed at facilitating observation of all users of a space, both legitimate and illegitimate. This can include mechanical measures such as security cameras, lighting, and convex mirrors; natural measures such as trimming any hedges that block lines of sight; and organizational measures such as volunteer patrols and Neighbourhood Watch.
2. **Access control.** The aim of access control is to make it harder for someone with ill-intent to come onto the premise. Controlling who can enter into buildings and onto property is a key element of security. Again, this can include mechanical measures such as security cameras and buzzers for entry; natural measures such as planters or thorny bushes that block access to ground-level windows or vulnerable places; and organized measures such as heightened security for special events. Cst. Hunt said the strategy is to “deny access to a crime target and to increase the perception of risk with the offender.”
3. **Territorial reinforcement.** Security can be increased by making clear divisions between public, private and semi-private space, such as with highly visible ‘No Trespassing’ signs. Signs should have concise messages and should not be covered by bushes or tree branches. Properties can also be made more secure by keeping the premises clean and uncluttered, particularly if there are areas in which people might loiter.

Lighting is another important consideration for CPTED. While lighting itself does not stop crime, it makes legitimate users feel safer, while making spaces less attractive for illegitimate use. Lighting also increases surveillance capabilities, such as by making it easier to see people coming onto the property and by enhancing camera surveillance. However, Constable Hunt cautioned that when installing lighting, communities should be aware of ‘spillage’ – light that spills beyond the intended area and enters neighbourhood windows. Spillage can have the effect of causing residents to close their blinds, thus reducing natural surveillance and Neighbour Watch effectiveness.

Sgt. PA Tremblay acknowledged that people do not want to turn a religious establishment into a fortress, so he encouraged groups to take a holistic approach in heightening security and find a balance between security and openness. Big fences and bars might actually reduce your security, particularly if they reduce visibility. Mr. Almendrades added that there can be easy and inexpensive measures put in place such as having wooden wedges that can be quickly kicked into place to secure inward-opening doors.

Cst. Hunt noted that he provides free CPTED audits. The process takes about one hour and involves his visit to the site along with a walk-through with community leaders and members responsible for security measures at their community buildings. Faith groups can also apply for the [Risk Security Infrastructure Program](#) with Public Safety Canada.¹ This program is available to assist with the costs of security infrastructure improvements for places of worship. Eligible premises include churches, mosques, synagogues, as well as community centres and institutions like schools and daycares. Applications are submitted online and require letters of support from Members of Parliament, as well as documented evidence of hate incidents. Public Safety provides training on this program, and organizations like NCCM can assist groups with their applications.

Control access to place of worship – human element

Mr. Almendrades and Sgt. Tremblay encouraged faith groups to train greeters to be aware of who is entering the place of worship, and to notice suspicious activity. Greeters should know how to ask questions and assess the situation, and to know what to do if they sense a threat. They should also be able to communicate with one another, such as through walkie-talkies. Faith groups can also recruit a team of volunteers who proactively patrol the grounds during worship service.

“We often feel like we need to rely on procedures and mechanisms to keep us safe,” Sgt. Tremblay said. “We like cameras, alarms, alert buttons, etc. when in reality everyone has a role to play in security.” He added that everyone needs to have a basic understanding of security awareness. “Pay attention to your environment. If you see something, say something.” He also encouraged faith groups to remind members of their communities that they all have important roles to play in paying attention to the environment.

¹ Public Safety, Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program (SIP), available online at: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/fndng-prgrms/scrt-nfrstrctr-prgrm-en.aspx>

4. Responses to hate motivated crimes and incidents

Religious establishments, locally and around the world, have been subjected to hate motivated crimes (vandalism, arsons, etc.); personal attacks (random swarming, insults, etc.); and deadly shootings. Throughout the forum, speakers and OPS members repeatedly acknowledged that security concerns among faith groups are valid. Interim Chief Steve Bell said, “We have heard calls from community that we were not dealing with hate crimes as effectively as we could. It is important to us that community feels they can come forward, and that we have a response that matches the gravity of the offence.” He added that OPS have a zero tolerance approach toward hate motivated crimes.

Repeatedly, participants were reminded of the need for faith groups to **report incidents to the police**, even if the incident seems small or if the threat was not realized. Examples of incidents that should be reported include, but are not limited to, threatening or harassing phone calls, messages and letters; vandalism; and personal harassment or attacks, such as shouted insults to faith members on or near the property.

Incidents can be reported to OPS in any of these three ways:

- Online (www.ottawapolice.ca/en/contact-us/Online-Reporting.aspx). After receiving an online report, police will follow up to get further information.
- in person at the local police station (Huntmar, Elgin, Tenth line stations)
- to Patrol (911) for immediate response

Faith groups are also encouraged to share reports of incidents with human rights organizations, interfaith networks, and community partners.

Ms. Alsarraj also urged faith groups to document all incidents. “Keep a paper trail,” she advised, and added that faith groups can obtain assistance in developing ways to improve how they record and store data. It is also important to train staff and community members about reporting incidents. By documenting incidents, faith groups can demonstrate to police and politicians the threats they experience and can lobby for increased police presence. Additionally, a ‘paper trail’ is also important for faith groups applying for funding support for security infrastructure.

For members of faith communities that have experienced hate crimes and incidents, Ms. Alsarraj encouraged leaders to make healing spaces and provide emotional support. Inform targeted individuals, as well as rest of the community, about measures the organization has taken to report and document the incident. Inform members as well of any changes that are made to security measures and processes.

Emergency preparedness for active Threats

“Statistically speaking, the chances of an active killer in your establishment is really, really low,” Sgt Tremblay assured everyone. However, he acknowledged that an active shooter is a legitimate threat and that there is a growing interest in the community to prepare for such an incident.

Faith groups can bolster their security against active threats through **deter, detect, deny**. This means deterring threats from coming on to the property through access control; detecting individuals who pose a threat through security awareness and training and rapid notification systems; and denying entry through barrier protections. Active killers typically have a cycle of planning in advance. They will visit the location they plan to target; take photos and videos, and record notes. Staff and volunteers who trained in situational awareness may notice such activities and can inform police.

If an active killer is able to gain entry to a place of worship, there should be an alarm system which can be easily triggered and which will notify occupants that there is a threat. Education needs to be done in advance so community members know how to respond to the alarm. Members within the community should also be trained to assume leadership in directing people to escape routes.

In open spaces, such as main worship and prayer areas, individuals are at heightened risk. These are places Sgt. Tremblay described as ‘target-rich environments’ because a killer has unrestricted access to large number of victims. Police can visit places of worship and assist faith leaders in identifying ways to improve security in such areas. They can assist in recommending and locating spaces which could be used if a lockdown is implemented. Because it is difficult to protect members once someone is inside such a space, it is important to control access through increased security measures. Particularly for events to which large numbers of people are expected, faith groups should increase the visibility of security team members. Security teams can include police, hired security guards, and volunteer members who are clearly identified as security (such as by wearing vests, carrying walkie-talkies, etc.).

In Canada, the advised response process to an active shooter is ‘**run, hide, defend**’. This means the preference is to run away from the danger, but if you cannot run, then hide in a barricaded space. If you cannot safely hide, then prepare to defend yourself, such as by using tables and chairs as weapons. Sgt. Tremblay noted that many people have experience in rehearsing fire drills and other such evacuation procedures. School children regularly rehearse lockdowns in which they learn to quietly hide in their classrooms. However, he repeatedly stressed that in an active killer situation, the first response should be to **run out**, not to barricade in. Evading is always preferable to barricading. Even if you can lock the door, it is still best to then escape through a window. A lockdown should only be put in place when evacuation is not an option. If you have to lockdown, the process needs to be as simple as possible.

Advance planning and training is critical. Police officers can visit places of worship and provide advice on safety planning, possibilities for evacuation, and lockdown options. Advance planning should also include preparation of a ‘**crash bag**’. This bag, typically a backpack, holds information vital to the police who arrive to deal with the active shooter. A crash bag could contain:

- Floor plans, with identification of access points, stairwells, etc.
- Access cards, if needed, to gain entry to areas of the building
- List of key people and contacts
- List of cameras on site and where these can be accessed

A primary crash bag should be safely stored on site, and secured in order to avoid tampering (such as with a zip tag). A second, alternate crash bag should be prepared and housed in a nearby location, such as with a neighbour or business across the street. Faith groups should inform police of the existence and location of both crash bags so this information can be included in dispatch files.

5. Police response to hate crime and hate motivated incidents

Interim Chief Bell noted that hate motivated crimes happen far too often. “We need to work together to prevent these things from happening in our city and in our places of worship,” he said. Deputy Chief Jaswal noted that OPS has 3 pillars of response to hate motivated crimes:

- 1- Intelligence and risk assessment;
- 2- Investigation;
- 3- Community engagement.

He acknowledged that there has been lack of clarity about how these pillars are coordinated, so OPS is developing a forward-facing capacity. Although there is no hate crimes ‘unit’ within OPS, each division has trained investigators when it comes to hate motivated incidents. Additionally, Det. Ali Toghrol will lead hate crimes investigations and will work closely with DRR.

In Canada, hate crimes are criminal offences. Det. Toghrol explained that how ‘hate’ is understood and interpreted by the courts is informed primarily by the 1990 Supreme Court decision in *R. v Keegstra*, one of Canada’s first real cases of hate crimes.

“Hatred is predicated on destruction, and hatred against identifiable groups therefore thrives on insensitivity, bigotry and destruction of both the target group and of the values of our society. Hatred in this sense is a most extreme emotion that belies reason; an emotion that, if exercised against members of an identifiable group, implies that those individuals are to be despised, scorned, denied respect and made subject to ill-treatment on the basis of group affiliation.”

Hate crimes are not directed to an individual, but rather directed at the group that person represents. In other words, hate crimes target entire communities. Yet while hate crimes are keenly felt by communities and the OPS has zero tolerance policy toward such crimes, for a hate crime to be proven *criminal*, it must satisfy the specific requirements of the *Criminal Code*.

The *Criminal Code* addresses hate crimes in 5 specific ways:

- propaganda advocating genocide, s. 318.1
- public incitement of hatred, s. 319.1
- wilful promotion of hatred, s. 319.2
- mischief to religious property (doesn’t have to be a house of worship), s. 430.4.1
- stricter sentencing guidelines for hate-motivated offences, s. 718.2

Det. Toghrol said his role is to examine cases to look for criminality. If an incident is deemed to be criminal in nature, an approved investigation guideline is followed. If the incident is not deemed criminal, there are alternative measures that can be followed to communicate to perpetrators that such actions are not tolerated. Det. Toghrol reminded forum participants that Canadians have freedom of expression, but our constitution protects multiculturalism and equality as well. Freedom of expression is allowed only as long as it does not interfere with other people’s rights. All people have the right to enjoy public spaces without being harassed.

OPS is strengthening its responses to hate motivated crimes and incidents in Ottawa. For example, training about hate crime is being provided to all new recruits, patrol officers and district investigators. Police also aim to have all frontline officers trained by the end of 2019. Det. Toghrol meets weekly with

the Hate Crimes Crown Attorney, and also regularly shares information with his counterparts in other police service organizations. “I strongly encourage people to report,” he said. “If there is one takeaway from today, it is that you need to report.”

MERIT

In addition to improving their responses to hate motivated crime, OPS has also developed an initiative called MERIT (Multiagency Early Risk Intervention Tables). This is a community-driven approach that involves ‘situation tables’, which are meetings of representatives from community agencies including healthcare, mental health services, and police. Its objectives are to establish front-line awareness and community and civic capacity to intervene to reduce risk, victimization, and criminality associated with violent extremism.

Jean Francois Ratelle and Julie McKercher gave an overview of the development of MERIT. In the past year they have held 18 consultations with various agencies in the city in order to determine the most appropriate local strategy to counter violent extremism. The strategy they are developing aims to address and respond to hate on a daily basis, and also to recognize how it is connected to other challenges and to systemic racism. They recognize that hate speech is often a first step to hateful behaviour, which can lead to violent and anti-social behaviour, and in turn can lead to extremism. They also recognize that being targeted by hate crimes results in stigmatization, marginalization, feelings of frustration and discomfort. Community ties are broken, people lose sense of belonging, and they can also lose trust in law enforcement.

MERIT aims to intervene through prevention, collaboration, and post-incident response. “We need to be able to address radicalization, but also don’t want to over-securitize the response,” said Ms. McKercher.

“We know we can’t enforce our way out of this,” she added. “We want to work together.” While the MERIT team hopes to present a strategy in the summer of 2019, they are still consulting with municipal, regional, and national partners, as well as community partners. Their aim is to develop a strong base for a holistic approach to the threat of radicalization to violence.

Participant suggestions for MERIT

Participants had opportunities during the forum to respond to posted questions that asked for suggestions about community-based mechanisms that should be implemented to address hate and incidents of hate motivated crimes (see Appendix D). Responses focused primarily on calls for training of community members or community action teams, such that they could identify hate incidents and report them.

Participants also gave responses to a question about resources needed to better tackle extremism and hate. The responses echoed themes that were common throughout the day such as the need for;

- Training
- Communication
- Police presence
- Community-based activities

With regard to training, there were calls for both police to be better informed about faith groups and for faith groups to learn more about responses to hate. Participants noted the police could improve on

communicating to the public how to report hate crimes, and how to access available services. Participants also called for increased and consistent police presence, and for activities that would encourage youth engagement.

Appendix A – Programs and initiatives

What programs/initiatives should the OPS invest more resources in to ensure we are a trusted partner in community safety? This question was asked of participants and written on posters at the back of the forum room. Throughout the day, participants wrote suggestions on provided sticky notes and attached them to the posters.

One comment indicated that at least one group already feels positively about police response and communication: “Anything we have ever asked, the police have been very prompt and helpful.” However, many other comments focused on ways to improve relationships and communication between police and faith groups. Some examples include the following;

- Bring the community together more frequently.
- The OPS should invest in more sessions with community members, visits to places of worship, and joint programs with communities.
- Community meetings.
- Knowledge of incidents.
- Recommendations to go forward with protection.
- Outreach service targeting the local community leaders that allows routine meetings even if there is no imminent threat.
- Open house for the community to facilitate contact with the neighbourhood and to break the ice.
- Create a kind of ‘local newspaper’ that highlights what partnership has been up to.
- Programs and initiatives involving youth and young adults to assist with providing supports and resources, information opportunities, mentorship – all of which are essential in mitigating the rise of radicalization, victimization, and involvement in organized crime.
- Please keep School Resource Program – visible, reduces fear of police for some newcomers
- Communication and engagement. Develop a community peer program to monitor certain areas of the city, like Neighbourhood Watch, but with a specific mandate.
- Hire police officers from different community, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

Other recommendations focused on specific training and initiatives participants would like to see police either develop or invest in.

- Situational awareness training.
- Some kind of formal training program offered regularly for ushers/greeters and security volunteers. An annual session to help develop our preparedness.
- Human trafficking initiatives. Violence Against Women issues and MMIWG.
- Ottawa Coalition to End Human Trafficking. The Code. A New Day.
- Address hate graffiti and aggressive panhandlers.
- More publicity e.g. TV commercials, social media (Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook)
- Mental health. People come to religious institutions looking for assistance. Mental health is a prominent issue with some.

Appendix B – Suggestions for moving forward

At the end of the forum, people participated in table discussions and recorded their comments on large feedback sheets. They were asked for suggestions about specific areas of safety on which OPS and the faith community should focus. Generally, recommendations addressed training, assessments, the sharing of information, and increased visibility of police.

- **Training.** Participants suggested that police and faith communities could work together to develop training, particularly for security team volunteers, greeters, and ushers. These individuals need to be trained in areas such as situational awareness and in how to respond to intruders.
- **Assessments.** Participants also indicated that police could help with assessments of vulnerability, CPTED, and general security of their places of worship.
- **Information.** With regard to sharing of information, participants not only want reliable information, but more transparency and communication with police. There was one suggestion for a centre of expertise for places of worship which would expand the resources and knowledge base on security. Another suggestion called for a newsletter offering information for faith groups such as best practices and CPTED tips.
- **Visibility.** During the forum and in the table discussions, participants expressed their desire to have the police more visibly present around their places of worship, particularly during times of worship and at occasions where large numbers of worships are expected.

Participants were also asked what the community could do to build and lead a **strong Interfaith Advisory Council** in the upcoming months. Feedback indicated that planning should include examination of precedent, and clarification of intent and purpose.

- Look into the history of the Interfaith Ottawa Council that existed at City Hall several years ago. What worked? What didn't work? Additionally, look for faith groups that have developed good initiatives which could be shared with others.
- Clarify mission, objective and vision before council comes together in order to respect people's time constraints
- Clarify how people would be chosen/appointed to be on the council
- Ensure diversity
- Respect people's time and commitments

Additionally, in order to develop an Interfaith Advisory Council, trust needs to be developed between police and among members, which could be done through more OPS/community events, and open houses in religious institutions. There also needs to be awareness that bridges need to be built with diverse and vulnerable communities; not all community members can attend regular meetings or have the same access to such forums.

Appendix C – Feedback

Participants were invited to complete feedback forms about the usefulness of the forum and the information it provided. Feedback was very positive, with 90% of those who completed the feedback form saying it was either 'excellent' or 'very good'. Individual speakers also received mostly 'good' or 'excellent' ratings. Comments reflected appreciation of being able to interact with police and other faith communities, and also to receive practical tips and insights into securing buildings, applying for grants, and accessing resources.

Examples of some general comments include:

- Great to see this topic taken seriously and open discussion with the participants.
- Excellent opportunity to continue much needed conversation. Inviting, inclusive, productive, and meaningful.
- Truly excellent day to continue conversation of our joint effort to keep our community safe.
- It was good to see OPS interacting together and sharing with the community.

Relationship building and connection was mentioned in several feedback forms, such as comments about the most useful aspect of the forum being:

- ability to interact with other faith communities and see what resources are available from OPS
- understanding the ongoing efforts in our community and access to resources
- meeting and talking with other faith community members
- new and reinforced relationships

Participants also expressed appreciation for practical aspects of the forum, such as information about:

- connection to options and awareness
- how to train volunteer security teams
- CPTED
- hate crime and hate crime investigation

Participants expressed hope that the similar forums would be held in the future, and that there would be more opportunities for roundtable discussions. There was also interest in having the information provided through the forum made available so that it could be shared within faith communities.

Appendix D – MERIT responses

MERIT posted two questions on posters, to which participants pasted sticky-note suggestions. One question asked: **What resources are lacking to better tackle extremism and hate?** Responses included:

Training

- Time/training that leads police to understand various religions, and vice versa.

Communication

- The community needs to know where to go, especially when the incident takes place. For instance, after 911 call if they were to be directly linked with officer or unit to follow-up.
- Easy access to reporting. Meaning that OPS need to invest in PR to inform communities about services available.
- Extremism and hate need to be separate from other services.

Police presence

- More presence by officers in the community to deter these problems.
- Consistent presence of police and involvement within faith-based and community events would be a great help. Also brings comfort and security to the minds of persons in the community.
- Enables them to reach out and report events of hate and violence.

Community-based activities

- More activities to encourage the youth to help and be active in the community.
- Cultural competence programs & healing spaces.

Another question asked: **What community-based mechanism should be implemented to address hate, incidents of hate crimes?** Responses again emphasized the desire for more training.

- Talking to each other & Training
- Deputization of community members and training programs to ensure that they are adequately trained to identify hate incidents/crimes and report them
- Working with coalitions of various faiths, also various cultures e.g. Indigenous, Muslim, Jewish
- More activities and trained neighbourhood watch programs, and trained by authorities with community action teams

Appendix E – Forum Speakers

Ottawa Police Services

- Diane Deans, OPS Board Chair
- Interim Chief Steve Bell
- Deputy Chief Uday Jaswal
- Detective Ali Toghrol, OPS Hate Crime/Hate Incident Investigations
- Jean Francois Ratelle, MERIT
- Julie McKercher, MERIT
- Constable Matt Hunt, CPTED
- Sergeant PA Tremblay, Emergency Preparedness
- Staff Sergeant Ian Hayes, Diversity and Race Relations

Community Members

- Irene Compton, Indigenous Elder
- Gerry Almendrades, Security Advisor for GTA National Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs
- Huda Alsarraj, Human Rights Officer, National Council of Canadian Muslims

Facilitator

- Adrian Harewood, co-host of CBC News Ottawa