

Caledon OPP detachment sees large increase in calls for service in 2021

34,890 calls for service received in 2021, compared to 24,348 in 2020

By Zachary Roman

The Caledon OPP detachment would usually see a one per cent increase in calls for service year over year, generally corresponding to Caledon's population growth.

But in 2021, calls for service increased by about 30 per cent, from 24,348 in 2020 to 34,890 in 2021.

At the Town of Caledon Council's April 19 General Committee meeting, Caledon OPP Detachment Commander Mike Garant provided a presentation on local police's year-over-year statistics on a variety of topics.

The largest change was seen in calls for service, which saw an increase of just over 10,000 calls.

"To be fair, a lot of that was response to COVID enforcement, COVID complaints, as well as assisting with bylaw enforcement calls as well," said Garant. "But that's the first time in 10 years that we've had a spike in the number of calls for service that have been given to officers to respond to."

Something else that rose in Caledon in 2021 was violent crimes, specifically in the "other crimes against a person" category. In 2019, those crimes totalled 70; in 2020, 99; in 2021, 127.

"Crimes against a person that can be threats, mischief type calls, we found that started increasing when more people were at home," said Garant. "We're responding to more calls where there's other criminal code offenses against other residents in the Town?"

There was one murder and one attempted murder in Caledon in 2021, while there was zero of each in 2019 and 2020. Sexual assaults rose in 2021 to 36, the same amount reported in 2019. The number of sexual assaults in Caledon dipped to 27 in 2020.

A similar trend was found in assaults, of which 154 were recorded in 2019, 118 were recorded in 2020, and 145 were recorded in 2021.

In his presentation, Garant spoke about police traffic enforcement efforts on the Easter long weekend.

"The Caledon OPP issued 187 seatbelt tickets in four days. So that's kind of shocking to me that that many drivers are not only out there, but our officers observe them and lay charges. So that means there's many more than that, they're still out there not wearing a seatbelt," said Garant.

"There's still much more work to be done on educating our motoring public."

Motor vehicle collisions in Caledon increased in 2021 from 2020, but did not climb to 2019 levels; the same trend was seen in Highway Traffic Act charges. Liquor License Act charges increased to 125 in 2021, up from 123 in 2020 and 85 in 2019.

There were 290 criminal code traffic charges laid in 2021, which Garant said are for things like prohibited and drunk drivers. There were 323 such charges laid in 2020, and 270 laid in 2019.

"We saw an increase during 2020, and 2021 increased again from pre-pandemic (levels) and already in 2022, we're on a course to increase in that area as well," said Garant.

He explained break and enters declined in 2020 and 2021 from 2019 levels because more people were at home during the pandemic. He also credited this decline to Caledon OPP's education and enforcement on the issue.

Garant said theft overs (theft over \$5,000) have increased, and that most of them are vehicle thefts. He said in the last six months, 79 vehicles have been stolen from residences in the Town of Caledon.

Theft under \$5,000 has also been increasing as 433 were reported by Caledon OPP in 2021, compared to 377 in 2020 and 404 in 2019. Garant said over half of these thefts were from people pumping gas then driving away without paying.

The gas stations have very good video systems, and we can ascertain through our investigation that there's no attempts to be made to pay for this gas. They're just pump and running. This is a common thing throughout the GTA again and in the broader province of Ontario," said Garant.

After Garant's presentation, Mayor Allan Thompson thanked him for his service as Garant will be retiring soon.

"I greatly respect and admire your leadership as a community leader in what you've done for the police force," said Thompson. "I want to thank you for your service and what you've given to this community? you've made Caledon a better place in your leadership."

Garant thanked Thompson and said he really appreciated the kind words.

"Yourself and Council have kept me on my toes in these last three years and it's for the better ? and thank you very much," said Garant.