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REPORT  
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DATE: November 1, 2018

SUBJECT: 2017 YOUTH CRIME REPORT

FROM: Marc Andrews, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Command

**RECOMMENDATION**

That, the Regional Municipality of Peel - Police Services Board receive the annual 2017 Youth Crime Report as information.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

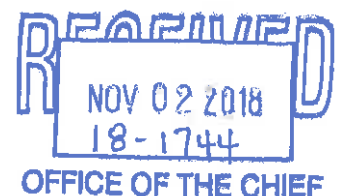
- In 2017, young persons represented 7.69% (103,530 residents) of the policing population.
- In 2017, 1,866 young persons were charged with a criminal offence by Peel Regional Police. This represents a 0.32% increase from the previous year. As such, in general terms, there was no statistical difference in youth crime reported in 2017 in comparison to 2016.
- Young persons represented 14% of all persons charged by Peel Regional Police in 2017.
- Peel Regional Police continue to collaborate with schools in creating educational programs that address evolving trends and issues related to youth.
- Peel Regional Police continue to work in partnership with community agencies in creating new initiatives that engage youth.

**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

The 2017 Youth Crime Report provides insight into crime statistics and trends related to young persons investigated by Peel Regional Police. The statistics used to generate this report were received from Corporate Planning and Research.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), which came into effect in April, 2003, defines a young person as someone between the ages of 12 and 17 inclusive. The legislation includes guiding principles that promote the long-term protection of society. The overriding principle is to strike a balance between the need to ensure that there is a meaningful consequence for youth who contravene the law while addressing the underlying causes and promoting the rehabilitation of offenders.



In 2008, an increase in gun violence amongst youth prompted a study and subsequent release of a report titled, "The Review of the Roots of Violence". The report identified a number of underlying issues that required response in a structured and sustained way. Further, the "Ontario Youth Action Plan" was created in 2012 to address the concerns identified in the Roots of Violence Report. This plan identified the need to increase support for evidence based initiatives that provide opportunities for youth and also strengthen community relations. Recognized as essential to the plan to provide early positive intervention in a young person's life was the need to better coordinate multiagency efforts and the adoption of a long term sustained approach focused on positive outcomes.

### a) Population

In 2017, the combined population of the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga was 1,346,000; 103,530 of which were young persons, an increase of 1.5% in comparison to 2016. In 2017, young persons represented 7.69% of the area population.

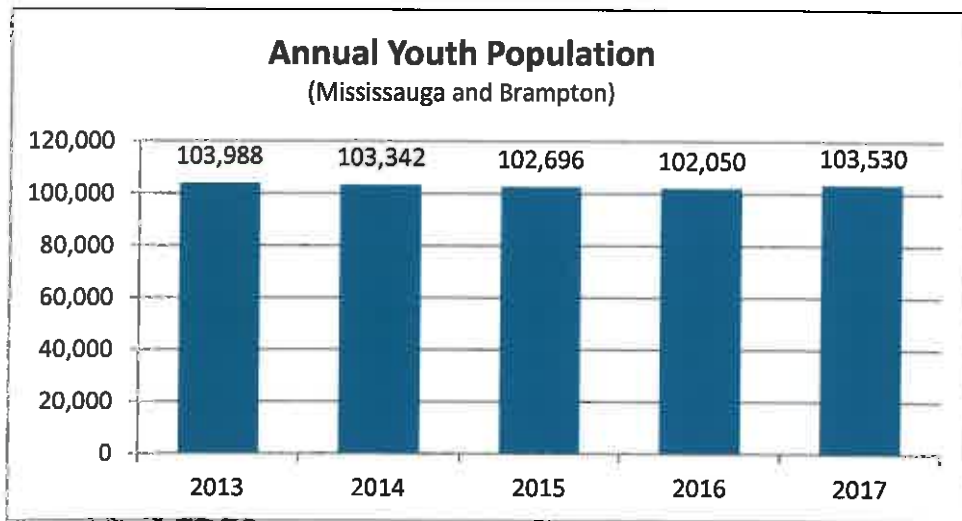


Figure 1

### b) Crimes Against Persons

Crimes against persons include offences such as assault, robbery, sexual offences, criminal harassment and threatening. In 2017, 859 young persons were charged with one of the noted offences. This represented an increase of 67, or 8.46% in comparison to 2016.

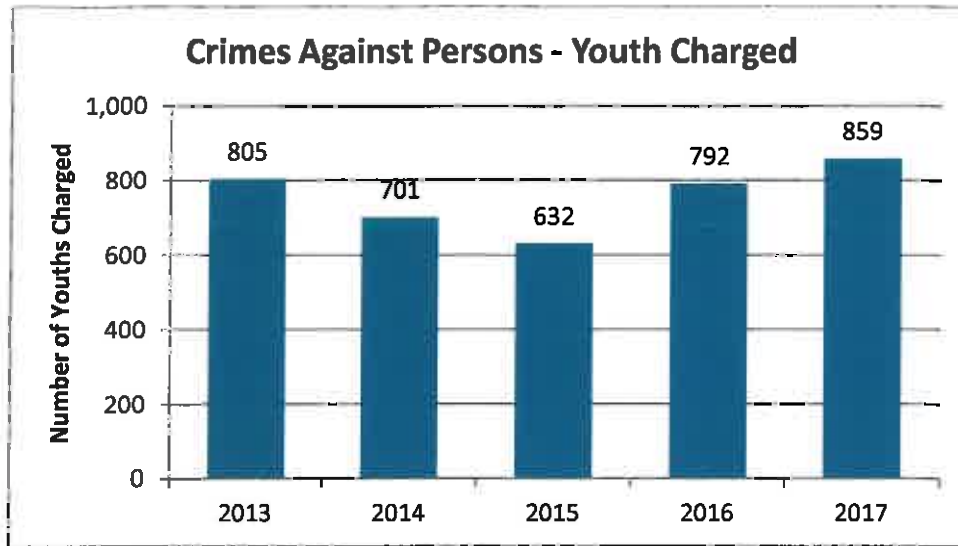


Figure 2

The four most frequently occurring incident types for crimes against persons were robbery, assault (Level One and Two) and uttering threats.

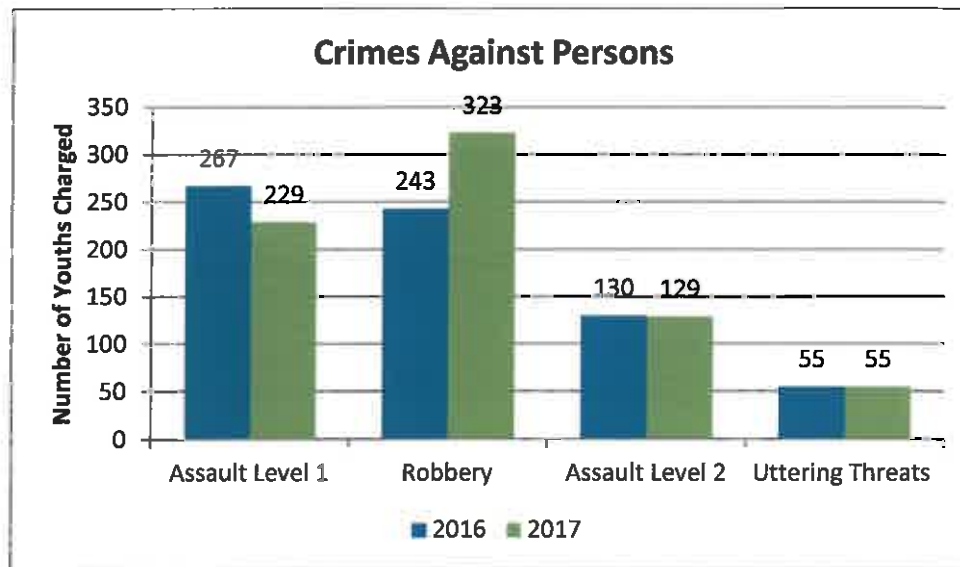


Figure 3

### c) Crimes Against Property

Crimes against property include offences such as break and enter, theft, possession of property obtained by crime, fraud, mischief and arson. In 2017, 524 young persons were charged with one of the noted offences. This represented a negligible increase of 2, or 0.38% in comparison to 2016.

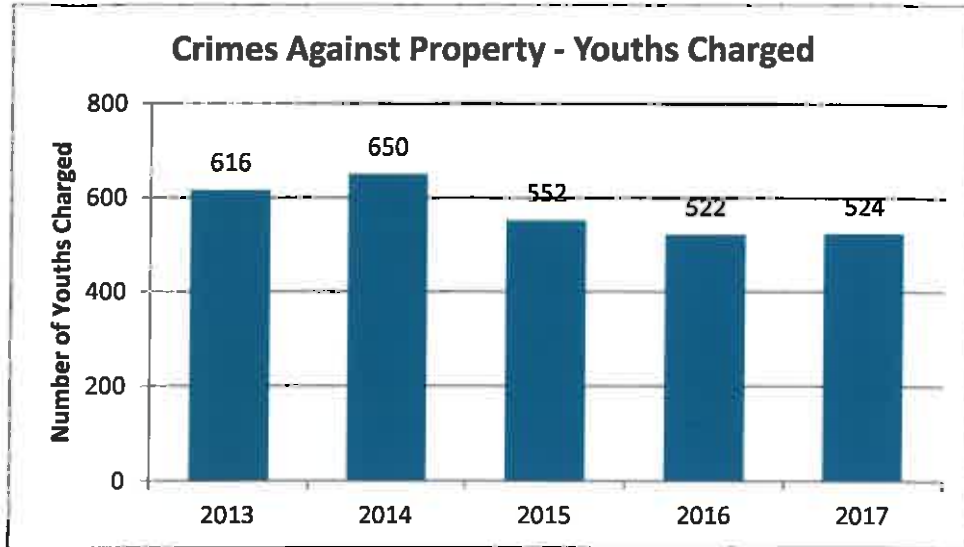


Figure 4

The four most frequently occurring incident types for crimes against property were theft under \$5000 – shop theft, break and enter, mischief, and theft under (other than shoplifting and/or breaking and entering).

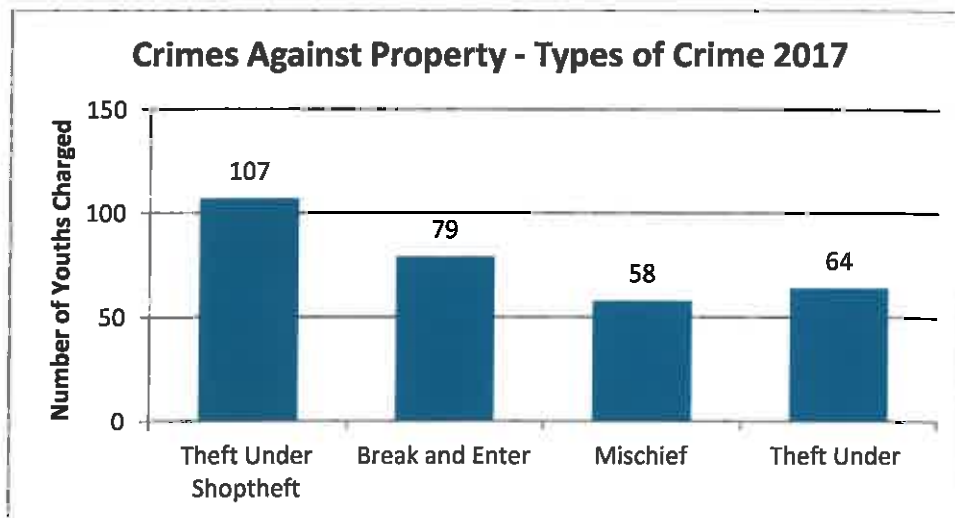


Figure 5

#### d) Criminal Driving Offences

Criminal driving offences include offences such as dangerous driving, failing to remain at the scene of an accident, impaired driving and street racing. In 2017, 25 young persons were charged with one of the noted offences. This is the same number of charges as in 2016. The majority of the charges are related to dangerous driving. There were no youths charges in 2017 for Impaired Operation Motor Vehicle by drugs.

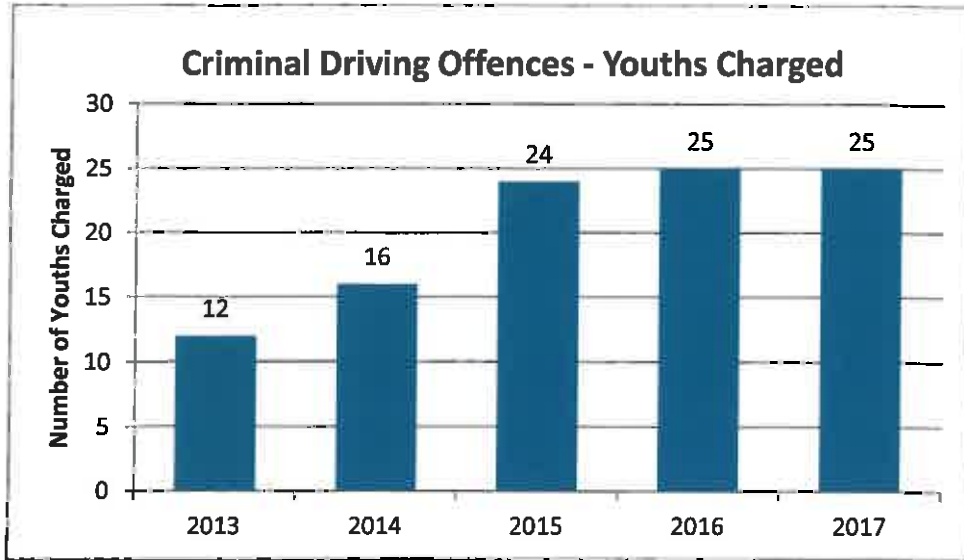


Figure 6

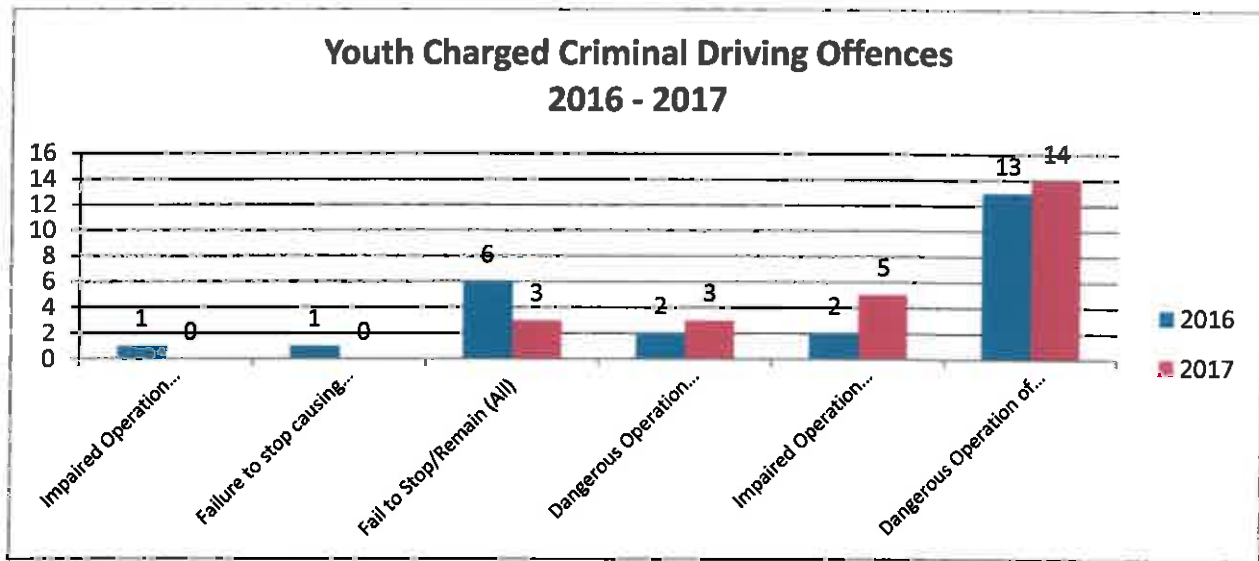


Figure 7

**e) Drug Offences**

Drug offences included possession, trafficking and other related crimes. In 2017, 103 young persons were charged in relation to one of the offences. This represented a decrease of 62, or a 37.6% decrease in comparison to 2016. More specifically, charges of simple possession of marihuana were reduced in 2017. This likely could be attributed to the changing attitude toward marihuana use and the now decriminalization of marihuana possession in Canada.

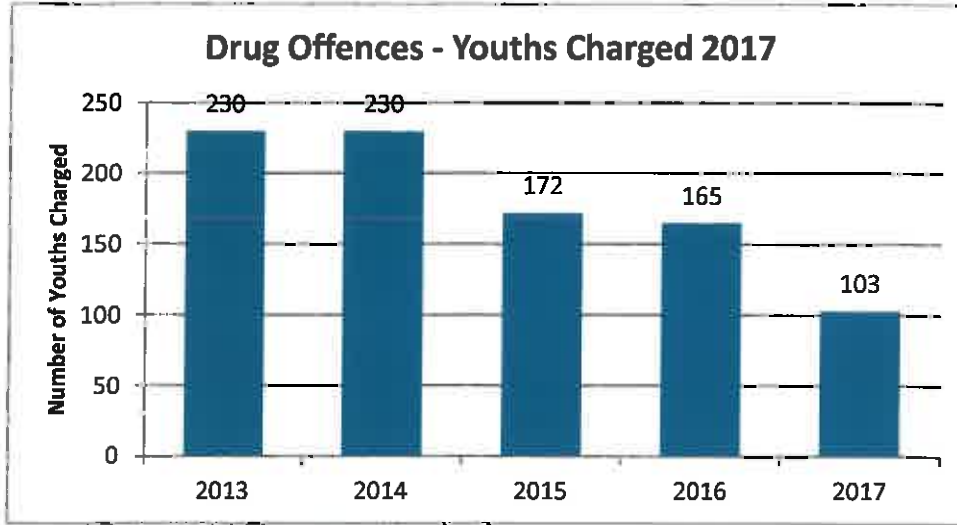


Figure 8

#### f) Total Young Persons Charged

In 2017, 1,866 young persons were charged by Peel Regional Police; an increase of 6, or just 0.32% in comparison to 2016.

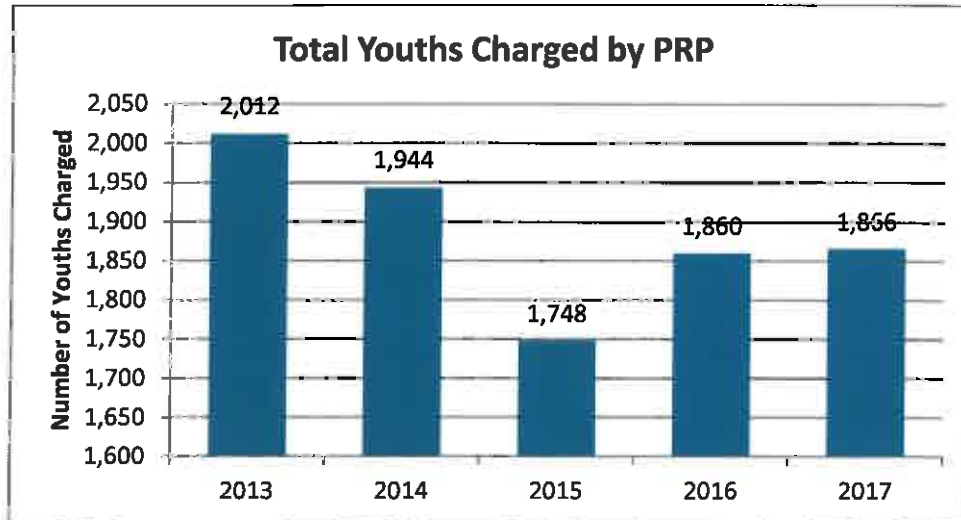


Figure 9

Young persons represented 12.3% of all persons charged by Peel Regional Police in 2017. The following chart summarizes the comparative analysis of statistics, on both youth and adult offenders, related to 2016 and 2017.

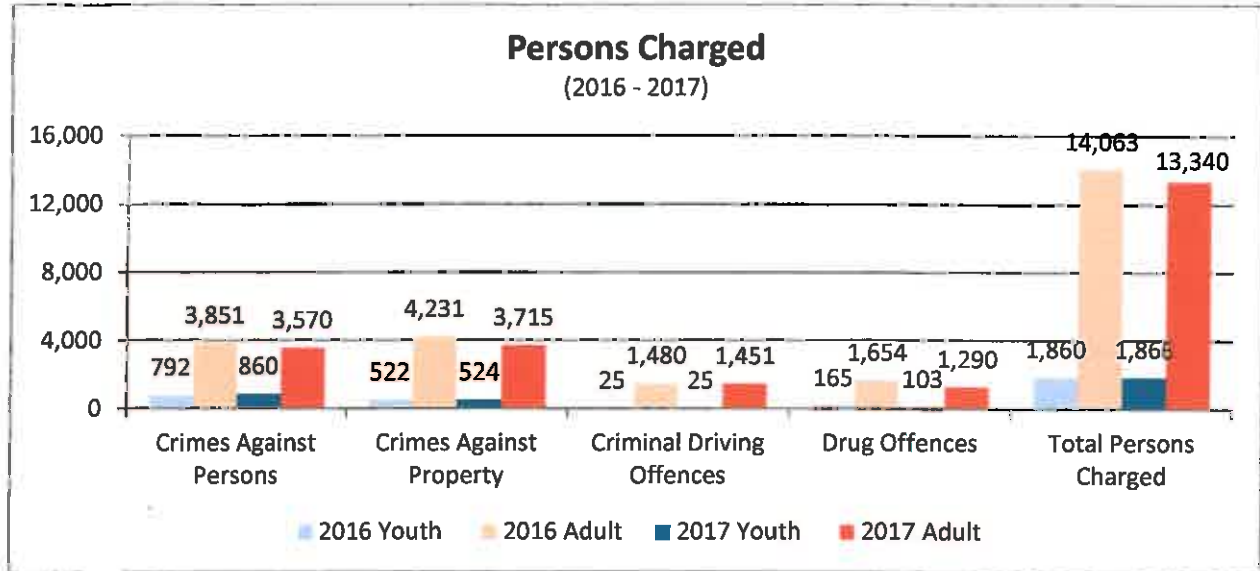


Figure 10

## 2. Findings

In general terms, there was no statistical difference in youth crime reported in 2017 in comparison to 2016 (+.32%). As identified in Figure 9, the total number of criminal charges involving youth for 2017 increased by just 6. While the frequency of charges, as shown in Figure 10, has shown no statistical difference in the overall criminal involvement of young people, the incidents of crimes against persons increased by 8.46% while drug offences decreased by 37.6%.

## 3. Continuing Work with Young People

Peel Regional Police has an excellent reputation for collaborating with organizations to make our community safer. Our working relationships with the local school boards, local crime prevention associations and the Region of Peel contribute on a daily basis toward helping youth succeed. Peel Regional Police has had a number of successful programs that have served to bring youth and police together.

### a) Pre-charge Diversion

A significant component of the Youth Criminal Justice Act is the application of Extrajudicial Measures, a means by which young people are diverted away from the criminal justice system while still adhering to the principle of ensuring that the young person is held accountable for their actions. Legislation directs that when a young person has committed an offence, Extrajudicial Measures shall be considered before a charge is laid. Where appropriate, Peel Regional Police will refer youth who have committed a criminal offence to the Pre-charge Diversion Program administered by Associated Youth Services of Peel. The agency counsels and administers the performance of tasks that help the offending young person acknowledge and appreciate the significance of breaking the law.

In 2017, 578 cases were referred by Peel Regional Police to Associated Youth Services of Peel, while 549 referrals were made in 2016. This represented an increase of 29 cases, or 5.3%. Each month, the Pre-charge Diversion Program Coordinator examines the frequency of referrals

compared to the use of cautions by officers. In 2017, 60.7% of all occurrences that met the criteria of the diversion program were referred to the agency by officers. This represents a decrease of 15% compared to 2016 where 75.9% of all cases were referred by officers. Work continues by the Co-ordinator to ensure that officers use the Pre-Charge Diversion Program as a means to resolve minor criminal matters through training and platoon presentations.

The decision to refer a young person to the program is based solely on the discretion of the investigating officer, which is based on options that are prescribed under the YCJA. Factoring into the decision not to refer a young person includes: if the youth does not accept responsibility for their actions, if the youth has been charged criminally in the past or has previously been unsuccessful in the program, or if the parent/guardian does not agree to the youth's participation in the program.

In 2017, officers referred more cases to the program than they did in 2016; however, they also cautioned more youths for minor offences. Closing minor cases by way of a caution is appropriate if the investigating officer deems it to be the correct course of action. It is worth noting that most of the cases referred to the Pre-Charge Diversion Program are very minor in nature. By using the Pre-Charge Diversion referral program, youth are simply directed to Extrajudicial Measures that hold them accountable for their actions without charges being laid.

Some of the more common minor offences where officers can consider the Pre-Charge Diversion program include theft, mischief, minor assault, and minor drug possession. As a reflection of the times, this list was expanded in December 2015 to include offences related to cyber bullying including non-consensual distribution of intimate images, criminal harassment, extortion, defamatory libel, voyeurism and personation. These additional offences that qualify for the program have been communicated to front line personnel through Corporate Communications and the on-going platoon presentations.

In 2017, youths were charged in 23 instances as a result of not having completed the program offered by Associated Youth Services of Peel. Another 32 young offenders were removed from the program because they were either unsuitable or did not qualify for referral. These cases include incidents where, amongst others, the youth had a previous criminal charge, had uncooperative parents, or was challenged by mental health issues. Some youths were not charged on the recommendation of the counselor who had been working with them. In these cases, youths were cautioned for the offence(s) committed.

Each month, an analysis is conducted on the recidivism rate of youth in comparison with the same period of the previous year. Of the youth who successfully completed the program in 2017, only 16.8% committed another crime within a one-year period. For those who did not complete the program, the recidivism rate was considerably higher at 36.8%.

The Pre-charge Diversion Program enabled 578 young people to have a second chance to learn from their mistakes before experiencing the criminal justice system.

## **b) Neighbourhood Policing Units**

Divisional Neighbourhood Policing officers (School Resource Officers) have been placed into every secondary school in the cities of Mississauga and Brampton. The relationships these officers have established with students and staff continue to help maintain a safe environment for young people to learn. Officers continue to increase positive engagement and when appropriate, conduct enforcement. At the same time, the officers strive to be positive role



models. Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers dedicate much of their time to Community Engagement initiatives such as fundraising, sports and other volunteer school activities.

Officers in the schools investigated 2,335 incidents during 2017, a decrease of 2.4%. Many of the youth criminal charges have been through the work of Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers. It should be noted that approximately 25% of the pre-charge diversion program referrals are made through School Resource Officers. These officers are aware of this program and use it when it is appropriate.

### **c) Youth Education**

The Youth Education Bureau is responsible for providing safety related education to elementary level students. Having the opportunity to provide drug awareness education to 22,910 students through the *Reduce Abuse in Drugs* (R.A.I.D.) program, and hosting 15,212 youth at the *Peel Children's Safety Village*, has allowed Peel Regional Police to positively impact a broad spectrum of our children.

Youth Education officers also attended classrooms throughout the year to present topics such as Bullying Awareness, Internet Safety, Youth and the Law, Street Proofing, Drug Abuse Prevention and Youth Gangs. In 2017, 136,393 youths were provided with educational presentations on these topics.

In the summer of 2017, the Peel Children's Safety Village provided Pedestrian Pedal Power (P3) days where parents registered their families to attend and receive instruction on pedestrian and bicycle safety. They were then able to go outside and apply what they learned on bicycles or miniature Jeeps within the Safety Village. Officers provided 148 youths and their families with this training.

Also in the summer of 2017, the Peel Children's Safety Village continued a program to provide a summer camp experience to youths, aged 5-8, from priority neighbourhoods at no cost to the participants. Officers welcomed 132 youths who received safety presentations and learned about community helpers including Paramedics, Fire Department, CN Police, and the Peel Regional Police Canine Unit.

To further engage with youth in the community, Youth Education officers attended 6 Breakfast Clubs where they assisted in providing breakfast to youth who typically did not receive a proper breakfast prior to attending school. They also participated in 13 Cram-A-Cruiser events where they assisted in collecting food donations to be taken to local food banks. Other community events that Youth Education officers attended where they were able to engage with youth include Bike/Walk-To-School days, Terry Fox Run/Walk, After-School Run & Read program, Kids for Cancer/Kids for Change, Shania Kids Can Program, school athletic engagements and Peel Regional Police Divisional Open Houses.

### **d) Crime Prevention**

Officers assigned to Crime Prevention are responsible for delivering police-related education to secondary school students. In 2017, 4,503 students received drug education presentations on topics such as street level drugs, the effects of drugs on the body and the importance of making positive choices. The 2018 presentations have been updated to educate high school students on the impact of the changes to the law surrounding marijuana possession.

As of July 2015, a new presentation called Identifying Vulnerabilities in Youth (IVY), was implemented at the high school level. The presentation focuses primarily on Human Trafficking, online safety and sexting and it is delivered in conjunction with the presentations on drugs. In 2017, an additional 5,462 students received this presentation, which continues to grow in demand at the high school level.

#### **e) Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI)**

During the summer of 2017, Peel Regional Police, in partnership with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, employed 20 young people in a mentoring relationship for a period of eight (8) weeks. With the assistance of the Peel District School Board, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, French language secondary schools as well as Peel Children's Aid Society, 20 students were selected to work alongside officers and civilians. This mentoring opportunity was well received by these young people.

The Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) program was implemented to ensure a meaningful employment and mentorship experience was maintained for the students. In keeping with current trends, the students were required to research a topic or issue that affects youths and how police can assist or better understand them. Students delivered the presentation to their fellow students and to officers from the Youth Education Bureau, ultimately educating the police about their topic from a youth's perspective.

In 2017, the YIPI program continued with its Low Ropes Course initiative where the students learned values such as teamwork, goal setting, leadership and self-confidence. This experience was then offered to youths aged 10-12 from priority neighbourhoods where the YIPI students were able to act as mentors for these youths in helping them learn about making good decisions and working together with others.

The YIPI students were able to act as mentors to 87 youths for this Low Ropes Course experience which also served to teach them how they can be a positive influence and role model for other youths in the community.

The 2017 YIPI program also continued with the YIPI Team Leader position, which was created in collaboration with the United Way and Safe City Mississauga. This Team Leader was hired through Safe City Mississauga to work alongside Peel Regional Police during the eight week YIPI program.

The position placed a university/college aged youth from the community in a mentorship role for the YIPI students and served as a liaison between the students and officers. This position was deemed to be very valuable for the youths and officers and will be continued in the 2018 YIPI program in collaboration with the United Way and Safe City Mississauga.

Feedback from the participants of the YIPI program, including those from years past, has been extremely positive with many having expressed an interest in or actively pursuing a career in policing. Many of them have gone on to pursue post-secondary education in police related studies.

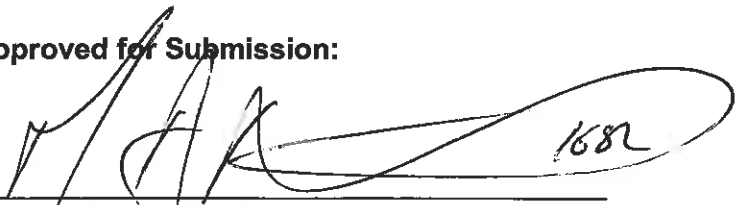
## CONCLUSION

The Peel Regional Police 2017 Youth Crime Report highlights important data on youth related crime and police lead activities that focus on youth crime prevention, suppression, engagement and support.

Overall, the number of youths charged with a criminal offence statistically remained the same over the past year. While the number of youths charged with crimes against persons has gone slightly up (8.46%), the number of youths charged with drug related offences has gone down (37.6%).

The Community Support Services Bureau, and PRP as a whole, continue to meet the strategic objective of enhancing youth programs and partnerships; the end purpose remains a reduction in crime and improved positive relationships with youth in the community.

**Approved for Submission:**



Marc Andrews, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Command

*For further information regarding this report, please contact Inspector Saliba at extension 3609 or via e-mail at [1796@peelpolice.ca](mailto:1796@peelpolice.ca)*

*Authored By: Detective Michael Szabo #1975, Youth Engagement*