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 CHIEF OF POLICE	

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REPORT
Police Services Board

For Information

File Class: 1-02-02-03

Cross-Reference File Class: 3-03-09-03

DATE: October 30th, 2016

SUBJECT: **2015 YOUTH CRIME REPORT**

FROM: Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received as information by the Police Services Board in accordance with annual reporting requirements.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

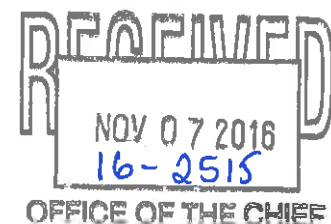
- Young persons represent 7.8% of the policing population at 102,696 residents.
- In 2015, 1,748 Young Persons were charged by the Peel Regional Police. This is a 10.1% decrease from the previous year.
- Young persons represented 11.8% of all persons charged by the Peel Regional Police in 2015.
- Peel Regional Police will continue to work with schools and community agencies to help young people succeed.

DISCUSSION

1. Background

The 2015 Youth Crime Report provides insight in to crime statistics and trends, related to young persons investigated by the Peel Regional Police. The statistics used to generate this report were received from the Peel Regional Police Corporate Planning and Research Bureau.

The Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) defines a young person as someone between the ages of 12 and 17. The YCJA came into effect in April, 2003. 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 the subsequent release of a report titled, "The Review of the Roots of Violence". The analysis revealed a number of underlying issues that required response in a structured and sustained way. In 2012, presented in support of the concerns identified in the Roots of Violence Report, was Ontario's "Youth Action Plan". The plan identified the need to increase support for evidence based impactful initiatives that provide opportunities to youth and strengthen community capacity. Recognized as essential to the plan was the requirement to provide early positive intervention in a young person's life, to better coordinate multiagency efforts and the adoption of a long term sustained approach focused on positive outcomes.

a) Population

In 2015, the combined population of the Cities of Brampton and Mississauga was 1,314,000; 102,696 of which were young persons, a decline of 0.6% in comparison to 2014. In 2015, Young Persons represented 7.8% of the area population.

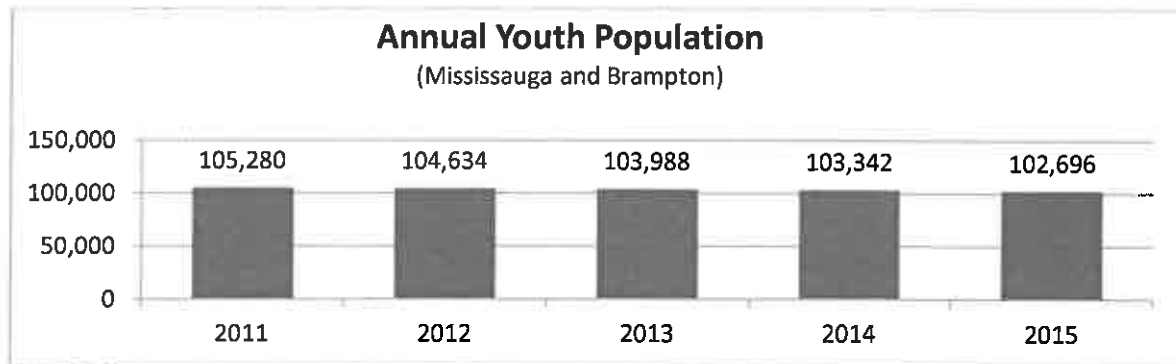


Figure 1

b) Crimes Against Persons

Crimes against persons include offences such as assault, robbery, sexual offences, criminal harassment and threatening. In 2015, 632 young persons were charged with one of the noted offences. This represented a decrease of 69, or 9.8% in comparison to 2014.

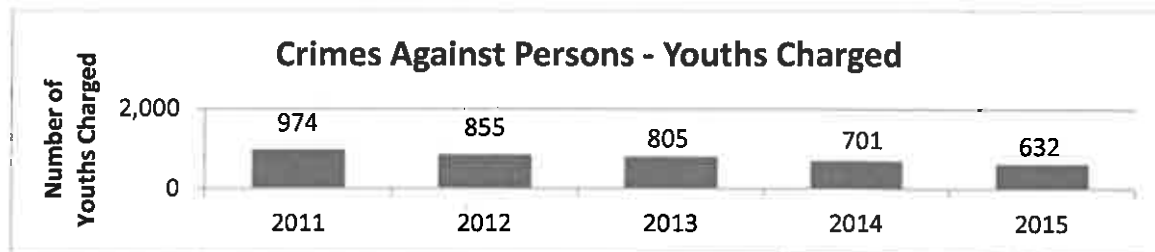


Figure 2

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

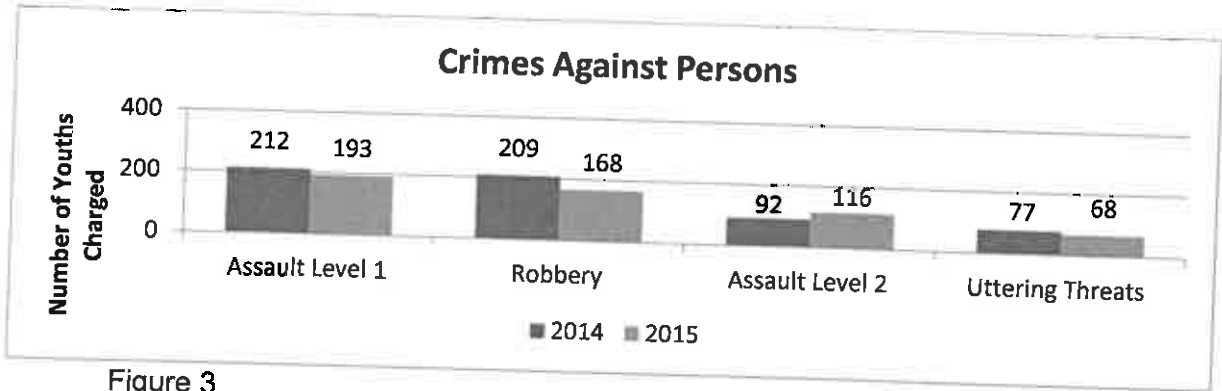


Figure 3

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 2015, 552 young persons were charged with one of the noted offences. This represented a decrease of 98, or 15% in comparison to 2014.

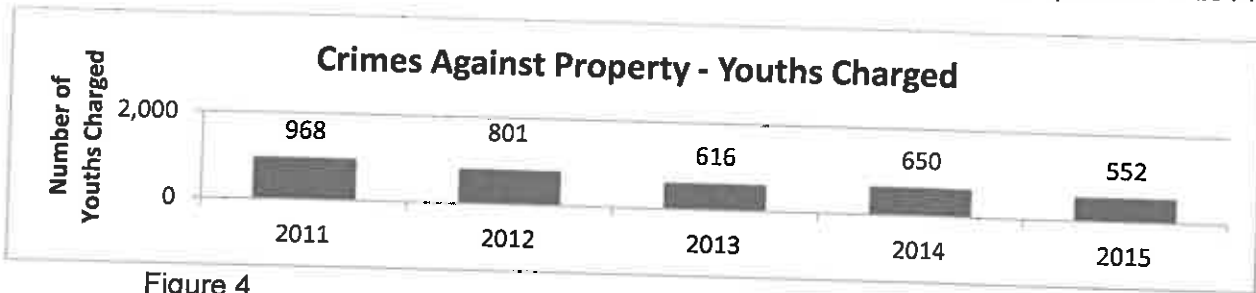


Figure 4

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 ([other] than shoplifting and/or breaking and entering).

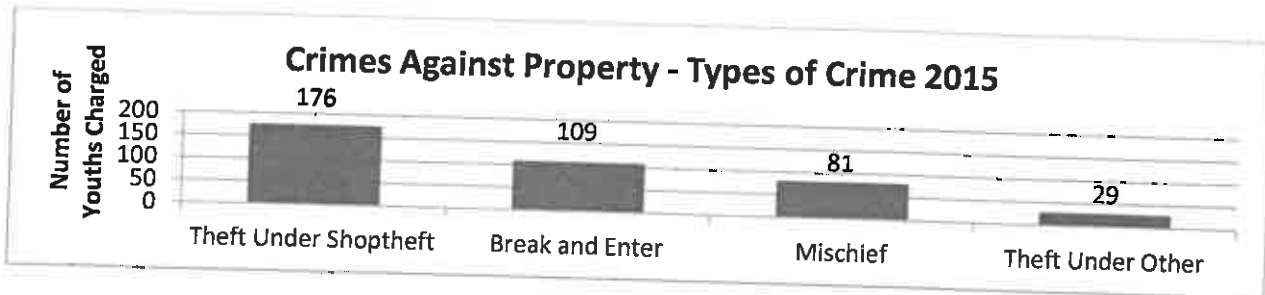


Figure 5

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 2015, 24 young persons were

charged with one of the noted offences. This represented an increase of 8, or 50% in comparison to 2014. The majority of the charges are related to dangerous driving.



Figure 6

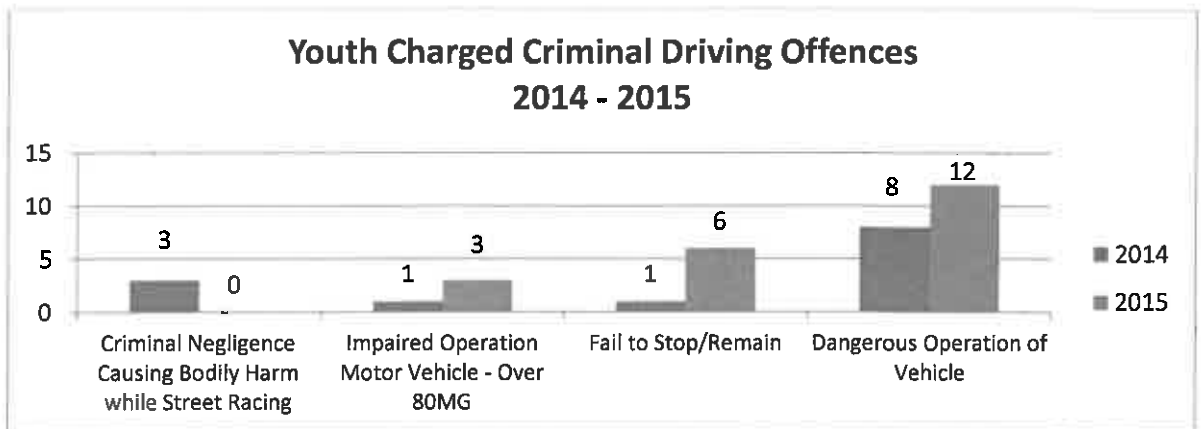


Figure 7

e) Drug Offences

Drug offences included possession, trafficking and other related crimes. In 2015, 172 young persons were charged in relation to one of the offences. This represented a decrease of 58, or a 25% decrease in comparison to 2014.

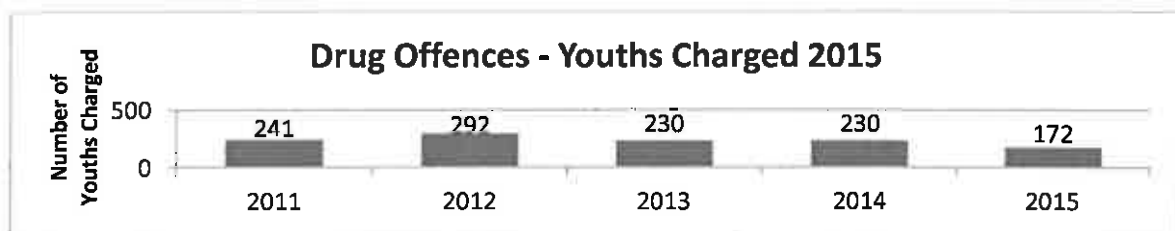


Figure 8

f) Total Young Persons Charged

In 2015, 1,748 young persons were charged by the Peel Regional Police; a decrease of 196, or 10.1% in comparison to 2014.



Figure 9

Young persons represented 11.8% of all persons charged by the Peel Regional Police in 2015. The following chart summarizes the comparative analysis of statistics, on both youth and adult offenders, related to 2014 and 2015.

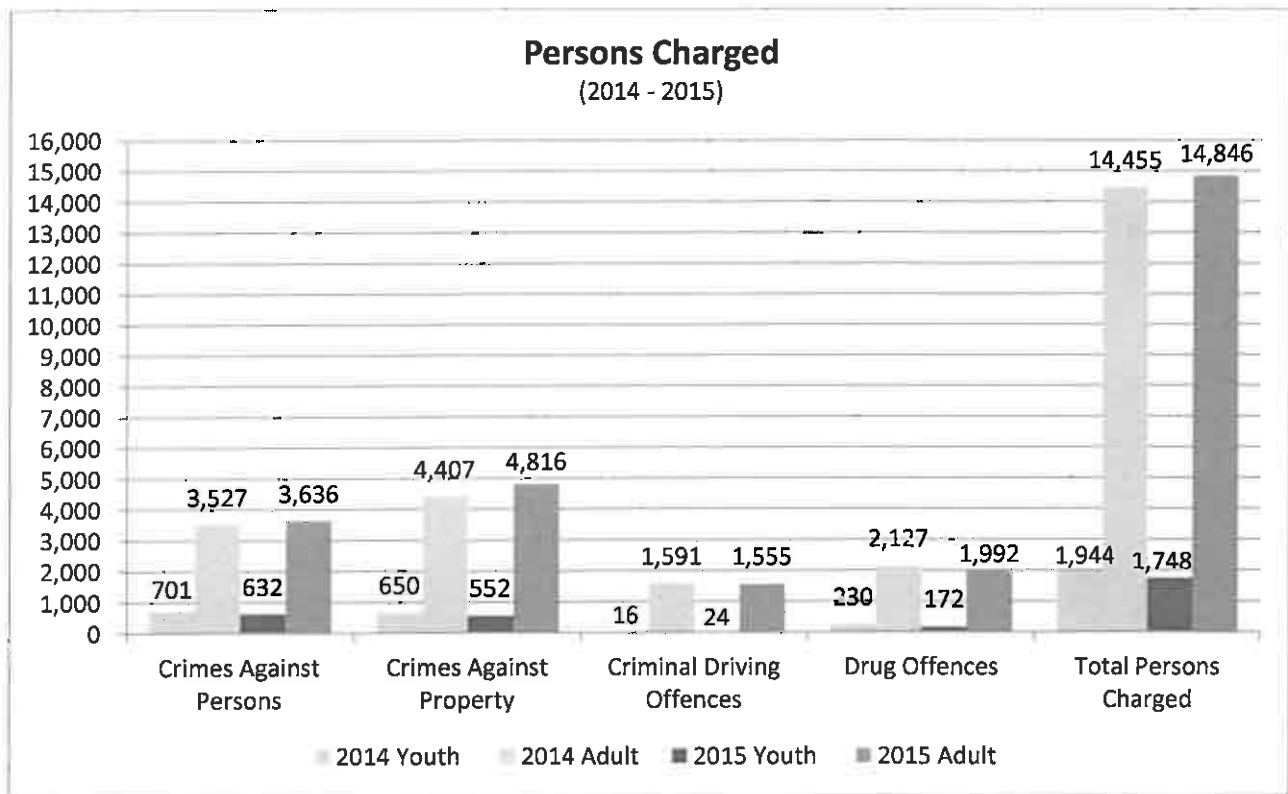


Figure 10

g) Pre-charge Diversion

A significant component of the Youth Criminal Justice Act is the application of Extrajudicial Measures, a means by which a 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, the 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 youth to acknowledge and appreciate the significance of breaking the law.

In 2015, 610 cases were referred by Peel Regional Police to Associated Youth Services of Peel, while 591 referrals were made in 2014. This represented a year over year increase of 19 cases, or 3.2%. Each month, the Pre-charge Diversion Program Coordinator examines the frequency of referrals compared to the use of cautions by officers. In 2015, 75.4% of all occurrences that met the criteria of the diversion program were referred to the agency, by officers. In 2014, 60.8% of criteria eligible cases were referred to the agency by officers, an increase of 14.6%.

The decision to refer a young person to the program is solely that of the investigating officer; the option is one of four prescribed under the YCJA. In 2015, officers referred more cases to the program than they did in 2014. Closing minor cases by 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. With referral to the program, youth are simply given a greater consequence for their actions.

In 2015, youths were charged in 14 instances as a result, in follow-up, of not having completed the program offered by the Associated Youth Services of Peel. Another 39 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 experiencing mental health issues. Some youths were not charged on the recommendation of the counselor who had been working with them. These youths were dealt with by caution.

It is worthy of note that as of May 2015, youths who have previously been referred to the program remain eligible to participate in the program once again, provided they meet the other criteria for acceptance into the program. Previously, young persons who had availed themselves of the program previously were ineligible for a second opportunity.

In December 2015, the list of allowable offences committed by young people eligible for the diversion program was expanded to include offences related to cyber bullying and sexting. This is a reflection of our times given the use of social media. Eligible offences may include Non-consensual Distribution of an Intimate Image, Criminal Harassment, Extortion, Defamatory Libel, Voyeurism and Personation.

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 2014, only 14.4% committed another crime within a one-year period. For those who did not complete the program, the recidivism rate was considerably higher at 32.14%.

2. Findings

In general terms, there was a statistical decrease in youth crime reported in 2015 in comparison to 2014. As identified in Figure 9, the total number of criminal charges involving youth for 2015 decreased by 10.1%. The incidents of crimes against persons, including crimes of violence, decreased by 9.8%. The frequency of charges, in the broad categories described in Figure 10, has shown overall that the criminal involvement of young people has decreased over the past year. The only category showing an increase for youth criminality is in relation to criminal driving offences (24 charges in 2015 compared to 16 charges in 2014).

The Pre-charge Diversion Program enabled over 600 young people to have a second chance to learn from their mistakes before experiencing the criminal justice system.

3. Continuing Work with Young People

The 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. The Peel Regional Police has had a number of successful programs that have served to bring youth and police together.

a) 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 have continued to conduct enforcement while at the same time striving to be positive role models. Countless hours have been spent by Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers in fundraising, sports and other volunteer school activities.

Officers in the schools investigated 2,138 incidents during 2015. Many of the youth criminal charges have been the work of Neighbourhood Policing Unit officers.

b) Youth Education

The Youth Education Bureau is responsible for assisting with providing safety related education to elementary level students. Having the opportunity to provide drug awareness education through the *Reduce Abuse in Drugs* (R.A.I.D.) program to 8,310 students, and hosting 10,500 youth at the *Peel Children's Safety Village*, has allowed the 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, Youth and the Law, Stranger Awareness, Policing as a Career, Community Helpers, Drug Abuse Prevention and Youth Gangs. In 2015, 36,928 youths were provided with Internet Safety education and another 64,650 were provided with Bullying Awareness education for a total of 101,578 students.

c) Drug Education

The Drug Education Unit is responsible for delivering police-related education to secondary school students. In 2015, 4,155 students received drug education presentations on such topics as street level drugs, the effects of drugs on the body and the importance of making positive choices.

As of July 2015 a new presentation was implemented, at the high school level, on Human Trafficking; delivered in conjunction with the presentations on drugs. An additional 676 students received this new presentation, which also covered vulnerabilities associated to youth involving social media, sexting, age of consent, and sexual assaults.

c) Youth in Policing Initiative

During the summer of 2015, the 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 and our French language secondary schools, students were selected to work alongside officers and civilians. This mentoring opportunity was well received by these young people.

The Youth in Policing Initiative program was continued in 2016 and was augmented to ensure a meaningful employment and mentorship experience was maintained for the students. The students were required to select a topic of importance to them, research the selected topic and prepare a presentation from a youth's perspective. 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.

Feedback from the participants of the 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 2015 Youth Crime Report lists important data on the involvement of youth in policing related activities. Although there were some minor fluctuations in the year over year comparative analysis, the incidence of youth criminal activity has remained fairly constant. It is encouraging to see that, when comparing 2015 to 2014, the incidence of crimes against persons where youths were charged has decreased by 9.8% and the overall number of youths charged has decreased by 10.1%. The Peel Regional Police has continued to deliver programs and partnerships that adhere to Ontario's Youth Action Plan and contribute to a safer community for our youth.

Approved for Submission:



Brian Adams, Deputy Chief, Operations Support Services

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