

***A Safer Nova Scotia***

**Prepared By**

**The Municipal Chiefs of Police**

**Vision for Policing in Nova Scotia**

**An Operational Perspective**

**Presented by Chief Beazley**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	5
VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES	6
THE CURRENT SITUATION	7
OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE	10
EVALUATION OF OPTIONS	10
CONCLUSION	15
APPENDIX "1"	16
APPENDIX "2"	17

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chiefs of Police Association of Nova Scotia is committed to ensuring that all communities in Nova Scotia receive the best possible policing service. The Association envisions a unified approach to policing that is effective, efficient and economical, upholding the following Guiding Principles:

- Ethical
- Timely Emergency Response
- Quality Service and Conduct
- Accountable to the Community
- A Diverse Organization
- Service Equity

The current policing situation in Nova Scotia has inherent strengths such as community connectedness, strong partnerships and well-trained professional officers. However, the Association recognizes that because of the complexity of policing, coupled with the increased technological demands placed on agencies, the current policing situation is not sustainable into the future.

In the Chief's Vision for Policing document, three possible policing options for Nova Scotia were identified. These options were:

- A Provincial police service; and/or
- Regionalization of services; and/or
- Expansion of services in key areas.

The logical next step in this process was to identify how the various options would be configured to accomplish the desired results. The RCMP responded to the Minister in a separate document. The Association's remaining member organizations came together to develop a consensus report to evaluate the options and how policing should be structured to ensure the best possible police service for the citizens of Nova Scotia. This document is a compilation of those discussions.

When each of the options is evaluated against the Vision and Guiding Principles their strengths and weaknesses begin to emerge. A single Provincial Policing agency would not deliver the effective, accountable, timely and equitable service envisioned in the Guiding Principles. The more feasible options are those that build on the long-standing partnerships between the Provincial Police and its municipal partners.

The regionalization of services is a workable option resulting in three regional municipal agencies: Cape Breton Regional Police, Halifax Regional Police and Chignecto Central Regional Police, supplemented by a Provincial Police service, arguably organized on a regional basis. Although seen as a viable option, regionalization would require considerable political commitment as well as the reorganization of existing services into new agencies. Such change may be more suitable to a longer-term strategy. These changes could be made over time as part of a two-step approach beginning with the expansion of services.

The expansion of services model has emerged as the most viable option. It provides the most immediate response to the issues facing policing in Nova Scotia. It builds on the current policing infrastructure and expertise with minimum disruption to existing services.

The policing options proposed in this document have been developed with the intent to strengthen the municipal partner agencies while maintaining a strong Provincial Police force.

The focus of this document has been on the long-term sustainability of policing in Nova Scotia. This will not be achieved without change. Regardless of what model of policing moves forward, some communities who have had a long history with a familiar style of policing would be facing considerable change. Such change could not occur without political leadership. Any decision to regionalize or expand police services must first and foremost enhance service delivery, but it must also be accountable and fiscally responsible in order to secure the needed political support.

## INTRODUCTION

Policing in Nova Scotia is comprised of 12 municipal police agencies and the RCMP. The two largest municipal organizations are Halifax Regional Police and Cape Breton Regional Police with the remaining municipal agencies of Annapolis Royal, Kentville, Truro, Westville, Stellarton, New Glasgow, Trenton, Bridgewater, Springhill and Amherst rounding out the list. The remaining areas of the province receive policing by the RCMP either under direct contract with municipalities or as the Provincial Police throughout the province.

The RCMP contract for policing was established in 1992 and expires in 2012. The potential for changes to the RCMP contract after 2012 has focussed the need to reflect on policing in Nova Scotia now and beyond 2012.

In response to the need to review policing, the Province of Nova Scotia sought input from various stakeholders. The province established the following criteria as the basis of their review:

- Operational Effectiveness: The extent to which outcomes match objectives; the degree to which current service delivery is doing what it is intended to do; how success is measured in relation to the police service as defined in the Police Act, s. 31(1).  

31(1) The Provincial Police shall provide policing services including (a) crime prevention; (b) law enforcement; (c) assistance to victims of crime; (d) emergency and enhanced services; and (e) public order maintenance.
- Accountability: Consistency with government values and priorities; public perception; effects on taxpayers; impacts on the private sector.
- Administrative Feasibility: Fiscal impact on government; constraints raised by legal or jurisdictional issues; ease of implementation; clarity of arrangement.
- Cost Effectiveness: The degree to which resources are used with the least possible waste; appropriate quality at the best price.
- Equity: the extent to which there is a disproportionate impact on groups or regions; there is equitable treatment; distribution of services to those in unequal circumstances; impact on future generations.

## VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association met in November 2007 to discuss the prospect of policing in Nova Scotia beyond 2012. In keeping with the criteria set by the Province, the Chiefs developed a Vision and Guiding Principles for the future of policing in Nova Scotia. This Vision was presented to the Minister of Justice in January 2008.

The Association envisioned the delivery of a consistent approach to policing in Nova Scotia where the services offered meet the three "E's":

**Effective:** achieving a good clearance rate; doing things right; 24/7 coverage across the province; each officer governed by the same set of standards and operating policies;

**Efficient:** reduced duplication of administration and services; and

**Economical:** cost effective and based on property assessments, not where people reside.

They also agreed that policing in Nova Scotia must also uphold the following Guiding Principles:

**Ethical:** Policing will be fair, evenhanded, transparent, community focused and unbiased.

**Timely Emergency Response:** Citizens will receive an immediate response to calls for assistance and 24/7 "on the road" service. (Timeliness means an appropriate response depending on standards, location and circumstances.)

**Quality of Service and Conduct:** The delivery of modern and efficient policing; standards are set and met according to the same tests applied elsewhere in Canada.

**Accountable to the Community:** Working in partnerships with other individuals and organizations to address issues and concerns; being open and transparent.

**A Diverse Organization:** Valuing diversity in all aspects; people see themselves reflected in the service; and the service is reflective of the community in which it operates.

**Service Equity:** All Nova Scotians are treated fairly and receive the most effective service possible in their geographic area.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION

The Chiefs concluded that the current situation in Nova Scotia is not living up to these Guiding Principles. Change is required to provide policing services in an effective, economical, and efficient way moving forward. With that said, there are a number of identified strengths of policing in Nova Scotia as it currently exists and there is a need to maintain these as prominent factors in any future policing strategy.

### Strengths of Policing in Nova Scotia

- Training has improved compared to that offered in the past: for recruits; in-service; as well as specialized training.
- There are more uniformed and support staff.
- Partnerships and collaboration have improved with each other.
- Partnerships have improved with other agencies, services and community organizations.
- There is a more focussed and comprehensive group of police service leaders.
- Information sharing and case management systems have improved as services evolve into the technological age of policing, with the result that policing can continue to improve if tools are available and better used.
- Officers are well equipped. The province has shown leadership and support for this, such as by funding recent enhancements.
- The quality of recruits has improved.
- Police Boards are better educated and informed.
- The Police Act has improved.
- There is generally high regard for the police in the public.
- Police are more open to the public and more accountable.
- Policing is in a period of transition to a new era. Training, case law, expectations of community have changed, pushed by 9/11.

Aside from the many strengths of policing in Nova Scotia, the Association recognized that policing is more complex and requires new and innovative strategies to keep up with the technological demands being placed on agencies across the province. All agencies are finding it more and more challenging to deliver effective and efficient service to the citizens they serve.

The Association believes that agencies that do not provide the critical mass in either human or technological resources needed to provide comprehensive service are not sustainable. Outside of Halifax Regional Police and Cape Breton Regional Police, the remaining ten municipal agencies serve a population base of just under 61,000 people. The Association believes the status quo of 12 municipal police services and the RCMP is not consistent with the Guiding Principles. The challenges below are demonstration of the multitude of issues facing all policing agencies, but can present unique challenges to smaller agencies:

- Recruitment and Retention.
- Ability to train: Keeping up with changing standards; affordable training; opportunities for skill building; and the impact of these on the quality of supervision and investigation police can provide.

- Attrition, demographic changes and loss of experienced personnel.
- Variances in pay and benefits from service to service.
- The absence of a critical mass of experience and skills. Quantity and quality of people available impacts police capacity to investigate and respond to serious crimes.
- Ability to focus on root of problems (e.g., causes of criminal behaviour) rather than dealing with symptoms and the need to be better and more consistent in work.
- Inability to work through layers of government and interests. Need to improve our collaborative and pro-active response to more complex community problems.
- Inadequate resources needed to respond to the problems police face and the increased sophistication required of police to solve crime and keep current with modern issues (e.g., luring over the internet).
- Challenges to the integration of service and effective collaboration caused by differences and inconsistencies in standards, policies, administration and governance. In smaller services, such policies may not exist. Further, it is not clear that everyone agrees on what integration means/should mean.
- Capacity to finance and pay for services.
- Specialty services and genuine accessibility of these services to everyone in the Province.
- No clear framework for policing in the Province.

In addition to the above, Nova Scotia also faces several unique demographic challenges unmatched by any other province in the country. As an example, the proportion of senior citizens living in rural Nova Scotia is approximately twice that of the national average (40% vs. 20%). This aging demographic will drastically change the face of communities in Nova Scotia over the next decade and, as a result, the policing services they can afford and deliver will be affected. Nova Scotia also faces a migration of population from rural Nova Scotia to the core municipal areas of the province, primarily HRM. Increasingly, two styles of policing are emerging in this new environment - highly urban and rural policing. What has also emerged is an expertise in these styles of policing by the organizations performing them. This document builds on that strength.



## Core Services

It is not sufficient to simply say smaller agencies with a proud history must simply disappear on the basis of an arbitrary number. The focus should be on the core services required and whether the agency can provide them in an effective, efficient and economical manner. The optimal size of a police agency should flow from such an exercise.

The analysis of core services began with a review of the legislative requirements then moved to those services that tend to distinguish more self-sustaining agencies from smaller agencies. The focus was on a core group of services that would allow a police agency to meet the Vision and Guiding Principles as set out in the Vision document. In determining the resources required to deliver such services it became clear that a sworn staff establishment of 40 officers would be required. An organization with less than this critical mass would be unable to provide the core services on a full time basis.

<b>Core Services</b>	
<b>Patrol - First Responder</b>	<b>Case Management / Court Services</b>
<b>Community Based Policing</b>	<b>Computer Crime Investigation</b>
<b>Major Crime Unit</b>	<b>Victim Services</b>
<b>Street Crime Unit</b>	<b>CISNS</b>
<b>Forensic Identification Service</b>	<b>K-9 Services</b>
<b>Traffic Service / Accident Investigation</b>	<b>Containment Team /Negotiator</b>

In addition to the core services identified, a number of supplemental services were also identified. These supplemental services could be contracted from larger municipal agencies or be part of a shared service agreement with neighbouring agencies.

<b>Supplemental Service Requirements</b>	
<b>Polygraph Services</b>	<b>Underwater Recovery</b>
<b>Analytical Capacity</b>	<b>Explosive Disposal Unit</b>
<b>Training / Human Resources</b>	<b>ERT</b>

## **OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

Building on the current strengths of policing in Nova Scotia, the Chiefs of Police Association recommended three possible options for further exploration and development. The Association believed that all three options or a combination thereof could achieve the Vision and meet the Guiding Principles as outlined above. The three options proposed were:

- A Provincial police service; and/or
- Expansion of services in key areas; and/or
- Regionalization of services.

The logical next step in this process was to establish how the various options could be configured to accomplish the desired results. In a separate document the RCMP responded to the Minister. In April 2008 the remaining members of the Association met to discuss each option and its merits in accordance with the Vision and Guiding Principles.

## **EVALUATION OF OPTIONS**

### **Provincial Police Service**

The Provincial Police Service option was defined as being a single independent organization that would be responsible for delivering policing services to the entire province of Nova Scotia. This organization could be a contracted service such as the current arrangement with the RCMP or a stand-alone organization similar to the Ontario Provincial Police. In other words a single contiguous police service providing all core and supplemental services throughout the province.

Although the need for a strong Provincial Police Service is acknowledged, a single provider of policing services is not desirable. There was consensus that a single Provincial Policing agency option, although admittedly efficient in reducing duplication of administration and services, falls short of delivering the effective, accountable, timely and equitable service as envisioned in the Guiding Principles. In spite of the increasing national and international nature of policing, policing remains primarily a local concern. The major operational issues facing day-to-day policing in Nova Scotia are of a distinctly local flavour.

Such an organization, regardless of how configured, would simply have too many masters, with a number of competing priorities of both a provincial and local nature. Inevitably choices would have to be made, and at whose expense? The problem would only be exacerbated with additional national and international responsibilities. Such conflicting responsibilities often raise concerns regarding community connectedness and responsiveness to local concerns.

A single agency would also suffer from “the eggs all in one basket” syndrome. A major strength of policing in Nova Scotia is the balance between provincial and municipal policing agencies. This has resulted in many “made in Nova Scotia” solutions. A single contracted service would also limit the ability of municipalities and the province to control policing due to limits set out in a contract and legislation. Building a new provincial agency would also bring infrastructure challenges and a myriad of legislative and policy issues.

In the end, a single police agency for Nova Scotia would be too disruptive and would not provide the necessary gains to justify such an organizational change. Energy would be better spent building on the current policing structures to strengthen policing in order to meet future challenges.

### **Regionalization of Services**

Regionalization of services is defined as the combining of two or more existing services to form a new regional police agency capable of delivering core and supplemental services. Unlike the Provincial example discussed previously, this model would entail a combination of three regional agencies that would, in partnership with the Provincial Police, police the province.

Under a regional service delivery plan, three large regional services are envisioned across the province as follows (see attached map Appendix 1):

- Cape Breton Regional Police - expansion to Baddeck and St. Peters areas, but could consider other parts of the Island of Cape Breton.
- Halifax Regional Police – Expand to police all of HRM from Ecum Secum on the Eastern Shore to Hubbards on the South Shore.
- Chignecto Central Regional Police - All urban areas of Pictou, Cumberland and Colchester Counties.

The remaining areas of the province including the South West portion of Nova Scotia, Guysborough and Antigonish Counties would receive their policing services from the Provincial Police, arguably on a regional basis. The exact boundaries of each region are flexible and the model could take several forms. The essence of the proposed regionalization is built upon the critical mass of services and infrastructure already in place. In others words, where a critical mass of municipal agencies exist to justify the creation of a regional service it is recommended. Where it does not exist a regional service is not recommended.

A large-scale provincial regionalization would involve considerable policy change and a great deal of political will and intervention. However, in the long term, it is believed that regionalization of services into large geographical pockets is a viable option for Nova Scotia. It could be considered as part of a two-step approach, starting in 2012 with an expansion of services in key areas of the province and moving over time to a more regionalized strategy.

### **Expansion of Services in Key Areas**

An expansion of services is defined as a single police service expanding its geographic boundaries to provide continuous police service in more populated Nova Scotia communities. Expansion of boundaries is considered viable if it would create a police service with the critical mass of human and technological resources required to provide the core services recommended.

An expansion of police service would entail the most populous municipalities in the province expanding their footprint on policing by absorbing geographical and population base currently

serviced by either a small municipal agency or the Provincial Police. The expansion of key services model provides the following benefits.

### **Benefits of Expansion of Services**

- Least disruptive approach
- Prevalence of existing infrastructure
- Best use of existing police resources, both municipal and provincial
- Builds on existing communities of interest
- Maintains the community commitment already in place
- Cost effective for the province and municipalities
- Less change for the citizens of Nova Scotia

The expansion of services is most importantly about an enhancement of the service delivery model. Having said that, the proposed expansion must make fiscal sense and provide benefits to the neighbouring communities.

Under this proposed model, the current 12 municipal agencies would combine or expand to form a total of five or seven new municipal agencies with the remainder of the province serviced by the Provincial Police. Tentative names have been assigned to each service for the sake of discussion. The new municipal agencies moving from East to West would include the following (See attached map, Appendix 2):

#### **# 1 Cape Breton Regional Police**

Cape Breton Regional Police is currently responsible for the policing of 106,000 people. An expanded Cape Breton Regional Police service would absorb the communities of Baddeck and St. Peters, encompassing all geographical areas in between. The infrastructure is already in place to absorb the new areas and the additional police officers required. This expansion would see Cape Breton Regional Police delivering a full service model of policing directly in line with the Vision of being effective, efficient and economical, all the while providing quality, equitable and timely service to the core urban areas of Cape Breton Island.

#### **#2 Pictou County Police Service**

The communities of Stellarton, Westville, Trenton, New Glasgow and Pictou are currently serviced by five agencies; the first four by municipal police agencies, and Pictou by the RCMP. All of these communities are close geographically, separated by 30 kilometres. The current municipal agencies in this area serve a population base of approximately 21,000 people.

The proposed model would involve a combination of both regionalization and expansion to include all five communities. Regionalization of police services would entail New Glasgow, Stellarton, Trenton and Westville combining services, and then expanding to take in the town of Pictou, currently serviced by the RCMP. This would result in a population increase of approximately 5,000 people. Similar to the Cape Breton model, the infrastructure is already in place to accommodate an expanded force and the additional personnel.

The regionalization and expansion of the above agencies would result in Pictou County having the critical mass required to provide core-policing services to its citizens.

### **#3 Truro Police Service**

The proposed expansion would see the current Truro Police Service extending into the neighboring urban communities in Colchester County. This area is essentially one contiguous area, which could easily be serviced by one agency.

The Truro Police Service currently has the infrastructure in place to support such growth and could easily absorb the additional positions required.

### **#4 Amherst/Springhill Police Service**

The current municipal agencies of Amherst and Springhill police a combined population base of 13,700 people. The towns and rural areas that fall in between would be more effectively served by one expanded municipal agency. This would involve the regionalization of Amherst and Springhill Police and the expansion into neighbouring communities.

Although the proximity is not as close as the towns in Pictou County, less than 50 kilometres separates some of the farthest points on the map, making this option both feasible and realistic. Again, this approach would give the newly formed service the critical mass necessary for full service as discussed above.

### **#5 Halifax Regional Police**

Halifax Regional Police is the largest municipal agency in the province serving a population of approximately 214,000. The policing situation in HRM is unique in that Halifax Regional Municipality is currently serviced by two agencies; HRP in the core Halifax, Dartmouth and Bedford areas, and the RCMP in the suburban and rural communities. Having two police services in one municipality does not provide efficient, or equitable police service to the community nor is it viewed as cost effective.

An expansion of police services in HRM would involve HRP expanding their boundaries to include all the communities of HRM.

Already supplying the core and supplemental services to its citizens, this proposed expansion of HRP would meet the Vision of the Nova Scotia Chiefs for policing beyond 2012 in that it would provide efficient, timely, equitable and quality service to the core urban areas of HRM.

## **# 6 Kentville Police Service**

Kentville Police Service currently has 18 officers serving a population of 5,900 people. In order to meet critical mass Kentville would be required to expand its geographical boundaries to take in several neighboring communities. By absorbing the above noted communities, Kentville Police would see a significant increase in service area and staff.

Kentville is a sole municipal agency surrounded by RCMP detachments on all sides. To meet the minimal critical mass required, adjacent communities, currently serviced by the RCMP, would have to be absorbed by Kentville. This would more than double the size of the current police service. To minimize the impact of this type of change on the organization it would be preferable to do this in incremental stages. Kentville has a new modern facility and an organizational structure that could readily add additional officers to facilitate 24-hour patrol functions in the expanded areas. While the Kentville Police Service is able to deliver the majority of the core functions they have the ability to purchase additional core services from the other municipal agencies. Additionally they have been able to and will continue to leverage the additional capacity of some current core services by offering them to Annapolis Royal.

## **#7 Bridgewater Police Service**

The current Bridgewater Police Service is able to offer an effective, limited service to the citizens to the Town of Bridgewater. It is well positioned to continue if there was an ability to expand its boundaries to encompass neighbouring communities. This extension of boundaries would involve an increase in staff providing a strong police presence for the core urban areas of the South Shore of Nova Scotia.

Not unlike the Kentville example above, Bridgewater is also a sole municipal agency surrounded by RCMP detachments on all sides. A primary difference is this would be a true expansion of services. Although it would be a significant change, Bridgewater has the infrastructure, including a new Police building, in place to support the extension of boundaries and the additional resources required. Some of the challenges of this new organization could be offset by geography. Bridgewater has quick access to a myriad of specialized services located in Metro Halifax, which could be contracted as needed.

Annapolis Royal Police Service would be the remaining municipal police service. Three full time officers serving a population base of 535 citizens is not viable for expansion. Annapolis Royal is not sustainable as a stand alone municipal organization moving beyond 2012. It cannot feasibly meet the critical mass required to deliver the core services.

## Conclusion

The option of expansion of services in key areas provides the greatest opportunity to strengthen policing in the province for 2012 and beyond. It will provide the building block for the long-term future of policing, guaranteeing quality, timely, effective and equitable service for the Province for years to come.

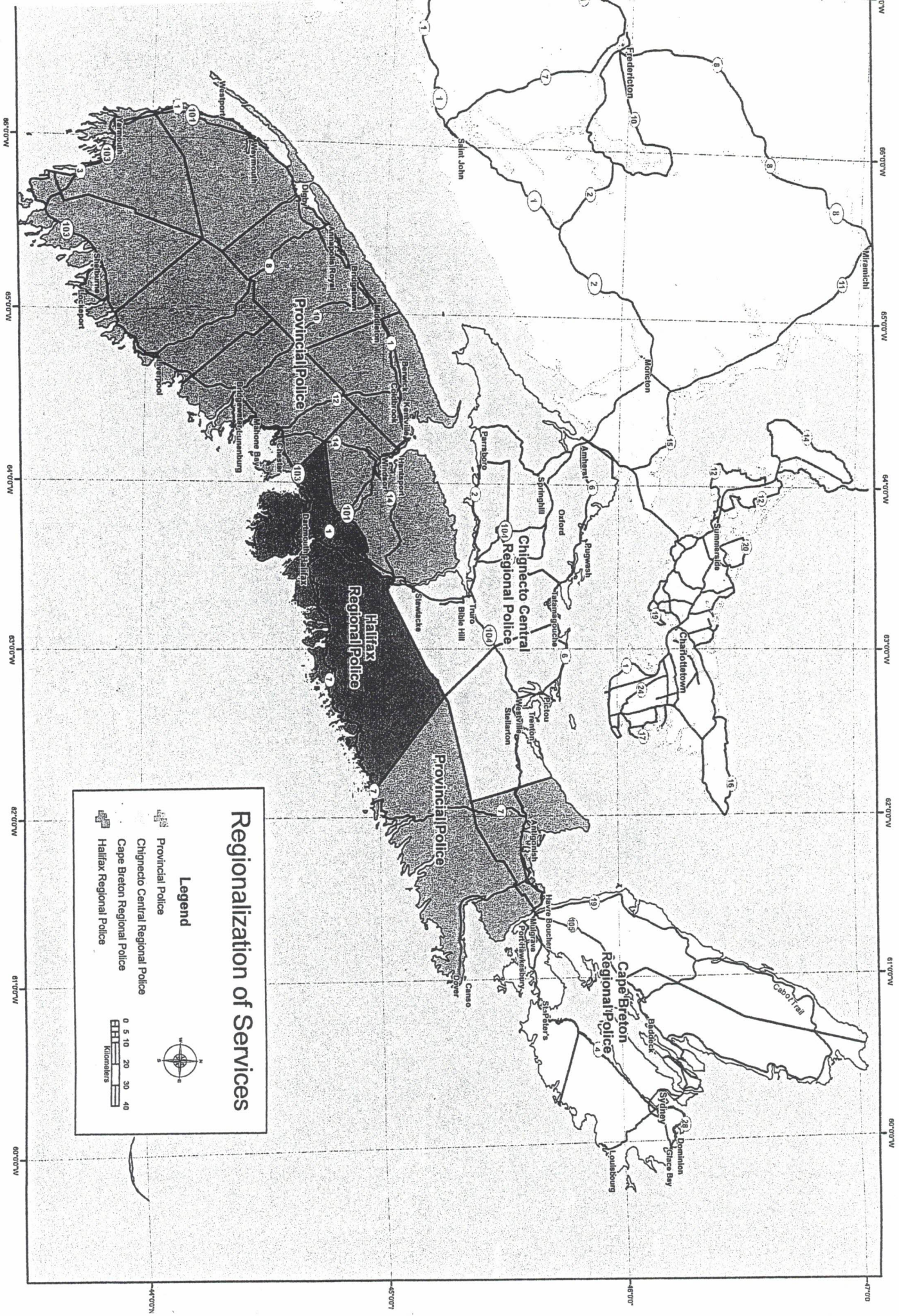
It reduces 13 separate agencies to either six or eight strong, healthy, viable police agencies prepared to meet the challenges of a new era of policing. It takes advantage of communities of interest by maximizing the current investment in policing to strengthen policing throughout the province. It creates efficient, effective and economical police agencies by reducing duplication of administrative services and integrating operational services. It allows for 24/7 coverage to the core urban areas of the province while still maintaining the connectedness to the community that is vital for delivering quality and accountable service.

The expansion proposal also provides the most financially viable option, involving the least amount of infrastructure change, the least amount of government expenditures and the best use of current available resources. Financially speaking, small-scale expansion of key urban areas, taking advantage of existing buildings and infrastructure as well as available police resources, is the most rational and well-founded choice for Nova Scotia. It also involves the least amount of change for the citizens of Nova Scotia. The connection to the community so critical to building solid community partnerships is best preserved by keeping current resources within their communities of interest.

The proposals in this document have been developed mindful of the need to maintain a balance of policing resources. The Halifax situation is an anomaly as it involves a significant number of resources. This situation could change regardless of any other process to review policing in the rest of the province, so the impact on this process is tempered. Although there will be an adjustment of provincial and municipal resources, the options in this paper do not unduly upset the balance of municipal and provincial resources.

The focus of this document has been on the long-term sustainability of policing in Nova Scotia. This will not be achieved without change. Regardless of the model of policing, some communities who have had a long history with a familiar style of policing would be facing considerable change. Such change could not occur without political leadership. Any decision to regionalize or expand police services must first and foremost enhance service delivery, but it must also be accountable and fiscally responsible in order to secure the needed political support.

There are other outstanding issues beyond the scope of this document that remain unresolved, such as service exchange, its impact on service delivery and the role of the Province in funding policing.



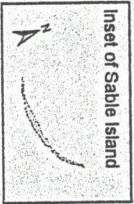
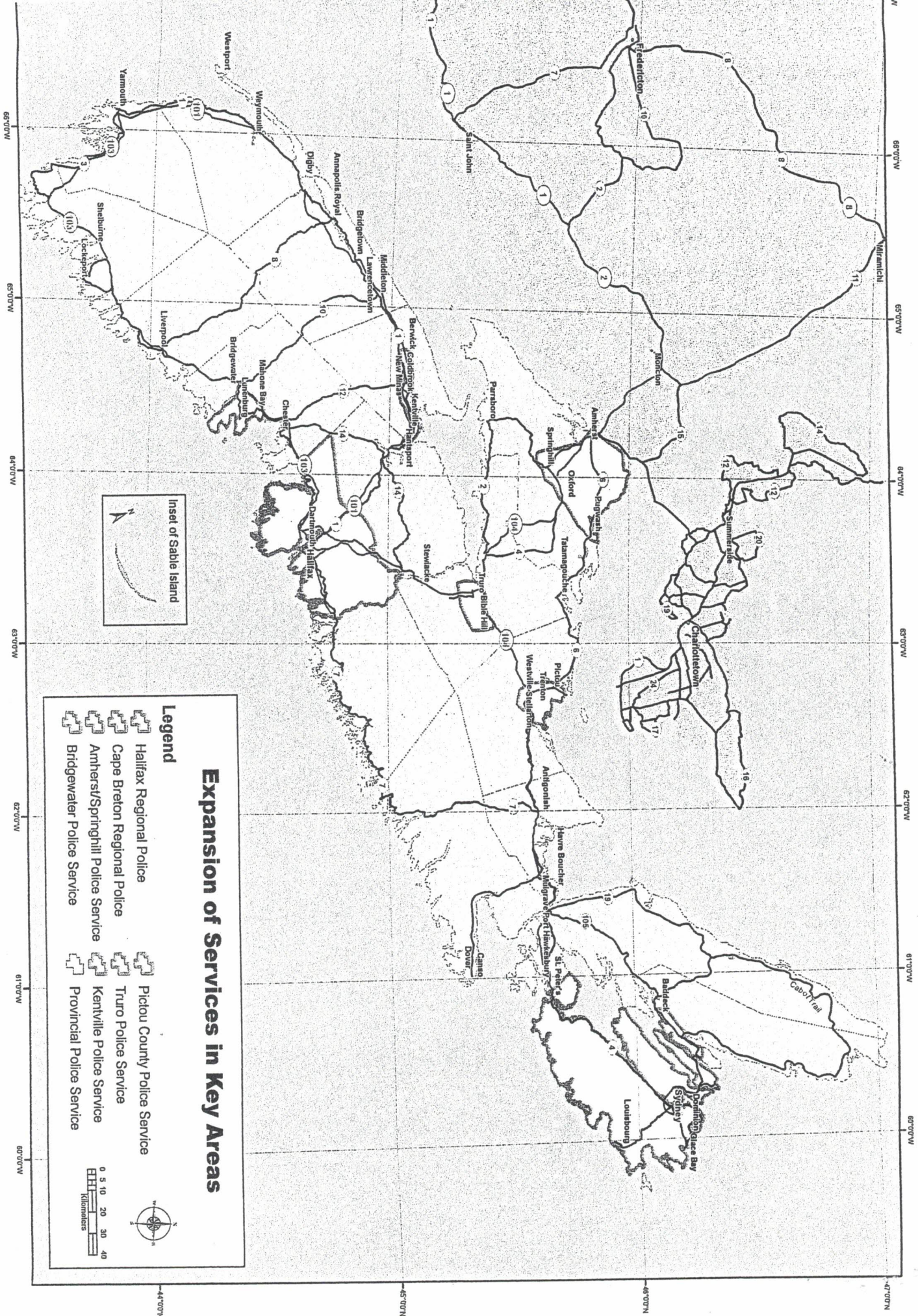
# Regionalization of Services

## Legend









-  Provincial Police
-  Chignecto Central Regional Police
-  Cape Breton Regional Police
-  Halifax Regional Police

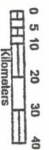






**Legend**

-  Halifax Regional Police
-  Cape Breton Regional Police
-  Amherst/Springhill Police Service
-  Bridgewater Police Service
-  Pictou County Police Service
-  Truro Police Service
-  Kentville Police Service
-  Provincial Police Service



**Expansion of Services in Key Areas**