



Crime Analysis

Taber Police Service

2022

By: Sergeant Steve Meggison

and

Arlene Wong, Administrative Assistant

INTRODUCTION

As a means of providing the context for this crime analyses, a brief overview of the Town of Taber and the Taber Police is provided below. As Taber is growing slowly, the context and makeup of the community does not frequently change and, as a result, provides an excellent base from which to conduct crime analysis.

The Taber Police Service has served the Town of Taber as its police service since 1904. The Town of Taber is situated geographically 52 kilometers east of Lethbridge, Alberta and 100 kilometers north of the Montana Alberta border. Taber acts as a regional hub for the residents within the M.D. of Taber; however, Taber itself has a population of 9212 people according to the 2022 Alberta.ca Regional Dashboard.

The Taber Police Service is an organization that is governed by the Taber Municipal Police Commission. The Police Act (2000) states that a police commission shall,

“Oversee the police service and for that purpose shall do the following:

- A) allocate funds that are provided by the council;
- B) establish policies providing for the efficient and effective policing;
- C) issue instructions, as necessary, to the chief of police in respect to the policies referred to in clause (b);
- D) ensure that sufficient persons are employed for the police service for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the police service.” (p.22)

The Taber Police has three core functions: the provision of Policing Services, Public Safety Dispatch and Support, and Community Support. In the Public Safety Dispatch area, our regional E911 communications center receives calls for service from the citizens of the Town of Taber and the M.D of Taber, they dispatch the Taber Police and local and regional fire services, and they forward ambulance calls to the Alberta Health Services Southern Communication Centre based out of Calgary. As well, they forward police calls for service to the RCMP when the incident is not within the Town of Taber. Communication Operators are also responsible for the monitoring of five Community Peace Officer programs throughout Alberta, as well as call taking/monitoring and dispatching for one Community Peace Officer program and for a private security company. Taber Police Service Communications Operators' responsibilities do not end with the dispatch function. Their responsibilities also include administrative support of Taber Police members through file creation, court/release document preparation and data information gathering to name a few.

As part of the policing service's function, we provide 24/7 policing to the Town of Taber. Included in that is the Regional Community Standards Unit (CSU), which services the bylaw enforcement needs of the community. As of October 2022, the CSU entered into a partnership with the Municipal District of Taber to provide bylaw enforcement to the M.D., including the hamlets of Enchant, Grassy Lake and Hays. The CSU will expand to two full-time Police Constables and two full-time bylaw students during the summer.

As of 2022, the authorized strength of the Taber Police Service is 19 police officers. The Province of Alberta funds one of these police officer positions; one

member is funded through and seconded to ALERT. There are currently 2 Auxiliary Police officers, 5 full-time and 3 part-time (Casual) Communication Operators, 1 Public Security Communication Manager, 1 administrative support position, 3 part-time casual prisoner guards and a large volunteer complement.

In terms of the community support function, the Taber Police Service works with various community agencies and volunteers to support the community as a whole.

Osborne (2001) wrote, “analysis is necessary to understand the scope of a problem and to be certain the problem is actually a problem. Sometimes crime and public disorder issues are public perception or a misinterpretation or under-analysis of statistics and do not exist in reality. Some problems, which are not so noticeable, are actually severe and have a strong negative impact on the community.” (p. 23). This quote speaks to the importance of conducting regular statistical analysis of crime in order to confirm or refute whether issues exist concerning crime in a particular area. The Alberta police standards require that each police service conduct a yearly crime analysis.

2022 marks the sixteenth year that the Taber Police Service is conducting a yearly crime analysis. This exercise will allow us to advise our stakeholders of current crime trends observed within the Town of Taber and it allows us to intelligently deploy our resources. It should also be noted that the Taber Police Service executive closely watches for trends of criminal activity that may be occurring within our community. These trends are examined in our police reports to the Commission. Our small size allows us to be fluid and adaptable to community concerns and, as such, the utilization of crime analyses, from a purely statistical and academic point of view, has less efficacy

than crime analyses within a larger police service that have more resources available to be deployed to address any identified issues.

RESEARCH METHODS

In order to gather the data used in this analysis an anecdotal review of the crime stats reported to Statistics Canada through the Police Reporting and Occurrence System (PROS) was conducted. In each case, the reports of crime were tallied and have been displayed both numerically and by chart. We utilized a 5-year window and gathered the data through manual searches of the databases. The date range for the data commenced January 1 of the given year and was terminated December 31 of that same year. The total reports of crime were tabulated and were compared against the previous years' numbers. As with all data, there is much speculation as to whether or not reports of crime are a determinant of actual crime within a given community. Although not infallible, we believe that given the time period specified and the scrutiny that is involved with inputting the data into our records management systems that, although we can't ensure accuracy, we believe the results are an actual reflection of the occurrences of reported crime within our community and, as such, can be used as a means of making educated guesses to help improve upon policing practices within our community.

RESULTS

The reports of crime can be broken down into five categories; Offences Against the Person, Property Offences, Other Criminal Code offences, Drug Offences and

Provincial Acts. All information gathered from this report can be found in the data obtained from the following table:

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>% Of Difference 2021 to 2022</u>
OFFENCES AGAINST PERSONS						
HOMICIDE						
Attempted Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Murder	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0%
<i>TOTAL HOMICIDE</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0%
ROBBERY	3	1	0	2	2	0%
ASSAULTS						
Sexual Assault	10	12	8	9	14	56%
Assault (Level 1)	70	58	60	48	57	19%
Assault Weap/Bodyhrm	20	16	6	20	10	-50%
Aggravated Assault	3	1	3	3	2	-33%
Assault on Police	8	0	6	5	8	60%
<i>TOTAL ASSAULTS</i>	107	87	83	85	91	7%
KIDNAPPING / HOSTAGE / ABDUCTIONS	3	4	4	1	4	300%
<i>TOTAL OFFENCES AGAINST PERSONS</i>	113	92	88	88	97	10%
PROPERTY OFFENCES						
BREAK AND ENTER	32	49	33	23	57	148%
THEFTS OF MOTOR VEHICLES	24	26	19	24	12	-50%
THEFTS OVER \$5000	9	10	7	4	6	50%
THEFTS UNDER \$5000	185	242	156	97	122	26%
POSSESSION OF STOLEN PROPERTY	22	31	26	12	19	58%
FRAUDS	37	72	53	68	46	-32%
<i>TOTAL PROPERTY OFFENCES</i>	309	430	294	228	262	15%

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>% Of Difference 2021 to 2022</u>
OTHER CRIMINAL CODE						
PROPERTY DAMAGE	133	156	125	94	95	1%
DISTURB THE PEACE	157	149	107	124	134	8%
CRIMINAL HARASSMENT	25	11	10	15	7	-53%
UTTERING THREATS	65	44	40	40	42	5%
BREACH OF PROBATION/BAIL VIOLATION	165	202	13	15	109	627%
IMPAIRED OPERATION	51	54	34	30	36	20%
TOTAL OTHER CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCES	596	616	329	318	423	33%

DRUG OFFENCES

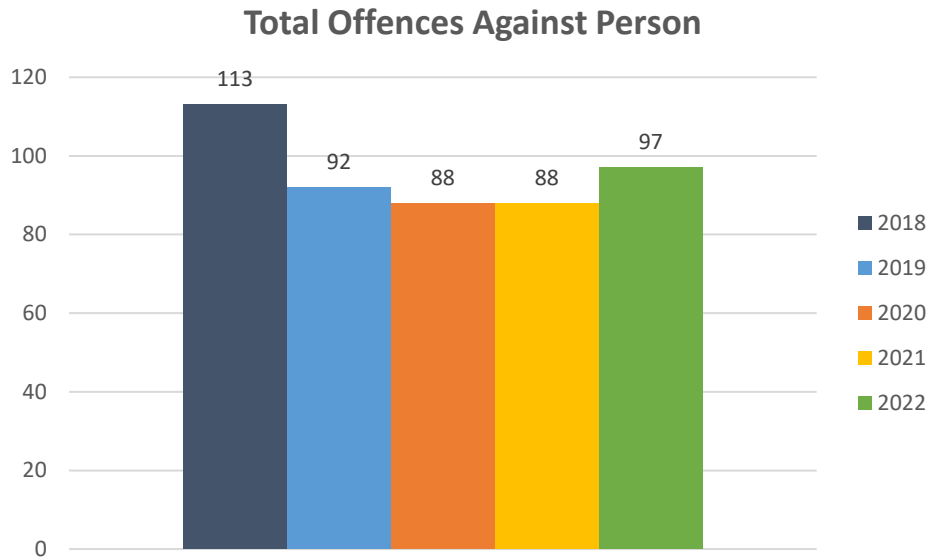
COCAINE POSSESSION	10	5	2	2	4	100%
COCAINE TRAFFICKING	5	5	7	4	9	125%
METHAMPHETAMINE POSSESSION	11	17	10	8	6	-25%
METHAMPHETAMINE TRAFFICKING	1	7	1	3	2	-33%
OPIOD POSSESSION	1	1	2	0	4	400%
OPIOD TRAFFICKING	0	5	2	0	4	400%
OTHER	8	6	4	5	1	-80%
TOTAL DRUG OFFENCES (Including Marihuana)	65	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL DRUG OFFENCES (Excluding Marihuana)	36	46	28	22	30	36%

PROVINCIAL ACTS

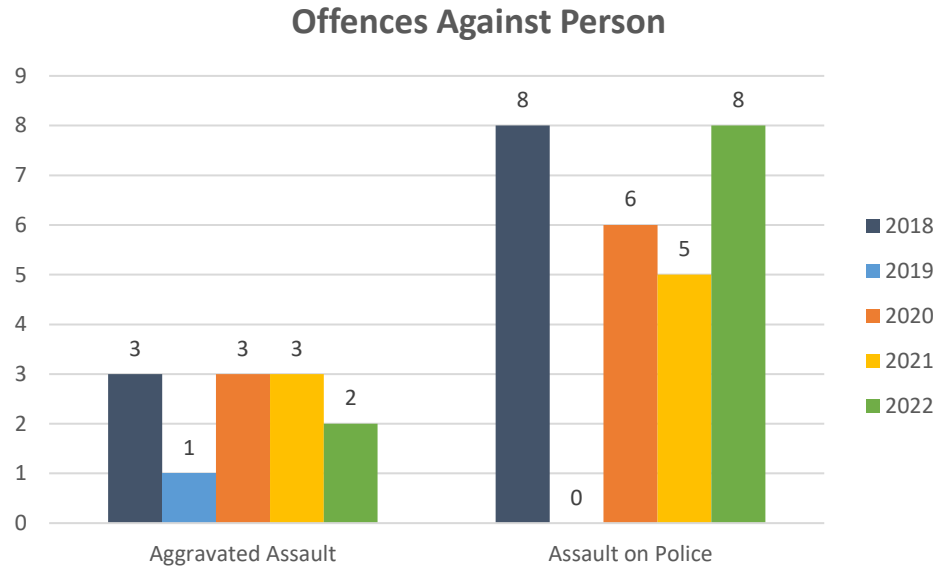
CANNABIS POSSESSION UNDER 30g	n/a	30	17	6	10	67%
CHILD WELFARE	15	14	22	6	11	83%
LIQUOR ACT	134	128	79	73	53	-27%
MENTAL HEALTH ACT	111	92	103	112	98	-13%
OTHER PROVINCIAL STATS	2007	1916	1567	1816	1710	-6%
COLLISIONS	148	135	100	127	132	4%
MUNICIPAL BYLAWS	501	495	467	381	517	36%
TOTAL PROVINCIAL ACTS (Including Marihuana)	2916	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL PROVINCIAL ACTS (Excluding Marihuana)	2940	2810	2355	2521	2530	0%

OFFENCES AGAINST PERSON

The Offences Against Persons category of crime relates to all reported incidents of crime that directly involve a person as a victim of the crime. Some examples are, but not limited to, assaults on police, assaults, sexual assault, abductions, etc.

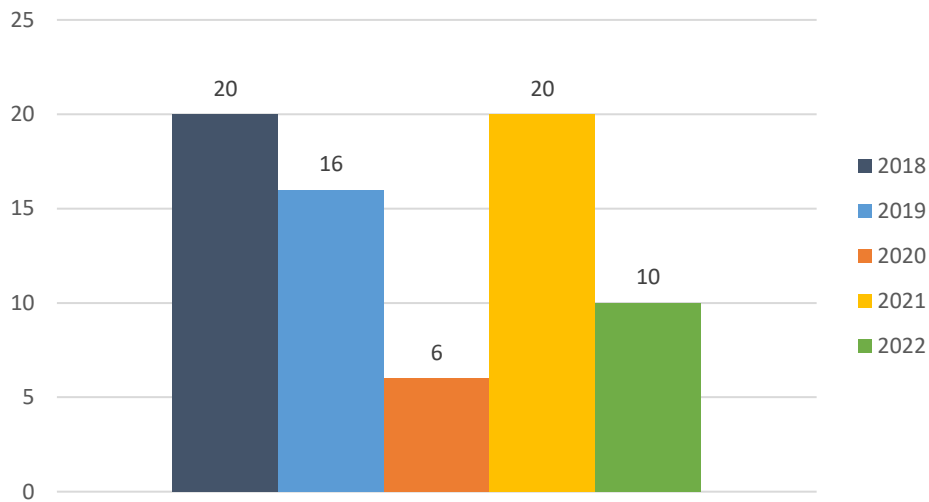


Overall, the 2022 crime analysis determined there was a 10 % increase in the total combined Offences Against Persons crime rate. This means that if you lived in Taber in 2022, there was a 1.05 % chance of you being the victim of an offence against person. These numbers are based off the 2022 Alberta.ca Regional Dashboard numbers where it was reported that the Town of Taber had a population of 9212.



Of the 10 offence types that are included in the Offences Against Person category, half (5) revealed increases in 2022. Kidnapping/Hostage (Forcible Confinement) & Abductions increased 300% (4), however those numbers are similar to both 2019 and 2020 (4 each year). Of the 4 reported, 2 were cleared by charge and 2 were unfounded. The Assault on Police reported the next highest increase (60%) for a total of 8. This is the highest it has recorded since 8 in 2018. While Aggravated Assaults remained relatively the same as previous years, it should be noted that Assault With a Weapon/Causing Bodily Harm dropped 50%, from 20 in 2021 to 10 in 2022.

Assault with Weapon/Bodily Harm

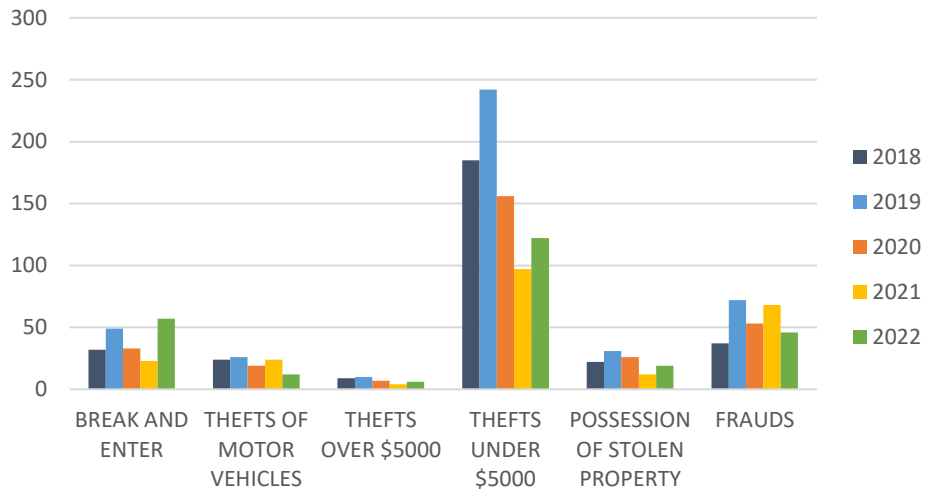


In 2022, the number of reports that the Taber Police Service received regarding sexual offences increased by 56%, from 9 occurrences in 2021 to 14 in 2022. Of those 14 occurrences, 6 resulted in formal charges being laid, 2 were determined to be unfounded, 2 victims declined to proceed, 2 reported insufficient evidence to proceed, and 2 are still under investigation. It is worth noting that none of the sexual offences comprised of stranger on stranger occurrences. These numbers are still lower when compared to 2016 when the Taber Police Service recorded its highest sexual offence report levels (19) since the inception of yearly crime analysis.

PROPERTY OFFENCES

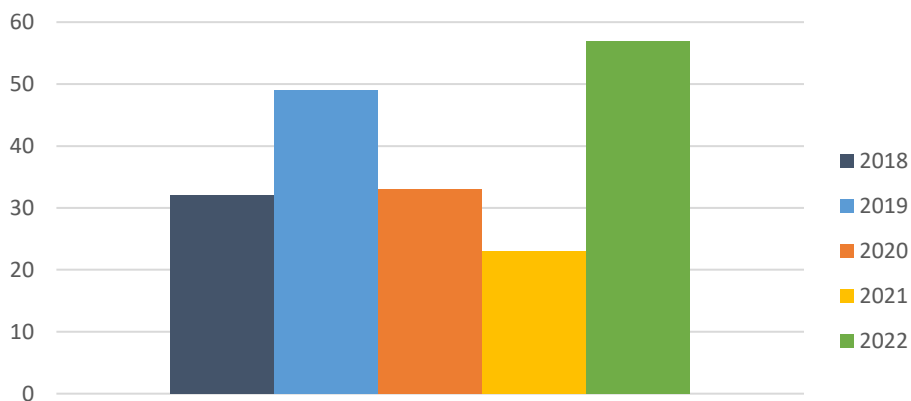
Property Offences are crime types where an item belonging to someone else is the subject of an offence. Examples of property offences include theft, possession of stolen property, break and enter, frauds, etc.

Property Offences



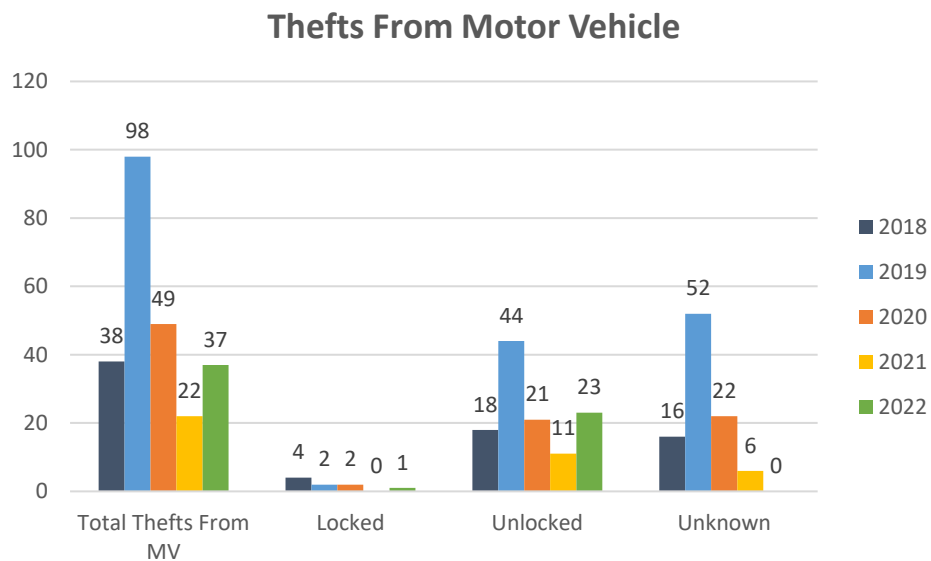
There was an overall 15% increase in Property Offences in 2022, which followed a 23% decrease in 2021. There were 430 property related offences reported in 2019, 294 reports in 2020, 228 in 2021 and 262 in 2022. The large increase in 2019 was forecasted in our 2018 crime analysis; however, a global pandemic was not forecast for 2020. The effects of the pandemic continued into 2021 and early 2022, however 2022 appears to reveal a slow return to our 5-year average.

Break & Enter



The Taber Police Service observed increases in 4 of the 6 Property Offence categories. The two categories revealing the largest increases were regarding Break & Enter (148%) and Possession of Stolen Property (58%). There were 57 reported break and enters in 2022, compared to 23 in 2021. Of the 57 reported occurrences, only 48 were determined to be actual. Break & Enter – Business and Break and Enter – Residence both reported 19 actual occurrences. Of the 48 occurrences, 11 were cleared by charge; a 27% clearance rate. The increase in the Break and Enter Category is a direct result of a new criminal element residing in Taber.

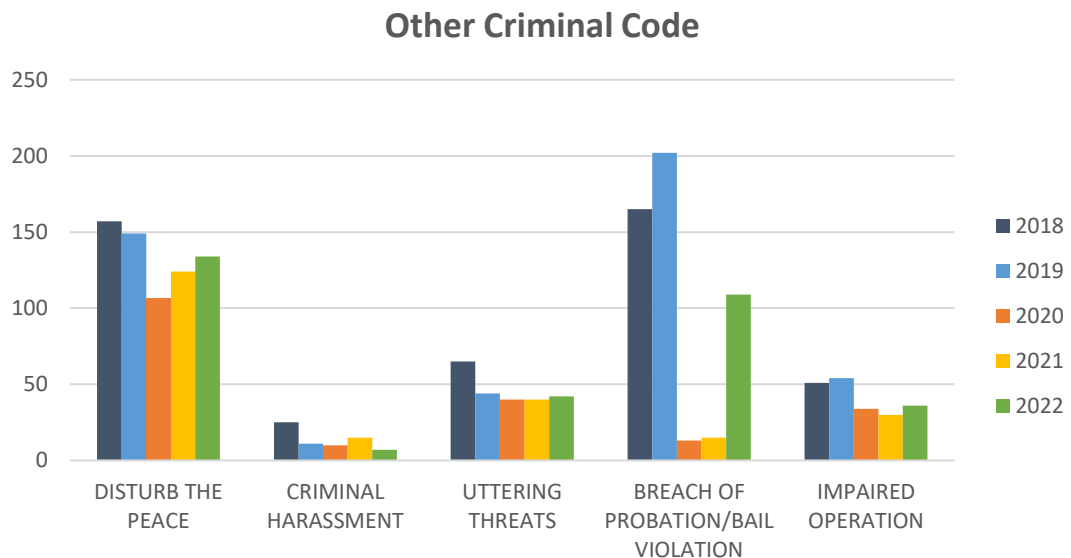
Unexpectedly, the Fraud category decreased 32%; 46 occurrences were reported in 2022, compared to 68 occurrences in 2021 and 53 in 2020. According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) 2021 Annual Report, in 2020, the CAFC observed 165 million in reported victim losses. This number rose to \$379 million in 2021; it will be interesting to see what the results are for 2022.



Thefts from Motor Vehicles accounted for 30% (37 out of 122) of all reports of Thefts Under \$5,000. Of the 37 reports of thefts from motor vehicles, 24 occurrences involved items being stolen from the interior of unattended vehicles, 8 involved licence plates or fuel being stolen, and 5 were unfounded complaints. The interior thefts showed that 23 of the vehicles were determined to have been unlocked. Only 1 of the occurrences revealed a window broken to gain entry. These statistics confirm that ensuring that doors are locked when vehicles are left unattended would likely decrease the number of reportable thefts within these categories.

OTHER CRIMINAL CODE

Although not all encompassing, the offence description of Other Criminal Code refers to offences that do not fall into the categories of offences against person, drug or property offences. Examples of these types of offences are Disturbing the Peace, Criminal Harassment, Uttering Threats, Breach of Probation, Impaired Driving, etc.



2022 saw a 33% increase in this crime category, resulting in 423 reports in 2022 compared to 318 reports in 2021. After an increase of 50% was noted in the Criminal Harassment statistics in 2021, 2022 revealed a 53% decrease with 7 occurrences in 2022 as compared to 15 in 2021.

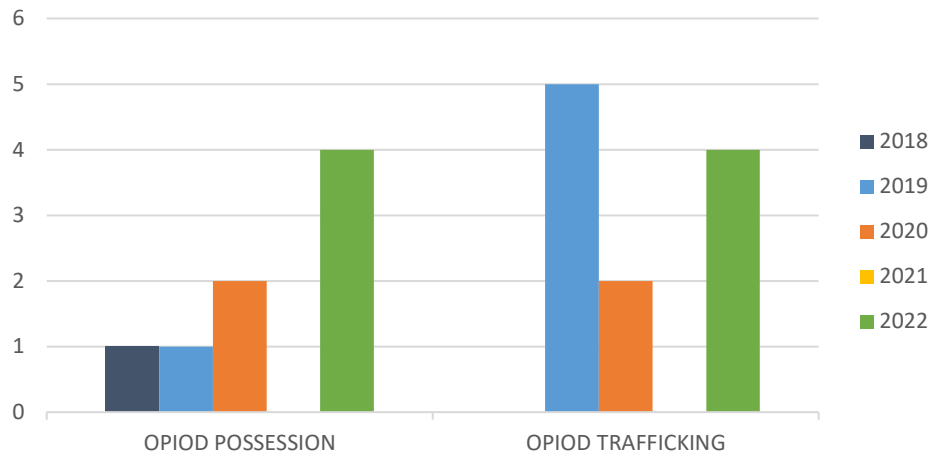
The Breach of Probation/Bail Violation category showed an expected 627% increase; 109 reports in 2022 compared to 15 in 2021. Pre-pandemic numbers were 202 in 2019 and 165 in 2018. Fail to Appear in Court and Fail to Comply with Release charges accounted for 83% of the 109 reports. These types of charges were generally not pursued during the pandemic due to no in-person court appearances. These numbers are expected to continue to climb now that the pandemic has ended.

Impaired driving statistics presented a 20% increase with 36 occurrences reported in 2022 compared to 30 in 2021. Out of the 36, 31 were actual and 5 were unfounded. Of those 31, 1 resulted in criminal charges (MVC), 26 resulted in IRS suspensions being issued and 4 occurrences were scored as insufficient evidence to proceed.

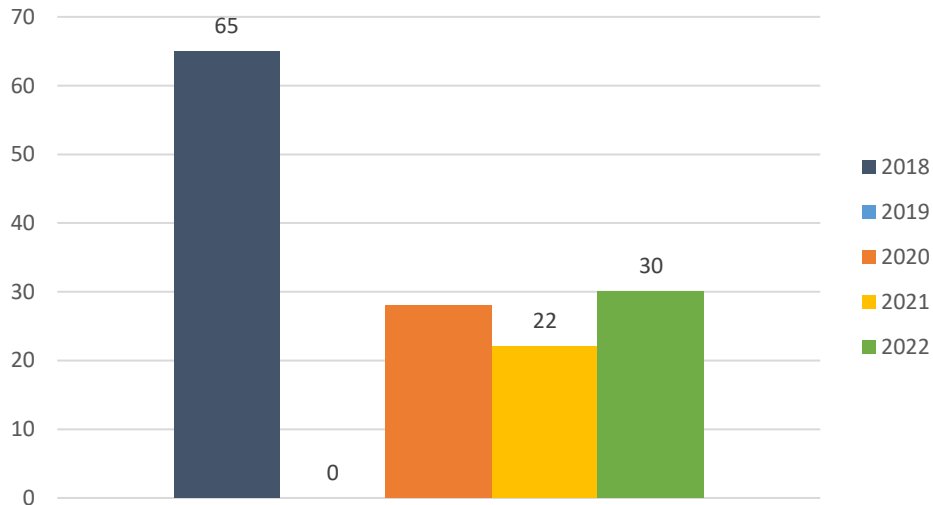
DRUG OFFENCES

Drug offences are those crimes reported that involve contraventions of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Examples of crimes that are included within this category are possession and trafficking of all illegal drugs and production of illegal drugs. Cannabis related offence types have been removed from this section and placed in the Provincial Act crime type due to the changes in federal law.

Drug Offences Opioid-Related Offences



Total Drugs

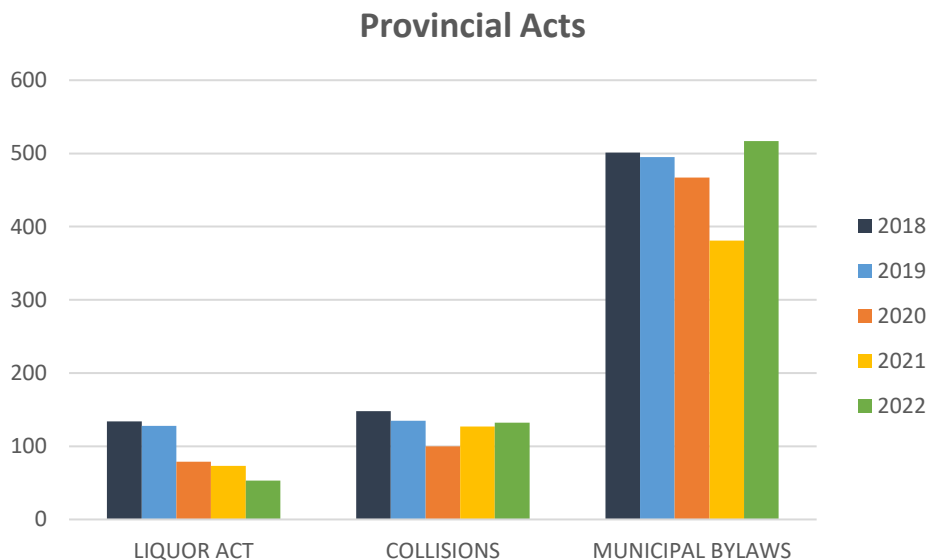


In 2022, there was a total category increase of 36%. Two categories showed a 400% increase, both Opioid Possession and Opioid Trafficking reported 4 occurrences compared to 0 in 2021. Cocaine Possession increased 100% (4 reports in 2022 compared 2 in 2021), and Cocaine Trafficking increased 125% (9 reports in 2022 compared to 4 in

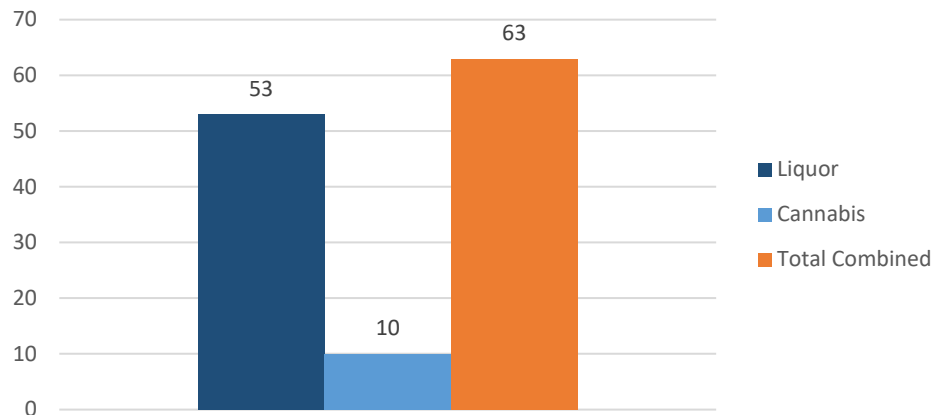
2021). These increases can be correlated with the work of the Intelligence officer and the investigations regarding drug targets in our community. A dedicated General Investigative position, hopefully in 2023, should see a further increase in these categories.

PROVINCIAL ACTS

Provincial Acts are the numerous laws enforced by police that are enacted through an Act of the Provincial Legislature of Alberta. Although there are hundreds of these Acts, this report will deal with reports of crime under The Child Youth Enhancement Act, The Gaming, Liquor, and Cannabis Act, and The Mental Health Act. Other Provincial Statutes, Traffic Collisions and Municipal Bylaws are also measured in this section. Although not criminal complaints, a large proportion of police resources are dedicated to the enforcement and investigation of Provincial Acts. 2022 is the fourth year since cannabis was added to the Gaming and Liquor Act.



2022 Liquor and Cannabis

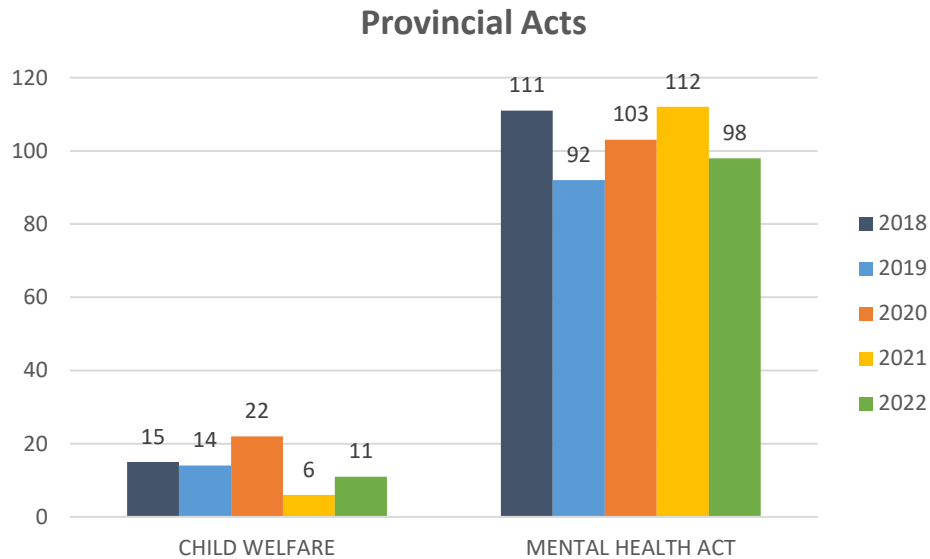


The 2022 numbers revealed a less than 1% increase, from 2021, in the number of reports to the Taber Police Service concerning Provincial Acts. The largest increase was reported in Child Welfare occurrences, up 73 %, from 6 reports in 2021 to 11 in 2022. Each report made to the Taber Police Service of a child welfare nature is shared with the Taber CFS office to ensure each organization involved can fulfill their mandates and responsibilities. South Country Child and Family Services continues to be an important stakeholder/partner of the Taber Police Service in ensuring the safety of the children within our community. Further to this, our partnership with the Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Center will foster a multidisciplinary team approach to these types of calls to service.

A 6% decrease was observed in other provincial stats, which would include traffic violations. This category is made up of 14 offences listed under the Traffic Safety Act. Some of these offences are moving traffic violations, fail to stop or remain at an accident

scene, and motor vehicle insurance coverage violations, to name a few. Of the 1710 reports of offences included in the Other Provincial Stats section, 1508 resulted in charges being laid; a slight decrease of 72 charges from 2021. Collisions saw a continued increase as they rose to 132 from 127 in 2021 and 100 in 2020.

The numbers for the municipal bylaw occurrences increased in 2022 to 517 occurrences as compared to 381 in 2021. This is an increase of 36% and the highest number of occurrences over the last five years.



Surprisingly, Mental Health calls to service decreased 13%, from 112 reports in 2021 to 98 in 2022.

CONCLUSION

In an ever-changing climate the Taber Police Service can use crime analysis statistics to assist in an educated response to various criminal concerns within our

community. A snapshot of the issues of concern are reviewed so we can direct a focused response. The 2020 Crime Analysis was an anomaly unlike anything seen in many decades. The obvious reason to attribute to this anomaly is the Covid 19 pandemic and the effects it created, starting in March of 2020. With the pandemic “ending” in 2022 and as expected, as already mentioned in this report, increases were observed in four of the five crime categories. Two of the categories saw increases of over 30%.

The Offences Against Persons category revealed a 10% increase in reports. This can lead to an inference that Taber is still a safe community. Property Offences increased 15%, after a significant 23% decrease in 2021 and a significant 46% decrease in 2020).

Our total Drug Offences increased by 36%, with Opioid Possession and Trafficking (400%) and Cocaine Possession (100%) and Cocaine Trafficking (125%) our biggest issues. A continued focus on drug education, community partnerships, particularly the work of the school resource officer, and building resiliency in youth, will be an important tool to assist in this issue.

Mental Health Act occurrences have decreased slightly, and it appears this trend may continue as the Covid 19 pandemic came to an end in 2022. According to the Statistics Canada Community Health Survey (2022), compared to pre-pandemic, more Canadians report having much better, somewhat better or about the same mental health – 66% up from 55%. The continued ability of the Taber Police Service to foster and grow our community partnerships is imperative to ensure effective response to this societal issue. The current Hub and Spoke model within our community regarding mental health is an example of an effective response.

The Police Executive Research Forum (2014), advised, “At the most fundamental level, police have expanded their mission, taking on the goal of preventing crime and

reducing crime rates, rather than merely responding after crimes are committed. Today's best police departments are always looking for ways to be proactive rather than reactive." (p.42). This has been a consistent way of doing business for the Taber Police Service and it is crucial that it continues to ensure effective community response. As drug use continues, the need for social supports will continue. This involves continued partnerships with addictions, mental health and victim services workers and advocates. From a policing perspective, it is important to continue enforcement and investigations regarding these individuals. The continuation of intelligence gathering, source cultivation and aggressive police work will be a vital part of the entire body of work that will be required to help combat this issue.

The Taber Police Service, through strategic planning and proper resource allocation is prepared to respond effectively. This crime analysis can be utilized as research to further promote and ensure the mission statement of the Taber Police Service is fulfilled.

We know that the pandemic greatly affected and decreased our crime rate, as the 2020, 2021 and to some extent the 2022 Crime Analysis have shown. It is our belief that the 2023 Crime Analysis, especially when compared to the pre-pandemic 2019 Crime Analysis will reveal a crime rate more akin to our 5-year average.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Open Government Website. Retrieved from:
<https://www.regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/taber/population/#/?from=2018&to=2022>
- 2
- Canada Anti-Fraud Center (2021). Statistics. Retrieved from:
<https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/annual-reports-2021-rapports-annuels-eng.htm>
- Osborne, D (2001). Four Position Papers on the Role of the Crime Analyst in Policing. Retrieved from: https://www.ialeia.org/docs/Crime_Policing_Document.doc
- Police Executive Research Forum. (2014). *Future trends in Policing*. Washington, D.C; Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. Retrieved from <http://www.policeforum.org>.
- Province of Alberta. (2016). Police Act. Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000 Chapter P-17. Edmonton, Ab. Alberta Queens Printer
- Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey (2022).
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb11/en/tv.action?pid=1310086501>