

Community Safety Town Hall

Hosted by Councillor Rowena Santos

Summary Report

Hosted by	Councillor Rowena Santos, Brampton Wards 1 & 5
Date	April 22, 2026
Location	Century Gardens Recreation Centre, Brampton
Registered Attendees	104 registered; 58 attended in person
Participants	Residents, Mayor Brown, Deputy Chief Mark Dapat, Superintendent Harry Dhillon, Peel Regional Police officers (22 Division, Community Mobilization, Road Safety, Crime Prevention), Community Safety & Well-Being Office
Format	Interactive listening session. Residents submitted concerns and solutions on post-it notes, which were clustered by theme. Verbal discussion followed with Peel Police leadership responding in real time. Findings from a prior petty crime survey and telephone town hall were distributed as handouts.
Related Activities	Petty Crime Survey (161 respondents); Telephone Town Hall (~8,000 participants); Peel Police Services Board delegation (Friday follow-up)

Executive Summary

On April 22, 2026, Councillor Santos hosted a Community Safety Town Hall at Century Gardens Recreation Centre, attended by 58 residents, Mayor Brown, Deputy Chief Mark Dapat, Superintendent Harry Dhillon, and officers from Peel Regional Police. The session was designed as an interactive listening exercise to capture resident concerns and identify actionable solutions.

The top concerns raised by residents centred on overnight car door checks and vehicle break-ins, porch piracy, speeding and dangerous driving, a lack of police follow-up eroding public trust, fraud targeting seniors, youth safety following a recent shooting, and the strain of mental health calls on police resources. Residents also flagged shortcomings with the 311 service request system and called for more visible community policing and public education, particularly for seniors.

Mayor Brown outlined significant progress on police hiring (approximately 800 new officers this term), 911 response times (reduced from 3 minutes to 5 seconds), a 50% reduction in auto thefts, and advancing federal legislation on bail reform and lawful access. High-resolution intersection cameras are now operational, and a drone program is being pursued.

Peel Police leadership acknowledged gaps in follow-up and customer service, and committed to building out a dedicated online reporting bureau with case callbacks. Officers introduced the Road Watch portal, the online reporting tool, and Crime Stoppers as key channels for resident reporting. The Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team was highlighted as a model for redirecting mental health calls away from frontline officers.

Key action items include improving police follow-up processes, translating 911 misuse materials into multiple languages, promoting reporting tools through accessible formats including print, advancing stop-arm camera technology, completing the 311 system revamp by September, and continuing provincial advocacy on speed cameras and driver licensing standards. Findings will be presented at the Peel Police Services Board meeting on April 24, 2026.

1. Mayor's Remarks

Mayor Brown spoke at the opening of the meeting. He described community safety as his top priority and expressed optimism that conditions are improving. Key points included:

- **Police hiring:** Peel Regional Police has scaled from roughly 25–50 new officers per year to 300 last year and 200 this year, totalling approximately 800 new officers this term.
- **911 response times:** Average wait times have dropped from 3 minutes to 5 seconds through staffing increases, next-generation 911 technology, and diversion of non-emergency/misuse calls.
- **Auto theft reduction:** Down 50% following advocacy that led to cargo scanners at the Port of Montreal and coordinated enforcement efforts.
- **Bail reform:** Legislation is now before the Senate after years of municipal advocacy, addressing repeat offenders released on bail.
- **Lawful access:** Legislation before the House of Commons would allow police to identify device owners in minutes rather than the current 30–45 days, aligning Canada with other Five Eyes nations.
- **Intersection cameras:** High-resolution 360-degree cameras are being installed at major intersections city-wide, already contributing to active investigations.
- **Drone program:** The city is pursuing Transport Canada approval to deploy drones for suspect pursuit, modelled on programs in U.S. cities.
- **Speed camera repurposing:** Approximately 200 decommissioned speed cameras are being repurposed for police investigations and red-light enforcement.

2. Resident Concerns and Responses

The following section summarizes the primary concerns raised by residents and the responses provided by Peel Regional Police and city representatives.

2.1 Overnight Car Door Checks and Vehicle Break-Ins

Resident Concern: This was the number one issue from both the petty crime survey and the post-it note exercise. Residents shared doorbell camera footage showing the same individuals checking car doors across multiple neighbourhoods between 1:00 and 5:00 a.m. One street alone experienced nine vehicles stolen in a single month.

Police/City Response: Deputy Chief Dapat acknowledged police cannot be everywhere and emphasized the "offender–place–opportunity" framework. Residents were urged to lock vehicles and eliminate opportunity. Dedicated officers and the CERT team patrol identified complaint zones, with a focus on main arteries where suspects exit neighbourhoods. Officers stressed that reporting — even when a crime is not completed — is essential to directing resources.

2.2 Porch Piracy

Resident Concern: The second most cited concern in the petty crime survey. Residents described watching thefts happen in real time on cameras but feeling unable to act.

Police/City Response: Police recommended using the new online reporting tool to upload video and photos. Practical advice included scheduling deliveries for times when someone is home, asking neighbours to collect packages, and using camera alert features.

2.3 Lack of Police Follow-Up and Erosion of Trust

Resident Concern: Only 1 in 5 survey respondents reported incidents to police, primarily because they believe nothing will be done. Multiple residents described being told their call was low-priority, being redirected without follow-up, or receiving no callback. One resident described a neighbour physically chasing down a suspect at 3:00 a.m. out of frustration with the lack of police response.

Police/City Response: Deputy Chief Dapat and Superintendent Dhillon acknowledged the organization has fallen short on customer service and follow-up. A new online reporting bureau with dedicated sworn officers and civilian staff is being built to provide callbacks and case updates. Police emphasized that investigations often continue behind the scenes — evidence collection, surveillance, and warrant processes take time. The leadership committed to addressing the follow-up gap at the divisional level.

2.4 Speeding and Traffic Safety

Resident Concern: Speeding was the dominant theme from the post-it notes. Specific issues included ignored stop signs, speeds of 70–80+ km/h on residential streets, unsafe U-turns at signalized intersections, and school zone violations. One resident reported a pet killed by a speeding driver and requested radar speed signs.

Police/City Response: Constable Damico introduced the Road Watch program, an educational warning initiative where a letter is sent to the registered vehicle owner. A new online portal for general driving complaints was launched, allowing residents to submit specific intersections and peak times for targeted enforcement. Deputy Chief Dapat noted that road safety and traffic complaints are among the top three call categories for Peel Regional Police and urged residents to report consistently.

2.5 Speed Cameras

Resident Concern: Multiple residents expressed strong support for reinstating speed cameras. Several noted the cameras had been effective deterrents, particularly in school zones.

Police/City Response: Councillor Santos confirmed Brampton had operated 186 cameras across 183 school zones with an 11 km/h threshold before the provincial government discontinued the program. The city attempted to negotiate a modified model (first-time warnings, fines during school hours only, stunt driving enforcement at night) but was unsuccessful. The cameras are being repurposed for crime investigations and red-light enforcement. Stop-arm camera technology for school buses is also being explored, with a report expected April 29. Residents were encouraged to advocate to their provincial representatives.

2.6 Fraud Targeting Seniors

Resident Concern: Fraud was raised as a significant concern, with several attendees identifying as victims of text message, social media, or banking fraud. A resident suggested the fraud prevention presentation be delivered at the regional level to reach long-term care homes.

Police/City Response: The crime prevention unit confirmed fraud presentations are their most requested offering and are available for any group of any size. Deputy Chief Dapat committed to delivering a fraud presentation at the Police Services Board meeting (televised) and to connecting with the Region of Peel's Senior Services Division to extend outreach to long-term care facilities.

2.7 Youth Safety and the Weybridge Trail Shooting

Resident Concern: A resident raised the targeted shooting near a local elementary school, describing youth who feel unsafe walking home or to the bus stop. The resident also reported seeing known offenders still present in the neighbourhood despite repeated reports with video evidence.

Police/City Response: Deputy Chief Dapat noted that approximately 80% of police calls are not criminal in nature, and that many crimes are committed by individuals facing mental health, addiction, or socioeconomic challenges. Investigations continue even when results are not immediately visible. The deputy chief emphasized the need for upstream community partnerships (e.g., organizations like Covenant House conducting outreach in schools) and prevention-focused programming.

2.8 Mental Health Calls Straining Police Resources

Resident Concern: Mental health was identified as one of the top three call categories for Peel Regional Police. Residents asked whether the issue was being elevated to provincial and federal advocacy.

Police/City Response: The Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team (MCRRT), in place since 2020, pairs police officers with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) professionals for serious mental health calls. A separate CMHA-only response stream handles lower-level calls to free officers for criminal matters. The long-term goal is for certain mental health calls to be handled entirely by health professionals without police involvement.

2.9 311 System Failures

Resident Concern: Residents reported receiving "resolved" status notifications while the underlying issue (e.g., garbage, high grass, abandoned vehicles) remained unaddressed.

Police/City Response: Councillor Santos explained the root cause: the 311 triage database did not integrate with operating department databases (bylaw, parks, building permits). A complete revamp is underway, modelling the resident-facing status tracker on an Amazon-style package tracking experience. Testing begins in June with a full launch targeted for September. Councillor Santos indicated she may recruit residents from the community to participate in the testing phase.

2.10 Community Policing and Public Education

Resident Concern: Several residents said they had never heard of the online reporting tool and criticized the absence of visible community policing — bike patrol officers, school visits, and proactive outreach. A resident recommended Peel Police mail physical information cards, especially for seniors who are not comfortable with technology.

Police/City Response: Police acknowledged the need for improved public awareness. Councillor Santos distributed a community safety booklet (produced from neighbourhood association feedback) containing tear-out sheets with emergency contacts, a CPTED home safety audit, and a "know your neighbour" form. An action item was noted to translate the 911 misuse campaign into multiple languages and distribute materials at senior community events. The online crime mapping tool was also highlighted as an underused resource.

It is worth noting that several residents and post-it note submissions also acknowledged positive experiences with Peel Regional Police, including prompt responses, follow-up calls, and successful apprehensions. One resident described a catalytic converter theft that resulted in a suspect being apprehended within days, with a personal callback from the investigating officer. The meeting reflected broad recognition of the progress being made alongside the challenges that remain.

3. Action Items and Solutions

Policing and Enforcement

- Build out the online reporting bureau with dedicated staff to provide case follow-up and callbacks to residents.
- Deliver a fraud prevention presentation at the Police Services Board meeting and connect with the Region's Senior Services Division for long-term care outreach.
- Deploy targeted enforcement at intersections and times identified through the Road Watch portal.
- Address divisional-level gaps in follow-up and customer service at 22 Division.

Technology and Infrastructure

- Continue installation of high-resolution 360-degree cameras at major intersections.
- Pursue Transport Canada approval for drone deployment.
- Repurpose decommissioned speed cameras for crime investigation and red-light enforcement.
- Advance stop-arm camera technology for school buses (report expected April 29).
- Complete the 311 system revamp with integrated databases and resident-facing status tracking (testing June, launch September).

Community Engagement and Prevention

- Translate the 911 misuse campaign into multiple languages and distribute at senior community events.
- Promote the online reporting tool, crime mapping tool, Road Watch portal, and Crime Stoppers through accessible formats including print materials for seniors.
- Encourage formation of neighbourhood associations (20 signatures for city affiliation; grants of \$1,500 in year one and \$2,000 in year two).
- Explore upstream youth engagement programming in partnership with community organizations.

Provincial Advocacy

- Continue advocacy for reinstatement of speed cameras or an alternative deterrence model.
- Press the provincial government to implement the Auditor General's 18 recommendations on driver licensing standards (December 2023 report).
- Support passage of lawful access legislation at the federal level.

4. Next Steps

1. Councillor Santos to delegate findings and feedback to the Peel Police Services Board.
2. Automated feedback survey to be distributed to registered attendees for post-event input.
3. Councillor Santos's office to continue tracking action items and communicating progress through the ward website and neighbourhood channels.