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CRIME

DOES HALTON HAVE A GUN VIOLENCE ISSUE?

#HIGHWAYPIRATES: GUNS, DRUGS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

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This story is part of a Metroland-wide series on drugs, guns and human trafficking happening along the major highways that run through our communities. For more on this topic visit Highway Pirates — guns, drugs and human trafficking.

As street gangs from large urban centres made their way across the province to operate their criminal enterprises — including drug trafficking, fire-

arms-related offences, and human trafficking — the impact can also be felt in the region.

That's according to Det. Sgt. Paul Foley, of Halton Police's Drug and Human Trafficking Unit.

"Our communities have experienced some gun violence, which has been perpetrated by street level gangs," Foley said, noting that there hasn't been a high degree of organized and structured gang activity at a grassroots level.

Despite the increase in frequency of firearms related seizures and incidents in recent years, a list that includes a string of "violent" bank robberies earlier in the year, he says the region continues to be the safest large municipality in Canada, as backed by a Statistics Canada report

last year.

"Halton has the lowest crime severity index of all municipalities with a population of 100,000 or more for the 14th straight year," he said.

The region, like others, is at risk to street gang activity due to the highways travelling across its boundaries, and Halton Police continues to work with provincial and municipal partners to strategically address gang and weapon related issues, Foley said.

Internally, the police have implemented a co-ordinated response involving a wide number of investigate and support units to address violent crime associated to gang activity.

As part of the public education initiative, they work with special interest community groups, and appoint high school liaison officers to reach out to the youth in the community.

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