# Artificial Intelligence & Public Safety

Key insights from the AI: The New Frontier of Public Safety panel discussion hosted at the 2024 Safety of Our Cities Conference.

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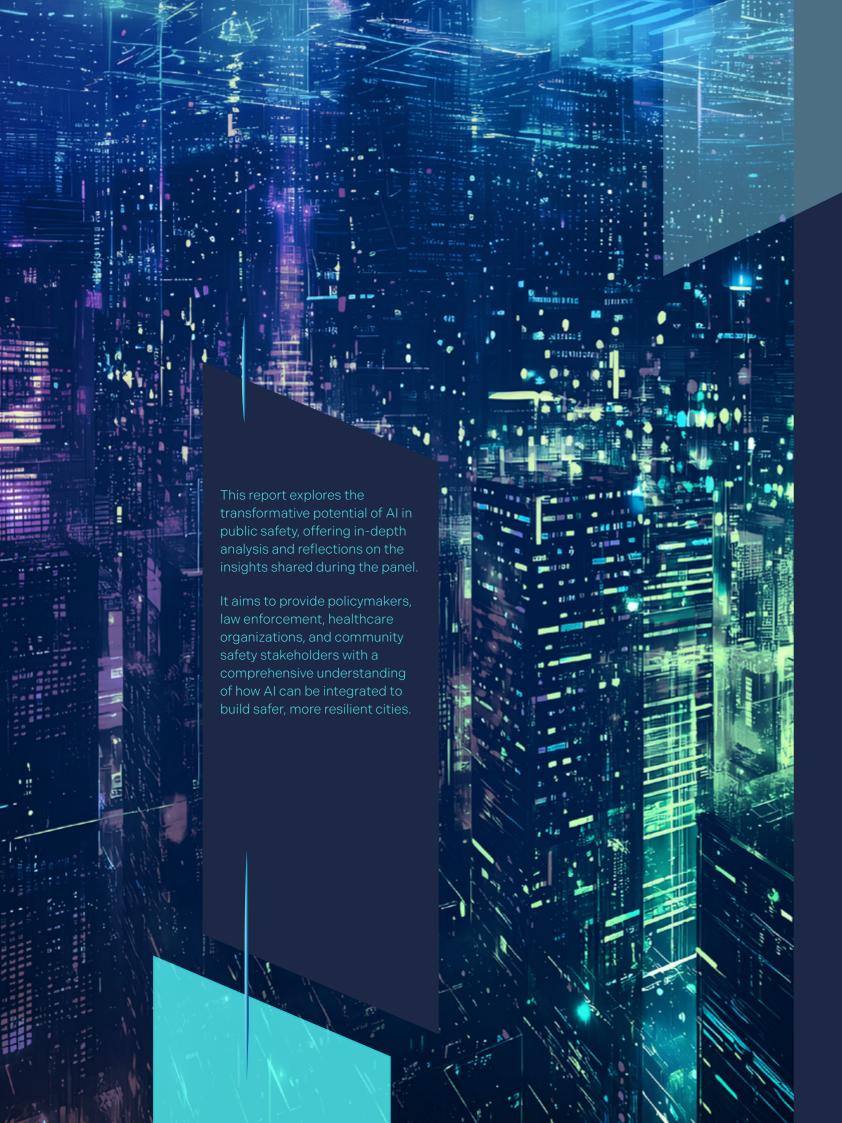
By: Paralucent™

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This report explores the transformative potential of AI in public safety, offering in-depth analysis and reflections on the insights shared during the panel.

It aims to provide policymakers, law enforcement, healthcare organizations, and community safety stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of how AI can be integrated to build safer, more resilient cities.

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Panelists:
Jeff Miller, Founder and CEO Paralucent
Anthony Odoardi, Deputy Chief Technology & Innovation, Peel Regional Police
Ron Anderson, CITO Edmonton Police Service
Dr. Shelly Ghai Bajaj, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Waterloo
Thais Nardo, Senior Manager of Public Sector Solutions Architecture, Amazon Web Services Canada
Andrew Leung, CISSP/Regional Sales Engineer, CrowdStrike
Gordon Guay, Team Lead Public Sector, Google Cloud

Moderator:
Christine Scott, Account Director at Paralucent

Chief Nishan Duraiappah

# Reflecting on the New Frontier

Artificial Intelligence (AI) isn't just the future—it's reshaping public safety right now, and it's doing so at a pace that demands attention, discussion, and action.

This year's *Safety of Our Cities* conference hosted an engaging panel discussion, *AI: The New Frontier of Public Safety*. This panel brought together experts from law enforcement, technology, and academia to delve into how AI is being integrated into policing, what it means for communities, and where we go from here.

While the panelists came from various sectors, the central thread tying their perspectives together was the need for *balance*. Balance between technological advancement and ethical responsibility, between efficiency and trust, and between short-term solutions and long-term community well-being. It became clear that the true potential of AI lies not just in its technical capabilities, but in how thoughtfully it is integrated into the fabric of public safety.

The discussion centered around five core themes: the dual power of AI to drive both efficiency and scalability, the necessity of building trust through transparency, the critical role of cross-sector collaboration, the ethical guardrails required for responsible AI use, and the forward-looking vision of AI's role in shaping safer cities.

The ideas shared weren't just theoretical; they provided a roadmap for navigating AI's complexities while aiming for a future where technology doesn't just support public safety, but transforms it.

The stakes are high, and the path is anything but straightforward—but as the panelists made clear, that's precisely why it's a journey worth taking.

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THE DUAL POWER OF AI:

# Efficiency and Scalability

One of the most striking takeaways from the panel was AI's potential to revolutionize the operational side of policing. While AI is often associated with dramatic images of predictive policing and facial recognition, the panelists were clear: AI's real value lies in its ability to improve the day-to-day functions of law enforcement.

AI-driven solutions—such as automated transcription of body-worn camera footage, real-time language translation, and predictive crime mapping—are already freeing up valuable resources. These innovations allow officers to focus less on paperwork and more on building relationships within their communities.

Yet, efficiency is not simply about doing more with less. As Jeff Miller, CEO of Paralucent, noted,

> **"AI is helping us process vast datasets and uncover insights that would take humans days, weeks, or even months to discover."**
>
> Jeff Miller

> **"AI gives us a strategic advantage that allows us to be more proactive in addressing issues before they become crises."**
>
> Ron Anderson

AI offers law enforcement a unique opportunity to operate at scale in a way that was previously unimaginable. *"We're entering an era where we're not just talking about reducing the burden of paperwork,"* Miller reflected. *"AI is helping us process vast datasets and uncover insights that would take humans days, weeks, or even months to discover"*.

Ron Anderson, CITO Edmonton Police Service added to this point by emphasizing AI's ability to enable data-driven decision-making across various aspects of public safety. *"Whether it's identifying patterns in crime data or optimizing resource allocation, AI gives us a strategic advantage that allows us to be more proactive in addressing issues before they become crises."* Anderson noted.

This scalability has the potential to address some of the biggest challenges facing police agencies today, from resource shortages to the ability to proactively address crime patterns before they escalate. But while this level of efficiency is exciting, it comes with a critical caveat: the ethical use of data.

Thais Nardo, Gordon Guay, Andrew Leung

# Navigating Ethical Dilemmas

If AI's promise lies in its ability to enhance operations, its Achilles' heel is public trust. The more powerful the technology, the greater the risk for misuse, intentional or otherwise.

Every panelist recognized that as law enforcement increasingly adopts AI, the public's skepticism grows alongside it. Anthony Odoardi, Deputy Chief of Technology and Innovation from Peel Regional Police, touched on this critical issue when he discussed the misconceptions that the public often holds about AI's role in policing. *"People think AI is going to replace police officers or lead to increased surveillance,"* he explained. *"But the truth is, AI is there to help us serve the community better, not control it".*

Building trust in AI is about more than just good intentions—it requires tangible actions and transparent communication. Without clear, ongoing dialogue between law enforcement and the communities they serve, the narrative around AI could quickly spiral into one of fear and mistrust.

Odoardi shared Peel Regional Police's experience in engaging with community stakeholders to understand concerns about AI, particularly around the use of facial recognition technology. By meeting the community where they are and listening to their concerns, Peel Police learned valuable lessons that informed their AI strategy. As Odoardi noted, *"When we create space for communities to engage, the outcome isn't just better policing—it's better relationships, better trust".*

Anthony Odoardi, Ron Anderson

**"When we create space for communities to engage, the outcome isn't just better policing, it's better relationships."**

Anthony Odoardi

Trust, therefore, is not a byproduct of technology but a prerequisite for its success. AI may offer sophisticated tools for law enforcement, but without the community's trust, these tools can quickly become liabilities.

As Dr. Shelly Ghai Bajaj pointed out, law enforcement must be acutely aware of AI's disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. *"AI has the potential to either deepen existing inequalities or help us address them."* she remarked. *"The key is in how we design and implement these systems".*

**"The most impactful AI applications are those that are built with users in mind from the start."**

Thais Nardo

# Law Enforcement and the Private Sector

The panel highlighted another crucial component of AI's role in public safety: collaboration. AI innovation in policing cannot happen in a vacuum—it requires partnership across industries, from tech companies to cybersecurity firms, to local communities and governments.

Andrew Leung of CrowdStrike captured this when he stressed the importance of collaboration in securing AI systems. *"Cybersecurity isn't just a technical issue; it's a collective responsibility. We need to work together to ensure that these AI systems are secure from the ground up."* Leung explained.

But collaboration goes beyond just protecting data. It's about co-creating solutions that are fit for purpose in the communities they serve. Thais Nardo, representing Amazon Web Services (AWS), spoke about how AI tools, when developed with input from police officers and community members alike, can become invaluable assets in day-to-day operations. *"The most impactful AI applications are those that are built with users in mind from the start,"* she said, reinforcing the importance of designing AI systems that don't just work in theory but in the real world of public safety.

Jeff Miller added that cross-sector collaboration is essential for scaling AI's impact across different areas of public safety. *"We need to break down the silos between sectors to fully realize AI's potential. When law enforcement, healthcare, and emergency services share insights and technology, we can tackle complex safety challenges in a more coordinated way,"* he explained.

Today, AI must bridge the gap between technological innovation and real-world application. *"We can't afford to have a disconnect between what's possible in the lab and what's practical in the field,"* Leung emphasized, *"our goal is to ensure that AI tools are not only advanced but also accessible and useful to those who need them most."*

**"Our goal is to ensure that AI tools are not only advanced but also accessible and useful to those who need them most."**

Andrew Leung

This collaborative approach also opens the door to new innovations. As Gordon Guay from Google Cloud highlighted, AI's future in policing could involve far more than automation. By working closely with law enforcement, the private sector can help develop tools that empower officers and create more efficient, equitable interactions with the public. *"We're just scratching the surface of what AI can do for public safety, but the future will depend on how well we collaborate to build tools that serve everyone, not just a few,"* Guay commented.

**"The future will depend on how well we collaborate to build tools that serve everyone, not just a few."**

Gordon Guay

# AI's Role in Shaping the Future of Public Safety

The *AI: The New Frontier of Public Safety* panel offered more than a glimpse into the future of law enforcement—it provided a roadmap for how AI can be responsibly integrated into policing.

From improving operational efficiency to fostering collaboration and maintaining public trust, the insights shared reflect a deep understanding of both the potential and challenges AI brings to public safety.

Each of the key takeaways from the panel—efficiency, trust, collaboration, ethical oversight, and long-term thinking—are interdependent. AI's ability to transform policing hinges on all of these elements working in harmony. Public trust is impossible without transparency; transparency is unachievable without collaboration; and none of these are sustainable without a strong ethical framework.

Ultimately, the panelists left us with a clear message: AI has the potential to redefine public safety, but only if we approach its implementation with care, responsibility, and a commitment to justice. In the words of Dr. Bajaj, *"AI is not a one-size-fits-all solution. It's a tool that, when used thoughtfully, can make our communities safer and more equitable".*

The path ahead is not without challenges, but the stakes couldn't be higher. AI is not just a technological advancement—it's an opportunity to rebuild trust, reimagine safety, and reshape our cities for the better. If we embrace this moment with courage and conviction, we won't just be using AI to keep up with the future—we'll be using it to lead the way.

> *"AI is a tool that, when used thoughtfully, can make our communities safer and more equitable."*
>
> Dr. Shelly Ghai Bajaj

# Guardrails for Responsible AI

As the conversation turned to the ethical dimensions of AI, Dr. Bajaj and Odoardi stressed that the stakes of getting AI right are incredibly high. The technology itself is neutral—it is the way it is applied that will determine whether it becomes a force for good or a source of harm. Both Bajaj and Odoardi underscored the importance of ethical guidelines and oversight in ensuring that AI serves the public interest.

Dr. Bajaj pointed to the potential dangers of AI if not carefully monitored. *"We're at an inflection point. The more AI becomes embedded in our lives, the harder it will be to undo the harm if it's used irresponsibly."* she cautioned. For AI to truly revolutionize public safety, it must be held to the highest standards of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. *"Ethics can't be an afterthought. It must be baked into the very DNA of AI development".*

Christine Scott, Account Director at Paralucent and the panel moderator, added that ethical considerations must go beyond theoretical discussions and be incorporated into everyday decision-making. *"Ethics isn't something we can afford to revisit only when issues arise—it needs to be a continuous, deliberate effort at every stage of AI's deployment."* she noted, emphasizing the need for consistent vigilance in applying ethical standards to real-world implementations of AI.

Odoardi echoed this sentiment, urging police forces to be proactive in defining the ethical boundaries of AI. He argued that AI is not a magic bullet but a tool that requires careful handling. *"AI isn't going to fix policing on its own. It's up to us to make sure it's used in ways that are responsible, equitable, and just."* Odoardi said.



From Left: Christine Scott, Anthony Odoardi, Jeff Miller, Dr. Shelly Ghai Bajaj, Thais Nardo, Ron Anderson, Guay, Andrew Leung