

New Westminster Police Department

Community Communications and Engagement Plan

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What's Inside

The New Westminster Police Department's Community Communications and Engagement Plan sets out the strategic framework to achieve transparent, timely, and accurate communication and engagement with our audiences both internally and externally.

We have a long history in a growing city and we want our community to remain informed and involved in how we grow together. The Police Board's direction is clear – we need a higher level of information, engagement, and partnerships across New Westminster.

As the New Westminster Police Department's first ever Corporate Communications and Engagement Plan, underpinned by the Strategic Plan, we're underway with goals, the roadmap to get us there and why it all matters.

Using an integrated communications approach our strategy includes how our people, processes and content all work together across police operations to inspire meaningful dialogue, a shared understanding, and increase trusted relationships.

The What – This plan identified 'what' we do, our goals, principles, team, and who we serve, the tools and methods we use, our audience groups and more. This plan conveys that we strategically combine the use of print, electronic and community relations tools and methods so we reach the right people at the right time with the right message to achieve results. In 2024 and beyond, our goals, deliverables, benchmarks and our success measures will demonstrate how we have accomplished what we set out to do each year.

The How – This plan also identifies 'how' we reach our goals through our annual work planning, implementation and ongoing evaluation. This includes gaining a better understanding of our audience groups, their attitudes and opinions and what's important to them that helps to inform our future. From ground-level to our leadership team's Strategic Priorities, how we effectively communicate and engage are paramount to support the New Westminster Police Department's overall success.



Moving Forward by Inviting Community Input – we invite input from our community about what we’re doing well and what they’d like to see improved in the way we communicate and engage. Community attitudes and opinions are important to inform our leadership team and guide staff as we remain fiscally responsible yet provide a higher level of communication and engagement in meaningful ways. Then, our next steps are finalizing our plan prior to 2025, implementation and internal/external awareness, evaluation and making reasonable adjustments as we go. This plan is a living document so we’ll keep doing what’s working well and refine our efforts to continuously improve to meet the changing needs of our community.

The Next 10

This plan is designed with the Next 10 in mind. What does the next decade look like in our community, and how will our communications and engagement provide an effective structure yet remain flexible to support the success of all units, programs and initiatives across the New Westminster Police Department? How will we meet the changing communication and engagement needs of our community? This is a chance to define where we’re going and how best to get there year-over-year.

This is our ‘start here’ roadmap so let’s get to it...



A Principled Approach

During our planning, implementation, and ongoing evaluation, these overarching principles underpin all that we do:

1. Putting the community first - We value what's important to our community and how we can help. We will seek to better understand what matters to them and why through their lens. We will also be a leader in our highly-responsive approach to communications and engagement.
2. Fostering Trusting Relationships – Building and maintaining trust in all that we do is paramount. Words matter. Attitudes and opinions matter. Transparency and respect matters. We will do what we say and the proof is in our actions.
3. Informing Early and Often - We will inform through our print, electronic, and community relations tools and methods. We will listen more and be highly responsive to input that guides informed decision-making.
4. Remaining Responsible and Adaptable – Our programs, initiatives, and our interactions will directly support our goals using a best practice approach and fiscal responsibility.

Our Goals

Our goals link directly to our strategic plan and the strategies mentioned throughout this plan are intended to:

1. Provide open, honest, and transparent communications with less government speak and more community-focused relations.
 - a. Increase our one-on-one and small group interactions to make sure community members are well informed and truly understood.
 - b. Proactively communicate with easy-to-understand language, and to provide the community with increased access to ask questions of our subject matter experts.
2. Increase accurate and timely information and opportunities for the public to be heard.
3. Provide responsive internal and external customer service that supports a positive and more strategic reputation.
4. Remain proactive, effective, and trustworthy with our media relations that helps journalists tell an accurate, balanced, and fair story.
 - a. Be highly responsive to promptly address the needs of media with the background, facts, why it matters and provide them with our next steps.
 - b. Support public perception that indeed we conduct business in a transparent and highly accountable way.
 - c. Maintain our social media presence as a provider of fact-based information and opportunities to help with increased online journalism.

If we begin with the end in mind, we want to be regarded as a kind, trustworthy and community-focused partner, a leader in applying strategic communication and engagement best practices and keep our stakeholders and the public well informed.



Our Team

Who We Are

Reporting to the Chief Constable, our Communications Officer is dedicated to communication activities. The Communications Officer is supported by the Strategic Communications Team, a cadre of staff who take time away from their full time roles to assist with communications projects. She works closely with the Sergeant in the Community Engagement Unit who serves as the department spokesperson. The Community Engagement Unit has a mandate to liaise with and provide outreach to all members of our community.

Who We Serve

The Communications Officer, with the support of New Westminster Police Department staff, provide two-way communications to residents, businesses, and government partners.

88,000 Estimated population of New Westminster

Communicating in a Complex World

The New Westminster Police Department collaborates regularly with City of New Westminster Corporate Communications and Public Engagement staff as well as other regional police departments. We communicate about how we play a role in regional issues that effect numerous cities and involve numerous agencies.

All of us Working Together

The Communications Officer supports New Westminster Police Department staff for strategic communications planning, visual identity, and daily communications needs.

She is working on an annual work plan process to better coordinate support for teams, streamline activities, and highlight gaps for continual review and improvement.

Internal communications include the delivery of key information to frontline staff about relevant and timely updates to aid in responding to public inquiries. Methods include a mix of print, electronic, and one-on-one engagement.

Internal Tools and Methods

- Intranet
- Emails
- Town Halls
- Internal announcements
- Video updates
- NWPD TVs

Key Messages

Overarching Messaging

Overarching corporate messaging derives from Police Board Strategic Priorities and typically include how NWPD staff are delivering those priorities. Examples include:

The Police Board's strategic goal that the New Westminster Police Department listens to the community and works in partnership with community members to create opportunities for others to share issues and opportunities.

The Police Board's strategic goal that we ensure community safety with integrity, compassion, and excellence.

The Police Board's strategic goal that the New Westminster Police Department is a diverse, inclusive, healthy, and engaging workplace.

Your opinions matter and we want to hear from you!

A Close-Knit Community

We remain focused on strengthening our relationships with community members and local organizations. The New Westminster Police Department shall continue to invest in group and one-on-one interactions, increasing and maintaining an inclusive, collaborative and participatory approach to its community relations.

Community relations and engagement is built on relationships and improves situations based on common goals and aspirations. We will continue to improve the way we interact with community members, community groups, other agencies, and other levels of government.

Accessibility

An accessible police department benefits everyone. The New Westminster Police Department is employing best practices to ensure communication and engagement is accessible. We actively

seek opportunities to improve accessibility by employing the following options wherever possible:

- Captions in videos
- Using photos that address diversity and inclusiveness
- Alt Text that enables assistive technology to describe an image
- Plain language
- Websites designed and coded so people with disabilities can use them
- Simplifying layout and design



Use Strongly Engaged Citizens as a Resource

Recognizing that there is a group of citizens who are well engaged on police matters and have a lot of knowledge and skills, engagement with the “informed minority” will be a priority. This will mean connecting with city committees, the Community Policing Committee, and other established stakeholders, asking for their support to raise awareness and participation rates.

Target Audiences

The following is a preliminary draft list of groups who may have an interest in police projects, programs, policy development and service delivery. The list will serve as a starting point to help inform the development and delivery of engagement activities. This list can be reviewed and supplemented throughout the process.

Broad Public

- City of New Westminster residents
- Business or property owners
- Individuals who work, shop, or play in New Westminster

Organized Groups

- Community Centres & Community Organizations
- Service Clubs
- Daycares and Early Education Centres
- Youth Ambassadors
- Social Agencies & Low Income Advocacy Groups
- Seniors' Centres
- Neighbourhood Associations

Business Community

- Businesses
- Business Associations
- Rental Associations
- Property management companies

Children & Youth

- School District
- Parent Advisory Groups
- Private Schools
- Post Secondary Schools

Government and Government Agencies

- Regional policing and public safety partners
- Indigenous Peoples
- Provincial Government
- Translink
- Fraser Health

City of New Westminster

- New Westminster City Council
- Employees
- Project Teams

Media

- Print
- TV
- Radio
- Online
- Social

Tools, Methods and Timing

New Westminster In the Know

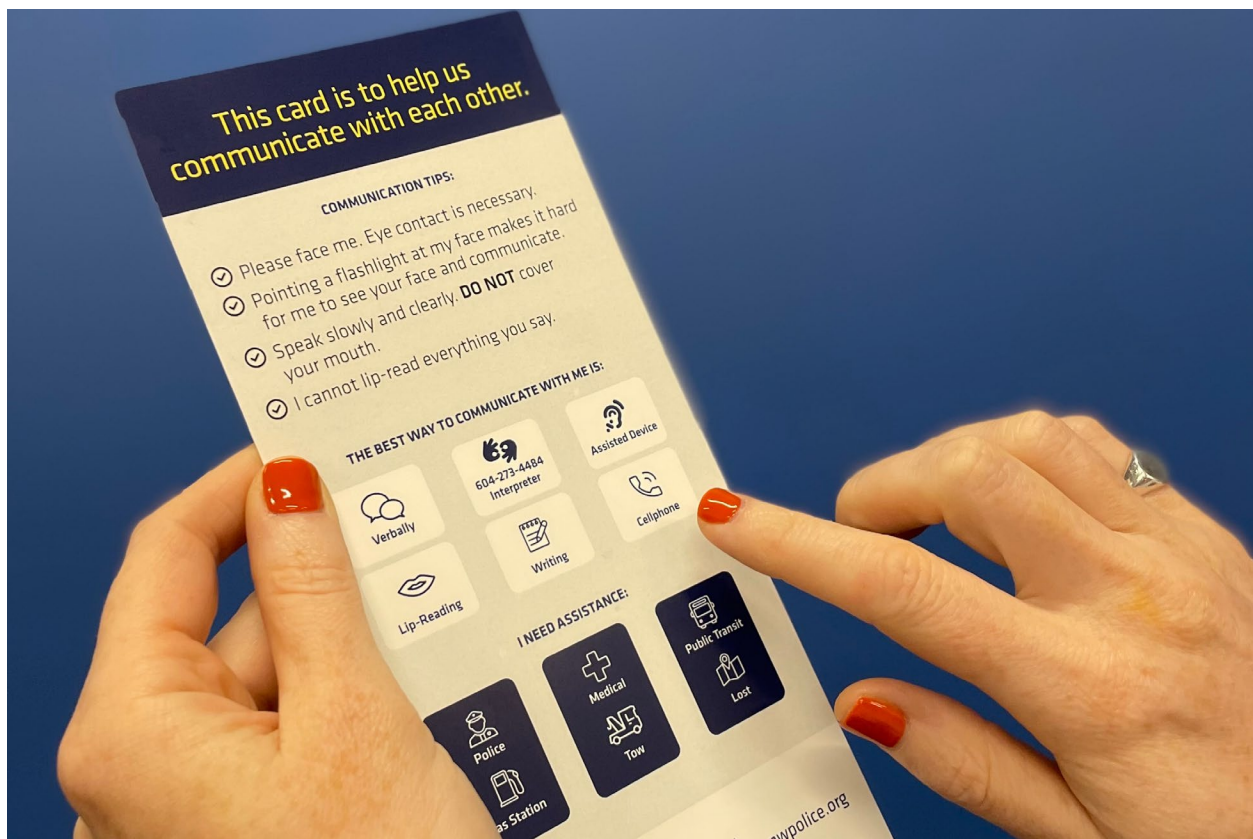
A variety of communications and engagement strategies and platforms remains a focus area. A combination of print, electronic, and community relations methods broaden the reach within the community and allows information to be received based on preferences.

In a world of continual change, the sheer volume of information that is produced and consumed each day reinforces the value of customizable bite-sized content, delivered through the appropriate communications channels at the right time.

An opportunity exists to examine a more coordinated approach to content delivery that will lead to sharing of police news and updates and increased engagement from the community.

Print

- Mailouts
- Brochures
- Fact Sheets
- Display Boards
- Signage
- Advertising
- Posters



Given the traditional reliance on print we will continue to produce materials using local vendors when possible for the purpose of informing the public when electronic means are not adequate or in addition to a mix of other tools and tactics.

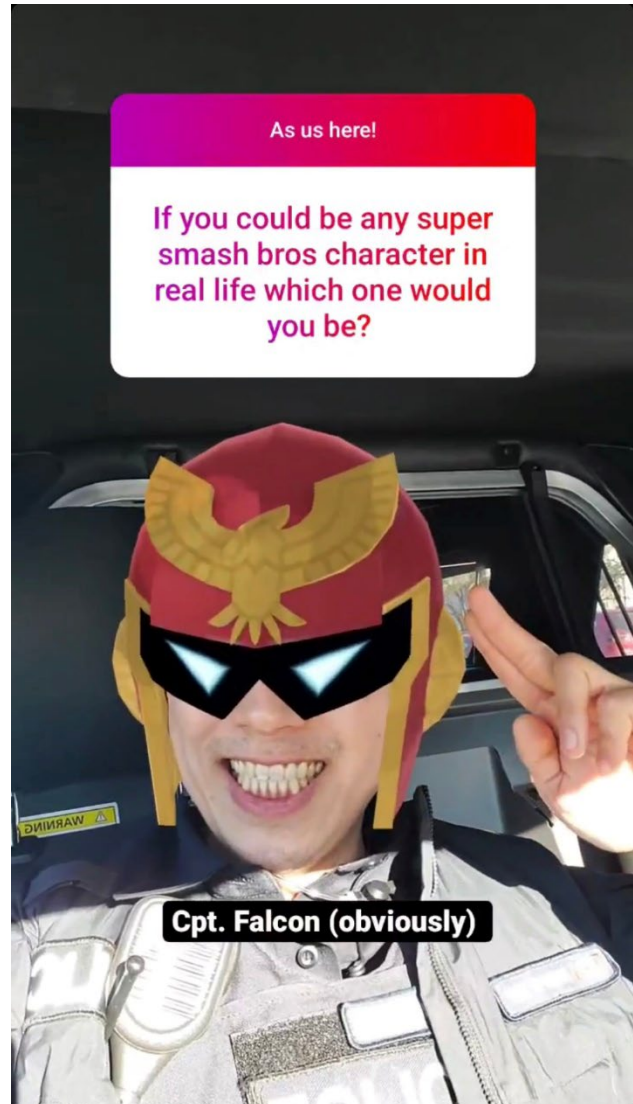
As print materials are developed under the purview of the Communications Officer she will consider design to enhance readability, eliminate police-speak, less text and included of more digital elements for greater understanding.

Strategies

- Continue to use visual identity guidelines and branding of police materials to create consistence and brand voice.
- Prepare writing style guidelines for internal staff to support content development for reports, signage, bulletins and guidelines for programs or services.
- Continue to communicate the suite of self-serve branded templates for staff and contractors to produce signage, fact sheets, bulletins, and other informational materials.
- Establish the Communications Officer as the go-to advisor for communication and outreach.

Digital

- Website
- CityPage Online
- Social media channels
- Zoom
- Digital billboards
- Engagement platforms
- Photography and videography



Increase in Digital Presence

We will continue to strive for accurate and timely information 24/7 that is well-organized and intuitively designed to enhance the public's experience. Access to police news, videos, highlights, stories, e-subscribe updates (CityPage online) will be promoted as the primary source of information and written in plain language.

Social Media Channels

The New Westminster Police Department uses Instagram, Facebook, X, Youtube, and Nextdoor as its main social media channels for sharing police and partners' news and is managed by the Communications Officer. Reaching people through their preferred method is a key part of our strategy and social media continues to be a powerful engagement tool to promote dialogue. It is a significant channel to inform large audiences and create calls to action. Social media is also a hub for crisis communications and continues to be the official source for police information outside the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).

Our goals for 2024-2026 will see the development of a social media strategy to continuously improve our outreach on the police social media channels for optimal coordination and effectiveness.

Social media has many opportunities to engage but it also presents challenges in monitoring, issues management, and curbing inappropriate behaviours. This must be carefully managed to protect members of our community and the New Westminster Police Department.

Online Survey and Engagement Tools

Online engagement tools are key to involve a larger segment of New Westminster's population. When the New Westminster Police Department requires an online engagement tool it has available the City of New Westminster platform Be Heard and the expertise of the City of New Westminster Public Engagement Team.

As part of any process, reporting back on what we heard and outreach outcomes will be an important part of the engagement process. Easy-to-use reporting tools and analytics will be a beneficial metric to understand reach and outcomes.

Strategies

- Increase the New Westminster Police Department's digital presence on existing channels through the use of video; photography and content.
- Develop a social media strategy to help guide the police department's short and long term objectives for a friendly and welcoming social media presence.
- Ongoing review of the resources supporting the plan.

Community Relations

A Community in Dialogue

Meaningful relationships helps strengthen our community. They ensure we work in harmony with members of our community and partners to be responsive and welcoming while balancing the responsibility we have to public safety.

Creating a consistent approach to guide public engagement will strengthen our relationships and improve consistency with the community, government, and organizations with an interest in policing in New Westminster. While decisions will not see universal support, those involved in the process will have a greater understanding of why.

Through a mix of face-to-face interactions and digital platforms we will continue to reach out to the broader community and those members that don't typically engage with local government.

Strategies

- Endeavour to learn more about group communications preferences, and how they would like to engage with police.
- Establish an engagement framework that provides a road map and criteria to staff involving members of the community.
- Continue to gauge citizen trust and satisfaction through various market research methods during key activities:

Public trust survey

- Continue to improve our Crisis Communications Plan.
- Further promote monthly reports to Police Board.
- Create an Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan.

Media Relations



We are committed to providing timely, accurate, and factual information across our New Westminster Community.

Police news is released on the New Westminster Police Department official channels and amplified through its platforms. All media inquiries are centralized through the department to aid in identifying the appropriate subject matter expert or spokesperson and closing the loop in a timely manner.

The Communications Officer provides media relations support and protocols to support the New Westminster Police Department leadership team and staff to ensure that information released to the public is consistent, factual and timely through various methods.

Police announcements follow the appropriate communications protocols as outlined by our guidelines and we work in partnership with our regional partners on an as-needed basis.

Strategies

- Support subject matter experts with media training and provide accurate and factual information to help respond to media inquiries.
- Continue to monitor issues and be proactive in our response.
- Continue our role as the Public Information Officer for the EOC/DOC during emergency events within our jurisdiction.

Measurement and Evaluation

Measuring up

We recognize how important it is to evaluate goals and objectives of communications for police initiatives. In measuring our effectiveness, we are able to adjust and fine tune our service levels and prioritize limited resources to meet the highest need of the city.

In any evaluation process, there needs to be good datasets to help understand if we were successful. This will include (but not limited to) analytics from police inputs:

- Electronic communications (websites, social media)
- Project-specific inputs (surveys, sentiment analysis)
- Media monitoring/evaluation
- Census data
- Market research both quantitative and qualitative



Conclusion

The New Westminster Police Department has made huge strides and will continue to foster greater understanding of police-led initiatives and regionally significant issues of importance to our community.

We want to get to know our community better and apply those continual learnings for greater understanding and delivering results.

Moving forward we will continue to seek input from our internal and external groups to ensure we are effectively communicating and engaging to contribute to the New Westminster Police Department's overall success.