



NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE BOARD

OPEN AGENDA

Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 9:30 am

By Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88644230155>

✓ Indicates Attachment

We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

1	ADOPTION & PRESENTATIONS	
	1.1 Land Acknowledgment	Mayor Cote
✓	1.2 Adoption of Open Agenda: February 15, 2022	Police Board
2	CONSENT AGENDA	Police Board
✓	2.1 Approval of Open Minutes: January 18, 2022	
	2.2 Police Board Member Reports	
✓	2.3 Statistics: January 2022	
✓	2.4 Street Checks Policy (Police Stops) OB235 – Audit Report	
✓	2.5 Police Board Correspondence:	
	2.5a CAPG Survey	
3	ONGOING BUSINESS	
✓	3.1 Response to Downtown Livability Concerns	Chief Constable Jansen
✓	3.2 Special Investigation Unit – Review of Recommendations	Chief Constable Jansen
4	NEW BUSINESS	
✓	4.1 NWPD 2021-2024 Strategic Plan	Kyle Stamm, Sirius Strategy
	NEXT MEETING	
	Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 9:30 am	
	Location: Zoom and/or Council Chamber, New Westminster City Hall (TBD)	
	ADJOURNMENT OF OPEN MEETING	



NEW WESTMINSTER MUNICIPAL POLICE BOARD

January 18, 2022 at 1000

Via ZOOM

MINUTES of Open Meeting

PRESENT:	Mayor Jonathan Côté	Chair
	Ms. Heather Boersma	
	Ms. Ruby Campbell	
	Mr. Karim Hachlaf	
	Mr. Sasha Ramnarine	
REGRETS:	Ms. Shirley Heafey	
STAFF:	Chief Constable Dave Jansen	
	Deputy Chief Paul Hyland	
	Inspector Trevor Dudar	
	A/Inspector Aman Gosal	
	Inspector Diana McDaniel	
	Inspector Andrew Perry	
	Ms. Jacqueline Dairon	Finance Supervisor
	Ms. Heather Corbett	Acting Board Secretary
GUESTS:	Ms. Karima Jivraj	President, Downtown NW BIA
	Ms. Kendra Johnston	Executive Director, Downtown NW BIA

The meeting was called to order at 10:22 a.m.

1.1. Introduction of New Police Board Member

Mayor Cote welcomed Ruby Campbell to the Police Board.

1.2. Adoption of Open Agenda: January 18, 2022

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT The New Westminster Police Board approve the January 18, 2022, Open Agenda.

CARRIED

1.3. Delegations

- a) Kendra Johnston, Executive Director, and Karima Jivraj, President, Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association (DNWBIA), presented to the Police Board about feedback received from the DNWBIA's members regarding safety concerns in the downtown area, including increased vandalism, shoplifting, harassment, unsafe street behaviours, and open drug use.

In addition, Ms. Jivraj outlined anecdotal feedback received from the BIA's members about the length of time it currently takes to report crimes through the non-emergency line, constraints and lack of feedback experienced when using the NWPD's online reporting service, and a desire for improved, consistent and transparent communication with the business community.

In response, Chief Constable Jansen assured the BIA representatives that the NWPD is aware of the concerns and is working with the City of New Westminster to address issues in the downtown. In October 2021, the NWPD reassigned the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) to focus solely on the downtown, and doubled the vulnerable person liaison unit from one to two members. In addition, Chief Constable Jansen noted that the operational review of the NWPD would hopefully assist with staffing decisions that may help to address the issues raised.

Police Board members thanked the DNWBIA representatives for the presentation and provided the following comments:

- The issues that have been raised are important to the Board, and stem from broader issues such as the housing and opioid crises;
- The NWPD and the City will continue to work hard to address the broader issues; however, they do take time;
- The comments about the communication channels may be more easily addressed through greater connection with groups such as the DNWBIA;
- The issues raised about the decrease in E-COMM's services, particularly the non-emergency lines, have been brought to the Board's attention previously, and options to address these concerns are forthcoming; and,
- In future, it would be important to examine the language contained in the letters included in the agenda package, as these documents are public record and some of the terminology may be uncomfortable to the unhoused and vulnerable populations.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

2.1. Approval of Open Minutes: November 16, 2021

2.2. Police Board Member Reports

2.3. Policy: AC30 – Ceremonial Protocols

2.4. Statistics: November and December 2021

2.5 Police Board Correspondence

- a) BCOHRC's Submissions to the Special Committee on Reforming the *Police Act*
- b) Compliance Evaluation of BCPPS Use-of-Force Training and Firearm Qualification in 2020

2.6 Amendment to New Westminster Police Board Governance Manual – Appendix 11: Honorarium

2.7 NWPB Guidelines on City of New Westminster Sanctuary City Policy

2.8 Summary of New BC Provincial Policing standards on the Promotion of Unbiased Policing

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT Item 2.5c be removed from the Consent Agenda; and,

THAT the New Westminster Police Board approve the remaining items on the Consent Agenda.

CARRIED

ITEMS REMOVED FROM CONSENT

2.5 Police Board Correspondence

c) Letter from Emergency Communications Professionals of BC (CUPE Local 8911)

Police Board members acknowledged the letter from the Emergency Communications Professionals of BC CUPE President and offered thanks for taking the time to communicate their concerns to the Board. It was further noted that the requested funding and issues at E-COMM would form an ongoing part of the Board's discussions and meeting agendas in future.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Police Board receive the correspondence from Emergency Communications Professionals of BC (CUPE Local 8911) for information.

CARRIED

3. ONGOING BUSINESS

3.1. Report on Non-Emergency Response Lines (Verbal)

Chief Constable Jansen noted that Inspector Perry, Administration Division, has been instructed to provide the Board with an overview of programs being explored by two other municipal policing agencies, including costing and approaches, as an alternative to the provision of non-emergency response lines by E-COMM. This report will be presented to the Board at a future meeting and will include potential strategies and partnerships. In the meantime, the following data had been gathered for the Board's information:

- In 2021, 27,000 non-emergency calls were received, of which 12,000 (44%) were abandoned;
- The wait time averages of these calls were far below the expected standard;
- In Q4 of 2021, abandoned calls went up from 44% to 58%; and,

- It can be hypothesized that the crime statistics reflect the above statistics, in that, for example, property crime levels have decreased, which may be due to the abandonment rate.

Police Board members provided the following comments:

- The Board was made aware of the failures of the non-emergency line at a previous meeting, along with E-COMM's main priority to maintain the emergency line; however, there is a serious community expectation of a functioning line that needs to be addressed; and,
- It would be important to explore partnerships with other similar-sized municipalities to ensure that a more cost-effective model is identified.

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the New Westminster Police Board receive the verbal report.

CARRIED

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. Call for Resolution

Mayor Cote noted that the deadline to submit resolutions to the Canadian Association of Police Governance (CAPG) annual general meeting is May 31, 2022. Mayor Cote also noted that the provincial body usually brings forward resolutions; however, if Board members had any interest in moving a resolution forward, then to bring it to the Mayor and Chief Constable's attention.

ADJOURNMENT of Open Meeting

Chair Jonathan Cote adjourned the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the New Westminster Police Board will take place on February 15, 2022 at 9:30 a.m., by Zoom Video.

MAYOR JONATHAN COTE
CHAIR

HEATHER CORBETT
RECORDING SECRETARY



Crime Type Category ¹	2021 Dec	2022 Jan	Jan 3YR Avg	YTD 2020	YTD 2021	YTD 2022	YTD 3YR Avg	% Change 2022-2021
Persons Offences								
HOMICIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A ²
ATTEMPTED HOMICIDE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
SEXUAL ASSAULTS	3	5	4	3	5	5	4	0%
ASSAULT-COMMON	38	23	25	30	22	23	25	5%
ASSAULT-W/WEAPON OR CBH	13	10	10	7	13	10	10	-23%
ASSAULT-AGGRAVATED	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	N/A
ROBBERY	1	2	4	4	6	2	4	-67%
Total Monitored Persons Offences	55	41	44	44	46	41	44	-11%
Domestic Violence								
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	52	44	51	63	46	44	51	-4%
FAMILY VIOLENCE	23	24	24	26	21	24	24	14%
Property Offences								
BREAK & ENTER-BUSINESS	20	6	17	16	30	6	17	-80%
BREAK & ENTER-RESIDENCE	5	2	4	6	4	2	4	-50%
BREAK & ENTER-OTHER	7	1	5	6	7	1	5	-86%
THEFT OF VEHICLE	14	16	15	16	13	16	15	23%
THEFT FROM VEHICLE	43	65	71	61	86	65	71	-24%
THEFT-OTHER OVER \$5000	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0%
THEFT-OTHER UNDER \$5000	37	31	34	38	32	31	34	-3%
MISCHIEF OVER \$5000	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	N/A
MISCHIEF \$5000 OR UNDER	33	43	45	44	48	43	45	-10%
Total Monitored Property Offences	161	166	192	190	221	166	192	-25%
Traffic Offences								
Collisions								
COLLISION-FATAL	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	N/A
COLLISION-NON-FATAL INJURY	10	3	9	13	10	3	9	-70%
COLLISION-ALL OTHERS	54	50	40	31	40	50	40	25%
Total Collision Offences	64	54	49	44	50	54	49	8%
215 Impaired								
215 ALCOH-24HR & DRUG	9	5	6	6	6	5	6	-17%
215 ALCOH IRP FAIL & REFUSE ASD-90 DAY	20	15	11	9	8	15	11	88%
215 ALCOH IRP WARN	6	7	5	4	5	7	5	40%
IMPAIRD OP MV (DRUGS & ALCOH)	20	13	9	9	4	13	9	225%
Weapons Offences								
WEAPONS-POSSESSION	7	3	3	2	5	3	3	-40%
Other Non-Criminal Offences								
BYLAW	19	12	24	26	33	12	24	-64%
CYBERCRIME	2	4	9	11	12	4	9	-67%
FALSE ALARMS	78	66	63	78	46	66	63	43%
MISSING PERSONS	24	21	19	18	19	21	19	11%
MENTAL HEALTH RELATED	45	25	52	61	69	25	52	-64%
DISTURBED PERSON/ATT SUICIDE	51	40	57	76	54	40	57	-26%
SUDDEN DEATH	14	12	8	5	8	12	8	50%
DOMESTIC DISPUTE-NO ASSAULT	34	29	35	49	28	29	35	4%
OVERDOSES	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	-100%

¹ The above statistics were extracted from LMD PRIME, General Occurrences (GOs) with CCJS Status: <>A (all files except unfounded) or B:Z (founded). Please note that the figures reflect police records as of the day the data was originally extracted; therefore, the figures may have changed over time. The PRIME data was last reviewed on: 2022-02-07. Please contact the New Westminster Police Department - Criminal Intelligence Unit for more information.

² Undefined. Percent Change = ((new value – initial value / initial value) x 100). Division by zero is division where the divisor (denominator) is zero, where the expression has no meaning; therefore, division by zero is undefined.



New Westminster Police Department

REPORT

To: Mayor Coté and Members of the New Westminster Police Board
Date: February 15, 2022

From: Inspector Trevor Dudar
Item #: 2.4

Subject: Street Checks Policy (Police Stops) OB235 – Audit Report

RECOMMENDATION

That the New Westminster Police Board receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND

The Government of British Columbia completed a public engagement process in April 2018, and released a document called “Promoting Unbiased Policing in B.C. Public Engagement Process.” This process was taken to garner a deeper understanding regarding the public’s views on equitable or unbiased policing. This was the impetus for the implementation of new policing Standards with respect to unbiased policing in British Columbia. There has been intense interest in the police practice of street checks in British Columbia and across Canada, mostly due to an over-representation of marginalized members of society.

In October 2019, the Government of British Columbia (BC) issued the new British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) 6.2.1 *Police Stops* (“Standard”) which took effect on January 15, 2020.

On January 21, 2020, the New Westminster Police Board approved this new policy entitled Street Checks (Police Stops) OB235 to provide direction to the NWPD members to ensure compliance with the new British Columbia Provincial Policing Standard (BCPPS) 6.2.1 Police Stops standard. Also, in early 2020, all NWPD members received in-house training for the new BCPPS for Police Stops and the newly developed NWPD policy. Later in 2020, all NWPD members also completed an on-line course through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN).

STREET CHECK POLICY OVERVIEW

As a refresher, a Street Check is any voluntary interaction between a police officer and a person that is more than a casual conversation and which impedes the person's movement. A Street Check may include a request for identifying information, depending on the circumstances. The decision to conduct a Street Check shall not be based on identity factors and shall not be based solely on that person sharing an identity factor with a person being sought by the police. Random or arbitrary Street Checks shall not be conducted. In a Street Check, the person was not found committing an offense, but the police observe a suspicious behavior or concern about the person's safety.

Members are not permitted to request or demand, collect or record a person's identifying information without a justifiable reason, such as lawful detention or arrest, an investigation of an offence or an imminent public safety threat.

Members may request that a person voluntarily provide identifying information provided that it serves a specific public safety purpose or objective, such as assisting in locating a missing person, an objectively reasonable concern for a person's immediate safety, and assisting a person in distress to refer them to health or other support services.

The Police can conduct Street Checks when they are making enquiries into reasonable and legitimate public safety purposes, such as suspicious activity, crime prevention or intelligence gathering. Police choosing to conduct a Street Check may do so provided it is lawful and complies with policy.

STREET CHECK DOCUMENTATION

When a member conducts a Street Check, for which identifying information was requested, the member shall document it in a PRIME Street Check Report. A Street Check report will not be used to document any incident for which a General Occurrence (GO) report would normally be submitted.

ANNUAL AUDIT

The BCPPS 6.2.1 Police Stops standard requires police departments to conduct an annual audit to determine if Street Check interactions, and the documenting of them by police officers, are in compliance with the policy.

This annual audit will report on:

1. Yearly totals of Street Check files for the year 2021
2. Ethnicity of persons that were the subject of a Street Check in 2021
3. Analysis of any Street Check files

STATISTICS

1. Yearly totals of Street Check files 2021 – 0
2. Ethnicities of persons checked 2021 – Not applicable
3. Analysis of any Street Check files – Not applicable

CONCLUSION

This report is provided to the New Westminster Police Board for information purposes for compliance under the new British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) 6.2.1 *Police Stops* ("Standard"). The New Westminster Police Department's policy ensures that Street Checks will be performed and documented in an unbiased and lawful manner.

OPTIONS

Option 1: That the New Westminster Police Board receives this report for information.

Option 2: That the New Westminster Police Board provides further direction to staff

Staff recommends option 1.

This report has been prepared by:

Inspector Trevor Dudar
Patrol Division

Heather CORBETT

From: Heather CORBETT
Sent: February-01-22 10:08 AM
To: Heather Boersma; Jonathan Cote (Mayor); Karim Hachlaf (Police Board); Ruby Campbell; Sasha Ramnarine (Police Board); Shirley HEAFEY (Police Board)
Subject: FW: 2022 CAPG Advocacy Survey
Categories: Police Board

Dear Police Board members,

Please see below for a survey from CAPG on issues of national significance. The deadline to complete the survey is Tuesday, February 22.

Here is a direct link: [CAPG Advocacy Survey](#)

Kind regards,
 Heather



Heather Corbett
 Police Board Secretary
 New Westminster Police Board
Phone: 604-529-2412
Mobile: 778-789-6738
Email: hcorbett@nwpolice.org

New Westminster Police Department
 555 Columbia Street
 New Westminster, BC V3L1B2

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From: communications@capg.ca [mailto:communications@capg.ca]
Sent: February-1-22 9:04 AM
To: Heather CORBETT <HCORBETT@NWPolice.org>
Subject: 2022 CAPG Advocacy Survey

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CAPG Members,

On behalf of the CAPG Advocacy Committee, I am sending you the following survey on issues of national significance for your Police Board / Commission. This survey can be completed by the board as a whole or individual board members

Please rank the issues in order of priority to your Police Board / Commission. If your Police Board / Commission has an issue of national significance that is not set out below please add it to the end of the survey.

We will be using your input to select a short list of issues to use as our advocacy platform for 2022.

The deadline for returning the survey is Tuesday, February 22, 2022.

Best regards,
Rebecca Boss

2022 CAPG Advocacy Survey

This survey can be completed by board as a whole or individual board members. If your Police Board / Commission has an issue of national significance that is not set out below please indicate those issues at the end of the survey.

We will be using your input to select a short list of issues to use as our advocacy platform for 2022. The deadline for returning the survey is Tuesday, February 22, 2022.

MENTAL HEALTH FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

There are many factors contributing to mental health issues of first responders. Need for resources, training and collaborations to address the mental well-being of first-responders.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

MENTAL HEALTH RELATED CALLS

With an escalation in mental health related calls, there is a need to increase attention to, support and funding for, resources that respond more proactively, directly and adequately to the impacts of the mental health crises occurring in communities – namely the ministries responsible for the health and well-being of society (social welfare, health, housing).

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

NATIONAL STRATEGY ON ADDRESSING CYBERCRIME

The nature of crime has changed. Crimes using technology evolve faster than the law, this diminishes the ability of law enforcement agencies to protect the public. The CAPG supports the Government of Canada building a National Cyber Security Action Plan that protects all Canadians, and includes protection of critical municipal infrastructure.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON THE FUTURE OF POLICING & POLICE GOVERNANCE IN CANADA

Policing in Canada is at a crossroads. Community trust and confidence has eroded and urgent change is needed. CAPG believes now is the time for a National Task Force to address the myriad of emerging issues and modernize the current approaches to policing and police governance in Canada. CAPG is

prepared to work with the Government of Canada in determining the scope of work and delivery of a meaningful and timely task force.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

FIRST NATIONS POLICING, RECONCILIATION & VULNERABLE INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

Pass legislation to fund First Nations Policing as an essential service with resources to provide adequate, effective and culturally appropriate police and governed by a properly trained and resourced governance body. Work on reconciliation, calls to action & calls to justice from TRC & MMIWG. Review overincarceration and under-serving of indigenous people.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

DRUG POLICY

De-criminalization of drugs / Harm reduction. Abuse of prescription drugs & criminal use

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

VIOLENT CRIMES

Intimate partner violence / sexual assault. Human trafficking / Crimes of opportunity / guns & gangs

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

POLICE GOVERNANCE

Establish national training and accreditation, in conjunction with a national awareness campaign, to position Canadian Police Governance as a progressive and leading standard world-wide. There has never been a better opportunity for the Government of Canada to invest in a CAPG movement to establish enhanced credibility, accountability, principle-based guidelines, and broad-based awareness of the critical responsibility, commitment and service that citizens across our country, passionately contribute to the realm of Canadian Police Governance.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

USE OF FORCE

Standardized training especially on the use of force on vulnerable populations. Modernize the current use-of-force intervention model by increasing the focus on de-escalation and by increasing public awareness of the complexity of police interactions.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

SAFE ROADS & TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

Best practices and use of emerging technologies to keep both communities and police personnel safe.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all important	()	()	()	()	()	()	Very important

Please indicate any additional issues of national significance that are not set out above.

Please indicate their level of importance.

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New Westminster Police Department

REPORT

To: Mayor Côté and Members of the New Westminster Police Board
Date: February 15, 2022

From: Chief Constable David Jansen
Item #: 3.1

Subject: Response to Downtown Livability Concerns

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the New Westminster Police Board receives this report for information.

PURPOSE

To provide information on the status of New Westminster Police Department (NWPB) immediate and short term actions taken following complaints from residents and businesses regarding the downtown core, as well as challenges faced.

BACKGROUND

Over the last several months the NWPB as well as New Westminster Police Board (NWPB) have received emails, letters, presentations and calls from city residents and business owners regarding their concerns around vandalism, shoplifting, open drug use, and an increase in homelessness and the overall livability of the area.

This report provides information on the short term actions taken, as well as information on challenges that are faced moving forward and possible longer term actions that may have a positive impact for the Downtown and in other neighborhoods of the city.

DISCUSSION

At both the November 2021 and January 2022 NWPB meetings, delegations have presented to the Board raising their concerns regarding several issues related to livability within the city.

In addition to the presentations to the NWPB, the NWPB has received letters, emails and requests for information from residents raising similar concerns in other parts of New Westminster as well as the downtown.

The areas of concern raised to the NWPB have covered many areas but can be summarized as follows:

- Increase in mischief
- Increase in graffiti
- Verbal harassment
- Open drug use
- Increase in violent behavior

Downtown Statistics

A review of the reported events in the downtown core of New Westminster for the months of September-January 2019, 2020, and 2021 show some crime categories up in 2021 (business break and enters, theft from vehicles etc.) while others were down or consistent with previous years.

Downtown September – January					
Crime Type Category ¹	2019	2020	2021	3YR Avg	Jan 2022
Persons					
SEXUAL ASSAULTS	1	9	2	4	1
ASSAULT-COMMON	40	47	36	41	10
ASSAULT-W/WEAPON OR CBH	17	15	27	20	5
ASSAULT-AGGRAVATED	0	0	0	0	1
ROBBERY	8	5	7	7	1
Total Monitored Persons Offences	66	76	72	71	18
Domestic					
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	47	45	52	48	8
FAMILY VIOLENCE	21	15	10	15	2
Property					
BREAK & ENTER-BUSINESS	29	20	43	31	2
BREAK & ENTER-RESIDENCE	4	5	6	5	0
BREAK & ENTER-OTHER	1	7	6	5	0
THEFT OF VEHICLE	9	15	12	12	1

Downtown September – January					
Crime Type Category ¹	2019	2020	2021	3YR Avg	Jan 2022
THEFT FROM VEHICLE	54	91	103	83	22
THEFT-OTHER OVER \$5000	2	2	1	2	0
THEFT-OTHER UNDER \$5000	39	47	58	48	15
MISCHIEF OVER \$5000	2	3	1	2	0
MISCHIEF \$5000 OR UNDER	46	81	65	64	17
Total Monitored Property Offences	186	271	295	251	57
Weapons					
WEAPONS-POSSESSION	6	14	13	11	2
Other Non-Criminal					
MENTAL HEALTH RELATED	47	82	67	65	4
DISTURBED PERSON/ATT SUICIDE	52	64	61	59	14
SUDDEN DEATH	5	8	20	11	6
DOMESTIC DISPUTE-NO ASSAULT	24	27	35	29	5
OVERDOSES	6	3	5	5	0

In response to some of the complaints from residents regarding call wait times for non-emergency calls it was determined that in 2021 the NWPDP received approximately 27,000 non-emergency calls of which approximately 12,000 were abandoned, or 44%. In the last quarter of 2021, the call abandonment rate was approximately 58%.

Short Term Actions Taken

In response to complaints, conversations and observations, the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) was redeployed from their normal duties to focus solely on the downtown core for the month of October 2021.

It was recognized that the frustrations shared with the NWPDP were mainly tied to what could be predominately identified as nuisance type behaviour observed in an around the downtown core.

The goal of this redeployment was to see what part the police could play in addressing the frustrations felt by the downtown businesses and residents while recognizing the systemic and institutional challenges those most complained about on a daily basis.

Consultation with Community

CRU engaged with a cross section of 16 local businesses, six (6) retail, four (4) smaller food/café style establishments, five (5) entertainment mixed use establishments serving a combination of food/alcohol, and one (1) non-profit with a direct connection to assisting the sector being discussed in this probe. The focus of this engagement was to obtain feedback on the issues, if any, and to gauge what businesses viewed as possible solutions.

The Chief Constable also met with the Downtown Residents Association at an in-person meeting to hear their concerns and observations as well as to provide information on the NWPD's work in the area and challenges faced.

The overarching issues highlighted by most were tied to nuisance type behaviour with some of the examples being the following:

- Urinating and defecating in and around the business;
- Sleeping in the alcove/entrance to the local business and having to engage individuals in order to gain access to their business;
- Intimidating customers/staff;
- Loitering in and around the business;
- Open air drug use;
- Garbage and drug paraphernalia left behind.

The above noted points made up the bulk of the complaints with the following areas also being noted and falling more in the areas that police would have the ability to engage in:

- Open air drinking in non-designated areas;
- Intoxication and fighting;
- Theft of merchandise;
- Inappropriate sexual acts.

It should be noted that a few businesses, although touching on some of the nuisance type behaviour above, were not concerned with what was occurring in the area.

Those businesses that were engaged were asked their opinion on possible solutions. The following were some of the suggestions put forward by the businesses:

- More fines in relation to urination and defecating;
- Increased police patrols both in vehicles and on foot;
- Assistance in moving people along who are sleeping and loitering;
- More assistance with homeless and drug addiction;
- Develop a long term plan to reduce the homelessness in the community;
- Need for more shelters for the homeless;
- Address long wait time on non-emergency number.

CRU Observations

Over the course of the 18 shifts CRU were on duty and redeployed, 48 calls for service were identified as being tied to the downtown core. Just over 52% of these calls were generated in the morning hours with the second biggest percentage of 29% tied to the afternoon hours, and the balance tied to the evening hours.

In breaking these calls down, a further 30 can be categorized as nuisance type calls with no real criminal component, which represents 62.5% of the total calls. When talking about the above noted 30 nuisance type calls, they are categorized for the most part as follows:

- Unwanted person sleeping at or in front of a business;
- Unwanted tent at or in front of a business.

Essentially, these calls that the police are being asked to deal with all revolve around the police being asked to move the vulnerable and homeless along. When we look at the locations of these types of calls they are predominately public spaces, where access is open for the general public to walk freely through.

The balance of the calls were predominantly broken into two additional categories:

- Calls for service where the individual ended up having an outstanding warrant for their arrest;
- Theft of merchandise calls for service.

Vulnerable Persons Liaison Officers Observations

In addition to the re-deployment of CRU, the NWPD also re-deployed a front line resource to work with the Vulnerable Persons Liaison Officer (VPLO) for the month of November. This re-deployment was meant to supplement the work of the current VPLO in response to similar concerns mentioned above.

The focus of the VPLO is not enforcement but rather to work to provide a compassionate support to the most vulnerable in our community.

During this redeployment, the two VPLOs were able to provide expanded hours of service and worked on the following initiatives:

- Continued to engage every morning with vulnerable clientele and downtown business owners.
- The VPLO and Purpose Society (Project Allies) have continued to collaborate together for outreach services and deploy together twice a week.
- VPLO has taken a significant role in working with City departments within the newly established Downtown Livability working group. This group has created a detailed work plan with immediate, short and long term actions to address several issues related to livability in the city.
- VPLO is engaged with the City of New Westminster in the creation of a new Homeless Strategic Plan. The long-term Strategic Plan working group is comprised of representation

from various City departments, Fraser Health, non-profit associations, faith-based organizations, Spirit of the Children Society, and New Westminster Resident Associations and Business Associations.

- VPLO has worked with the New Westminster Fire and Rescue Service in facilitating ride-a-longs to their staff to assist them in their work related to the opioid crisis.
- As a result of participation in the Downtown Livability working group, Constable Oliveira developed a training curriculum on Homelessness Initiatives for city staff members. The training session addresses myth-busters on homelessness, the opioid crisis, police lawful authorities and limitation in dealing with our homeless population, enforcement options for Bylaws, trauma informed practises, de-escalation and communication strategies. This training has also been delivered to all front line staff.
- In order to properly address business community concerns the VPLOs have had an informal meeting with the Downtown BIA. The VPLOs and Deputy Chief Hyland subsequently met with several different business organizations to discuss their concerns
- The VPLO worked collaboratively with City staff to create a series of educational webinars for business owners focused on nuisance behavior, homelessness issues, the opioid crisis, and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- The VPLO reached out to the strata council members and property managers for the Queensborough Port Royal community as they have expressed interest in community based solutions to reduce crime in the area.

Challenges

As mentioned several times both within this report and at past NWPB meetings, a high percentage of the concerns raised relate to nuisance or non-criminal related matters.

The NWPB is committed to protecting the safety and security of all persons while respecting their fundamental human rights and these are not easy issues to resolve. They most certainly are not going to be solved solely by police, and I, as Chief Constable, would suggest that the police should not be seen to be the best solution for what is occurring.

Homelessness is not a crime. Time and again, we are asked to get involved in issues that are outside of our mandate. The unhoused need housing, they do not need police. We play a role in this issue and, to address that, have created policy that lays out our role, the applicable laws, and the most appropriate resources for staff to call upon to assist in these situations. We assigned, with no additional funding, a full-time staff member as a Vulnerable Persons Liaison Officer whose job it is to work collaboratively with service providers, City staff, and others to find real solutions to the challenges that some face. By all accounts, this officer has done extraordinary work but she is overwhelmed, under staffed, and challenged to continue with the work she is asked to do, so we again moved a resource internally to assist with this work.

Open drug use. This issue is even more difficult for front line officers to navigate. Some or most of those who are seen openly using drugs have an addiction. They need medical intervention, safe supply, and treatment on demand. Rarely do they need the police. Once again, we do play a role though. For now, illicit drug possession is a criminal offence, but the Public Prosecution Service of Canada will not, except in rare circumstances, prosecute simple possession charges. Our officers are aware of this and it creates a very challenging situation for them if they encounter such a situation. Our focus has been, and will continue to be, investigating the production and trafficking in controlled substances, not possession. Front line staff know that any seizure of drugs from those openly using will take away the only source most of them have to get them through the day and manage their addiction. There is no other source of safe supply! In addition, the officers know that there will be no charges laid so what are they to do? I recognize as the Chief that these officers and honestly everyone from the individual stuck using an unsafe supply in a doorway, to those living in the area, are all in impossible situations. We are working on some guidelines and principles to assist our front line staff and, when completed, will be brought to the Board for review and approval. For now, we have to approach this issue with a compassionate and reality based lens. Again, the solution isn't the police, nor is the seizure and arrest of those using the solution. Rather, a medical based approach is needed.

The Board has also wrestled with these challenging issues. In the June 2020 police reform motion, the Board discussed the need for the NWPD to deprioritize resources away from the enforcement of laws that criminalize the survival of society's most vulnerable people who would be better served by a public health or community care framework. Staff has heard from the Board on this issue and as we move to follow the Board's wishes, there are difficult and challenging times that will occur, such as now. The resources and programs may not be in place quickly, so I ask - how do we all best deal with the challenges everyone is facing while these programs are researched and implemented?

There is also the reality that the New Westminster community is growing at a pace that is significantly faster than some other communities and with that there has been a significant decrease (about 36 percent) in the police to population numbers. The front line staffing numbers have not changed in over 20 years. Simply put, there are fewer officers per resident now than 10 years ago while at the same time the community ranked the #1 emerging priority as "City's response to addressing crime," in the City's recent 2022 budget survey.

The growth of the city is also evident when you analyze the growth of City budgets compared to the police budget. From 2001 to 2020, the percent increase of the City budget, net of police, is 96% while at the same time the percentage increase in the police budget has been 81% (net of secondments). This is mentioned only to point out that it is clear the city is growing faster than the police department, which will eventually lead to challenges.

I also think that there is not always a clear picture of how many actual police officers are working on any given shift. We do not generally provide specific numbers, but in general terms there are usually no more than 6-8 uniform police officers working in the entire city at any given time. This obviously fluctuates, but that is an average number.

When we have peaks of incidents in various areas of town we currently do not have extra officers to deploy to those areas. To do this, we have to redeploy staff from their normal jobs thus leaving those tasks vacant. So we have to be very purposeful and informed before we can do that.

These challenges and others have been recognized by the Board, and we are currently several months into the largest department-wide evaluation, being conducted by an external consulting firm. This review is looking at every aspect of our department. This report is scheduled to be completed in July 2022.

Ongoing Actions

1. On a weekly basis our analysts, senior leaders and various staff meet to review our weekly trends and hotspots and then provide this information to all staff so that they can utilize data to assist them in their daily work, and for our front line staff to focus their patrol time in the trending areas when they find time outside of responding to calls for service. This will continue and will help to drive evidence-based deployment where it is needed the most.
2. Though contingent on staffing flexibility, an additional uniformed resource will be allocated to the CRU to assist with their work in city-wide hotspots.
3. Continue working with the city of New Westminster on longer term solutions. The City is leading the work on a multi-faceted approach to these issues. An immediate and short-term (one to three months) plan has been laid out, that is aimed at improving the livability of the downtown. Specifically, five categories of issues were identified with actionable items assigned to each. The five areas are:
 1. Need to improve general cleanliness and the provision for 24 hour, public toilets in the downtown;
 2. Homeless outreach and added emergency shelter capacity;
 3. Opioid epidemic and illicit drug response;
 4. Business support and engagement;
 5. Need to work with Fraser Health in addressing mental health issues which are contributing to increase homelessness and illicit drug use.
4. Continue to support the city led work regarding the development of a new model to address crisis health management with the goal of creating a pilot community based crisis management program in New Westminster.

CONCLUSION

This report is provided to the New Westminster Police Board for information purposes.

OPTIONS

Option 1: That the New Westminster Police Board receives this report for information.

Option 2: That the New Westminster Police Board provides further direction to staff

Staff recommends option 1.

This report has been prepared by:

Chief Constable Dave Jansen



New Westminster Police Department

REPORT

To: Mayor Côté and Members of the New Westminster Police Board
Date: February 15, 2022

From: Inspector Diana McDaniel
Item #: 3.2

Subject: Special Investigation Unit – Review of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION

That the New Westminster Police Board receives the submitted report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the New Westminster Police Board with a copy of the report “*Final Draft Report – an Evaluation of the New Westminster Police Department Special Investigations Unit*” completed by Garth Davies, SFU and Carla Hotel, Douglas College. Within this report, there are a series of recommendations regarding the Special Investigations Unit (SIU). This report to the New Westminster Police Board provides a detailed response to these recommendations by the NWPB.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, a report conducted by the *Globe and Mail*, revealed that one in every five sexual assault allegations made to police were dismissed as unfounded. The New Westminster Police Board directed the New Westminster Police Department to look into how sexual assaults were being investigated. The Special Investigations Unit was formed in 2018 and the attached report was completed to review the Unit and its effectiveness in investigating sexual assaults.

DISCUSSION

In 2017, a report conducted by the *Globe and Mail*, revealed that one in every five sexual assault allegations made to police were dismissed as “unfounded”. This can be translated to mean that no offence occurred. Overall, the national unfounded rate was 19.39%, much higher than other crime

types, including physical assaults. The New Westminster Police Board (NWPB) was informed of this information and directed the New Westminster Police Department (NWPB) to analyze the way in which sexual assault investigations were investigated. The NWPB completed an extensive internal review that focused on best practices, which included a victim-centered approach and trauma informed practice.

As a result of the above-noted review and direction from the NWPB, the Specialized Investigations Unit (SIU) was created in March 2018 with one Detective Constable assigned to the position. This position was created to ensure best practices in a victim-centered approach while investigating sex assaults. Every sexual assault file is reviewed by the SIU and they provide feedback and direction regarding the investigation. SIU makes the determination whether the investigation will remain with the Patrol member or if they will take over the investigation.

The NWPB determined that it would be useful to evaluate the SIU to measure its effectiveness and to see if it is operating as anticipated. The COVID-19 pandemic put the evaluation by SFU on hold and it was delayed until September 2021, when the NWPB received the report. The SFU researchers determined that the SIU results have been very positive. The principles under which the SIU is functioning are in line with recognized best practices – being trauma-informed and client centered, and anecdotal evidence suggests that clients are benefiting from the existence of the SIU. There are, however, some areas for improvement. The evaluation of the NWPB SUI was completed by Garth Davies, SFU and Carla Hotel, Douglas College, and entitled: *“Final Draft Report – an Evaluation of the New Westminster Police Department Specialized Investigations Unit.* A copy of the report is attached for your reference. In this review, there are a series of recommendations, which this report will discuss. Some of the recommendations have already been implemented and we will discuss their value. Some of the recommendations have yet to come to fruition.

RECOMMENDATIONS – SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

1. **Create an advisory team that would meet regularly to share strategies and discuss how to improve services for victims of sexual assaults.** This recommendation was included in the original SIU proposal, and continues to be timely. The team could be made up of other police department sexual assault investigators and include advocates and partnership agencies.
 - The NWPB are a part of the British Columbia Provincial Policing Standards (BCPPS) group that has representatives from municipal and federal policing organizations in BC. The working group consist of subject matter experts regarding sexual assault investigations. This group is in the process of developing new Provincial Policing Standards (standards) regarding sexual assault investigations. The police subject matter experts and practitioners are to provide input and advice to the project leads in relation to the development of the standards. They will also assist in the assessment of the need for additional resources, materials, or training-related considerations. This is an ongoing working group and the new standards can be expected by 2023.

- SIU, Victim Assistance Unit (VAU) and Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) are currently meeting weekly to discuss current cases and strategies for sexual assault investigations and victim support.
- The NWPDP would like to extend this meeting to external police agencies and community advocates like Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVA) Rape Crisis Center who support survivors of sexual violence. The meeting would include the discussion of trends in investigations and would allow constructive feedback. This meeting would not involve the discussion of personal information but would assist to identify trends in investigations and ways to improve victim support.

2. Have sexual assault files reviewed and coded by the supervisor for the SIU. Given the turnover that the SIU has experienced, it is important to maintain consistency in the processing of sex assault files.

- The first level of oversight is done by the Patrol Unit Supervisor after a Patrol member submits their report. The Supervisor would complete the investigative review (Patrol Supervisor Checklist) we developed to assist with Sexual Assault Investigations. The Supervisor would ensure it was coded in PRIME correctly and that best practices for the investigation are met. The Patrol Supervisor Checklist is attached for your reference. Not only is this checklist used by Supervisors but it is also a tool for Patrol members to help guide them through a sexual assault investigation.
- The Sergeant in SIU reviews all of the sexual assault files that are coded in PRIME as sexual offence files. All of these files are routed to the Sergeant's review handle. This is a second review (after the Patrol Supervisor) to determine if SIU will take over the investigation, or discuss the file with the Patrol members/supervisor for further investigative direction to ensure best investigative practices have been met.
- The Sexual Assault Review Committee consists of the Staff Sergeant in charge of MCU, the Sergeant in charge of SIU, and the File Quality Reviewer Supervisor from Records Management. They ensure that all concluded investigations have been conducted in a thorough and professional manner. Reviewed files that require additional investigation are referred back to the original investigator.

3. Make mandatory trauma-informed interviewing techniques, and sex assault training, for all Patrol members. Most sex assault cases begin with Patrol officers. The initial contact of the officer with the victim sets the context for the rest of the victim's experience with the NWPDP. Problems of communication that may arise during these earliest interactions are challenging to rectify later in the process.

- An online CPKN course for Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) has been completed by all Patrol members. BC Police Services are developing mandated courses for two levels.

The first course will be for police recruits at the JIBC and the second for current serving police officers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been delayed but is still being developed to be implemented in the future.

4. Provide regular briefings/training for entire organization regarding the role and function of the SIU. This would address concerns that some Patrol officers still do not have a clear idea as to what the SIU does, and how it can aid Patrol officers in their work. This education would also include clarification about how cases are divided between the SIU and MCU.

- The SIU members schedule regular attendances at Patrol briefings throughout the year. At these briefings, the SIU discuss the mandate of the Unit, what types of files they investigate, and how they can assist Patrol members with sexual assault investigations. At the most recent visit to briefing, the Sexual Assault Checklist was introduced and explained.
- SIU members also attend the supervisor course where they provide training to new supervisors on best practices and investigative techniques regarding sexual assault investigations.
- The current Sergeant in charge of SIU worked to bridge the gap between Patrol members and SIU. She has ongoing communication with Patrol supervisors advising that they are there for support, can take over investigations or alternatively, provide guidance throughout the investigation. This has been a crucial development to ensure that Patrol members feel supported when investigating difficult and complex sexual assault investigations.

5. Create better mechanisms for collecting data on the SIU. The online client survey is a first step in collecting the types of information that are relevant to evaluating the work of the SIU. Ideally, this collection of data relating to client experiences should be systematized and made more comprehensive. This would allow for a more detailed understanding of how the SIU is meeting its mandate, as well as facilitate the assessment of any changes in client experiences over time.

- This has yet to come to fruition but a variety of methods for collecting data regarding victim experiences has been discussed. Support counsellors feel this would re-traumatize victims (having to discuss their experience); however, a less obtrusive manner of collecting data would be to provide a link on the NWPD brochure or on the back of a member's business card. This link would allow the victim to provide anonymous feedback. Other police departments have used this method. The Sergeant in SIU is looking at options to implement the availability of a link for victims and thus allow the collection of data relating to client experiences.

6. Include client feedback and related information in the performance measures for review and promotion of SIU investigators. As noted earlier, traditional measures of police effectiveness may not be as relevant for SIU clients. Consequently, it is necessary to re-evaluate the criteria on which investigators should be judged. Given the client-centered orientation of the unit, it is critical that evaluation criteria reflect considerations and outcomes that are important to clients.

- Victims do provide feedback; however, it is not documented and only anecdotal in nature. SIU members advise that victims have told them that they have had bad experiences with other police agencies but that they felt very comfortable at the NWPD and have built trusted relationships. They further advised that the NWPD has provided a very welcoming, non-judgemental and professional environment. The sexual assault investigations could be assessed based on positive outcomes (charges approved, victim centered approach, trauma informed practice being utilized) which would give a measure of police effectiveness.

7. Proactively plan for recruitment of new SIU investigators. Develop strategies for education and training for all officers about the principals of the unit, the objectives of SIU investigations, and how performance will be assessed.

- The NWPD have had members work in the SIU in a seconded position. This allows them first-hand experience in the responsibilities and investigation of the unit. This unit is not conducive to short secondments because it takes time to build relationships with victims and to build trust. One police officer dedicated for at least three years is ideal. Most members have MCU experience prior to taking the position. The DVRT Detective and SIU investigator have started to work together as more of a team. Their collaboration has made a significant difference in work satisfaction. They monitor each other's interviews, cover each other on vacation, attend calls together in the community and participate in offender management. This team environment has made the position more attractive to members. This needs to be advertised to members at the NWPD.
- Education and training are ongoing in the SIU. A selection of the courses offered are Child Interviewing, BE-SAFER, Sara Volume 3, risk assessment and in depth safety planning. These should be mandatory prior to becoming an SIU Detective.
- Members of the unit are encouraged to source their own courses to aid in their professional development. An organization called "Protect International, Risk and Safety Services" provides municipal and federal police officers a multitude of training opportunities. The Sergeant engages members and they develop a training plan together as they gain more experience in the Unit.

8. Reconsider the organization placement of the SIU, particularly in relation to the MCU. The issue of how the SIU operates in relation to the MCU continues to raise questions. Legitimate concerns over silos, lack of resources, and the need for collaboration suggest that it may be possible for the organization to better leverage the work being done by the SIU. As such, it would be useful for the NWPD to revisit this issue. At the same time, it would also be helpful to further consider the name of the unit, as well as the physical placement in the office.

- This has been the topic of discussion for several years. There are definitely pros and cons to having SIU in the Major Crime Unit (MCU). An advantage to having SIU under the MCU umbrella is the available resourcing. The MCU is staffed with experienced police officers and supervisors that work on serious and complex files. This team is available for their input and they can also utilize the Major Case Management model for complex sexual assault investigations. The opposing viewpoint to SIU being under MCU would be that SIU would get pulled away from sexual assault investigations and into other high priority MCU files. This would then remove their sole focus on sexual assault investigations. To be successful, the SIU would require their own supervisor/Corporal and there must be a strict mandate as to their focus and responsibilities in MCU.
- Best practices in other municipal and federal police agencies have SIU under the MCU umbrella. Agencies such as Port Moody Police, Burnaby RCMP, Coquitlam RCMP, West Vancouver Police, Vancouver Police Department and Delta Police Department IPVU's fall under MCU.
- The DVRT Policy is currently undergoing a revision which will change the current name to the Intimate Partner Violence Unit (IPVU) which is an updated term used by most other police agencies. The word "domestic" can be limiting as it relates to a household or a family domestic life. Intimate Partner is a more broad term which include all types of relationships and best practices dictate changing the name of the unit.
- The current physical placement of the SIU is appropriate as they are required to be close to VAU as they interact on a daily basis with respect to victim management and support services.

9. Clarify policies and procedures for sexual assault victims under 18 years of age. Given the specialization of the SIU, it remains unclear as to why it is excluded from handling this subset of cases, including the work of the counsellors. Given the high number of young sexual assault victims, it would be best to have members who are specifically training in such investigations as well as have a strong understanding of the impact and needs of victim.

- FSGV Support workers are restricted from supporting children. These referrals go to an external agency called "Cameray Child and Family Services". VAU is responsible

for making these referrals. Our current policy states that any sex crimes against children are to be investigated by MCU. This is another support for SIU to be under the MCU umbrella as they would be part of the Unit and able to take these complex files, as they have the training to do so and they would have the MCU resources as support. There are many challenges to investigating these files – a tremendous amount of resources are required. Currently, the normal course of action is that the file will be assigned to MCU and the SIU Detectives will assist them with the investigation.

10. Develop standard set of training courses for SIU investigators. In consultation with other units and experts in the field, it would be beneficial to develop a standard set of course for SIU investigators. Members could be encouraged to take other training, but this group of courses would constitute the minimum requirements. (See paragraph 7)

11. Develop a social media presence. Campaigns could be conducted to alert the public to the under-reporting of sexual assaults with the goal of making victims aware of the supportive response they would receive through the NWPd. These campaigns would include descriptions of the SIU and emphasize how the unit is there to help victims with their experiences, not necessarily to secure criminal justice system responses.

- The NWPd have had several campaigns run through our Communications Unit via social media during the pandemic reminding the public they do not have to stay in an unsafe situation and to be encouraged to speak with the police.
- There are flaws in advertising SIU, as an investigation may stay with a Patrol member and not be assigned to SIU. Most sexual assault reports are initially taken by Patrol members.
- No media specifically related to sex crimes has been done to date; however, this could be discussed with the NWPd Communications team as to an appropriate manner in which this could be done.

12. Consider the role of blind reporting. Reporting where the identity of the victim is protected would allow the police to have a fuller understanding of these crimes, and even identify connections about serial offenders, while encouraging the victim to report without the fear of perceived consequences. This option could potentially create an opportunity for the victim to build confidence in the NWPd, and ultimately seek further communication with investigators, which could eventually result in a decision to participate in a full investigation.

- ViCLAS (Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System) linkage achieves this goal by keeping victims anonymous, but allows analysis of current trends in sexual assault investigations.

- Third Party Reporting (TPR) is similar to blind reporting in that the victim's identity is protected. The NWPD can work on messaging that promotes victims to seek help, without committing to the entire judicial process of reporting the sexual assault to police. Third Party Reporting is included in the NWPD Sexual Assault Investigations Policy (OB220). It states, "The New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) shall receive and accept for investigation all complaints alleging a Sexual Offence including Third Party Reporting". This process is monitored and reviewed by the Provincial Coordinator who is an RCMP member. TPR files can be received from a community based victim assistance agency or the Provincial Coordinator. Every TPR submitted will have a unique TPR tracking number assigned. If a TPR sexual offence report occurred in New Westminster, a General Occurrence Report will be created. The NWPD see this as an opportunity to offer services through the person reporting for the victim.
- FSGV report workers currently support victims that have not reported to the police. They have client confidentiality and a police report may never be created. The public needs to be informed that this option is available to them.

The SIU has been successful in meeting most of the above-noted recommendations. The Unit still has difficulty attracting members to the position due to the perceived lack of support and team environment. The current Sergeant has changed this perception and both the Domestic Violence Detective and SIU Detective have a partnership where they work as a team in their investigations. From monitoring and planning interviews to victim support and arresting suspects, they support each other and the SIU has become a team environment. The extra resources that MCU would offer would definitely be an asset; however, losing the ability to focus on their mandate may negatively impact these investigations. The NWPD are currently undergoing an Operational Review of the police department which should be completed in summer of 2022. This will most likely help the NWPD decide in the direction of the SIU and where it should most effectively be situated within the organization.

SUMMARY OF FUTURE WORK REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue our work with the Province in the development of the standards regarding sexual assault investigations. Implement the recommended training, resources and related materials.
- Plan a meeting with external police agencies and community advocates to discuss trends and best practices.
- Create a way to collect data on the SIU. One suggestion being discussed is to have a link on the NWPD brochure or on the back of a member's business card. Victims could anonymously access this link and provide feedback on the unit.
- Police effectiveness could be measured by charge approval, using victim centered approach and trauma informed practice during investigations.

- Consider moving SIU under MCU for greater resources and team environment. This would make it more attractive for members and could result in an increase in applications to the unit.
- Policies and procedures regarding sexual assault victims under the age of 18 years need to be reviewed and best practices applied.
- Social media plan to increase public awareness of SIU and what it can offer.
- Inform the public and counsellors about blind reporting and third party reporting so they know its availability.
- We anticipate the completion of the Operational Review in summer 2022 and believe that we will have more clarity in deciding on the placement of SIU within the NWPd. We want to ensure the Unit will operate at optimal effectiveness and to continue to provide a professional and compassionate approach to sexual assault investigations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

OPTIONS

Option 1: That the New Westminster Police Board receives the submitted Report for information.

Option 2: That the Board provides staff with alternate direction.

Staff recommends option 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. *Final Draft Report – an Evaluation of the New Westminster Police Department Specialized Investigations Unit*
2. Sexual Assault Investigation Checklist

This Report has been prepared by:

Inspector Diana McDaniel

Final Draft Report - An Evaluation of the New Westminster Police Department Specialized Investigations Unit



Garth Davies
Simon Fraser University

&

Carla Hotel
Douglas College

September 14, 2021

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Executive Summary

- A 2017 report conducted by the *Globe and Mail* revealed that a troublingly high rate of sex assault investigations were cleared as “unfounded.” This report led many police departments in Canada, including the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) for re-evaluate their approaches to sex assault investigations
- Following an extensive internal review that identified best practices, the NWPD introduced a Specialized Investigations Unit (SIU) to conduct sex assault investigations
- In particular, the SIU was founded on a trauma-based approach that emphasized the needs of the victim
- It was originally hoped that the SIU would handle all sex assault investigations; however, resource limitations and other considerations have resulted in the SIU handling select investigations only. In some instances, sex assault investigations remain with the originating patrol officer, while in others, the investigation is transferred to the Major Crimes Unit (MCU)
- The NWPD determined that it would be useful to evaluate the SIU as a comparatively early stage in its implementation, to see it was operating as anticipated
- The evaluation involved 11 interviews with members of the NWPD and 1 member of Family Services of Greater Vancouver. Because of resource limitations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a review of data pertaining to the SIU was postponed.
- The second key part of the evaluation involved the development and implementation of an online client feedback survey. The survey was developed in consultation and cooperation with the SIU. The research team will report back on the survey results after sufficient time has passed to secure a viable sample size (expected to take at least 4-6 months)
- Overall, the results for the SIU have been very positive, particularly given the challenges wrought by the pandemic. The principles under which the SIU is functioning are in line with recognized best practices (especially with regard to being trauma-informed and client centered), and anecdotal evidence suggests that clients are benefiting from the existence of the SIU
- Still, the interviews suggested a number of areas of potential improvement
- The resulting recommendations involved potential structural/organizational changes, revisions to the procedures for coding sex assault files, more standardized training, improvements to data collections, and a more proactive approach to the recruitment and retention of SIU investigators
- A full list of recommendations can be found [here](#)

Background: The Impetus for Creating the Specialized Investigations Unit

In 2017, a *Globe and Mail* national report focussing on police investigations of sex assault revealed that, in the five year period between 2010 and 2015, nearly one in five sex assault allegations were classified as “unfounded” (Doolittle, 2017). While there were inaccuracies in the data initially provided by NWPD, their revised the numbers still identified areas of concern for sex assault cases, in comparison to other comparable crime data. The troublesome results highlighted by the *Globe and Mail* report prompted many police agencies, including the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) to review their policies and practices in relation to sex assault cases. Several areas of concern were identified, including the following:

- There existed no specialized police officer or caseworker to assist with sex assault/power-based crimes;
- Client-centered support in sex assault files was lacking; this included initial support, safety planning, and on-going support through the criminal justice process;
- The NWPD did not have the participation of external stakeholders who specialize in sex assaults;
- Gaps in the knowledge/training of police members investigating sex assaults;
- Not all sex assault files were overseen by a specialized investigator;
- Patrol members did not have a specialized unit from which to seek advice for sex assault cases
- A lack of knowledge in trauma-based evidence gathering; and,
- A lack of follow-up with the victim once the file proceeded to court or concluded without charges, potentially leading to victim disengagement.

Response

In response to the challenges identified above, NWPD proposed a new unit focussed on sex assault in 2017. The new unit was developed around the following recommendations:

1. Create a new Power-based Crimes Unit¹

¹ The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Policing and Community Safety Branch defines victims of Power-Based Crimes as:

All victims of violence in relationships (adult, youth, or child), victims of sex assault, victims of criminal harassment, victims of child abuse/assault (both physical and sex), adult survivors of childhood abuse (both physical and sex), and child witnesses of family violence.

Prior to the creation of this unit, the NWPD needed to identify both the appropriate human resources and organization structure placement. The resulting unit was called the Special Investigation Unit (SIU).

2. Review and revise existing policy (OB220)

The purpose of this review and revision was twofold: a) to introduce new objectives and goals to reflect the focus on sex assault and b) to ensure inclusivity for all sex assault victims.

3. Identify gaps in training, policy, and investigative approaches

Through this process, the new unit was to include best practices in victim-centred and continuum of care, as well as trauma-informed practices. The availability of alternative justice options, including restorative approaches,² could be usefully employed.

4. Identify partners/stakeholders for cross-training and unit capacity building

A key partnership included an external counsellor. The role the counsellor and the distinction in roles between the new unit and the victim assistance unit needed to be clarified.

5. Implement program evaluation to assess effectiveness in objectives and goals

A multi-method approach to evaluation was envisioned, one that could involve a number of tools, including feedback forms, questionnaires, interviews and the analysis of PRIME data.

The Focus of SIU Practice would be a Victim-Centred Approach

It terms of structure, it was determined that a NWPD detective 'would be paired with a community counsellor from Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) to ensure a victim-centered approach to sex assault cases. To support the development of knowledge and the sharing of information and expertise, the SIU would foster relationships with other agencies to provide support to the victim they choose not to proceed with a police investigation.

At a minimum, this would partner agencies such as FSGV, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Community Corrections, Royal Columbian Hospital, and various advocacy groups. The SIU would also work with Crown Counsel to push

² Wemmers, (2017), International Centre for Comparative Criminology, University of Montreal. Although only 5% of sex assault victims report to police, 1 in 4 are interested in restorative justice and this option may be beneficial for the well-being of the victim by reducing the effects of the trauma.

for testimonial aids and to consider expert testimony evidence of neurobiology of trauma to explain reaction in victims (for example, paralysis during assault). In addition, SIU would collaborate with groups such as Communities Embracing Restorative Action (CERA) regarding the use of restorative justice alternative in known offender cases when the victim is open to this approach. At present, monthly (K-File) meeting are held to bring together various stakeholders, including the NWPD Victim Assistance Unit, MCFD, Community Corrections, Community Victim Services, and Crown Counsel.

To ensure that all files were properly coded as founded or unfounded³ in accordance with the changes to UCR reporting requirements, the coding of all files is reviewed by the Supervisor for the SIU. As well, the NWPD proposal suggested the creation of an advisory team that would meet regularly to discuss how to improve services for victims of sex assaults. The team could be made up of sex assault investigators from other police department, and also advocates and partner agencies. Thus far, this recommendation has not been implemented.

Determining Case Management

At the beginning of the process, the SIU was intended to perform a triage function. That is, the SIU detective was to review all reported sex assaults (in consultation with the Supervisor where necessary) to determine how best these cases should proceed. Specifically, this intake process would identify those cases that would:

- a) remain with the initial patrol investigator;
- b) have SIU assume command of the investigation; or
- c) forward to the Major Crime Unit.

The decision regarding how each sex assault should be investigated is intended to take into account a range of factors, such as:

- the level of risk to the victim;
- the level of risk to the public;
- the severity of the crime, including the impact on the victim;
- the vulnerability of the victim;
- whether the identity of the suspect is known to the victim; and
- the level of resources and/or expertise needed to fully investigate the file.

³ **January 2018:** A new definition of 'unfounded' and new standards for reporting incidents by clearance status were established for the UCR Survey and disseminated to all police services.

September 2018, the SIU was directed to try to assume control over as many files that met the definition of a power-based sex offence crime as possible. That is, in contrast to the DVRT, the SIU was not to assume control over only the “highest risk” designated files. This directive was designed to help the NWPD achieve its SIU objectives. However, detective workload quickly increased to the point where outstripped SIU capacity. As a result, in December 2018, the unit was instructed to assume conduct only of complex power-based sex offence crime investigations. As the same time, NWPD began monitoring the situation to assess whether the SIU might require a second officer.

Literature Review

A full literature review was conducted as a part of this research study. The review provides a broader and more comprehensive picture of sex assault reporting and investigations, particularly with regard to the issue of unfounded cases. It also identifies a number of recommendations for how policing agencies might improve their responses to reported sex assaults. The recommendations were considered a part of this assessment. The full literature review is provided in [Appendix A](#).

Evaluation Methods

The overall aim of this evaluation was to measure the implementation and the impact of the SIU. Specifically, is the unit operating as intended, and has the unit improved the approach to and investigation of power-based crimes.

There are a number of elements that are involved in such as assessment. First, interviews with key stakeholders provide important background into the process of creating and implementing the SIU. It allows stakeholders to elucidate both “what they hoped that unit be” and “what the unit actually is.”

Stakeholders were also invited to reflect on any challenges that were experienced, either during the creation of the unit or during its early-stage operations, to provide guidance to police services that might be interested in creating a similar unit in the future. The results presented in this report are drawn from 12 interviews with key stakeholders. These interviews were conducted between January and April, 2021.⁴

A second method of evaluation would involve data analysis. Given the events that precipitated the creation of the unit, the statistics pertaining to the proportion of founded to unfounded cases would be of significant interest. At the same time, the data collected by the NWPD can be utilized to determine whether the unit was producing increased compliance with investigative standards. Data can be aggregated to

⁴ A copy of the interview questions is presented in [Appendix B](#).

demonstrate trends. For example, one of the intended outcomes of the SIU was to decrease victim apprehension and/or fears about the reporting process, and therefore more apt to report sex assaults. Monthly and annual snapshots of data can reveal changes in the reporting of sex assaults, and potentially provide some valuable insights into the extent to which the SIU may be operating successfully. Due to resource limitations, NWPD was unable to provide data for this report. But the framework for a future analysis of the data is set out in the *Data Analysis* section below.

The third, critically important, facet of evaluating the SIU would include an assessment of client feedback. As mentioned previously, a foundational element of the SIU is to provide assistance to clients at all phases of case investigation. The most direct ways to solicit input are through surveys and/or interviews with the clients. At present, these feedback mechanisms do not exist. In deference to privacy considerations, it was determined that the research could not “go back” and try to contact clients who had already been served by the SIU.

Instead, the authors of this report worked with the SIU to develop an online survey. Moving forward, the SIU, at their discretion, may make a client aware of the survey. The survey also contains contact information that links the clients to the researchers should they wish to be interviewed or provide more detail about their experiences with the SIU. The survey results will be monitored, and NWPD will be notified when there are a sufficient number of responses to analyze the results. More details on the survey are available in the *Client Feedback* section below.⁵

Client feedback can also be assessed through testimonials and other comments offered by clients. Although anecdotal, these unsolicited comments nonetheless provide insights regarding the clients’ feelings toward the SIU. These comments will also be discussed in the *Client Feedback* section below

Interview Results

Overall, interview participants were positive in their assessments of the SIU. They indicated that the SIU was for the most part, functioning as it was originally hoped. The earliest stages of the unit were not without their challenges, of course, and the Covid-19 pandemic created further obstacles. But the weight of opinion was that the SIU was “definitely moving in the right direction.” Through their insights, participants identified a number of areas that could be improved and issues that need to be addressed, for the continued success of the SIU.

⁵ A copy of the client feedback survey is presented in [Appendix C](#).

Communication / Integration

Irrespective of organizational structure, the majority of victims most often have first contact not with a member of the SIU, but rather, with a patrol member. The initial stage of contact between the victim and investigators is critical in establishing trust. Put another way, mistakes that are made at this stage can be very difficult to rectify later on. Although the case may not remain with the patrol officer, it is essential that the investigation “start off on the right foot.” As a result, patrol officers need have a clear understanding of the work that SIU does; that is, they need some capacity around the specifics of sex assault investigation, including initial victim contact and trauma-based interviewing.

For their part, participants indicated that the SIU is a good resource for them to draw upon. They noted that the SIU was effective at giving feedback on files, and at increasing their understanding of what is important for working with victims. This, in turn, allows patrol members to be more effective throughout their role in these investigations.

Participants argued that patrol needs SIU support, given that a lack of follow-up is a major complaint from victims. Through helping to build connections with victims, the SIU has in most cases been able to address this concern.

One area that participants felt needed to be addressed was the confusion that remains of the “ownership” of cases: that is, which cases are the responsibility of Patrol, SIU, or Major Crimes. It would appear that the process of making these decisions needs to be clearer. As well, participants would welcome increased communication and follow-up, as some participants mentioned they would like to know the case “turned out” in order to build their understanding of sex assault cases.

File identification and role of SIU

The confusion around the classification of files is not limited to the patrol officers; rather, it extends to SIU members as well. Some of this confusion rests with the broader term “power-based crimes,” which has proven to be problematic in practice. Simply put, all sex assaults are power-based crimes; but the SIU does not take on all sex assaults (e.g., assaults against youth and children).

With the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT), the key consideration is lethality. In instances where the victim’s life is threatened and it is a life-or-death situation, a DVRT investigator becomes involved. Because there is no equivalent foundational consideration that anchors the SIU, the scope of unit remains nebulous. It would be beneficial if better, more direct criteria were developed and regularly communicated to the entire department. For example, a clear description of the types or stages of

involvement of SIU may have in a file would be useful. This description could illustrate that involvement thresholds may be influenced by varying factors including SIU resources.⁶

Unit name and location within NWPD

Some of the participants in the study commented that the moniker of *Specialized Investigation Unit* was not ideal. First, compared to other units, such as DVRT, it is not immediately clear what the focus of the unit is. Most concerning, this lack of clarity extends to clients. Participants recounted situations where clients asked if there was “something special” about the investigation into their case.

Although there is nothing beyond anecdotal evidence to suggest this is the case, there is mixed reaction and sometimes concern or suspicion by the thought of a “special” investigation. More generally, concerns were expressed that that name may inadvertently function to set expectations that might not be consistent with the true nature of the unit. A more direct and specific name might help avoid misunderstandings. Given that the unit is focused on power-based crimes, it would be useful for that connected to be explicitly acknowledged.

Other examples of where language can have powerful effects on perception were also mentioned by respondents. For example, in the context of power-based crimes, categorization of an incidents as “domestic” is arguably problematic.⁷ This distinction has been argued to inherently imply or communicate that the violence occurring during these crimes is less serious, and potentially private. The use of term domestic has gendering effect so is also less inclusive. Intimate partner violence recognizes and includes violence beyond what is by traditional household and typically hetero-normative. Obviously, that is not the intent of anyone in the NWPD using this terminology. But as implicit bias is being discussed and recognized in public safety sector, expunging this language would be a positive step to neutralize these distinctions and underscore the seriousness of the work undertaken by the SIU.

In this same theme, some participants further indicated that the use of the term “alleged” is similarly challenging, in that appears to imply that the victim has something more to “prove” with regards to the charge. A more concrete, less loaded

⁶ In addition, questions were raised about the name “Prevention Services”. While some of the follow up work carried out with victims may be aimed at reducing reoccurring victimization, neither the DVRT nor SIU are truly, or even primarily, preventative in nature. A re-naming of this branch of the organization should be considered. Moreover, the language pertaining to the Domestic Violence Response Team could also be made more inclusive (e.g., Intimate Partner Violence).

⁷ <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2019/06/domestic-violence-term/590848/>

description, such as “reported,” might better send a more welcoming message to victims.

Relatedly, two participants felt that the separation of SIU from Major Crimes gave the unintended impression that the work of SIU was less “serious” than that undertaken by Major Crimes. On one hand, this could lead victims to assume that their cases were some less important than Major Crime cases. If potential new applicants perceive this to be true, they could be less likely to apply for the less “serious” position.

Finally, although the SIU does engage in prevention efforts, that is not the primary focus of its work. As a result, participants argued that the SIU should not be located under Prevention Services. It will be further noted below the NWPD has experienced challenges in trying to fill SIU investigator positions. To this end, concerns were raised that the lack of clarity and importance about the SIU may deter suitable candidates from applying. In short, there are several reasons for NWPD to reconsider both the name of the unit and where it fits in the organizational structure.

There may also be an argument to be made to assess the physical location of SIU. Although participants were not unanimous about best placement, several commented that the SIU offices were not easily accessible. On one hand, this was seen as hindering communications with other NWPD members. The idea that the SIU might be better served by being in closer proximity to Major Crimes was raised in a variety of interviews. While its current placement leaves SIU cut-off from these more informal, day-to-day communications with investigators, it does allow easier communications with the Victim Assistance Unit.

Office space and allocation is always at a premium in large organizations, and there are always a number of considerations that go into such decisions. These issues should be purposefully weighed in terms of the role and direction for SIU going forward.

Placement within organizational structure of NWPD

The nature of the relationship between Major Crimes and SIU is an important issue to consider in its own right. There were several discussions about how SIU is situated and interacts with the Major Crimes Unit (MCU). We, the researchers, are well aware that this issue has been debated within NWPD. A number of participants were of the opinion that SIU would best be served by having a closer connection with MCU. While some argued that the SIU should be absorbed into MCU, others favored closer cooperation and coordination.

Several justifications for both propositions were provided. Perhaps most heavily weighted, MCU was perceived as having appropriate resources and team-work orientation, both of which would be beneficial to the SIU. The SIU’s work was often

described as “siloeD”, which resulted in difficult working conditions for investigators. This is an extremely challenging work environment; instead, the SIU needs greater support, and to function in a more collaboration setting. Given that nature of the cases handled by the SIU, some participants felt that such collaboration would best be achieved through a closer partnership with MCU.

A related issue that invited comment was the fact that sex assault files involving youth were automatically placed with MCU. It is not clear as to why this distinction is made. Moreover, it is puzzling that the SIU counsellor is not permitted to participate in cases where the victim is under 18 years of age, especially given that many sex assault victims are young. This is a good example where greater collaboration between the SIU and MCU would potentially better serve the needs of clients.

In terms of recognizing and formalizing connections, participants also suggested that there was a need for greater policy and procedural clarity around the SIU’s connection to the Domestic Violence Response Team (DVRT) and the Victim Assistance Unit (VAU). Again, strengthening collaboration with these units is central to the functioning of the SIU. As one participant noted, the case-level relationship between the SIU and these units is complex and dynamic:

“We worked with them (VAU) a ton. They have victims that they are mandated to work with, on 24/7. They might send one of their volunteers to deal with the victim in the middle of the night for example. Then there would be that decision to have them deal with SIU and the counsellor or VAU; this was done on a case-by-case basis and it worked very well. We had a good relationship with them – with the siloeD piece it was getting frustrating to DVRT – the VAU and domestic violence files. I worked very well to try and keep the communication open. If the victim bonded with the VAU worker then we try to keep the victim with that worker.”

Finally, as previously mentioned, some participants did also indicate that the SIUs present home in Prevention Services did not reflect that true nature of the work done by the SIU. There is certainly an element of prevention, but it is only a small part of the SIU’s portfolio, which is dominated by investigation and the work that it does serving as an invaluable resource for patrol officers. This is not necessarily an argument for greater coordination with MCU, but it does suggest that a rethinking of the work of the SIU and how it fits into the organizational structure of the NRPD.

Difficulties attracting suitable applicants for the role of SIU investigator

The siloeD and too often solitary nature of SIU work may also be implicated in one of the biggest problems experienced thus far by the SIU: the recruitment and retention of investigators. Participants from the executive level of the NRPD routinely commented

that it was difficult to attract and retain interested applicants. There are several possible explanations for this challenge. First, sex assault cases are generally regarded as very difficult, and very complex. As one participant noted:

“When you’re on patrol, most people dread SA calls. They can be quite involved, a time commitment, a purely investigative role. This is not an interest for a lot of people, not an action call, not over with a quick report. There are many elements: witnesses, training, involving children, interviews, people with different disabilities etc.”

In other words, these cases require a diverse skill set and career interest that can be difficult to find among patrol officers.

Second, as it is a relatively new unit, there is some indication that the work of the SIU is not widely understood. That is, applicants make not be sure “what they are getting into” as SIU investigators. Clear and detailed job descriptions are recommended for postings and where possible, opportunities established to observe and be mentored into the role by experienced investigators.

In addition, this lack of clarity clouds assessment and performance measures. The work conducted by the SIU is distinct from many other units. Clients have a wide range of reasons for reporting sex crimes, and many are not interested in more traditional measures of cases success, such as charges and convictions. Instead, they may want the behavior to stop, to have it “on the record”, and/or to get assistance through the resources provided by the SIU. These experiences may be deemed successful by clients but are then not reflected in officer assessment.

As a result, standard assessment criteria for promotion, including arrests and charge approvals, do not accurately reflect the work done by SIU investigators. At the same time, alternative evaluative criteria have not been specified, leaving investigators in a tenuous position in terms of understanding their role and knowing how to define their successes.

Third, the SIU is widely perceived as being under-resourced. Simply put, one detective is not sufficient to cover the number of cases that would benefit from SIU involvement. The work of the unit is heavily labour intensive and involves some of the highest risk cases handled by the department. Because of a lack of resources, SIU investigators are “spread very thin.” There are many files with which investigators would like to engage, and that would benefit from the investigator’s input and expertise, but for which the investigators simply do not have the bandwidth.

Moreover, there is no appropriate way to “speed up” the processing of many of these cases, as making connections and establishing rapport with victims takes time; it cannot be rushed, lest the entire justification for the unit be disregarded. Developing trust is

made all the more difficult by standard shift work. The complexity of many of these cases requires a consultation and a team approach, both of which are lacking under the current SIU model. In sum, investigators are not able to review and respond to all sex assault, as was originally intended with the creation of the SIU. Limited further by detectives working alone, it is impossible consult and collaborate on all such cases.

At the same time, the under-resourcing of the SIU means that its ability to engage in proactive work, especially reaching out to more vulnerable populations, is highly limited. Some participants suggested this was a serious setback, because there were many people in the community who might be encouraged to engage with the SIU but who were unaware of its existence, and how it might assist. Again, it is important to bear in mind that many victims may not be necessarily looking for a criminal conviction and may in fact be fearful of coming forward to report an assault. Community awareness about the SIU and how it works to assist victims would be beneficial. As the unit develops, it is important that the community, and the most vulnerable groups in particular, become aware of the resources offered by the SIU.

Finally, in addition to potentially serving as a barrier to recruiting investigators, there was also some suggestion that retention may be adversely impacted by fatigue and burn out. Given the time that is required to get “up to speed” on the intricacies of the SIU work, and the specialized skills that are acquired by investigators, frequent turnover is problematic, from both client and organizational perspectives. It is in the best interest of both clients and the NWPD to develop mechanisms to support and encourage investigators to stay in their positions. Some recommendations on how this might be accomplished are provided below.

Training

For the most part, SIU investigators did not receive specific training prior to starting. One area of concern was a lack of crossover between outgoing and incoming investigators. Given the complexities and nuances of the position, it would be highly advantageous for new SIU investigators to be able to job shadow departing investigators.

It was also evident that there was no consistent set of training for SIU investigators; rather, it is currently more of a patchwork approach. Training is encouraged, and NWPD has supported and made training available when requested by investigators, but this approach has led to inconsistent resources and training among SIU officers. Having officers identify their own training needs is especially challenging early on, as they may have little knowledge as to what types of training they may require.

A consistent set of initial training requirements made available as part of onboarding might streamline the onboarding process. This training could be followed by options to update and refresh skill sets. In light of concerns about silos, it might also be beneficial if there some crossover training was provide together to the SIU and the DVRT.

Impact of the counsellor

The role of the counsellor in the SIU was universally praised. According to the participants, the counsellors have had a demonstrably positive effect on case outcomes for victims. The overall feedback suggests that the addition of the counsellor to the SIU model is achieving its intended effect. Aside from the obvious challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the perspective of the participants is that the SIU model resulted in better outcomes for victims. Counsellors are generally able to stay in weekly contact with victims, enabling them to develop the types of bonds that would be much harder for regular patrol officers and investigations to develop or maintain.

The counsellor position is a collaborative resource that allows for a more holistic trauma informed / victim centered approach, and as such it consistently impacts the work for detectives and the experiences of the victims. Participants reported that investigators were able to “check in” with the counsellor regarding the state of mind or current situation of particular victims. In some cases, when updates were available, the information was conveyed when it would be best for victim (e.g. non-urgent update provided after an unrelated challenge has past).

In one case example that was provided, a victim, the counsellor and the detective participated in a three-way call to share information and discuss case. The counsellor was able to assist in communication, provide updates, and direct the victim to further external resources. Participant also noted that investigators were able to assess various options or approaches to specific cases with counsellors, who can uniquely comment on how the victim might respond to different courses of action. There also have been examples where the counsellor has been able to provide assistance conveying information to the victim. Finally, the counsellors are also important in supporting follow up on community resources and safety plans.

Client Feedback

In light of the specific contexts within which the SIU was developed, it was envisioned that the unit would produce a number of outcomes. Perhaps most importantly, the integrated support provided by the SIU model would improve the overall quality and consistency of NRPD’s response to the individual needs of sex assault victims. For example, the integration of both a detective and counsellor would ensure that the

victim of a sex assault crime would gain timely access to supports that would increase the likelihood of the victim remaining engaged in the criminal justice process. At the same, the integrated unit would ensure that victims have access to comprehensive support, from the initial reporting of the crime through to the end of the criminal justice process and beyond if required. The SIU was also expected to conduct safety planning and aid victims in reducing incidences of re-victimization.

It was also anticipated that the SIU investigator would develop specific skill that would improve the way NWPD was able to assist sex assault victims. For instance, was expected that the investigator would become skilled in techniques of trauma-informed interviewing and able to obtain the most detailed and accurate recollection from the victim. This approach would support the victim, reduce the risk of further trauma, while simultaneously strengthening the case.

The specialized skill set developed by the SIU investigator would also provide benefit to the NWPD more generally. It would allow the unit to provide best practice training and guidance to patrol resources, which would, in turn, assist in patrol officers' initial response to sex assault cases. Similarly, the SIU could serve as a resource for sex assault cases that are not investigated by the unit; that is, for those cases that remain with the originating officer, or that are transfer to Major Crimes.

At the moment, no systematic, direct feedback from clients is available. There is however notable anecdotal evidence, in the form of informal feedback and comments provided by clients to SIU investigators and counsellors that highlights the positive effects of the unit. Examples of this feedback include the client:

- telling family and friends about how good the police had been to them;
- reporting a second, separate crime as a result of their interactions with the SIU;
- eventually coming forward to report a crime, after having initially denying that the offence occurred;
- relaying feelings of emotional release following their interactions with the SIU;
- feeling encouraged and supported when they discovered that there is a specific unit for sex assault;
- expressing satisfaction that their experience had been heard and documented (in some cases, this was, for the client, the intended outcome); and
- having another family member come forward with their own victimization and open a separate file

Going forward, the NWPD would be well served by more formally gathering client feedback for evaluation. An online client feedback survey has been developed and vetted through NWPD investigators and the counsellors. It is recommended that SIU detectives, counsellors, and VAU workers discuss strategies to ask clients to complete the survey (e.g. taking into account factors such as timing, receptivity, state of mind,

and external constraints or issues). The survey is to be completed anonymously, and no identifying features are to be gathered from the survey participants. Sensitive to the possibility of distressing and/or re-traumatizing victims, the survey is relatively short. The combination of closed (check box) and short open-ended questions were developed in consultation with the SIU investigator and counsellor, to create a few different options for clients to provide feedback.

Beyond the standard measures of success for police organizations, and in addition to the anecdotal comments presented earlier, the following is a list of, or starting point for, what could be interpreted as success from the point of view of the clients:

- feeling a sense of closure;
- experiencing enhanced emotional well-being;
- feeling satisfied with having reported (irrespective of criminal justice system outcome);
- knowing the report is “out there” or “on the record”;
- feeling respected;
- feeling included;
- feeling supported;
- having a positive experience with police;
- feeling of inclusion having been kept informed regularly; and
- feeling an increased trust of police.

A copy of the online client survey is provided in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Originally, we had hoped to conduct a data analysis related to the SIU. As a result of staffing challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the resources required to collect the data were unavailable. We are hopeful that the data will be available in the future. The review of case file data would be intended to address the following questions (all of the questions, with the exception of #8, would have Yes/No responses):

1. Were there reasonable grounds to believe a sex offence occurred?
2. Were charges recommended?
3. If the file met the standard for the BC Domestic Violence policy, were K file procedures followed?
4. Were all investigative tasks followed up on?
5. Was the victim informed of the outcome of the investigation?
6. Was the SIU investigator engaged?

7. Was the SIU counsellor engaged?
8. What was the time to complete the investigation (in months) or until charges were recommended?

With future research, the case file review could be extended to assess issues such as the quality of investigation, compliance with policy and practice at both patrol and MCU levels, and the potential presence of bias.

Recommendations

Create an advisory team that would meet regularly to share strategies and discuss how to improve services for victims of sex assaults. This recommendation was included in the original SIU proposal, and continues to be timely. The team could be made up of other police department sex assault investigators and include advocates and partnership agencies.

Have sex assault files reviewed and coded by the supervisor for the SIU. Given the turnover that the SIU has experienced, it is important to maintain consistency in the processing of sex assault files.

Make mandatory trauma-informed interviewing techniques, and sex assault training, for all patrol members. Most sex assault cases begin with patrol officers. The initial contact of the officer with the victim sets the context for the rest of the victim's experience with the NWPD. Problems of communication that may arise during these earliest interactions are challenging to rectify later in the process. While work is underway to have all members trained in trauma informed practices,

Provide regular briefings/training for entire organization regarding the role and function of the SIU. This would address concerns that some patrol officers still do not have a clear idea as to what the SIU does, and how it can aid patrol officers in their work. This education would also include clarification about how cases are divided between the SIU and MCU.

Create better mechanisms for collecting data on the SIU. The online client survey is a first step in collecting the types of information that are relevant to evaluating the work of the SIU. Ideally this collection of data relating to client experiences should be systematized and made more comprehensive. This would allow for a more detailed understanding of how the SIU is meeting its mandate, as well as facilitate the assessment of any changes in client experiences over time.

Include client feedback and related information in the performance measures for review and promotion of SIU investigators. As noted earlier, traditional measures of

police effectiveness may not be as relevant for SIU clients. Consequently, it is necessary to re-evaluate the criteria on which investigators should be judged. Given the client-centered orientation of the unit, it is critical that evaluation criteria reflect considerations and outcomes important to clients.

Proactively plan for recruitment of new SIU investigators. Develop strategies for education and training for all officers about the principles of the unit, the objectives of SIU investigations, and how performance will be assessed.

Reconsider the organizational placement of the SIU, particularly in relation to the MCU. The issue of how the SIU operates in relation to the MCU continues to raise questions. Legitimate concerns over silos, lack of resources, and the need for collaboration suggest that it may be possible for the organization to better leverage the work being done by the SIU. As such, it would be useful for the NWPDP to revisit this issue. At the same time, it would also be helpful to further consider the name of the unit, and well as the physical placement of its office.

Clarify policies and procedures for sex assault victims under 18 years of age. Given the specialization of the SIU, it remains unclear as to why it is excluded from handling this subset of cases, including the work of the counsellors. Given the high number of young sex assault victims, it would be best to have members who are specifically trained in such investigations as well have an strong understanding of the impact and needs of victims.

Develop standard set of training courses for SIU investigators. In consultation with other units and experts in the field, it would be beneficial to develop a standard set of course for SIU investigators. Members could be encouraged to take other training, but this group of courses would constitute the minimum requirements.

Develop a social media presence. Campaigns could be conducted to alert the public to the under-reporting of sex assaults with the goal of making victims aware of the supportive response they would receive through the NWPDP. These campaigns would include descriptions of the SIU and emphasize how the unit is there to help victims with their experiences, not necessarily to secure criminal justice system responses.

Consider the role of blind reporting. Reporting where the identity of the victim is protected would allow the police to have a fuller understanding of these crimes, and even identify connections about serial offenders, while encouraging the victim to report without the fear of perceived consequences. This option could potentially create an opportunity for the victim to build confidence in the NWPDP, and ultimately seek further communication with investigators, which could eventually result in a decision to participate in a full investigation.

Appendix A: Literature Review – Sexual Assault in Canada

“The personal cost for nothing to happen was too unbalanced for me, and that was why I didn’t report. There’s no guarantee that I am going to be heard and listened to and believed, and the skepticism that policing seems to have with sexual assault and all forms of unwanted sexual contact is a huge barrier to me” (Interview 4).

- *Women’s Experiences of the Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault*
Prochuk (2018)

Introduction

Sexual assaults are significantly underreported in Canada (Benoit et al., 2015; Sinha, 2013). A total of 5.9 million individuals aged 15 years or older have experienced sexual assault – 4.7 million of these victims were women, while 1.2 million were men. Overall, women were four times more likely to have experienced sexual victimization than men (Cotter & Savage, 2019). Sexual victimization has several detrimental and long-term mental and physical health consequences, including: depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety (e.g., Khadr et al., 2018; Tarzia et al., 2018), substance abuse (Abbey et al., 2004), poor physical health (Weissbecker & Clark, 2007), and suicidal ideation and behavior (Gilmore et al., 2020). Many sexual assault victims have difficulty functioning in their daily lives (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Cotter & Savage, 2019).

Recently, there has been an increase in collective awareness about sexual assault. Prevalent social movements such as #MeToo or Time’s Up have widely informed the public on the pervasiveness and detrimental impacts of sexual assault (Cotter & Savage, 2019; Rotenberg & Cotter, 2018). To evaluate sexual assault prevalence, Statistics Canada uses information from two national surveys: (1) self-reported data from the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians’ Safety (Victimization), and (2) police-reported data from the Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey (Allen, 2015; Perreault, 2015). Police-reported UCR Survey statistics showed a 46% increase in sexual assaults reported to police in October 2017 compared to October 2016 (see Rotenberg & Cotter, 2018). This increase co-occurred with the #MeToo movement, which went viral in October 2017 (Rotenberg & Cotter, 2018). Despite these positive outcomes in rates of reporting to police, the self-reported 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces (SSPPS) indicated that sexual assault was still significantly underreported (Cotter & Savage, 2019). More precisely, only five percent of victims of sexual assault reported to police (Cotter & Savage, 2019; RCMP, 2017). Although it is difficult to directly compare police-reported incidents on the UCR Survey and self-reported victimization data gathered by the SSPPS or GSS, it is essential to note that the

UCR only measures crime that meets two requirements: the crime was reported to, and corroborated by, the police. In other words, police-reported data includes sexual assault incidents that have come to police attention and been substantiated through an official police investigation that confirmed violation of the law (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Given that most sexual assaults are unreported to police, self-reported GSS data captures the “dark figure” of crime (Perreault, 2015).

Self-Reported Sexual Assaults in Canada

GSS data has shown that over 15 years, from 1999 to 2014, sexual assault rates have remained unchanged (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Perreault, 2015). For instance, the rate of sexual victimization in Canada for individuals aged 15 years or older was 21 per 1,000 population in 1999 and 22 per 1,000 population in 2014 (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Of the eight victimization offences assessed in the GSS, sexual assault was the only offence that did not decrease over this timeframe (Perreault, 2015).⁸ By way of comparison, violent victimization involving physical assault and robbery decreased by 35% and 39%, respectively from 1999-2014, while sexual assault rates held constant (Perreault, 2015). GSS data indicates that a total of approximately 636,000 incidents of sexual assault occurred nationwide in 2014 (Conroy & Cotter, 2017).

There are three different types of sexual assault assessed by the GSS: (1) forced or attempted forced sexual activity, (2) “unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing, or fondling,” and (3) sexual activity where the victim was not able to give consent due to “intoxication, manipulation or non-physical force” (Conroy & Cotter, 2017, p. 5).⁹ The most common form of sexual assault reported was unwanted sexual touching (71%), followed by forcible sexual assault (20%), and sexual assault where the victim was not capable of providing consent (9%; Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Research has demonstrated that girls and women (Conroy, 2018; Rotenberg, 2019), sexual minorities (Simpson, 2018), Indigenous women (Boyce, 2016), university women (Muehlenhard et al., 2016), and women with disabilities (Cotter, 2018) are especially vulnerable to sexual victimization. For instance, of the 636,000 sexual assaults reported by Canadians in the 2014 GSS, 87% of victims were women; this figure translates into 37 incidents of sexual

⁸ The eight types of offences measured in the GSS include: sexual assault, robbery, physical assault (i.e., violent victimization), theft of personal property (i.e., theft or attempted theft of personal property), break and enter, theft of motor vehicle or parts, theft of household property, and vandalism (i.e., household victimization; Perreault, 2015).

⁹ Sexual assault is measured on the GSS by three questions: (1) “Has anyone forced you or attempted to force you into any unwanted sexual activity by threatening you, holding you down or hurting you in some way?” (2) “Has anyone ever touched you against your will in any sexual way...anything from unwanted touching or grabbing, to kissing or fondling?” (3) “Has anyone subjected you to a sexual activity to which you were not able to consent...where you were drugged, intoxicated, manipulated or forced in ways other than physically?” (Conroy & Cotter, 2017, p. 5).

assault per 1,000 population (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). The majority of sexual assault perpetrators were men known to the victim, either a friend, acquaintance or neighbour (52%), versus a stranger (44%; see Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Moreover, in 2014, 83% to 90% of the total incidents (i.e., 636,000) were not reported to the police (Department of Justice Canada, n.d.; RCMP, 2017). A more recent 2018 SSPPS revealed that only five percent of women reported sexual assault to police (Cotter & Savage, 2019). Given the low rates of reporting in cases of sexual assault, GSS and other self-reported data sources obtained through community research (e.g., Prochuk, 2018) are extremely important for understanding the prevalence, barriers in reporting, and criminal justice experiences of sexual assault victims in Canada (Benoit et al., 2015).

Barriers to Reporting

Researchers have offered many reasons for underreporting of sexual victimization (e.g., Johnson, 2017). A recent collaborative project conducted by YWCA-Metro Vancouver and West Coast Legal Education & Action Fund (West Coast LEAF), titled *Dismantling the Barriers to Reporting Sexual Assault*, interviewed sexual assault victims from the Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C.) area about their experiences with reporting or not reporting their sexual victimization to the police.¹⁰ The goal was to identify systemic barriers in reporting sexual assault to police for victims and in navigating the Canadian criminal justice system (Prochuk, 2018). From the 30 interviews with women who experienced sexual assault, the most frequently mentioned barriers to reporting to law enforcement were: (a) concern or fear of not being taken seriously by law enforcement or other individuals in the Canadian justice system; (b) concern or fear of skeptical responses from individuals in their support network (e.g., friends, relatives); (c) concern that their profession or physical appearance would reduce their credibility; (d) concern that police will be suspicious or skeptical, especially for marginalized women in society (e.g., substance user, single mothers, those with a criminal record) or minority women (e.g., Indigenous, LGBTQ+); and (e) concern over physical safety or their family's safety and well-being (Prochuk, 2018).

GSS reports also indicate that a vast majority of sexual assault victims stated that they: (1) considered the incident not severe enough to file a police report (Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008), (2) believed the incident to be a personal issue resolved informally, or (3) suggested that the incident was too minor and that nobody was injured (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). In addition, Pinciotti and Seligowski (2019) applied a victim fight/flight/freeze response theoretical framework to understand the probability of official reporting among sexual assault victims. Victims were more likely

¹⁰ 2014 GSS statistics reveal that the rate of sexual assault in B.C. was 18 per 1,000 population (Perreault, 2015).

to report the sexual assault to police when they responded with forceful resistance during the attack, whilst victims who reacted with nonforceful (froze) resistance were less likely to report (Pinciotti & Seligowski, 2019). A sense of internalized guilt, blame, or humiliation (Johnson, 2012), and a fear of being criticized or revictimized also dissuade victims from reporting (Prochuk, 2018; Venema, 2014). Experts have argued that women are predominantly reluctant to report sexual assault incidents to the police because they fear being treated poorly by law enforcement or other criminal justice officials (Johnson, 2017; Johnson, 2020). Simply put, victims often lack confidence in the police (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Further, among immigrant women, some studies have suggested that victims were unsure about what specific behaviours represented sexual violence (see Ahmad et al., 2004). Johnson (2020) has argued that:

Despite progressive reforms of Canada's sexual assault laws designed to remove sexist barriers to fair treatment of (primarily) women complainants, and to encourage victims to come forward, women continue to avoid the police. There are many reasons for this, such as shame and embarrassment, or fear of retaliation. But a chief deterrent is a concern they will receive poor treatment by police and courts. These barriers to reporting persist despite police training, specialized sexual assault police units, and improved coordination between police and sexual assault support centres in many communities (para. 2).

A study by Johnson in 2017 investigated the multifaceted decision-making processes that women experience when reporting their sexual assault victimization to the police. This study included 37 Canadian sexual assault victims who reported their victimization to the Ottawa Police Service. Women's experiences were assessed from the initial decision to file a formal report to dealings with police officers, investigators, and other criminal justice system professionals. The goal was to identify points of attrition in these cases. The results show that several officers operated from a professional and non-judgemental perspective, whereas others were influenced by "real rape" or "ideal" victim stereotypes expressed through messages of skepticism and inexperience with trauma (Johnson, 2017; see Randall, 2010). While indictment and court proceeding rates did not increase, approximately 60% of women anticipated positive interactions with officers and criminal justice personnel, which was a roughly a 30% increase from earlier cases (Johnson, 2017). The findings from this study highlight the impact law enforcement can have on invalidating women's victimization through insinuating victim-blame/responsibility (Johnson, 2017). Other researchers have highlighted the need for specialized training to address broader attitudinal structures among officers who investigate sexual violence cases (e.g., Murphy & Hine, 2019).

Unfounded Sexual Assaults in Canada

Recommendations for Law Enforcement

In early 2017, a national investigative report published by *The Globe and Mail* on sexual assault and police procedures in Canada revealed that nearly one in five (19.39%) sexual assault allegations were “unfounded” over five years from 2010-2014 (Doolittle, 2017). More precisely, from 2010 to 2014, there were roughly a total of 143,053 sexual assault allegations reported to police; of these, 27,740 were cleared as baseless (Doolittle, 2017). “Unfounded” sexual assaults are incidents that are categorized as unsubstantiated, whereby law enforcement has concluded that “the reported offence did not occur, nor was it attempted” (Conroy & Cotter, 2017, p. 11). *The Globe and Mail* received information on unfounded sexual assault allegations from 873 police jurisdictions, a 92% response rate out of a total of 1,119 jurisdictions (Rodan, 2017). Provinces in Western Canada had lower unfounded rates than central and eastern provinces. For example, at the provincial level, B.C. had the lowest rate (11%), whereas New Brunswick had the highest (32%; Doolittle, 2017). Toronto, Winnipeg, Surrey, and Windsor had the lowest city rates under 10%, whereas Saint John had the highest city rate at 51% (Doolittle, 2017). Although B.C. represented the lowest provincial rate, percentages varied at the City or municipal level; see Metro Vancouver Regional District data divided by municipality presented in Table 1.

The Globe and Mail also interviewed 54 individuals who recounted their experiences reporting sexual assault allegations to police. Supplemental data, including emails, medical files, court documents, police notes, police reports, and police audio or video interviews, were obtained. Thirty-nine of the 54 cases were classified as unfounded and cleared. Interviewees described conflicting procedural practices: 8 women stated that their experience reporting the crime to police was positive; 11 explained that they were not informed about the status of the case; 12 experienced victim-blaming by police; and a total of 25 had their allegations dismissed (Rodan, 2017). Experts suggested to *The Globe and Mail* that the following actions may perhaps address the problems of unfounded sexual assault cases in Canada:¹¹

1. Unfounded sexual assault statistics need to be consistently reported by Statistics Canada
2. Consistent and standardized practices to manage sexual assault allegations and cases
3. Sexual assault and trauma training for police in all police departments across Canada should be required. For instance, police must know how trauma impacts memory and seek to employ the most effective interview techniques for sexual assault victims

¹¹ “Experts” were educators, criminologists, trauma experts, and lawyers.

4. Consistent accountability and supervision of how police forces deal with sexual assault allegations and cases (Rodan, 2017).

Many of the recommendations cited above correspond with the Philadelphia Model. Over two decades ago, advocates and the public criticized the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) in the United States (U.S.) for mishandling sexual assault allegations and cases. At this time, the PPD had a high rate of unfounded cases of 18% (RCMP, 2017; Wilson-Raybould, 2017). As a response to these criticisms, the PPD created The Philadelphia Model for managing sexual assault cases. In addition to these high unfounded case rates, the death of Shannon Schieber exposed that the PPD was intentionally downgrading/misclassifying sexual assault cases “under bogus codes” (Walters, 2013, para. 24). Troy Graves, a serial rapist who was active in Philadelphia for over two years in the late 90s, was responsible for the sexual assault and murder of Shannon and for many other sexual victimizations in the area (Walters, 2013). Experts have argued that if police had classified these crimes accurately, some sexual assaults and Shannon’s death may have been preventable (Weber, 2019). John Timoney, former Philadelphia Police Commissioner, implemented reforms shortly after Shannon’s death, which ultimately reduced the rate of sexual assault cases cleared as unfounded (PERF, 2012). An independent committee of external members, including high-ranking police officers, government personnel, and non-governmental organizations (e.g., front-line local sexual violence experts and women’s advocates), examined unfounded sexual assault case files once per year (Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan, 2020; Wilson-Raybould, 2017). Specifically, the reforms included utilizing the Women’s Law Project to oversee sexual assault cases within the PPD (PERF, 2012): this became known as the Philadelphia Model. Law professor Michelle Madden Dempsey has argued that the Philadelphia Model should operate as the benchmark for other police departments in the U.S. (Police Executive Research Forum [PERF], 2012). The PERF document titled *Improving the Police Response to Sexual Assault* provided an outline of four critical elements of the Philadelphia Model to prevent the misclassification of unfounded sexual assault cases:

1. Audits to examine sexual assault cases and ensure cases are not being misclassified or intentionally downgraded.
2. A supervisor officer’s approval should be mandatory for sexual assault cases to be labeled as unfounded.
3. Advocacy groups to oversee police procedural management in sexual assault cases; this will help foster transparency and accountability.
4. Special sexual assault and trauma training for police officers.

Similarly, Jody Wilson-Raybould, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, argued at a #AfterMeToo town hall conference that she supported the Philadelphia

Model for Canadian law enforcement agencies, which would encourage “greater transparency and accountability” (2017). A pilot project is currently underway in Ontario, Canada, based on this model (Wilson-Raybould, 2017).

Furthermore, in early 2017, The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) outlined their action plan to address the limitations in current police methods for handling sexual assault files (2019). The plan included amending the classification of founded and unfounded sexual assault cases measured by the UCR survey to improve police-reported data accuracy; this task was completed in 2018. The use of standardized definitions will establish consistency between the CACP and Statistics Canada (Girt, 2018). Next was the implementation of trauma-informed, evidence-based, and victim-centered education and procedural justice strategies. The CACP and Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) published the *Canadian Framework for Collaborative Police Response on Sexual Violence* guidelines in 2019. The *Framework* highlights the need for a collaborative effort between agencies, victim-centered training, specialized personnel, support services for victims, and prevention and community education (CACP & OACP, 2019). For instance, several important procedural guidelines for police interviews and investigations into sexual assault cases are detailed. These include the need to pay attention to the victim's immediate health and safety needs before conducting the interview and to understand that the victim has the right/option to receive all, some, or none of the services offered (e.g., medical, support, or legal services). Finally, police need to carry out and guarantee a comprehensive investigation and re-establish victims' sense of self-control by involving them in the decision-making processes (CACP & OACP, 2019). Within the document, a methodological approach delineates the steps in reviewing sexual victimization incidents in a collaborative team environment, including items for both internal and external reviewers. The recommended training guidelines for external reviewers cover these modules: (1) Confidentiality training: How to manage confidential information, (2) Review of the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, (3) Review confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement police and advocacy agencies, (4) Learn relevant law enforcement policies, (5) UCR sexual assault case classifications, (6) Sexual assault law, and (7) Expectations and results (CACP & OACP, 2019). Overall, this framework exemplifies the core Philadelphia Model components.

Law Enforcement Response & Preliminary Results

This section of the review focuses on the response from specific law enforcement departments across Canada after the 2017 publication of *The Globe and Mail* unfounded sexual assaults in Canada (Doolittle, 2017).

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

After *The Globe and Mail* (Doolittle, 2017) report on unfounded sexual assault cases in Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP, 2017) released their victim support action plan in 2017 for sexual assault cases.¹² “The RCMP stated that they were “taking action to strengthen police training and awareness, investigative accountability, victim support, and public education and communication” (RCMP, 2017, p. 1). There were a total of 10,038 sexual assault allegations reported to the RCMP in Canada during 2016. Out of these cases, the RCMP evaluated the 2,225 (~22%) sexual assault cases categorized as unfounded during the year – 1,260 (57%), which were misclassified. Of the 1,260 misclassified cases, 284 (13%) required additional investigation; this brought the rate of unfounded sexual assault incidents down to 9% (RCMP, 2017). The RCMP enlisted the assistance of other law enforcement agencies in Canada and internationally, as well as NGO’s, to review best procedural justice practises for sexual assault files. The team identified four key areas that required attention: (1) trauma-informed police training and awareness; (2) investigative accountability through external advisory committees; (3) victim support services; and (4) public education and awareness (RCMP, 2017); the CACP and OACP (2019) guidelines also incorporate these main elements.

New Westminister Police Department

Similarly, in 2018, the New Westminister Police Department (NWPD) revealed the implementation of a new Specialized Investigation Unit (SIU) devoted exclusively to sexual assault cases (Bernard, 2018; New Westminister Police, n.d.).¹³ The SIU applied a previously established and effective interpersonal violence (IPV) model to sexual assault cases (New Westminister Police, n.d.). Specifically, the model utilizes a collaborative approach whereby a specialized police officer is paired with a community counselor to deliver support services throughout the entire duration of the sexual assault case – from reporting to criminal proceedings (New Westminister Police, n.d.). The Canadian framework for IPV focuses on a trauma-informed strategy that uses multi-agency co-operative response teams specializing in IPV incidents – similar to the core principles in the Philadelphia Model. The goal is to support victims and families of IPV by providing safety, support, and resources (University of New Brunswick [UNB] & CACP, 2016). Additional goals included using public awareness and education campaigns as well as implementing systematic evaluations of the effectiveness of police IPV strategies (UNB & CACP, 2016). The NWPD has maintained that this “victim-

¹² The RCMP is the national police service in Canada with over 20,000 police officers serving eight provinces, except Ontario and Quebec (RCMP, 2013).

¹³ New Westminister is a city located in the Metro Vancouver Regional District in the province of British Columbia, Canada. The NWPD serve approximately 70,996 residents in this city (Statistics Canada, 2016).

centered approach” is essential as “sexual assault is one of the most personal, invasive, and traumatic crimes a victim can suffer” (New Westminster Police, n.d.). The *Globe and Mail* reported that the 5-year (2010-2014) unfounded sexual assault rate for NWPDP was 27% (Doolittle, 2017); details are presented in Table 1. In more recent years, after implementing the SIU, data for 2018 and 2019 suggest a decrease in unfounded sexual assault rates for the NWPDP, 13.8% and 15.2%, respectively (Godfrey, 2020).¹⁴

Hamilton Police Services

According to the *The Globe and Mail* report, Hamilton Police Services (HPS) dismissed just under one-third of sexual assault cases (30%). As a result, the Hamilton Police Services Board (HPSB) instructed Chief of Police for Hamilton to undertake a review of the HPD record management practices and a comprehensive internal and external review of HPD unfounded sexual assault files (Girt, 2018).¹⁵ The Chief established the Sexual Assault Community Review Team (SACRT), a multisectoral committee.¹⁶ The internal review assessed unfounded sexual assault cases reported to the HPS from 2010 to 2014, and look at both the Child Abuse Unit (CAU) and the Sexual Assault Unit (SAU).¹⁷ This evaluations concluded that (CAU and SAU cases) 75% of unfounded sexual assault investigations were accurately classified, while in almost 25% of misclassified cases, the police should have cleared with a different category (Girt, 2018). At the same time, the SACRT conducted an external review for unfounded investigations between 2010 to 2016 within the SAU. A total of 65 unfounded SAU investigations were randomly selected for evaluation.¹⁸ SACRT concluded that 70% of these files were misclassified. There were several reasons for misclassification:

- Detectives not correctly applying “Reasonable Grounds”
- All relevant witnesses not being interviewed
- All forensic testing not being requested, and results returned
- Disproportionate weight given to the accused version of events
- Use of investigative interviewing and interrogation techniques with victims
- Reliance on corroboration being required
- Predetermining outcomes prior to a full investigation (Girt, 2018, pp. 21-22).

¹⁴ 2019 rates were based on data collected from January to September 2019.

¹⁵ The HPS serves 545,000 residents in the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada (HPS, n.d.).

¹⁶ SACRT consisted of the following members: Chief Eric Girt, Staff Sergeant Dave Dunbar (HPS Investigative Services), Sunny Marriner (Gender Equality Network Canada), Cindilee Ecker-Flagg (Native Women’s Centre), Monica Mackenzie (Ministry of the Attorney General), Diana Tikasz (Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Centre HHS), Lenore Lukasik-Foss (Sexual Assault Centre of Hamilton and Area), Susan Double (HPS Victim Services), and Inspector Dave Hennick (HPS inspector; Girt, 2018).

¹⁷ The SAU investigate sexual assault cases for victims 16 years of age or older, whereas the CAU investigate sexual assault cases for victims 15 years of age or under (Girt, 2018).

¹⁸ The committee excluded two cases from the sample (Girt, 2018).

The HPS accepted and agreed to implement all SACRT recommendations, and expressed its intent to work collaboratively with community partners to guarantee sexual assault victims gain support from HPS and other community agencies (Girt, 2018).

The Effectiveness of Specialized Police Sex Crime Units

The Globe and Mail investigation revealed several concerns regarding police response to, and classification of, sexual assault allegations across Canada (Doolittle, 2017). Several agencies have substantiated these claims and suggested various recommendations that coincide with the Philadelphia Model used in the U.S. (e.g., UNB & CACP, 2016). Given the concerns around unfounded cases, many police agencies in Canada have implemented significant changes within their respective agencies to address concerns described in *The Globe and Mail* report (e.g., Girt, 2018; New Westminster Police, n.d.; RCMP, 2017). As a result, many law enforcement agencies across the nation have assembled specialized sexual assault units to improve victim services and/or enacted reforms to use multiagency/interdisciplinary approaches to dealing with allegations and investigations of sexual assault (e.g., Girt, 2018; RCMP, 2017). In Canada, there are numerous police agencies with specialized sex crime units, many of which work collaboratively with other local agencies.

Few studies have evaluated the effectiveness of specialized crime units in law enforcement departments, including domestic violence (DV) units or sexual assault units (see Rumney et al., 2020). Compared to earlier investigations (e.g., van Staden & Lawrence, 2010), current studies have utilized more rigorous methodologies and have found promising results for specialized DV units. For instance, police departments with specialized DV units have witnessed a significant increase in the number of case files advancing through to the U.S. criminal justice system in Cleveland, Ohio (Regoeczi & Hubbard, 2018). Although there is a dearth of research evaluating specialized sexual assault units specifically, from the limited studies available, the findings have shown positive impacts (see Rumney et al., 2020). For example, in Victoria, Australia, sexual assault victims reported that, compared to the average officer, officers in specialized sex crime units were more victim-centered; this included officers being attentive, caring, and communicative in their investigations (Powell & Cauchi, 2013). In addition, experts – i.e., police, counsellors, medical officers, child protection workers, and prosecutors – perceived the changes/reforms adopted by Victoria police as encouraging. The inclusion of multiagency cooperation, victim-centered approaches (including the focus on victim satisfaction, support), and communication, were consistently viewed as promising improvements for Victoria Police (Powell & Wright, 2012). Others have studied Australian police officers' perceptions of specialized training for sexual assault

cases before, directly after, and several months after (i.e., 9-12 months) receiving specialized training (Tidmarsh et al., 2019). At the final follow-up, police officers attached greater significance to specialization in sexual assault investigations. In addition, officers indicated that specialized sex crime investigators should possess the attributes/qualities of empathy, communication skills, and open-mindedness, whereas before receiving training, officers would often emphasize investigative skills (Tidmarsh et al., 2019). Months after training, officers indicated that the most critical details to garner during an interview with a sexual assault victim were the 'whole story,' relationship details, and grooming compared to corroboration, background/history, and victim welfare, which were indicated before receiving specialized training (Tidmarsh et al., 2019). From the victim's perspective, Rich (2019) argued that "police officers who engage in trauma-informed procedures while taking rape complaints are more likely to retrieve accurate memories and produce actionable statements" (p. 475). For clinicians, trauma informed care has been outlined as a series of guiding principles that are victim centered. The main guiding principle is to "do no (more) harm" to clients; in other words, to avoid retraumatization (Butler et al., 2011, p. 188). The clinician framework includes by five trauma-informed aims that encompass: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment (see Butler et al., 2011). In the context of sexual assault investigations, interviews with victims should be facilitated by a highly skilled and trauma-informed officer (Rich, 2019).

In the United Kingdom, a more recent evaluative study compared police officers' performance in a specialized sex crime unit with officers from a non-specialized criminal investigation division (CID) in executing sexual assault investigations (U.K.; Rumney et al., 2020). Using a mixed-methods approach, Rumney et al. (2020) interviewed nine officers who had experience working in both specialized units and non-specialized CID. Many stated that the specialized sex crime unit (i.e., Bluestone)¹⁹ obtained motivated and committed officers with specific expertise in investigating sexual assault allegations. As one interviewee stated: "Bluestone was [about] having officers there who were interested, passionate and motivated around rape investigation. Having the skillset and knowledge around rape investigations, around the psychology of the victim, the psychology of the offender and...the different ways that victims present" (Rumney et al., 2020, p. 553). It was also noted that some non-specialist CID officers were unwilling, reluctant, or frightened to partake in sexual assault investigations. Others emphasized the complexities of sexual assault cases, which require a specialized approach where highly skilled officers can address victim needs, trauma, intersecting vulnerabilities and work successfully within a multiagency team environment (Rumney et al., 2020). Officers who specialized in sexual assault investigations stated that when they worked in a general CID environment, they were

¹⁹ Bluestone is a specialist rape investigation unit in Bristol (Rumney et al., 2020).

often subjected to a degree of separation (McMillan, 2015; Rumney et al., 2020). One officer argued that “we’re sat with CID so we’re sort of more of a team of work people but they’re not necessarily dealing with the same work as us. So, it’s not a team as in work team...” (Rumney et al., 2020, p. 555). The quantitative data in this mixed-methods study determined that specialized sex crimes units (i.e., Bluestone) outperformed non-specialist investigative methods (i.e., Comparator) on several measures of performance including:

- The offender was charged (Bluestone 35.5% vs. Comparator 31.5%)
- The case reached the courts (Bluestone 35.5% vs. Comparator 31.5%)
- Retention of cases with multiple victim vulnerabilities (i.e., 2 vulnerabilities):
 - Charged (Bluestone 32.8% vs. Comparator 25%)
 - Reached the court (Bluestone 27.6% vs. Comparator 25%)
- Victim care, i.e., support referrals (Bluestone 85.1% vs. Comparator 78%)
- Accurate crime recording based on Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime (HOCR; Bluestone 77.5% vs. Comparator 64.7%; Rumney et al., 2020)

Overall, from the limited scholarly research available, findings show that specialized sexual assault units that train officers on trauma and victim-centered approaches were most effective for sexual assault investigations particularly improving case accuracy, victim support services, and advancements in the criminal justice system process.

Table 1. 5-Year (2010-2014) Unfounded Sexual-Assault Rates in Metro Vancouver Regional District by Municipality

Member	Percentage of Sexual Assault Allegations Cleared as Unfounded	Number of Unfounded out of Total Allegations	Policed Population	Police Department
Delta	29%	56 of 190	107,380	Delta Police Department
New Westminster	27%	51 of 189	70,731	New Westminster Police Department
West Vancouver	21%	19 of 89	48,718	West Vancouver Police Department
White Rock	17%	16 of 94	20,931	RCMP
Port Coquitlam	16%	34 of 218	59,580	RCMP
Bowen Island	16%	3 of 19	3,605	RCMP
Vancouver	13%	337 of 2557	650,719	Vancouver Police Department
Port Moody	13%	6 of 67	35,062	Port Moody Police Department
Coquitlam	12%	63 of 506	135,284	RCMP
Maple Ridge	10%	45 of 471	81,080	RCMP
Richmond	11%	66 of 582	203,593	RCMP
City of Langley	11%	21 of 185	26,941	RCMP
Pitt Meadows	11%	8 of 72	18,903	RCMP
District of North Vancouver	10%	19 of 192	89,914	RCMP
Township of Langley	8%	40 of 509	111,615	RCMP
Surrey	8%	283 of 3760	499,880	RCMP
Burnaby	8%	98 of 1223	239,579	RCMP
Total	11%	1165 of 10,923	2,403,515	N/A

Note. Data were retrieved from Doolittle (2017). Data for Anmore, Lions Bay, Tsawwassen, Belcarra, Electoral Area A was not available.

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Appendix B: Interview Questions

- 1) Describe the creation of the SIU
 - Who started the SIU?
 - What was the purpose for the creation of the SIU?
 - What problem(s) was the SIU designed to correct?
 - What does the SIU replace?
 - Where other possible approaches considered?
 - If so, why was the SIU model selected?
- 2) Describe the initial implementation actions/steps?
 - Who was involved?
 - How was it implemented?
 - How was it received? (at each level of organization)
 - What data has been gathered?
 - How are clients referred / identified?
 - What client needs are the unit designed to meet?
- 3) What are the anticipated outcomes of the SIU?
- 4) Are there any obstacles to the unit achieving its intended goals? If so, what are they, and how have they been/should they be addressed?
- 5) How will you know if there are unexpected/unintended results? Have any unintended results been identified?
- 6) What is the capacity of the SIU?
 - How many officers? Qualifications?
 - How many civilians? Qualifications?
 - Additional required /expected training?
 - How many clients is the unit intended to serve?
 - What is the anticipated average caseload per service professional?
- 7) Are there any individuals or groups that may be indirectly impacted by the SUI?
- 8) Has the SIU had an effect on how others NRPD officers do their jobs?
- 9) Has the SIU resulted in any organizational changes?
- 10) Can you think of any ways that the operation of the SIU could be improved?

For SUI Officers Only:

- 11) Can you provide an example(s) of where you feel the SIU has worked well?
- 12) Can you provide an example(s) of where you feel the SIU has not worked well?

Appendix C: Client Feedback Online Survey

Hello. We are seeking your input about your experiences with the New Westminster Police Department and with the Special Investigations Unit (NWSIU). This brief survey is entirely voluntary and completely anonymous. We anticipate that it will take approximately 5 minutes to complete, but you have as much time as you want to finish. You can choose to stop and/or skip questions at any point.

Your important feedback will be used to evaluate and improve the responses and services of the NWSIU in responding to cases such as yours. Thank you for providing your valuable input.

Q1. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the NWPD?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Very Good | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor |

Q2. Is there anything you would like to share with the NWPD about your experience?

Q3. Did you have any challenges or barriers in coming forward to report (please check all that apply)?

- ☐ Fear of perpetrator
- ☐ Fear of other consequences
- ☐ Feelings of trauma
- ☐ Lack of trust in the police
- ☐ Lack of trust in the criminal justice system

- ☐ Lack of stable housing
 - ☐ Lack of financial support
 - ☐ Lack of emotional support
 - ☐ Other (please explain): _____
-

Q4. What influenced your decision to report (please check all that apply)?

- ☐ Felt it would be helpful to me
 - ☐ Was supported by someone I trusted
 - ☐ Wanted to stop it from happening again
 - ☐ Wanted to prevent it from happening to anyone else
 - ☐ Wanted consequences for the perpetrator
 - ☐ Other (please explain): _____
-

Q5. What services/resources/people helped you through the process of reporting: before, during and/or after (please check all that apply)?

- ☐ Friend
 - ☐ Family member
 - ☐ NWPD SIU detective
 - ☐ Other member of NWPD
 - ☐ Family Services counsellor
 - ☐ Victim Service Worker
 - ☐ Doctor
 - ☐ Other counsellor or health/mental health professional
 - ☐ Other (please explain): _____
-

Q6 Based on your experiences, if there were things you could change anything about the way the police respond to your experience of sexual violence, what would those be?

Q7 Are there any other comments you would like to make?

We sincerely value your input. It will assist us to help others who have had similar experiences.

If you have any further comments, questions or concerns about the survey, please contact the researchers:

Carla – mercconsultinginc@gmail.com

Garth – garth@donnybrookresearch.ca

Should you find you need immediate emotional support during or after this survey, please contact: VictimLink 24 hour Crisis Assistance Line at 1-800-563-0808

Or WAVAW 24 hour Crisis Line at 604-255-6344 or text 604-245-2425.

NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPT**NARRATIVE TEXT HARDCOPY**

GO# NW 2006-3939

Narrative: **MISCELLANEOUS NOTES - 85****NW SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST**Author: **NW3122 JUNG, WENDY**Related date: **Tuesday, 2022-Feb-01 at: 15:29**Related event: **GO NW 20063939**

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST - INVESTIGATIVE QUALITY ASSURANCE

Supervisor's should review this checklist upon initial file review and ensure it is completed before the file is concluded.

File No. []

PRIME GO FRONT PAGE REVIEW

[] Is the Primary Offence code carded correctly?

CHILD / VICTIM [] Check if no child / victim.

[] Was an audio/video statement taken?

[] Was a member trained in child interviewing used for victims
10 years old and under?

[] Was a child safety risk assessment completed?

[] Was MCFD contacted?

[] Were disclosure statements(s) obtained?

[] Were any referrals made? (HEAL CLINIC in Surrey and/or Children's
Hospital Child Protection Team or other, please specify.

[]

EVIDENCE COLLECTION AT SCENE [] Check if no scene

[] Was FIS consulted?

[] Were photographs and/or videos taken?

[] Were damp / wet items seized in paper bags / DNA drying cabinet?

[] Were neighbourhood inquiries / video surveillance canvass completed?

[] Was video surveillance seized?

[] Was evidence needing refrigeration placed in fridge?

[] Was a Search Warrant obtained?

VICTIM

[] Was an audio / video statement taken from victim?

[] Were photographs taken of the victim?

[] Were clothing items seized from the victim?

***** CONFIDENTIAL *****

NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPT
NARRATIVE TEXT HARDCOPY

GO# NW 2006-3939

- [] Is the suspect known to the victim?
 - [] Is this an intimate partner relationship? (K) File?
 - [] Was a safety plan completed?
 - [] Were photographs exchanged between the victim and suspect? Obtain images.
 - [] Was there electronic communication(s) between the victim and suspect?
-
-

SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINER (SANE Exam) [] Check if no SANE completed.

- [] Was a SANE Exam offered if within 7 days of incident?
 - [] Was a Medical Release form signed by the Victim and provided to Forensic Nursing Staff?
 - [] Was the Sane Exam kit seized and lodged in PSS?
-
-

WITNESS

- [] Were all witnesses (including disclosure statements) identified and interviewed?
-
-

SUSPECT [] Check if not identified.

- [] Was an attempt made to obtain an audio / video statement with the suspect?
 - [] Were photographs taken of the suspect?
 - [] Was the suspect's phone seized?
 - [] Were clothing / items seized from the suspect?
-
-

SPECIALTY UNITS

- [] Was a referral to VAU completed?
 - [] Was MCU notified for stranger or unknown suspect, aggravated sexual assaults, multiple victims, multiple suspects, and offences involving children?
 - [] Was the Special Investigations Unit notified?
-
-

VICLAS - SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

- [] Was a VICLAS submitted within 24 days of report date?
If not, assign follow-up.
- [] Was the Sex Offender Registry contacted?

Date: [] Supervisor Signature: []

*** CONFIDENTIAL ***

	NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPT NARRATIVE TEXT HARDCOPY
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GO# NW 2006-3939

***** END OF HARDCOPY *****

***** CONFIDENTIAL *****



New Westminster Police Department

REPORT

To: Mayor Côté and Members of the New Westminster Police Board
Date: February 15, 2022

From: Chief Constable David Jansen
Item #: 4.1

Subject: 2022-2024 New Westminster Police Department Strategic Plan

RECOMMENDATION

That the New Westminster Police Board approve the 2022-2024 New Westminster Police Strategic Plan.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work done to formulate the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan and to gain approval from the New Westminster Police Board (NWPB) for the plan.

BACKGROUND

In April 2019, the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) embarked on a process to refresh its current strategic plan (2016-2019).

The process undertaken by the NWPD initially involved undertaking environmental scans. One of the scans surveyed the community of New Westminster via a publicly available web-based survey, while another surveyed the staff within the police department itself.

In addition, four consultative community meetings were held at the main branch of the New Westminster public library and more than two dozen community partner organizations were approached for comment.

In each of the environmental scans, questions were asked and the responses were themed and analyzed.

In late 2019, three dozen members of the police department, as well as members of the NWPB, participated in a strategic planning workshop. The workshop's stated purpose was to gather further data and information from the participants regarding the content and focus of the NWPD's future strategic plan.

DISCUSSION

In March of 2020, the strategic planning process was placed on hold in order to respond to the urgent operational needs emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, several high profile and galvanizing events occurred, such as the murder of George Floyd in the US by a Minneapolis police officer during an arrest. In response, the NWPB recognized the importance of re-assessing the future of policing to understand the implications for NWPD.

In June 2021, the NWPB engaged a strategic planning expert with Sirius Strategy to take on the work of moving the strategic plan to its conclusion. Some of the goals established at that time were to:

1. Leverage completed engagement and analysis activities.
2. Identify clear outcomes that should be achieved over the next three years.
3. Reflect the Board priority of Police Reform as a strategic priority.
4. Improve the visual appearance of the plan.
5. Provide a concise version of the plan, and a one-page at-a-glance summary.
6. Create a stronger message for NWPD's Vision.
7. Enable the Board and NWPD to track its progress through the duration of the plan.

Through a series of working sessions with the NWPB and the NWPD leadership team, as well as a department wide town hall, a final version of the 2022-2024 strategic plan was completed in late 2021.

CONCLUSION

Although delayed due to several significant issues, the NWPD and NWPB are proud to have completed the 2022-2024 strategic plan that is attached to this report. It is felt that this plan accurately reflects the current global landscape and the work that the NWPD and NWPB plan to achieve over the next several years.

OPTIONS

Option #1 – That the New Westminster Police Board approve the 2022-2024 New Westminster Strategic Plan.

Option #2 – That the New Westminster Police Board provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommends option 1.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2022-2024 New Westminster Police Strategic Plan

This report has been prepared by:

Chief Constable David Jansen



New Westminster Police Department

2022-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN





We recognise and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsundered land of the Halq'eméylem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a city, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

Halq'eméylem

The following Strategic Plan has been developed as a three-year roadmap for the New Westminster Police Department (NWPD). It sets out concrete actions, building and expanding upon the significant work that has been completed over the last several years.

The last three years have been characterized by resiliency. The NWPD remained flexible during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the community received the policing services it needed during a challenging time and placed a continued emphasis on organizational wellness. A Gang Unit was created, and crime was reduced throughout the City of New Westminster.

The NWPD respects its unique position to serve the community and protect each of its residents, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, and mental or physical ability. The Department is focused on tackling systemic discrimination in all its forms, working with the community to better understand how diverse groups of people experience NWPD policies and services and ensuring its workforce composition is reflective of the community it serves. The NWPD's Strategic Plan lays out three priorities for the next three years, including:

- **Strengthening community engagement**

The NWPD will continue serving the community at a time when people continue to face significant challenges as a result of the pandemic, and racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in the community.

- **Modernizing community safety**

The NWPD will continue its transformation to a modern police department through innovation, transparency, inclusiveness, and community partnerships.

- **Investing in our people**

The NWPD recognizes its people as its greatest asset and will continue putting significant effort towards the growth and development of its team members and building future leaders, while ensuring diversity and inclusion are a pillar of its operations.





OUR PURPOSE

We serve everyone in our community with integrity, excellence, and compassion.

We serve everyone.

We want every person, in particular those that have had negative experiences with police, to feel safe enough to reach out to us, and to be served with compassion, integrity, and professional excellence.

We want to earn the trust of everyone in our community, so that we can assist in the moments when they need help.

With integrity, excellence, and compassion.

In 2019, a member of our community came to us looking for help. She explained that, as a sex worker, she had many negative experiences with police and, as a result, did not trust police.

However, as we worked with her, she was surprised to be treated with respect, compassion, and dignity. Because she felt safe, and that we cared for her well-being, she had confidence to continue with the investigation, and allowed us to help.



OUR VALUES

Integrity | Excellence | Compassion

Integrity

We are open, honest, and accountable for the work we do. We are transparent about our successes and failures.

Excellence

We serve with commitment and dedication to the highest standard.

Compassion

We treat everyone with dignity, humility, and empathy and we are sensitive to each person's experiences.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) has set three strategic goals that define its direction over the next five to ten years. These goals align to the NWPD’s vision and will be used to evaluate the department’s progress towards its vision. The NWPD’s strategic goals are as follows:

NEW WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC GOALS



STRATEGIC GOALS

MEASURED BY

1 LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITY

We are a valued community partner. We engage with our diverse community, listen to their needs, and collaborate to ensure their needs are met.



- 1. Public satisfaction
- 2. Public trust of police
- 3. Stakeholder satisfaction

2 SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

We ensure community safety with integrity, compassion, and excellence.



- 4. Crime rates
- 5. Response times
- 6. Police costs
- 7. Police effectiveness

3 SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

We have a diverse, inclusive, healthy, and engaging workplace that promotes employee equity, growth, wellness, and fulfillment.



- 8. Employee engagement
- 9. Attrition
- 10. Vacancy

OUR ACCOUNTABILITY

The 2022 – 2024 New Westminster Police Department (NWPD) Strategic Plan was prepared under the direction of the Police Board, Chief Constable, and police department. Collectively, we are committed to implementing the Strategic Plan.

We are accountable for the contents of this plan and for regularly communicating progress on our results. Publishing this strategy is the first step towards transparency and accountability. Looking forward, we will regularly make available public-facing progress reports to identify how we are tracking against our milestones and report out on our key performance indicators, annually. It is our expectation that the community, the Police Board, our leaders, and every member of our department, holds us accountable to each of the priorities we have committed to.

Continuous engagement with the community will be key to our progress – and feedback received during these discussions and touchpoints will allow us to evolve our policies and programs in a way that best serves the community. Ultimately, this plan will only be successful if it is executed in a way that best aligns our policing services with the needs of the entire community.

The New Westminster Police Board, Chief Constable and Police Department are committed to implementing this Strategic Plan and the priorities and goals outlined within that will support us in listening, serving, and supporting our people and community. These activities will bring us closer to creating a future where the department is known and recognized for its integrity, excellence, and compassion.

Mayor Jonathan X. Cote
Chair, New Westminster Police Board

Dave Jansen
Chief Constable, New Westminster Police



2022-2024 PRIORITIES:

Over the next three years we will focus on three priorities and several key milestones to help us achieve our strategic goals.



Strengthen Community Engagement

By December 31, 2022

- Create an Indigenous Peoples Engagement Plan
- Establish an NWPD Diversity and Engagement Team
- Begin community engagement

By December 31, 2023

- Engage with local First Nations
- Engage with community groups
- Identify and Implement recommended actions

By December 31, 2024

- Continue engagement activities
- Identify and Implement recommended actions



Modernize Community Safety

By December 31, 2022

- Complete the operations review
- Support committee work to clarify police role for homelessness, mental health and addiction
- Establish Key Performance Indicators

By December 31, 2023

- Milestones for this year will be identified based on committee work, public engagement and the operations review

By December 31, 2024

- Milestones for this year will be identified based on committee work, public engagement and the operations review



Invest in our People

By December 31, 2022

- Implement an employee engagement survey
- Implement DEIAR recommendations
- Pilot performance and growth reviews

By December 31, 2023

- Create a module-based leadership development program
- Implement performance and growth reviews
- Continue to act on employee engagement results

By December 31, 2024

- Measure impact of leadership development
- Expand leadership development program
- Continue to act on employee engagement results

