

CHAPTER 6: BOARD POLICIES

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## SECTION 6: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### 8.1 DEFINITIONS FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS POLICY

- 8.1.1 **Community Relations** indicates the various methods used by the Board to establish and maintain relationships with the communities it serves, for both the Board and the VPD. This is achieved through active engagement, outreach, public education, oversight, and accessibility.
- 8.1.2 **Rights holders** include First Nation(s) and Indigenous leaders, communities and people. Indigenous peoples have a special constitutional relationship with the Crown. All relations with Indigenous peoples need to be based on the recognition and implementation of their right to self-determination, including the inherent right to self-government.
- 8.1.3 **The Community** includes rights holders and all other interested community parties. These are the individuals, community groups, organizations and neighbourhoods that are affected by, and have a vested interest in the VPD's services and operations.

### 8.2 INTRODUCTION

- 8.2.1 The Board recognizes and respects the identity and unique nature of all communities, including their cultural diversity, and their potentially differing needs and perspectives. This Policy outlines the Board's roles and responsibilities with regards to listening to those perspectives, and building and strengthening community relationships for both the VPD, and the Board.
- 8.2.2 The VPD has a strong history and reputation for extensive outreach and engagement with its various communities, rights holders, partners and interested parties. The Board plays a significant role in the oversight of, and participation in this engagement. This collaborative effort is necessary to promote public trust and confidence in policing.
- 8.2.3 The Board acts as a link between the community and the police by supporting a two-way understanding of public safety issues and needs. The Board is in place to listen to, and recognize the various needs of those who are served by the VPD. This input assists the Board in forming its policy decisions and determining a strategic direction for the VPD that ensures equitable policing and public safety for all.

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8.2.4 In its commitment to the community the Board will address broader governance issues by: listening to the community, learning about what is critical to ensuring public safety, overseeing the VPD's community engagement, making policy decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand while balancing all divergent perspectives, and identifying opportunities for accessible engagement and outreach.

### 8.3 PROVINCIAL POLICING STANDARDS ON UNBIASED POLICING

8.3.1 This Community Relations Policy was drafted to align with the expectations of police boards to follow the *Provincial Policing Standards 6.1.2 Community Engagement*, which are set to come into effect on July 30, 2023.

### 8.4 RIGHTS HOLDERS, INTERESTED PARTIES AND PARTNERS

8.4.1 **The Community (rights holders and interested parties)** are the people, groups, organizations and neighbourhoods affected by VPD's services and operations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Rights holders (First Nation(s) and Indigenous leaders, communities and people);
- b. Individuals who reside, visit, and/or work in Vancouver;
- c. Community organizations and special interest groups, panels and committees (e.g., advocacy groups, youth groups, seniors groups, religious groups, newcomers, cultural groups, SisterWatch, the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee and the African Descent VPD Advisory Committee);
- d. Organizations that serve marginalized communities;
- e. Neighbourhood crime prevention groups and partners (BlockWatch, Citizen's Crime Watch, Community Policing Centres); and,
- f. Business groups, including networking and professional business associations.

8.4.2 This Policy is specifically with respect to rights holders and interested parties within the community as outlined above. There are however other interested parties and partners that the Board also engages with and is accountable to, such as:

1. **Internal interested parties.** These are the sworn and civilian employees of the VPD.
2. **Interested parties within Government.** These are the various levels of government that the Board engages with to ensure cohesive communication and information sharing, an effective and accountable governance structure, and to advocate to for changes

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- which would improve the Board's and the VPD's ability to enhance safety, and positively impact police governance and oversight. These may include, but are not limited to:
- a. Municipal Council;
  - b. BC Public Service Ministries (eg. Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General [incl. Police Services], Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions); and,
  - c. Members of the Legislative Assembly.
3. **Other external interested parties and partners.** These include but are not limited to:
- a. Independent oversight bodies (Independent Investigations Office, Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner, other BC municipal police boards);
  - b. Unions;
  - c. The Vancouver Police Foundation;
  - d. Health Authorities (Vancouver Coastal Health, the Provincial Health Services Authority);
  - e. Providence Health Care;
  - f. Provincial and national police Associations; and;
  - g. Provincial and national Police Board Associations.
- 8.4.3 The Board's policy on engaging with the other interested parties and partners it is accountable to, can be found in Chapter 6 Section 7 of this Manual (still in draft format).

### 8.5 COMMUNITY INPUT AND BALANCING INTERESTS

- 8.5.2 Although the Board listens to and seeks input from the community, a thoughtful and measured approach to decision making is paramount, recognizing that the various rights holders and interested parties and partners will have diverse and competing priorities and perspectives.
- 8.5.2 The Board must ensure that all decisions are made within the parameters of the *Police Act* and *Provincial Policing Standards* and are aligned with the VPD's Strategic Plan as set by the Board.
- 8.5.3 In setting policy and determining the strategic direction of the Department, the Board must only make evidence based decisions, through a comprehensive understanding of the issues

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at hand. This requires balancing legislation, resource requirements and limitations, policing operations, and the overall needs of all rights holders and interested parties and partners. In doing so the Board should analyze and consider all available information, including but not limited to divergent perspectives, facts, data, and the public safety needs of the community as a whole.

### **8.6 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: BOARD OBJECTIVES**

- 8.6.1 The Board is committed to the following community relations related objectives:
- a. A two-way understanding of civilian police governance and public safety needs through effective engagement and public education;
  - b. Strengthened public trust and confidence in the VPD, and in the Board's oversight role of the VPD;
  - c. Ongoing and evolving efforts to build new relationships, and maintain and improve existing relationships with and within the community;
  - d. An equitable and inclusive community engagement strategy for the Department in line with public safety needs, and the strategic direction of the Department;
  - e. Sufficient resourcing to execute on the strategy;
  - f. Appropriate and effective mechanisms for the Board and VPD to listen, learn about and build their joint understanding of the diverse cultures, perspectives, needs, and opinions of all communities;
  - g. Enhanced programs and initiatives to further the goals of Truth and Reconciliation within the Board and VPD, and to build relationships with an understanding of local Indigenous communities; and,
  - h. Balanced consideration of community perspectives and priorities to contribute to improved decision making in the development of the VPD's Strategic Plan, Board and VPD priorities, goals and objectives, and relevant Board and VPD policies.

### **8.7 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: BOARD OVERSIGHT OF THE VPD**

- 8.7.1 A continued collaborative, inclusive and open relationship with the community requires a coordinated effort between the Board and VPD to ensure activities and communications are aligned and effective.
- 8.7.2 The Board's oversight role of the VPD's community relations includes, but is not limited to:
- a. Safeguarding community relations as a fundamental priority of the VPD, through adequate resources and an effective and inclusive community engagement strategy;

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- b. Ensuring policy compliance with Provincial Policing Standards 6.1.2 *Community Engagement*;
- c. Receiving information on:
  - o The demographic makeup of Vancouver (from BC Stats and Statistics Canada)
  - o The history and legacy of police relations with the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səl'ílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations
  - o The elected and traditional leadership, and history, traditions and laws of the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səl'ílwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations
- d. Ensuring that this information be, where possible, developed with input from the local First Nations, that it be periodically reviewed and updated, and that it be provided in a manner that is conducive to fostering relationship building, ongoing learning, and where possible experiential learning;
- e. Ensuring that this information be provided to police officers via various training mechanisms and educational opportunities;
- f. Regularly receiving information on the VPD's various community engagement programs, initiatives, events, and consultations through the VPD's *Community Matters* Report, the Annual Business Plan, and the Community Satisfaction Survey;
- g. Regularly monitoring VPD outcomes relative to community engagement and consultations;
- h. Receiving minutes from the VPD's Indigenous Advisory Committee and African Descent VPD Advisory Committee meetings; and,
- i. Ensuring community input obtained by the VPD is incorporated into the Board's deliberations and decisions related to the VPD's priorities, goals and objectives.

### 8.8 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: THE VPD

- 8.8.1 The Department, under the leadership of the Chief Constable, is responsible for planning and executing a comprehensive strategy for community outreach and engagement that builds trust and confidence in VPD and its programs and services.
- 8.8.2 The VPD's community engagement strategy is reflected in the VPD's Annual Business Plan and the VPD's annual [Community Matters](#) report. The VPD's Diversity, Community, and Indigenous Relations Section (DCIRC: which includes the Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Unit and the Community Policing Services Unit) is also part of the VPD's engagement strategy as DCIRS conducts outreach through multiple programs in an attempt to reach and engage all of Vancouver's diverse communities.

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- 8.8.3 The VPD's community engagement strategy must demonstrably achieve the following:
- a. VPD and Board joint understanding of the list of individuals, groups, partners, organizations and neighbourhoods who are affected by the decisions about and by the VPD, and the dialogue and engagement strategies for the VPD;
  - b. The conducting of regular community satisfaction surveys through external consultants, the results of which are reported to the Board;
  - c. Regular review of opportunities to incorporate learning, community advice and recommendations into the VPD's decisions, and to provide feedback to rights holders and interested parties on how their input has been considered and incorporated; and,
  - d. Regular review of opportunities to work in partnership with community groups and individuals.

### 8.9 COMMUNITY RELATIONS: THE BOARD

- 8.9.1 A significant criterion for becoming a Board director is a strong tie to the community. This means that Board directors are already linked to the community when they are appointed and are expected to impartially share the views and perspectives they have gained through their own experiences and engagement.
- 8.9.2 In addition to its oversight role with respect to the VPD's community relations, the Board has a responsibility to actively participate in its own methods of listening to and engaging directly with the community.
- 8.9.3 The Board ensures an open and direct link with the community in the following ways:
- a. Providing opportunities for community groups and individuals to address the Board as part of the open session of a Board meeting;
  - b. Engaging strategically with identified community groups and individuals to build or enhance their relationship with VPD and the Board, understand their perspectives, and gain insight into opportunities for improvement of the VPD's services, policies, and strategic direction;
  - c. Hosting roundtables targeted at relevant issues where the police and community intersect;
  - d. Holding Board meetings at community locations once per year (depending on COVID-19 restrictions), and preparing the public agenda based on the input of that community;
  - e. Attending VPD community events as outlined in the VPD's *Community Matters* report;

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- f. Hosting meetings between the Board and the VPD Indigenous Advisory Committee and African Descent VPD Advisory Committee;
  - g. Engaging with external consultants to conduct community consultations and/or provide independent advice and perspective as it relates to the Board's decision making responsibilities;
  - h. Through the website, statements, social media and otherwise, providing information about the Board, including the Board's scope and mandate, the Board's operations and activities, and how all members of the community may engage and connect with the Board;
  - i. A responsive and transparent Service or Policy Complaints process that considers the views of the complainants and any potential impacts on affected community groups and individuals;
  - j. Responding to community correspondence to the Board, where appropriate; and,
  - k. Ensuring accessibility through easy to navigate and responsive means of communication for members of the public who wish to contact the Board.
- 8.9.4 Recognizing the unique relationship and history between Indigenous Peoples and police, the Board ensures an open and direct link with rights holders in the following ways:
- a. Respecting the special constitutionally protected relationship between Government and Indigenous Peoples, when appropriate, the Board will engage with local Indigenous communities and leaders in decisions that could impact them;
  - b. Receiving minutes from and meeting with the VPD's Indigenous Advisory Committee to inform the Board's decision making;
  - c. Receiving information on local Indigenous communities that, where possible, has been developed using input from the local Indigenous communities; and,
  - d. Providing opportunities for Indigenous community leaders and members to address the Board as a part of the open session of Board meetings.
- 8.9.5 The Board's *Communications and Community Relations Manager* is responsible for developing a community engagement strategy that is reflective of this Community Relations Policy.