



# 20122016 STRATEGIC PLAN

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT



## MESSAGE FROM THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: MARY COLLINS, JASON MCLEAN, PATTI MARFLEET, GREGOR ROBERTSON, GLENN WONG, SHERYL WILLIAMSON, WADE GRANT

**IT IS OUR PLEASURE** to introduce the Vancouver Police Department's five-year Strategic Plan for 2012-2016. As a civilian oversight Board, one of our most critical functions is to work with the Chief Constable in establishing future goals and objectives for the Department. This Strategic Plan represents the culmination of that work.

Moving forward over the next five years, the Vancouver Police Department will build upon the successes it has seen over the previous strategic plans. Under the previous plan, the Department has made significant progress towards meeting its targets, and in some cases, meeting or exceeding the target prior to the end of the plan. Despite challenges, particularly those related to resources, the VPD has fully engaged with the strategic plan and its associated processes in order to bring it to life. Each strategic plan outlines what the Department will do and how it will be done, providing a road map for the next five years.

In developing the Plan, the Vancouver Police Department made a concerted effort to engage all staff, stakeholder groups and the community in the planning process. Extensive consultation was done through surveys and face-to-face meetings. The result is a comprehensive document that reflects the needs and desires of the people who are served by it (the public and stakeholders) and the people who have to work to fulfill its demands (Department staff).

The Strategic Plan emphasizes the Vancouver Police Department's values of integrity, professionalism, accountability and respect, and it contains major goals for the Department in the areas of: crime reduction and community and organizational development. The Police Board ensures the Department's accountability through detailed business plans and quarterly monitoring of key performance indicators.

As this Strategic Plan demonstrates, the goals for the Vancouver Police Department over the coming years are ambitious. With the support of the community, City Council, and other stakeholders, these expectations can be met and a safer city achieved.

Gregor Robertson  
Chair, Vancouver Police Board





## MESSAGE

FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

**THE VPD'S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN** reflects the VPD's ongoing commitment to be a leader in policing and to provide excellent service to our community. This Plan embodies the priorities of all VPD employees, sworn and civilian, as well as the people and businesses we police, thanks to the large amount of feedback we received during the planning process.

In this Plan, we have provided a high-level overview of how we will focus the efforts of our police officers, civilian members, partners and volunteers. We will continue to build on the achievements of the previous Plans and constantly evaluate our strategies to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. The annual business planning process – driven by comprehensive performance metrics – will complement this five-year Plan, focusing our efforts and enabling us to meet the needs of the community as priorities shift over time.

Public safety will always be our number one priority and will guide our decisions and policies. People deserve to live, work and play in a city where they feel safe to walk anywhere at any time without threat or fear.

It is the job of the VPD, in partnership with stakeholders and the community at large, to ensure that Vancouver remains a safe place.

Sincerely,

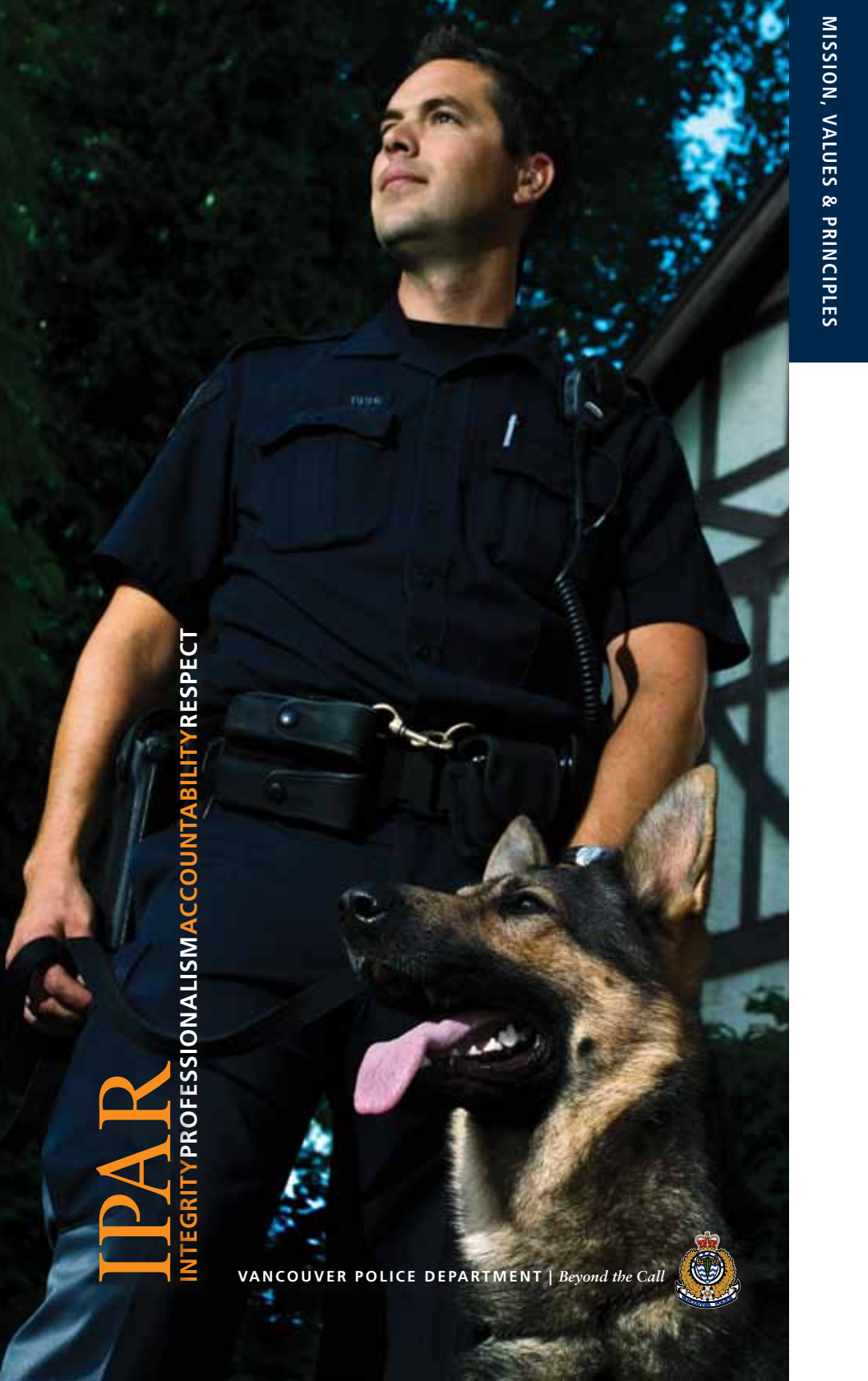
Jim Chu  
Chief Constable  
Vancouver Police Department



# IPAR

INTEGRITY PROFESSIONALISM ACCOUNTABILITY RESPECT

VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT | *Beyond the Call*





## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Vancouver Police Department is dedicated to being Canada's leader in innovative policing, maintaining public safety, upholding the rule of law and preventing crime.

## **OUR VISION**

To be the safest major city in Canada.

## **OUR VALUES**

In carrying out our mission, members will uphold "IPAR":

### **INTEGRITY**

"We stand for truth and honesty in all circumstances"

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

"We will pursue the highest standards in policing"

### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

"We will maintain the highest ethical and legal standards"

### **RESPECT**

"We will be compassionate and respectful in all of our actions"



## **OUR PRINCIPLES**

### **JUSTIFICATION**

"Police actions shall be necessary, legitimate, and legally justifiable"

### **PROPORTIONALITY**

"The risk and impact of police actions shall be proportional to the priority and the severity of the situation in need of intervention"

### **INTRUSIVENESS**

"Police actions should be the least intrusive required to ensure public safety"



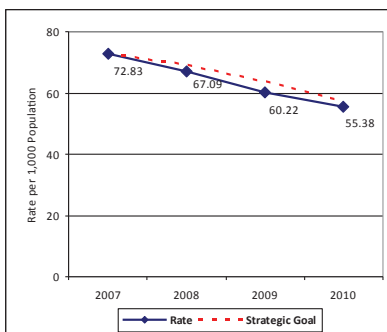


# BACKGROUND

**VANCOUVER IS A THRIVING AND DYNAMIC CITY**, demonstrated as never before during the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. It is a destination for travel, entertainment and work for many and has been designated as the most liveable city in the world by the Economist Intelligence Unit.<sup>1</sup> Vancouver's population of approximately 642,000 people does not reflect the actual number of people in Vancouver on any given day. Because it is a core city and acts as a hub for businesses, tourists, and entertainment, the functional population of Vancouver is much higher. The VPD serves a diverse population with the goal of making Vancouver the safest major city in Canada.

The efforts of the VPD have led to strong public support for the police: in the 2010 annual survey, 81% of citizens and 91% of businesses reported being satisfied with the service provided by the VPD. Crime rates in the city have been dropping steadily, particularly for property crime (already down 24% since 2007, see Figure 1). Many initiatives, such as ConAir and our work with chronic offenders, have contributed to these reductions.

**Figure 1 – Property Crime Rate per 1,000 Population**



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[http://www.citymayors.com/environment/eiu\\_bestcities.html](http://www.citymayors.com/environment/eiu_bestcities.html)

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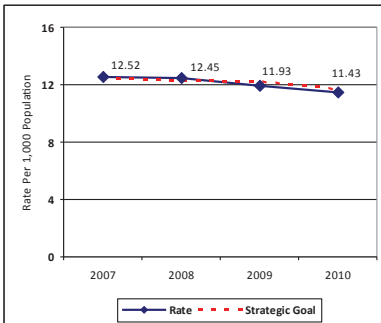
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT  
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Violent crime is a concern for everyone and the VPD has implemented numerous partnership initiatives such as BarWatch, Restaurant Watch and SisterWatch to reduce violence in the city. Periodically, concerns have arisen over gangs and organized crime groups and as a result, the VPD initiated targeted enforcement projects such as Rebellion (2008), Torrent (2010) and Rescue (2011). These have contributed to dramatic decreases in violent crime statistics (Figure 2). Since 2007, violent crime has dropped almost 9%.

The VPD advocates strongly for the most vulnerable members of our city. In the VPD position papers *Project Lockstep* and *Lost in Transition*, the VPD advocated for better conditions for the city's marginalized population in the Downtown Eastside and the mentally ill, respectively. Part of this advocacy work involved the establishment of relationships between the VPD and partners in the community. The VPD believes that positive relationships with community partners are valuable, as these collaborations are vital to successfully implementing positive change. Initiatives like SisterWatch, a project aimed to protect vulnerable women in the Downtown Eastside, help to build trust and mutual respect between the community and the VPD. The VPD has consistently worked with its partners in the health and justice systems to improve conditions for Vancouver citizens.

**Figure 2 – Violent Crime Rate per 1,000 Population**



Reducing crime and promoting safety for the public will always be a priority for the VPD. Further, the VPD strives to be a socially responsible organization promoting positive change in the justice system and the community at large.



# PURPOSE OF A STRATEGIC PLAN

**THE VPD HAS CREATED A FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN** to articulate its organizational priorities over the next five years. It has been developed as a guideline for staff to determine where resources should be allocated and how the VPD will provide service to the public.

Because circumstances change over time and often in unexpected ways, the Strategic Plan is meant to be flexible. Strategic innovation and yearly business plans allow the VPD to stay at the forefront of policing issues and enable the VPD to provide the best services to the people of Vancouver no matter what new challenges and opportunities arise.

To determine the VPD's priorities for the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, employees, stakeholder groups, and the public were consulted to ensure the new Plan fairly and accurately represented the priorities of this broad spectrum. Hundreds of comments were received and analyzed; the product of that examination is contained in this document. This Plan is the result of the contributions and insight of many; its success will be a result of the dedication, creativity and enthusiasm of our employees, partners, and volunteers.

# MEASURING SUCCESS

**OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS**, it is imperative for the VPD to demonstrate its commitment to the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan by continuing to share internal progress with the public. In 2008, the VPD implemented a business planning process that requires “Champions” of the Strategic Plan goals to detail how they will meet their targets each year. Twice a year, the Champions are required to assess and report back on their progress. This process ensures accountability and allows Champions an opportunity to adjust strategies, where required, to ensure targets are met, or explain setbacks. Additionally, it allows the Police Board, City Council and the public to be aware of the progress made each year towards meeting the goals.

For the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan, the annual business planning process will continue. The Champions are expected to be innovative in their strategies and responsive to the needs of the community. Though some strategies will remain the same over the course of the Plan, others will shift and change in response to emerging issues and ongoing assessments. Champions can focus resources on issues in a timely fashion, making the Plan flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of the citizens of Vancouver while supporting its strategic goals.





# THE VPD'S STRATEGIC GOALS

**AFTER SUBSTANTIAL CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYEES**, stakeholders and the public, the VPD has identified 14 priorities for inclusion in the Strategic Plan for 2012-2016. These priorities fall into three categories: Crime Reduction Goals, Community Focused Goals, and Organizational Development Goals.

## CRIME REDUCTION GOALS

As a police department, crime reduction and increased safety for the citizens of Vancouver are clearly key priorities. These goals address the main crime related priorities for the next five years.

### THE GOALS:

- **Reduce violent crime by 2.5% a year for a total reduction of 12.5% over the next five years.**

Violent crime has a devastating impact on the victims and witnesses. Often related to alcohol and drugs and occurring in the "heat of the moment," violent crime can be difficult to prevent. Some members of the community are at an increased risk of being victims of violence, such as the marginalized, or those in the sex trade, or who suffer from addictions, mental illness, or who are homeless. It is important for the VPD to continue to work with these groups to help prevent their victimization. Because of the impact on the community, as well as the individuals involved, the VPD's Plan involves three components to address violent crimes: reducing the number of violent incidents through preventative measures, investigating the violent incidents that do occur in an effective manner, and communicating when appropriate with the public about incidents that have occurred and the resulting police response.

Crimes such as assault, sexual assault, and robbery, are categorized as violent crimes. For this strategic plan the VPD will establish a reduction target that exceeds the general trend of 2% decreases achieved over each of the last five years.



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- **Reduce property crime by 5% a year for a total reduction of 25% over the next five years.**

While the VPD has made significant reductions in property crime over the period of the last Strategic Plan, more remains to be done. Vancouver's property crime rate continues to be one of the highest in Canada. Although violent crime receives a great deal of attention because of its significant impact on individuals, the impact of property crime is often underestimated. Beyond being expensive for individuals and businesses, it also leaves people feeling violated and unsafe. Unfortunately, the frequency with which property crime occurs has left some feeling that there is no hope of change. However, through crime prevention programs, community awareness programs and targeting chronic offenders, the combined efforts of the VPD and the public have begun to pay off. Property crimes such as break and enter, theft and mischief are down significantly and the VPD will continue to work to reduce them.

The VPD has achieved a great deal of success in combating property crime as a result of the initiatives put in place over the last five years. The 2012-2016 property crime reduction targets are notably ambitious, requiring an average reduction of 5% a year, and will require the VPD to continue implementing innovative methods to achieve these targets.

- **Disrupt organized crime groups**

Crime groups, such as gangs, are a constant concern for residents of Vancouver and the surrounding region. Organized crime can come in a variety of forms and these groups will be targeted for disruption. "Disruption" involves any tactic that inhibits or prevents organized crime groups from engaging in criminal acts. The VPD has been highly successful with proactive enforcement actions leading to arrests and prosecutions targeting those members of a criminal organization who are most likely to engage in violence. These strategies will continue.



More recently, the VPD has focused its attention on the use of innovative strategies, such as seizures of assets under provisions of the Criminal Code and referrals to the BC Civil Forfeiture Office where property can be forfeited if it was used, or acquired, in an unlawful manner. The VPD spends considerable time examining criminal organizations to learn how they operate and the organizations or people who assist them. In cases where criminal charges are not possible, investigators may use administrative laws to interfere with the groups' operations.

In addition, BarWatch and Restaurant Watch are two examples of proactive measures that interfere with violent criminals' ability to gather within Vancouver to reduce the likelihood of violent incidents occurring. The Gang Crime Unit's partnership with the Marine Unit during the summer months ensures this disruption tactic is taken to the marine environment, further upsetting gang members' ability to gather without police interference.

Continued use of proactive and innovative strategies will be employed over the next five years to disrupt and interfere with the operation of criminal organizations. Due to the diverse nature of organized crime, success must be measured in a number of ways to more accurately assess the VPD's impact on organized crime.

- **Combat low-level crimes and problems that impact perceptions of neighbourhood safety**

Every neighbourhood in Vancouver has issues that impact the residents' perceptions of safety, though no neighbourhood is as troubled as the Downtown Eastside. The VPD has worked hard over the last several years to reduce behaviours that have a negative impact on the quality of life of those living in the area through advocacy and enforcement. Residents of any neighbourhood have a right to walk down the street without feeling unsafe or harassed. Unfortunately, many of the issues are driven primarily by drug and alcohol addiction and mental illness. However, police are often called on to help manage situations involving people who face these challenges. By helping to manage "quality of life" problems, the VPD will help citizens feel safer.



The VPD will proactively focus on incidents related to disturbances, breaches of the peace, aggressive panhandling, public intoxication, drug offences, unlicensed street vending, and other contributors to disorder in all areas of the city while continuing to foster relationships with community partners to help people access the resources they need.

- **Reduce motor vehicle collisions that result in injury or death by 12.5% over the next five years**

One of the biggest concerns voiced by Vancouverites during the consultation process was unsafe drivers, pedestrians and cyclists on the roads. Traffic collisions cause more property damage, injuries and loss of life than property and violent crime. The VPD continually works to reduce the number of collisions occurring in Vancouver through increased enforcement and education for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, the VPD works with ICBC and the City of Vancouver Engineering Services to improve roadways and make them safer for all. With the increase in bike lanes and many commuters choosing to ride their bicycles to work, traffic safety has become significantly more complex.

The VPD will continue its efforts to minimize the number of collisions occurring in Vancouver that result in injury or death by continuing its work in the areas of enforcement, engineering and education.



## COMMUNITY FOCUSED GOALS

As a police service, the public expects that the VPD will “fight crime” and “catch criminals.” However, to accomplish these goals it is important for the VPD to engage with the community. From programs and initiatives for youth to advocacy and collaboration with partners in the Downtown Eastside, the VPD is committed to working with the community to reduce crime and improve safety from “behind the scenes.”

### THE GOALS

- **Develop and maintain positive working relationships, including sharing information, within the VPD and with stakeholder agencies in the community**

The VPD received considerable feedback regarding its communication and collaboration efforts both internally and externally. Though the VPD has shown leadership in the area of collaboration with other agencies (e.g., mental health agencies, Aboriginal groups, women’s groups, etc.), it is important that the VPD continue to work at developing new relationships and maintaining (or improving) existing ones.

As a large organization, internal communication is equally essential. The VPD will strive for improved internal working relationships to facilitate communication and information sharing between senior management and front line staff. As well, efforts will be made to encourage communication between different areas of the VPD (e.g., investigative teams and patrol teams) in order to provide more effective service to the public.

- **Provide public educational outreach on policing and police related issues**

This goal is aimed at further developing the connection between the community and the VPD through increased outreach and education for the public. The VPD has been proactive in sharing information, including news about investigations and public safety issues, through the VPD website and regular media releases.



More recently, the VPD has launched initiatives to improve communication to the public through the Crime Alerts Program, Twitter, and Facebook. These initiatives have allowed the VPD to communicate directly with the public, providing more information than ever before. Through social media, members of the public are also able to find out more about the VPD and how officers do their jobs on a daily basis. There are also benefits for officers when the public better understands what they can expect from the police.

The VPD has a tradition of engaging the community in crime prevention efforts by addressing root causes of crime. Programs and initiatives to combat property crimes, such as auto theft, or violent crimes like drug facilitated sexual assaults, are important ways that the VPD can enhance community safety over the next five years.

- **Provide socially responsible programs and initiatives that benefit youth**

The VPD prides itself on the contributions it makes to the community both at the organizational and individual employee levels. The VPD is particularly interested in helping to increase the respect young people have for the law and the criminal justice system. Many employees already contribute significant amounts of their time to worthy charities and causes in the community and many more do so off-duty. Programs like Eastside Aboriginal Space for Youth (EASY) for at-risk Aboriginal youth, the School Liaison Programs at Vancouver schools, Car 86 for child welfare matters, the Police Athletic League (PAL) and the High Risk Youth/Street Youth Intervention Team assist youth by providing the skills necessary to allow them to make better life choices, with the goal of preventing them from becoming entrenched in a criminal lifestyle.

As a socially responsible organization, the VPD will continue to provide positive role models for young people and support services and programs that assist them.



- **Manage resources in an environmentally sustainable manner**

The VPD is committed to being a law enforcement leader in environmental sustainability. While this is a relatively new concept in policing, the VPD has been engaged in making improvements to the way its resources are handled for a number of years. Recent improvements to the fleet and facilities have helped reduce the VPD's carbon footprint and a waste diversion program is being developed. As sustainable practices often result in cost savings because of increased efficiencies, there are financial incentives for the VPD to become more "green." City Council has also made this a priority in the City Strategic Plan, and the VPD has made significant progress with its current programs.

Over the next five years, the VPD will continue to engage staff in its efforts to be more sustainable. Within operational limitations, the VPD will work towards minimizing its carbon footprint by focusing on reducing, reusing, recycling and using innovative methods to better utilize resources through its Code Green program.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The VPD strives to be a leader in policing and this requires committed people who are supported with the appropriate training, direction, and resources. Recognizing that there are constraints including financial challenges, these goals reflect a commitment by the VPD to be efficient and effective in its operations. These priorities were identified by staff, stakeholders and the public as being essential for the VPD to be a leader in policing.

### **THE GOALS**

- **Encourage and support career development and succession planning for all staff**

The VPD depends on its employees to be the human face in times of crisis and to respond professionally and effectively to any situation. To ensure that employees are able to respond at such a level, the VPD encourages and supports





development. Through performance development, mentorship, and access to development opportunities, the VPD works to have well rounded, highly capable individuals who have the skills necessary to meet any challenge they may face.

With both sworn and civilian members having the opportunity to transfer to different assignments, succession planning is essential in order to facilitate seamless transitions. This is relevant for all levels of the organization, however is particularly important for those areas requiring specialized knowledge. In many areas, the training required to be competent in a position can take years and effective succession planning will allow members to come into those positions ready to perform at a high level. The VPD is working to improve and expand on current succession planning strategies.

The VPD is committed to ensuring access to developmental opportunities to assist employees with their careers and to facilitate members' transitions between assignments.

- **Ensure that the VPD has the human resources and training needed to meet objectives**

It is important for the VPD to have the staff necessary to meet workload demand. With financial considerations in mind, particularly in the current economic climate, the VPD has been carrying a number of sworn and civilian vacancies. Going forward, it will be necessary for the VPD to be staffed at its authorized strength to meet demands, achieve the goals outlined in this Plan, and better ensure the community's safety.

Simply having sufficient staff is not enough. Training is an essential component of law enforcement because of the frequent changes to legislation and sometimes onerous requirements of police procedure. All employees require training to develop and to fulfill their duties regardless of assignment. Ensuring that training is available and accessible for all staff is crucial for the VPD to provide the public with excellent service.





- **Support and foster employee wellness**

Work-life balance has become increasingly important and the VPD has worked to help staff manage the stress both at home and work. During the consultation process to develop the Strategic Plan, it became clear that while some employees were satisfied with the support they received in times of difficulty (e.g., illness, family challenges, or traumatic incidents), more could be done. Given the type of work and situations employees are exposed to, it is crucial that sworn and civilian members have access to resources to stay mentally and physically healthy. The continued operation of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team and Employee Services to help members through crises is essential for the physical and mental health of our employees. While critical incident management is clearly necessary, there are many other circumstances where our employees require support. The VPD will work to improve awareness of and access to various assistance programs such as the annual debrief for employees in high stress units through the Employee Wellness Program. The VPD will continue to develop and expand current employee wellness programs.

- **Develop and implement initiatives that streamline administrative processes**

Though limited in many cases by legal requirements and the procedures of other agencies (such as Crown Counsel), the VPD recognizes that some of its administrative processes can be made more effective and efficient. Efforts to reduce administrative duties and increase time available for operational policing are in progress.

The VPD has implemented a number of programs, such as the Workforce Management System (WMS) and electronic overtime filing, with the aim of increasing efficiencies; however, there are still areas identified by staff that could be streamlined further. Further analysis will be conducted to identify additional inefficiencies and projects developed to solve administrative challenges.



- **Research, acquire and utilize the best technology and infrastructure to assist officers in the investigation and enforcement of crime**

To be on the leading edge of policing and to be one step ahead of criminals, it is necessary for the VPD to have access to modern technology and infrastructure. Having the right equipment (e.g., vehicles, radios, and computers) is essential for officer and public safety. Technology will be used as a force-multiplier to make frontline officers more effective, and to make our support staff more efficient. It will also be used to increase the efforts of our many volunteers and partners. While the VPD is generally well served by the existing equipment and technology; however, in law enforcement the reality is that technology is ever-changing. From crime analysis software to having digital storage space for the increasing amount of video and photographic evidence, ensuring that the VPD is up to date with the current technology is essential for crime fighting.

The VPD is committed to providing staff with the facilities, equipment and technology they require to do their jobs at the highest level of performance.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Vancouver Police Department would like to thank our employees and volunteers, and the residents, visitors, businesses and City Council of Vancouver for their feedback in helping to develop the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan.

In addition, the VPD would like to thank the many groups and organizations who contributed to the Strategic Plan by contributing feedback and suggestions. Our partnerships will be strengthened as a result of this collaboration.

Finally, the VPD would like to thank the Planning, Research & Audit Section and the following people for their leadership, assistance and direction in moving the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan forward:

## **VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD**

Mayor Gregor Robertson, Chair  
Ms. Mary Collins  
Mr. Wade Grant  
Ms. Patti Marfleet  
Mr. Jason McLean  
Ms. Sheryl Williamson  
Mr. Glenn Wong

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT COMMITTEE**

Andy Hobbs, Superintendent  
Paul Patterson, Senior Director  
Brad Desmarais, Inspector  
Michelle Davey, Inspector  
Mario Giardini, Inspector  
Drazen Manojlovic, Director  
Leslie Stevens, Sergeant  
Carol Tarnowsky, Sergeant  
Kristie McCann, Planning Advisor  
Nelson Teixeira, Planning Analyst

## **VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE**

Jim Chu, Chief Constable  
Warren Lemcke, Deputy Chief Constable  
Doug LePard, Deputy Chief Constable  
Adam Palmer, Deputy Chief Constable  
Andy Hobbs, Superintendent  
Paul Patterson, Senior Director  
Mike Porteous, Superintendent  
Rob Rothwell, Superintendent  
Jeff Sim, Superintendent  
Daryl Wiebe, Superintendent  
Warwick Wright, Senior Director

## **DESIGN**

Sharm Thiagarajah

## **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Martin Dee  
Spencer Robertson





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