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To: South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Board
Governance Committee (Governance Committee)

From: Chief Officer Dave Jones
South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Police Service
(Transit Police)

Date: January 10, 2022

Subject: Community Consultation and Engagement Methodologies [Report No. 2022-08]

Information Report

PURPOSE

The Governance Committee requested to be informed on established methodologies for engaging with the community and soliciting feedback on priorities, objectives, citizen satisfaction and relationship building.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

At the September 8, 2021 In Camera meeting of the Governance Committee, the Chief Officer was requested to provide an information report on the community engagement approach of the Transit Police. This request arose from the new BC Provincial Policing Standards (“BCPPS”) on the Promotion of Unbiased Policing¹ that will take effect on July 30, 2023, including requirements to:

- Maintain a community relations function to liaise with community representatives reflective of the demographic make-up of the community.
- Seek community input on priorities and objectives for policing and law enforcement from a broad spectrum of the community served.

¹ Government of British Columbia, Provincial Policing Standards, 6.1.2 - Community Engagement:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/police/standards/6-1-2-community-engagement.pdf>

- Conduct a survey of citizen satisfaction at least once every three years.
- Integrate community relationship building into performance assessment/management of police officers.

Community Stakeholders

Transit Police is responsible for policing a transit service area that covers 1800 square kilometres and crosses through 22 different communities served by a combination of 17 jurisdictional police agencies. Transit ridership is diverse and includes citizens and visitors of all backgrounds, cultures, ages, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations and physical/mental abilities. Efforts at community consultation must ensure representation and input from the full transportation service region while also providing opportunities for input from the broad spectrum of different user groups that use the transit system.



The primary focus of this report will be on consultation with transit users and the general public. This includes all transit users, both those that rely on the transit system for daily/weekly transportation needs as well as transit users who use the system more infrequently such as for travel to/from special events. Consultation with the general public is also important as Transit Police supports efforts to increase transit usage amongst all citizens, consistent with the TransLink Regional Transportation Strategy², and works jointly with Jurisdictional Police on regional policing matters.

This report will not focus on internal communications with employees and operational partners, although input from internal stakeholders is vital to ensuring a coordinated response and maintaining public safety across the region. Transit Police has numerous channels of communications with jurisdictional police agency partners, TransLink and its operating companies, and works closely with each partner on a daily basis to address emerging issues and concerns. Input from Transit Police employees, police agency partners and TransLink operating companies was a part of the recently completed strategic planning process.

² TransLink Regional Transportation Strategy: <https://www.translink.ca/plans-and-projects/strategies-plans-and-guidelines/transit-and-transportation-planning/regional-transportation-strategy>



Transit Police Community Policing Model

One of the requirements of the new BCPPS on Unbiased Policing is that all police agencies maintain a community relations function to liaise with community representatives reflective of the demographic make-up of the community. This function was already established within Transit Police in 2016 with the creation of the new Transit Police Community Policing Model. This model was adopted, in part, to help enhance feelings and perceptions of safety on the transit system and included the appointment of a Neighbourhood Police Officer (“NPO”) for each of the six Community Service Areas (“CSAs”). The NPOs engage in a variety of activities including public reassurance and engagement, attendance at community events, the provision of transit safety presentations to groups such as immigrants/students/seniors, and relationship building/partnerships development with community groups, businesses and residents around busy transit hubs.

In addition to engaging with local groups and individuals within their respective CSAs, NPOs also took on specific liaison responsibilities related to different groups of transit users. This currently includes:

- Sgt. Julien Ponsioen - NPO for Downtown Vancouver and liaison to 2SLGBTQ+ community;
- Cst. Bruce Shipley - Neighbourhood Police Officer for Richmond/Vancouver/UBC and liaison for the homeless, shelters and government ministries;
- Cst. Jenny Chung - NPO for North Shore/Burnaby/Tri-Cities and liaison to Korean community;
- Cst. Marco DiTrollo - NPO for North Shore/Burnaby/Tri-Cities and liaison to seniors organizations;
- Cst. Miles Teitelbaum - NPO for South Burnaby/New Westminster and liaison to universities;
- Cst. Shiraaz Hanif - NPO for Surrey/Langley and liaison to Muslim community, and;
- Cst. Kirk Rattray - liaison to Indigenous community.

The team as a whole is responsive to current events and issues, and engages in regional community outreach related to specific safety trends and targeted initiatives. Most recently, the NPO team performed additional outreach, consultation and safety reassurance with members of southeast Asian communities, following reports of increased hate crimes towards these communities being reported across Canada. All NPOs performed this targeted outreach and consultation in 2021, to ensure that new/existing transit users felt safe in using the system and understood how to report threats, intimidation and general concerns.

The community outreach activities of the Neighbourhood Police Officers have grown significantly since they were first introduced in 2016, leading to additional resources being allocated in 2020-2021 to the rebranded Transit Police 'Community Engagement Team' ("CET"). This included the creation of a dedicated Indigenous Liaison Officer ("ILO") position and the addition of second Mental Health Officer to deal with the increasing file load related to clients with cognitive issues. The CET is currently comprised of one Sergeant and nine Constables (six NPOs, one ILO, and two Mental Health Liaison Officers), who ensure ongoing daily outreach, education, consultation and channels of feedback with community representatives across Metro Vancouver.



Transit Police Chief's Community Council

While the CET provides continuous information and feedback from the community at large to Transit Police, the Chief Officer has another direct form of feedback in the form of the Transit Police Chief's Community Council ("TPCCC"). Originally formed in 2014, the TPCCC acts in an advisory capacity to Transit Police to promote dialogue and collaboration. It consists of representatives from a broad cross section of the transit community including representatives from community safety organizations, businesses, groups supporting the disabled, Indigenous elders, seniors and school faculty/students.

The objective of the Council is to bring community members together to gather information and perspectives on transit related safety and security issues in the BC lower mainland, to collaboratively develop strategies to make transit safer for all users, and to prevent and reduce crime on transit vehicles and in/around transit stations. The TPCCC meets five times per year, either in person or, more recently during the pandemic, via Zoom, for dialogue and information exchange.

The TPCCC was surveyed in early 2020 as part of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan environmental scanning process, and was consulted again in 2021 for further feedback as the draft Plan was developed. They were also consulted in 2021 within the community consultation phase of the proposed Community Safety Officer Initiative.

TransLink Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Given the large geographic size of the transportation service region, Transit Police makes use of existing surveys conducted by TransLink as a starting point when seeking community input on perceived levels of safety on the transit system. TransLink undertakes a wide range of transportation-related research and analytics to better understand their customers' needs and

experiences and the travel behaviours of the region as a whole. Through an ongoing data collection and analytics program, TransLink monitors and reports on the performance of the region's transportation system.

As part of this research, TransLink has an accountability program that assesses customer satisfaction, including perceived levels of safety. The most recent TransLink Accountability Report shows that perceptions of safety have remained high between 2016-2020, scoring between 8.6-8.7 out of 10 for perceptions of safety on transit vehicles and 8.3-8.5 out of 10 for perceptions of safety at transit stations/stops. Customer Satisfaction is tracked by TransLink quarterly and is one of the Key Performance Indicators identified in the 2022-2026 Transit Police Strategic Plan.



TransLink 2020 Accountability Report – Perceptions of Safety and Security Graphs³

TransLink Listens Panel

TransLink Listens is an online panel of approximately 3,400 Metro Vancouver residents who have joined the panel to participate in market research activities sponsored by TransLink. The TransLink Listens panel is owned by TransLink and managed by TransLink Customer Research & Insights. It provides a cost-effective method of obtaining feedback/information from both transit riders specifically and Metro Vancouver citizens generally.

Transit Police has made use of the TransLink Listens panel on a number of occasions, including but not limited to surveys of transit users when developing previous Strategic Plans. Most recently, a Transit Safety Survey was issued to the TransLink Listens panel in 2020 as part of the environmental scanning work conducted by Transit Police, informing the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan's development process.

³ TransLink Accountability Report: <https://www.translink.ca/-/media/translink/documents/about-translink/corporate-reports/accountability-reports/2020/2020-accountability-report.pdf>



Transit Police Directed Surveys and Studies

Complementing TransLink's Customer Satisfaction Surveys and TransLink Listens panel surveys, Transit Police has historically commissioned several directed studies, detailed below:

- Transit Police Community Survey (2011): Conducted by NRG Research Group, Transit Police commissioned a survey of residents within the Metro Vancouver region to measure awareness of Transit Police, gauge perceptions of Transit Police and the services provided, determine the incidence of conduct with Transit Police and obtain feedback on residents' past contact with Transit Police. (The intent was to repeat this survey biennially; however, budget restrictions and then the service delivery initiative resulted in deference.)
- Transit Police Scent Dog Pilot Program Awareness Survey (2012): Conducted by NRG Research Group, Transit Police commissioned a survey of residents within the Metro Vancouver region to better understand their awareness and attitudes about the Transit Police Explosive Scent Detection Dog Pilot Program.
- Feelings of Safety and Security among SkyTrain Users (2014): Conducted by Nahanni Pollard, Douglas College School of Criminology, and Curt Griffiths, Simon Fraser University School of Criminology, Transit Police commissioned a survey of feelings of safety and security amongst SkyTrain users. This was part of a larger study of transit policing in the Metro Vancouver region and helped inform the development of the new Transit Police Service Delivery Model, launched in 2015 as well as used in environmental scanning for the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.
- Service Delivery Model Evaluation (2020): Conducted by Nahanni Pollard, Douglas College School of Criminology, Curt Griffiths and Josh Murphy, Simon Fraser University School of Criminology, Transit Police commissioned a review of the Service Delivery Model, launched by Transit Police in 2015, including the establishment of six NPO positions detailed earlier in this report.

The newly issued BCPPS on Unbiased Policing, including an obligation to conduct a survey of citizen satisfaction at least once every three years, means that the Transit Police will now need to examine different options to meet this semi-annual requirement. This could include the further use of the TransLink Listens panel, commissioned external survey every three years (such as that done in 2011), directed studies commissioned biennially, or a combination of these tools.



CONCLUSION

In addition to the new BCPPS on Unbiased Policing, Transit Police has also included objectives/actions related to community consultation and engagement as part of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Specifically, Strategic Action 2.3.2 calls for Transit Police to “establish channels of regular information gathering from transit users, with associated analysis, to inform the development of safety initiatives and campaigns.” As Transit Police is now moving into the Plan’s implementation phase, it will be examining potential formats, timelines and the associated costs/resourcing necessary to perform more regular surveys of transit users and the public. This will complement the ongoing consultation and engagement work of the CET, TPCCC and TransLink.

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