



Metro Vancouver Transit Police 2021 Report to the Community

Policing the Moving City

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Message from the Police Board Chair

2021 was a year of transition. Transit Police completed its 2016-2021 Strategic Plan while consulting with police, transit, Indigenous and community partners on the finalization of a new Plan for the next five years. We also said a reluctant goodbye to long-serving Police Board member, Ali Pejman, whose fiscal expertise and dedication to high standards of transparency and accountability had successfully steered the Police Board Finance Committee for many years.



Simultaneously, the organization continued to contend with issues related to the global COVID-19 pandemic. These included depressed (though recovering) levels of transit ridership; increased calls for service pertaining to mental health and individuals in crisis; mask mandates with associated enforcement; and transit users' increased anxiety about crime, particularly hate crimes against specific ethnic groups. Despite these demands, Transit Police made significant strides in expanding opportunities for community engagement, safety education, information exchange and support to diverse transit users.

The Transit Police Board's pledge to strengthen support for Indigenous peoples was formalized through our statement of commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. We're acting on that commitment in a number of ways, including the implementation of additional Indigenous awareness training for Police Board members and Transit Police employees, consulting with Indigenous groups on the new Strategic Plan and other initiatives, and launching the Blue Eagle Community Cadet Program in Vancouver. The Blue Eagle program provides weekly events for youth between the ages of 12 to 15, developing their leadership skills while teaching about Indigenous culture. The program's success in Vancouver has since seen other Metro Vancouver communities reach out in the hopes of expanding the program into their municipalities.

2021 also saw the creation of the Waterfront Community Policing Centre (CPC). This program sees trained Transit Police volunteers deployed on the transit system several times a week, handing out safety information, partnering with Transit Police specialty teams, and other community policing centres in Vancouver, on safety initiatives and proactively engaging with the travelling public. Our CPC volunteers make an important contribution and have even successfully administered Naloxone, saving several lives.

Due to an increase in reported hate crimes across Canada, the Transit Police Community Engagement team held numerous pop-up engagement events at transit hubs throughout the year, offering safety literature printed in different languages for increased accessibility. The Police Board also identified new opportunities to collaborate with the Chief's Community Council, who represent a cross-section of community groups, to hear their thoughts on safety issues and proposed solutions. As the pandemic continues to ease and community events make their return to centre stage, the Police Board will be looking for new opportunities to engage with both transit users and the public at large, and to receive your direct input on how we can better serve you.

Sara A. Levine, Chair - Metro Vancouver Transit Police Board

Message from the Chief Officer

Faced with the second year of a global pandemic, Transit Police did not slow down. While volumes of transit passengers remained low, the Operations Communication Centre at Transit Police actually saw a 22% increase in text messages requiring police assistance. Many messages concerned mandatory mask requirements and health-related measures; however, many more calls and texts were related to crime and disorder issues.



We experienced a 24% increase in the number of Section 28 Mental Health Apprehensions, the highest number that Transit Police has seen since 2015, even with transit ridership down by over half. Protecting and assisting vulnerable persons is a Strategic Objective within the 2016-2021 Strategic Plan and Transit Police Officers continued to work closely with TransLink operating companies, community and health care partners, and cross regional policing partners to support vulnerable people and those in a mental health crisis. New initiatives took place to support those who were homeless.

Transit Police patrol officer deployments are complemented by specialty units that respond to issues and calls for service across the transit system. This includes the Targeted Mobile Enforcement Team, General Investigations Unit, Explosive Detection Dog Team and Community Engagement Team. Information provided by transit users about incidents and concerns assist us in determining where officers are most needed; we encourage you to contact us if you ever feel unsafe.

A new team permanently established in 2021 was the Crime Suppression Team ("CST"). The team is able to quickly and effectively respond to issues when crime trends or hot spots are identified on or near the transit system. CST maintains close contact with a number of other agencies such as the "End Gang Life" initiative run by the BC Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit. The team's real time focus on project-based investigations has allowed Transit Police to better respond to problematic areas and issues in real time, and provides another layer of partnership with cross regional police agencies.

Another team that is set to become busier in the coming years is our Recruitment Team. With rapid transit expanding in both Vancouver and Surrey/Langley, along with natural levels of employee attrition, Metro Vancouver Transit Police is looking for both police officer recruits and experienced police officers. Consistent schedules, multiple deployment centres and the ability to work in 22 different communities make Transit Police a desirable police service to work for. The organization strives to be responsive to, and representative of, the diverse communities we serve. I encourage you to take a look at joining our growing team.

Dave Jones, Chief Officer - Metro Vancouver Transit Police

2021 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Offences



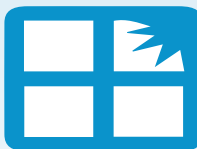
↓5%

Crimes Against Persons ¹

Down 5%

2020: 1,456

2021: 1,376



↑10%

Crimes Against Property ²

Up 10%

2020: 1,635

2021: 1,793



↑22%

SMS Text Conversations
Converted to Police Files

2020: 4,983

2021: 6,064

¹ The rate of Crimes against Persons per 100,000 Boarded Passengers was down by 8%, from 0.668 (2020) to 0.618 (2021)

² The rate of Crimes against Property per 100,000 Boarded Passengers was up by 7%, from 0.750 (2020) to 0.805 (2021)

Joint Initiatives /Operational Plans with Jurisdictional Police Departments



↑86%

Up by 86%

2020: 81 Initiatives

2021: 151 Initiatives

Arrests



↓29%

Arrests on New Charges ³

Down 29%

2020: 709

2021: 500

↑40%

Warrant Arrests

Up 40%

2020: 778

2021: 1,092

↓37%

Breaches ⁴

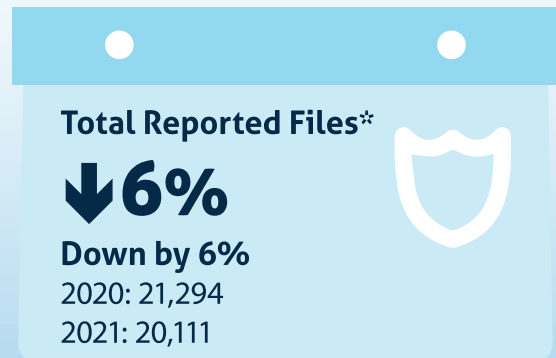
Down 37%

2020: 471

2021: 295

³ Arrest means an actual arrest and all other cases where charges were recommended to Crown Counsel.

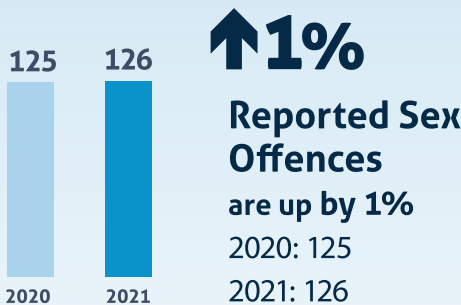
⁴ Breaches including secondary offences; does not include assists.



* Primary offence only – all offences

Our work is guided by four operational priorities in order to ensure that we are delivering the best possible service to transit users.

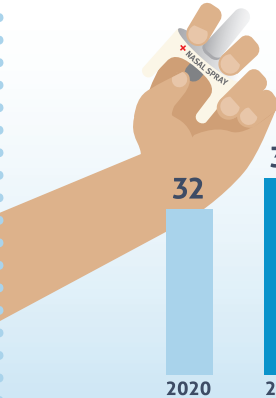
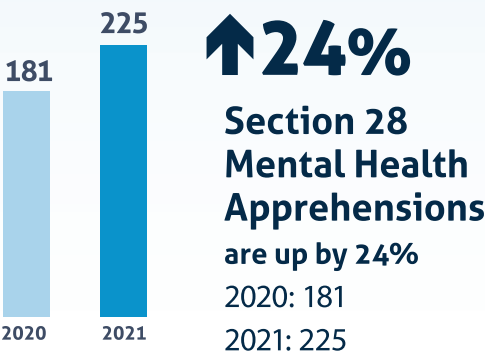
1. Reducing Sex Offences



2. Reducing Frontline Workplace Assaults



3. Helping Vulnerable People in Crisis



↑19%

Naloxone Events are up by 19%

4. Building System Resiliency

2,364 Searches for explosives and firearms ⁵



Strider, a Deutsch Drathaar, is the first of his breed to be working for a Canadian police agency and provides explosive detection services.

⁵ This includes both calls for service and the number of proactive explosive sweeps when members of the general public are present.



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A special inspection ceremony was held in June 2021 for the first class of Blue Eagle Community Cadets.

Community Events

Following a substantial reduction in community events in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 saw a return to previous levels of public engagement, with 272 community/partner events attended, a 244% increase over the prior year. A number of these engagement opportunities were due to the creation of two new programs: the Waterfront Community Policing Centre and the Blue Eagle Community Cadets.

Waterfront Community Policing Centre (“CPC”)

While based out of the Waterfront Station hub office, the Waterfront CPC program supports Transit Police activities across Metro Vancouver. Trained volunteers attend events alongside Neighbourhood Police Officers in each of the six Community Service Areas, partner with Transit Police speciality teams such as the Targeted Mobile Enforcement Team on special projects and also support the Blue Eagle Community Cadets Program.



Blue Eagle Community Cadets



In 2021, Transit Police worked with the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre and the Vancouver Police Department’s Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenous Relations Section to establish a new program for youth between the ages of 12-15.

This weekly program serves to empower youth by offering culturally connected mentorship, building leadership skills, empowering youth as they discover their potential and explore career options, increasing mental and physical health, learning about Indigenous culture and helping the community.



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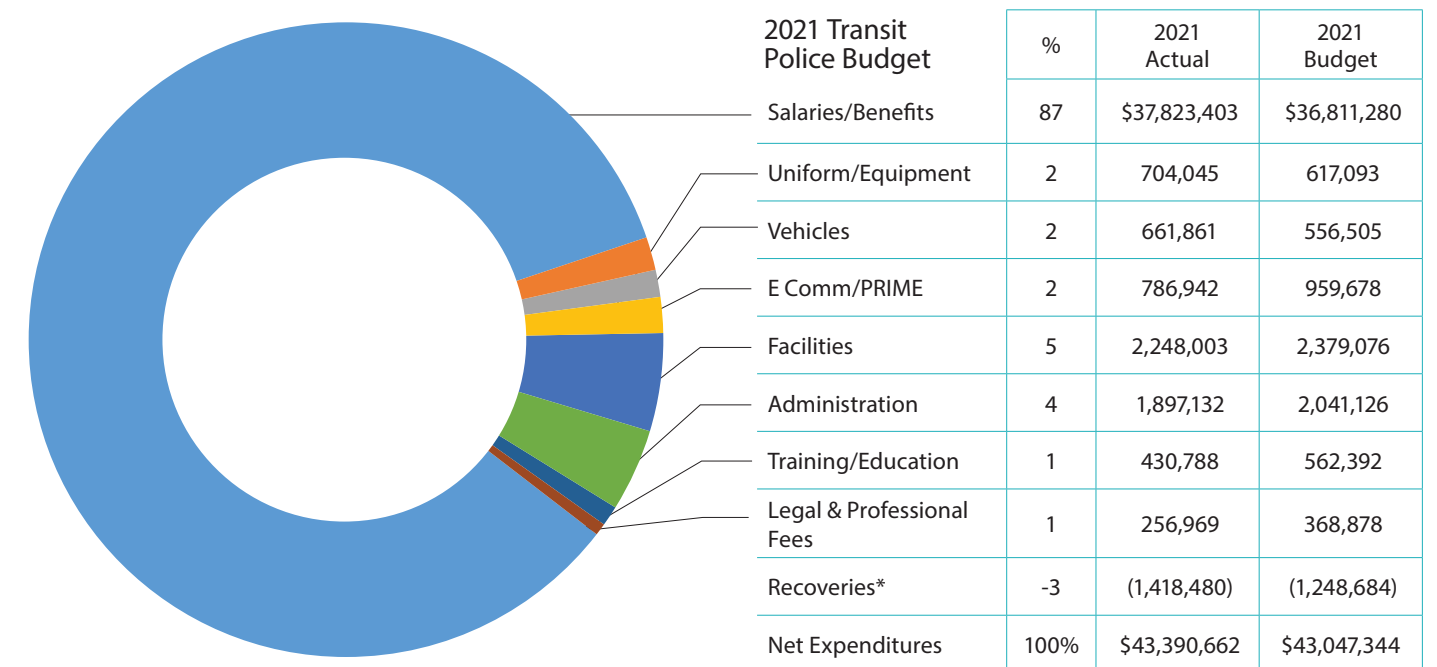
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Financial Summary

The Transit Police budget for 2021 was \$43,047,344. Total actual expenditures were \$43,390,662. The expenditures include TransLink allocated costs of \$4,845,616 for centralized services (premises rent and information technology services).



*Salaries represent the net costs to Metro Vancouver Transit Police after recoveries (i.e. those officers seconded and paid for by other joint police initiatives).

**Transit Police salaries are consistent with those of independent municipal police agencies in Metro Vancouver.

In 2021, Cst. Bruce Shipley took on the role of Transit Police Homeless Outreach Officer as part of a new pilot project.



For a complete breakdown of strategic initiatives at Metro Vancouver Transit Police in 2021, see our Strategic Plan Year End Update located at: <https://transitpolice.ca/news/strategic-plan-2016-2021/>



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