



## METRO VANCOUVER TRANSIT POLICE REPORT FOR JUNE 2023 TRANSLINK BOARD MEETING

### TransLink Strategic Priority: Customer First

- **Transit Police seize drugs, guns, counterfeit cash, and vehicle following months-long investigation**

In May 2023, Transit Police publicly reported on an investigation by the Metro Vancouver Transit Police Crime Suppression Team (“CST”) that resulted in arrests and seizures related to a multi-jurisdiction drug trafficking ring. In fall 2022, Transit Police became aware of a network of individuals associated with the British Columbia gang conflict, whom they suspected of trafficking illicit drugs into municipalities throughout the Lower Mainland by using the transit network. It was quickly determined that these individuals posed a risk to public safety due to their access to firearms. (CST was able to secure financial and resource assistance.)

On May 2, 2023, as a result of their investigation, Transit Police executed three simultaneous residential search warrants, in three different municipalities (with the support of cross-regional policing partners). While executing the warrants, Transit Police seized:

- Ten firearms of varying caliber, some with illegal modifications;
- 3,800 rounds of ammunition;
- Illicit drugs, packaged in a manner consistent with trafficking, with an estimated street value of \$70,000;
- Approximately \$50,000 in counterfeit Canadian Currency; and
- A 2017 Mercedes C300W, seized as proceeds of crime.



Also located at one of the residences was a psilocybin (“magic mushroom”) grow operation that was dismantled and seized. Four suspects were arrested and additional arrests are anticipated. The investigation is ongoing.

This special investigation was done with assistance from the Surrey RCMP Crime Reduction Unit North, the RCMP Lower Mainland District, Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit BC, and the Vancouver Police Department. Working with multiple jurisdictional police partners allows Transit Police to investigate criminal activities that cross municipal boundaries; and demonstrates Transit Police purpose and commitment to public safety, and reinforces that persons using the transit system to commit crime will be arrested and face criminal charges.

- **Enhancing Transit Safety**

Between April 1 and April 15, 2023, there were a group of serious, high profile incidents on the Metro Vancouver transit system involving crimes against persons that caught significant public

attention. One of these incidents occurred on April 11<sup>th</sup> on the bus, which resulted in the tragic death of a 17 year-old youth. Even though the rates of crimes against persons and property per 100,000 board passengers are declining from the rates experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is recognized that the public still feels at-risk and it is important that Transit Police Officers and its civilian professionals are there to respond to calls, to investigate and solve crimes, as well as be proactive in advancing public safety and engagement. It can be reassuring to the public when they know that arrests were made in relation to such serious incidents. summary of the incidents follows:

- April 1, 2023 – Stabbing on a bus. A male passenger stabbed other male passenger on the neck with a large knife; they did not know each other. The suspect was located and arrested by police. The Transit Police criminal investigation was taken over by the RCMP Integrated National Security Team as the suspect is alleged to have committed the assault for the “Islamic State” (charges related to terrorism).
- April 10, 2023 – A man allegedly assaulted several passengers on board the Millennium Line SkyTrain and, when confronted by police, attacked a Transit Police Officer with a knife, slashing their jacket. The suspect was arrested.
- April 11, 2023 – A victim was pushed onto a guideway at a SkyTrain station and a stabbing occurred by a group of young persons, following conflict between two groups (unrelated to each other). There are no arrests at time of this report and the investigation is being handled by the New Westminster Police.
- April 11, 2023 – There was a fatal stabbing of 17 year-old onboard a bus. The suspect and victim were known to each other through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party. The suspect was arrested by police.
- April 12, 2023 – A violent fight broke out between passengers and a suspect on the West Vancouver Blue Bus. The suspect was arrested.
- April 14, 2023 – A “serious assault” on board a bus located at Hastings Street and Dunlevy Avenue was reported on by the Vancouver Police Department. The victim was taken to hospital for non-life threatening injuries and Vancouver Police reported no arrests had yet been made.
- April 15, 2023 – A male in his 20s suffered a stab wound to his abdomen on the SkyTrain. He was transported to hospital in serious condition. He has since been released from hospital. A Transit Police investigation led to the arrest of the suspect.



Transit Police has also participated in ongoing meetings with TransLink and the other operating companies to collaboratively work on enhancing transit safety. Transit Police identified opportunities to help address the heightened concerns for public safety on transit, such as:

- Conducting dedicated/increased high visibility patrol in problem areas on the transit system, including joint Transit Police/Jurisdictional Police Department patrols;
- Increasing transit safety awareness campaign, including promotion of the 87 77 77 text number throughout the transit system (in particular the bus system which has had less visibility of the number), and participation in community events and on media; and
- Increasing Operations Communication Centre dispatch capacity in anticipation of increased SMS texts and calls for service arising from the safety campaign.



- **Transit Police Officers Recognized**

Transit Police is proud to advise that, in Spring 2023, a number of Transit Police Officers were recognized with external awards.

Police Honour Night – In May 2023, the Honourable Janet Austin, OBC/Lieutenant Governor of BC and the Honourable Mike Farnworth/Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General presented awards of ‘Valour and Meritorious Service’ Awards to four Transit Police Officers arising from the 2019 police officer involved shooting. The recipients were Constable Baelde, Constable Elvidge and former Constables Harms and Clarkson.

Leadership Award – In April 2023, Staff Sergeant Michelle Hansen was presented with a



Leadership Award from the BC Women in Law Enforcement. She was recognized for her compassion and care that she brings to her work, her unwavering commitment to the community she serves, and the strength of leadership that she provides. S/Sgt. Hansen has 27 years of policing experience (five years with Transit Police and 22 years with the RCMP). She has worked in a number of areas, including patrol, Olympic security, high-profile international events, major crime, and the Lower Mainland - Integrated Tactical Support Group. Currently, she helps to oversee the Transit Police Patrol Section and works closely with TransLink operating companies to address safety on transit.



When a patrol officer lost his son, Justice, to illness, S/Sgt. Hansen was there to help offer support and guidance. She then sought to turn the tragedy into a way to help other children. Working closely with the officer, his family and the department, a plush dog named K9 Hero “Justice” was created, designed to be given by Transit Police Officers to children who experience a traumatic situation on transit. K9 Hero Justice pays tribute to the bravery, courage, and strength of the child that he was named after, while providing comfort to those in need. For more on S/Sgt. Hansen, see the 2020 International Women’s Day video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wfhGhi-r0c>

Alexa Awards – In May 2023, Transit Police’s Constable Nicole Dennis and Sergeant Steve Shaw received recognition for their dedication to the removal of impaired drivers and were honoured with 2022 Alexa Team Awards. Alexa’s Team pays tribute to the dedicated RCMP and municipal police officers who make an extraordinary contribution to reducing the number of drivers affected by alcohol or drugs on British Columbia’s roads and highways.



This provincial recognition program is named in honour of four-year-old Alexa Middelaer, who was killed by an impaired driver in Delta, British Columbia in 2008. To receive a nomination to the Alexa Team, the officer must have removed a minimum of 12 impaired drivers by *Immediate Roadside Prohibition*, or *Criminal Code* investigations, due to impairment by either drugs or alcohol.



Constable Nicole Dennis is a recognized Drug Recognition Expert and is called upon to assess persons who may be driving while impaired by drugs or drugs and alcohol.

Keeping impaired drivers off the roads makes it safer for our transit passengers in their journey from home to their destination and for the movement of our buses and transit staff throughout the transportation region.

#### Coquitlam RCMP Recognitions to Transit Police

On June 12, 2023, Coquitlam RCMP presented three recognitions at Transit Police headquarters. There was one recognition was to the police service overall and individual recognitions to Constable Guri Gosal and Constable Gregg Gillis, as follows:

*“Is officially commended for its invaluable support to the Coquitlam RCMP on November 22, 2022 which was instrumental in leading to the apprehension of a suspect involved in an extremely violent robbery, flight from police, car jacking and the attempted murder of members of the RCMP.*

*Following a highly orchestrated violent armed robbery, police pursuit, the discharge of firearms in an attempt to murder RCMP officers and a car jacking, members and the OCC staff of the Metro Vancouver Transit Police acted admirably in providing critical operational support. Patrol members patrolled and closed area Skytrain stations, OCC staff contacted Skytrain stations and buses in a coordinated effort to ‘choke-off’ avenues of escape. Other*



support included the identification and ultimately the arrest of a suspect in possession of a stolen vehicle, which had been taken from its owner at gun point, in addition to coordinating containment.

*Metro Vancouver Transit Police significantly contributed to the successful resolution of what was a highly dynamic, violent, evolving and multi-layered major police incident, that represented extreme risk to both the public and police. The collective efforts of its members and staff represented the highest of core values and the commitment to the communities they serve. Their diligence, service and professionalism are a credit to the Metro Vancouver Transit Police.”*

#### TransLink Strategic Priority: State of Good Repair

- **Performance Measurement Culture**

Transit Police is an intelligence-led and data-driven police agency, and gathers comprehensive statistics in relation to crime and organizational performance. Transit Police shares statistical and performance information with the public, TransLink and stakeholders through a variety of tools. The following is a snapshot of key statistics for 2023 Q1 as compared to 2022 Q1. In 2023 Q1, Transit Police had 3,529 Police Files, which is a 9% decrease from 2022 Q1.

Metro Vancouver Transit Police Crime and Safety Statistics	2023 Q1	2022 Q1	% Change
<b>Rate of Crimes Against Persons/100,000 Boarded Passengers</b> (primary and assists)	.40	.58	-31%
Actual Number of Crimes Against Persons	367	390	-6%
<b>Rate of Crimes Against Property/100,000 Boarded Passengers</b> (primary and assists)	.47	.79	-40%
Actual Number of Crimes Against Property	434	531	-18%
<b>Other Criminal Code Violations/100,000 Boarded Passengers<sup>1</sup></b> (primary and assists)	.24	.33	-26%
Actual Number of Criminal Code Violations	223	222	-0.5%
<b>Provincial Violation Tickets (“VTs”)</b>	1433	1195	20%
<b>Arrests - Warrants Executed (All)</b>	246	192	28%
<b>Arrests - New Charges<sup>2</sup></b>	78	76	3%
<b>Total S. 28 Mental Health Act Apprehension Files</b>	45	73	-38%
# of S.28 MHA individuals committed, held, voluntary admitted	70%	81%	-11%
<b>Sexual Offences</b> (primary and assists)	43	30	43%
<b>SCBCTA Fare Infraction Notices</b>	1234	1212	2%
<b>Number of Unique SMS Text Conversations</b>	1417	1176	20%

1 Other Criminal Code Violations: Includes such offences as weapons, disturbing the peace, child pornography, obstruct peace officer, possess break and enter instruments, intimidation and threats, breach/bail violations, indecent acts/exposing, and counterfeiting.

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

<b>Number of Police Files Generated from SMS Texts Conversations</b>	633	628	1%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ridership levels increased 37% in 2023 Q1 when compared to 2022 Q1 (91,489,352 versus 67,008,014), moving upwards to pre-pandemic level. The 2023 Q1 results show encouraging movement with decreases in the rates of Crimes Against Persons (dropped 31%) and Crimes Against Property (dropped 40%) per 100,000 Board Passengers, as compared to 2022 Q1. These rate changes are largely due to the increase in ridership. However, the actual volume of files also decreased for both Crimes Against Persons (-6%) and Crimes Against Property (-18%).</li> <li>It is noted that by volume, total assaults in 2023 Q1 were higher than 2022 Q1, with March 2023 having the highest volume since June 2022. Common Assaults represent 85% of assaults and there was an increase in assault with a weapon numbers in 2023 Q1 as compared to 2022 Q1 (21 versus 10).</li> <li>The number of sexual offence files (both primary and assists) for 2023 Q1 was up 43% from 2022 Q1. Transit Police had experienced a reduction in reports of sexual offences during the pandemic; however, the volume of files is now back within the pre-pandemic range. Transit Police takes all reports of sex offences seriously and investigates thoroughly. Transit Police continues to be concerned with possible under-reporting of incidents and promotes reporting through a variety of initiatives, including texting 87 77 77.</li> </ul> <div> <p><b>Indecent Act</b> – A female passenger boarded a bus in White Rock. A man sat beside the female passenger and, when she looked over, she noticed that the man’s zipper was open and he was masturbating. The female passenger was able to move seats and text Transit Police. Surrey RCMP arrived first and detained the suspect. When Transit Police arrived, they arrested the suspect for the indecent act.</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When comparing Crimes Against Property files from 2023 Q1 to 2022 Q1, the number of theft incidents in 2023 Q1 was up while the number of mischief and graffiti files were both significantly down. There was no thefts from auto reported to Transit Police in 2023 Q1.</li> <li>When comparing 2023 Q1 to 2022 Q1, Transit Police made 38% fewer apprehensions of persons in mental health crisis under S. 28 of the <i>Mental Health Act</i> (“MHA”). This follows a significant decline in apprehensions that had also occurred in 2022 Q4. Of those persons apprehended under S. 28 of the <i>MHA</i>, 70% were committed, held, or voluntary admitted once at hospital.</li> </ul> <div> <p><b>S. 28 Apprehension</b> – Passengers on the Canada Line, at Langara Station, texted that they were being harassed by a man who appeared to be on drugs, having a mental health crisis, or both. The man began grabbing passenger’s bags and mumbling incoherently. At one point, he threw a cup of coffee at another passenger. Transit Police attended and observed the person sitting on the train, appearing to be asleep. However, when the Officers asked the person to stand up, they both immediately recognized him, as the same Officers had dealt with the person the day prior on a similar incident. Upon Officer interaction and assessment of the person, they were apprehended under S. 28 of the <i>Mental Health Act</i>. After transport to hospital, the person was certified by a doctor.</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was a 20% increase in unique SMS Text conversations with the Transit Police - Operations Communication Centre when comparing 2023 Q1 to 2022 Q1. The number of unique SMS conversations is quite varied month on month, with little pattern. However, the</li> </ul>			

conversion of SMS calls to a police file remains very steady with an average of 225 per month. There are five times more texts that come from passengers on the train system versus the bus system. SMS text 87 77 77 continues to be promoted as a way for transit riders to discreetly contact Transit Police when issues of concern arise while on transit. The new 2023 safety campaign will include expansive promotion of the text number on the bus system.

- **Criminal Warrant Arrests**

One of Transit Police's three Strategic Pillars in the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is to improve public safety by working closely with our cross regional police partners and developing strategies that prevent crime. In 2023 Q1, Transit Police Officers made 246 arrests for outstanding criminal warrants, which included RCMP, Municipal Police and Transit Police issued warrants from BC and elsewhere. The number of warrant arrests in 2023 Q1 was 28% higher than 2022 Q1. Further, within that period, there was 39% more Transit Police warrants executed, in comparison to warrants of other Jurisdictional Police Departments. The number of new charge arrests by Transit Police increased slightly (3%) in 2023 Q1 as compared to 2022 Q1. Further, the number of breach files increased by 53% when comparing 2023 Q1 (271) to 2022 Q1 (175).

Assault – In March 2023, two passengers (unknown to each other), were riding on a train from the Royal Oak Station when they both texted Transit Police. The passengers reported that a man had hit two females on the train. Transit Police intercepted the train at the Metrotown Station and initially detained the man. A subsequent CPIC query regarding the man, revealed an outstanding arrest warrant from the Vancouver Police Department for Breach of Probation. Transit Police arrested the male for the breach and transported him to police cells. In addition, an investigation into the assault allegation on the train was conducted.

Many warrant arrests arise from on-view work of Transit Police Officers in their Community Service Areas (assigned patrol area), calls for service, confirming identity incidental to criminal arrest or during enforcement of a provincial statute offence (such as misuse of a fare gates). However, Transit Police Officers also familiarize themselves with offenders and criminals of concern or offenders wanted through law enforcement intelligence sharing, regional BOLFs (Be on Look Out For), and the Transit Police Offender Monitoring Program.

**Misuse of Fare Gates and Provincial Violation Tickets (“VTs”)**

Issuance of Violation Tickets (“VTs”) is associated to Transit Police Officers' active observations and enforcement of the provincial offences, including the misuse of fare gates. In comparing 2023 Q1 to 2022 Q1, there was a 20% increase in the number of VTs issued. Of critical importance to the safety of transit customers/staff and public is how the process of confirming an offender's identity for the violation, allows Transit Police to learn whether there is a criminal record or conditions of release, and if there are any outstanding warrants to be executed. These warrant arrests contribute positively to the work of our Jurisdictional Police partners and their offender management and community safety/crime reduction efforts.

Periodically, Transit Police Officers may encounter a vulnerable person without the necessary fare media. In such cases, the Officer may exercise discretion and provide the person with a complimentary fare pass so the person is able to complete their travel and not be issued a FIN.