

POLICE PROTECTION ENHANCEMENT

DESCRIPTION:

Increase of 4 RCMP members to focus on internal training requirements and improve frontline service delivery to the public, increasing the current contracted strength from 142 to 146.

The City of Prince George population rose from 80,043 in 2018 to 82,290 in 2020. That is an increase of 2.8%. To maintain a corresponding rate of growth with the level of population growth over those two years, the RCMP establishment would have increased by 4 members. In 2019 and 2020, no members were added. Population growth has been approximately 1.5% per year over the last five years. That population growth trend shows no sign of slowing. In order to maintain service levels in the face of increasing demands, additional resources are required.

2 RCMP members – Training Officers

Development of the Prince George RCMP Strategic Plan for 2021/2022 included an internal scan in relation to issues that have been the topics of considerable public discussion. In order to meet the public expectations and improved levels of service delivery, the Strategic Plan will focus strongly on providing a more robust internal training program for the detachment in several areas, including the following:

- **Mandatory firearms and use of force options:** Focus on achieving 100% compliance with mandatory re-certifications for use of force theory & skills, firearms and less lethal intervention options. Ensuring a high level of competence with these intervention options will increase member confidence in their use and decrease the risk of unnecessary injuries or fatalities.
- **Crisis de-escalation and mental health:** Advanced training in the area of mental health and crisis de-escalation. This is a high-risk area with a high number of volatile interactions. An increased level of competence in the ability to peacefully resolve these incidents will decrease the need for physical intervention. Attempts to secure additional resources from partner agencies to expand programs such as Car 60 have been unsuccessful. In order to improve service delivery in this area, unilateral training and capacity enhancements need to be developed.
- **Medical / life saving:** Training in areas such as basic trauma medicine and swift water rescue. Police are routinely the first responders on scene of violent events. Having advanced skills in immediate treatment of traumatic wounds is critical to increasing both police safety and the survivability of victims of incidents such as gunshots, stab wounds or motor vehicle collisions. Each year, police are involved in the retrieval of several persons from hazardous environments such as rivers. Proper training to operate in those environments is critical to ensure the safety of police and victims.
- **In service training:** Locally developed training to address local service delivery gaps specific to the community of Prince George. The training section will work with community stakeholders to develop and deliver training specific to meet the policing needs of Prince George. This will include increasing awareness of local cultural groups and issues as well as improving the Detachment's cooperative response to local issues with partner agencies.

The request for the prescribed safety training officers who will be able to instruct and ensure that all required training is being met on a more consistent basis and expand the current scope of training from once a year to once a month in most areas. This will increase the baseline level of policing service that Prince George RCMP will be able to provide to the community above the minimum provincial legal requirement. This will better ensure the safety of all Prince George residents.

Having an internal training unit will reduce the need for officers to travel down to PRTC in Chilliwack for training, thereby reducing travel/training costs, with the potential of extending the training to other North District units and recovering some of the costs associated with the training unit.

Local mandatory training is currently facilitated by instructors who have other full-time duties at the Detachment. This results in both time away from their primary job functions and an expenditure of overtime funds. Establishing a dedicated training unit would reduce the need for officers to be diverted from their primary job functions to instruct and would reduce overtime costs.

2 RCMP members – Investigative Support Team investigators

On a monthly basis, RCMP conduct an analysis of call response times. Additionally, periodic reviews of the current service delivery model are examined in an effort to continuously improve efficiency.

The Serious Crime Unit is fully tasked with homicide and similar major investigations. As a result, many significant investigations such as frauds, shootings, arsons and aggravated assaults remain the responsibility of frontline officers from initial attendance, until the conclusion of the investigation in court. These investigations require a significant dedication of resources, often occupying multiple officers for days or weeks. While those officers are occupied by these significant investigations, they are unavailable for frontline call response, reducing the number of members responding to calls and increasing call response times.

A proven strategy to alleviate this burden on frontline officers and return them to their primary functions of call response and proactive patrols at many detachments is the formation of an Investigative Support Team (IST). IST investigators take conduct of more serious investigations from frontline officers that do not meet the threshold for Serious Crime to undertake. IST investigators complete followup investigative tasks and bring those files to completion. This frees up frontline officers to respond to calls for service or focus on proactive activities, such as enforcement at drug related properties, patrols in the downtown core and other areas that routinely suffer from break and enters, property damage and graffiti.

Ideally, an IST team at Prince George Detachment would consist of 2 supervisors and 8 investigators to provide 24/7 support to frontline police officers. It is cost prohibitive to undertake such a significant increase in a short period of time. These 2 positions would be the basis of an IST team at Prince George Detachment and would be supervised by an existing supervisor position in the Serious Crime Unit. This small team is a reasonable compromise to minimize cost while introducing enough capacity in this function to have a reasonable impact to relieve pressure on frontline officers, enabling them to provide a more effective service to the public.

**FINANCIAL COST OF THE ENHANCEMENT:**

Due to process timing with the RCMP, the positions would be filled in the last quarter of 2022 with an estimated cost of **\$201,365**. The total budget cost for 2023 is estimated to be **\$805,460**.

MEASUREMENT OF SERVICE LEVEL INCREASE:Training Officers

Failure to develop capacity to maintain a training standard consistent with evolving legal requirements and social expectations could negatively impact service delivery, creating risk to public and officer safety and adversely affect the community's perception of public safety as well as fair and equitable police service delivery. Increased proficiency in tactics will result in officers resolving high risk situations successfully, reducing the number of incidents in which force is required as well as minimizing the level of interventions utilized during those interactions.

IST Officers

Frontline officer response times to calls for service will be reduced. Frontline officers will also have additional time to focus on proactive activities to address ongoing issues and problems reported in various neighbourhoods throughout the community.