Resource Review of the Prince George RCMP Detachment

Executive Summary

Curt Taylor Griffiths, Ph.D.
School of Criminology
Simon Fraser University ~ Surrey Campus

Eli Sopow, Ph.D.
Business Administration
University Canada West ~ Vancouver

&

Joshua J. Murphy, Ph.D.
Department of Criminology
Kwantlen Polytechnic University ~ Surrey Campus

Curt T. Griffiths, Ltd.

December 2022

Executive Summary

This resource review focused on the operations of the Prince George RCMP detachment. The project was conducted during the period April–October 2022. It involved the administration of a community survey; focus groups sessions with Sworn Officer and Municipal Employees in the detachment; interviews with community stakeholders; ride-alongs with uniformed patrol and specialty units; and an analysis of statistical data on the operations of the detachment.

The review proceeded from two fundamental principles (1) that the existing resources in the detachment are being used as effectively and efficiently as possible; and, (2) that any new resources be targeted for specific areas where analysis has revealed there are gaps in service delivery, with metrics to assess the impact of additional resources. The overall objective of the project was to generate materials that will assist Municipal Council and Prince George (the City) in their efforts to ensure the safety and security and quality of life for all community residents.

The reader should be mindful that this report provides a snapshot of the issues surrounding the delivery of police services in Prince George. Since the completion of this project, there may have been new initiatives taken to address the challenges and opportunities that exist in the community. Information on these initiatives can be provided by city staff. It was the objective of the project team to create a report that could be used as an informational source for municipal council, city staff and the senior leadership in the detachment to inform police policy and practice going forward. And to be a foundational document if the City accepts this report's recommendation that it develop a Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) plan.

An overall impression of the project team is that time and events have caught up with the municipality. Today the City is considered to have what has been traditionally referred to as "big City" challenges. However, the response of municipal government to the challenges facing the community can best be described as siloed: the initiatives that have been taken have occurred in the absence of interoperability with other agencies and organizations. This siloed approach has not produced a good return-on-investment (ROI) for the City or the target populations. During the study, the project team accessed reports produced by units in municipal government that were not known to personnel in other governments units and organizations involved in service delivery. To address this system issue, this report recommends that the City involve all stakeholders in the development of a CSWB.

The project team found that the Prince George detachment faces several challenges that compromise its effectiveness and efficiency. There are significant gaps in the capacity of the detachment to effectively prevent and respond to crime and contribute to the overall safety, security, and quality of life in the community. A review of the materials gathered for this report via interviews and focus groups with police personnel, ride-alongs with front line Patrol Officers, and statistical analysis of the detachment's data resulted in the identification of several significant gaps in the detachment's

capacities. This includes the ability to adequately respond to demands for service, engage in proactive community engagement, develop strategic partnerships with community stakeholders, and to implement effective crime prevention, crime attack, and crime response strategies. In addition, chronic understaffing is placing the mental health and well-being of the Sworn Officers and Municipal Employees in the detachment at risk.

At present, the Prince George detachment has near zero community policing capacity and does very little proactive, problem-solving policing. A high percentage of the calls for service to which officers respond are mental health related and many of these do not require the presence of a law enforcement officer.

A major challenge for the detachment is calls for service related to issues in the downtown area of the City. Police involvement in social development in the community in collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders is a key feature of policing in the 21st century. That is, the police as a core component of improving the quality of life in the community through partnerships with other agencies and organizations and community residents.

The effective use of resources requires that the detachment develop a comprehensive policing plan that would include prevention and intervention. This would be a component of a broader CSWB plan. These plans can provide the framework for the delivery of police services as well as set parameters for police involvement in addressing the larger quality of life and social issues in the community. The CSWB plan would identify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in addressing the challenges facing the municipality and facilitate the development of proactive, problem-solving approaches.

The recent report of the BC Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, released in April 2022, proposed the development of a tiered system of policing in the province. It highlighted the important role that Special Municipal Constables can play as part of an integrated approach to community safety. In Prince George, a tiered model would involve Sworn Officers and Bylaw Officers and, potentially CSOs, should that program be re-established.

This approach provides the best opportunity to reduce the demands on Patrol Officers, improve their capacity to effectively respond to calls for service and investigate case files, and provide broader coverage in the community. At present, the CSO program in Prince George is dormant and there is little interoperability between Bylaw Officers and Sworn Officers. Similarly, in the view of several representatives of community service organizations, the original objectives for creating a Community Service Hub remain largely unmet.

A tiered policing model in collaboration with community stakeholders would maximize resources, increase police visibility, divert calls away from Sworn Officers, increase the community residents' feelings of safety and security and improve the quality of life in the community.

With respect to the RCMP detachment, requests for additional resources should be firmly grounded in data that indicate specific areas where there are gaps in the ability of the police service to fulfill its mandated and assumed responsibilities. It is incumbent upon the detachment to ensure that existing resources are being utilized as effectively and efficiently as possible and to demonstrate the impact of any additional resources via report backs to Municipal Council. It is not a best practice for municipal councils to provide "generic" resources. To this end, any additional resources provided to the Prince George detachment by the municipality should be targeted to specific areas. This report provides recommendations to Council on how any additional resources provided to the detachment will be most impactful going forward.

The at-risk/high needs/vulnerable populations in the area are growing. It will require a coordinated response involving all levels of the municipal and provincial governments. It also requires the development of a CSWB plan that would identify the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in addressing the challenges facing the municipality within a long-term, problem-solving framework.

Specifically related to this project, the volume and types of demands that are being made on the detachment will require a pivot from a sole focus on call response and crime suppression to community engagement, problem-solving, and a partner in collaborative partnerships focused on social development and addressing the challenges facing the community. Merely adding officer positions to the current model will not provide the City with a good ROI, will not assist in meeting the challenges facing the community, and will not take advantage of the opportunities to provide policing services within a community-focused policing model.

Relationships with Provincial Agencies

The challenges that have afflicted the City-provincial relationship with respect to housing, addiction, and mental health are long-standing and well-documented. A major issue is the absence of a comprehensive provincial plan developed in collaboration with communities. This is exacerbated by the lack of CSWB plan in communities. As a result, efforts to address issues in the City have been fractured. Consequently, they are not well coordinated when the provincial government is pursuing its policies and the City is taking action to ensure the safety and security as well as the quality of life of its residents.

In some cases, the municipality has been the *recipient* of policy decisions made by the provincial government and its agencies, having had little or no input into the process. As one stakeholder noted, "The provincial teams operate in a parallel universe. There is no coordination between the various teams involved in working with clients. People want that coordination between the province and the City."

Review Findings & Recommendations

The project's findings and recommendations from the resource review are presented in the following tables.

RFR Table 1 Review Findings & Recommendations – The Municipality

Finding	Recommendation
At present, the municipality does not have a comprehensive Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) plan. This hinders the potential impact of Council-funded studies and initiatives designed to address issues facing the community, including addressing the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons. Studies are often conducted in isolation from one another rather than being a component of a larger strategic plan and the initiatives that are taken are often siloed. A CSWB plan would ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently.	The City, in collaboration with community stakeholders, including persons who are at-risk and vulnerable, should develop a CSWB plan. The initiative can be informed by the experiences of other communities in the province, e.g., Kelowna, and be led by the Director of Public Safety.
Municipalities across the province have, and are, developing innovative approaches to ensure the safety of all community residents and to address the issues of homelessness, addiction, and mental health. There are lessons learned and knowledge of what does, and doesn't work, that could inform initiatives taken by the city. Initiatives could also be informed by findings from research studies and evaluations.	Review initiatives taken by other municipalities in the province to address the challenges of community safety and the needs of at-risk and vulnerable persons. The municipalities of Kelowna, Vernon, and Maple Ridge have developed innovative approaches that could be studied. The City of Kamloops appears to have a successful Community Services Officer program and has taken several initiatives to address issues affecting the quality of life in the community.
It appears that, in providing funding for specific community safety initiatives, previous municipal councils have not required that these initiatives include a robust evaluation component that would reveal the extent to which the initiatives achieved their intended objectives. This would contribute to the accumulation of "lessons learned" and provide the foundation for evidence-based practice.	Any request for resources made to municipal council for policing and community safety-related initiatives or programs should be accompanied by a detailed business plan, including an evaluative component and a requirement to report back to council on a regular basis. Specific documentation should be required on the ROI of the initiative both for the city and the intended target population
While beyond the scope of this study, it appears that the municipality is subsidizing the lack of provincial resources in the community, e.g., many of the calls attended by the Fire & Rescue service are medically related.	Municipal Council should consider whether responding to medical calls for service should be within the purview of the Fire & Rescue service. If this agency is going to respond, consideration might be given to invoicing the province for the costs of doing so, e.g., attending overdose calls for service.

There are gaps in service capacity in areas that, legislatively, are within the purview of the provincial government. This includes the provision of services for persons who are experiencing homelessness, addiction, and/or mental health issues. Given the uncertainty of availability of provincial personnel, several municipalities have funded social and family worker positions.	The City should consider, on a selective basis, funding initiatives to improve safety and security and the quality of life in the community. This report recommends that funding be provided for several Municipal Employee ((ME), Social Worker, and mental health worker positions in the detachment to be co-deployed with Police Officers and for a Peer Navigator position for the public library.
The downtown area of Prince George has high levels of social disorder, open drug use, and crime. This is having a significant negative impact on the business sector and the quality of life in this, and other areas of the community. There is little evidence that the City's resource expenditures to date have been effective in addressing these issues. The downtown area is largely abandoned by most community residents after 7:00 p.m. In recent years, the disorder has spread to other areas of the community. One-off projects and initiatives that do not take a "whole-of-community" approach have little chance of providing solutions to the issues. The police should not be the default to address these issues.	The issues of homelessness, addiction, and mental health are complex and require a comprehensive plan involving collaboration of all levels of government. Every effort should be made to improve collaboration, coordination, and communication with provincial agencies, including Northern Health and BC Housing, while at the same time asserting the interests and priorities of the community. The creation of a CSWB plan would crystallize the priorities and maximize the capacities of the city.
At present, the City does not have a plan to strengthen neighbourhoods so that residents can play a substantive role in improving the quality of life in the community. Community residents are a vital stakeholder in community safety and their experiences and perceptions are important considerations in the formulation of City policies and programs.	Explore ways to engage and empower neighbourhoods to be a partner in improving the quality of life for residents. The recommended Neighbourhood Police Officers in each of the patrol districts and the adoption of a community policing model can play a substantive role in this. Strategies to strengthen communities can be a component of a CSWB plan. This will empower neighbourhoods to be guardians of community well-being.
At the time the study was conducted (April–October, 2022), several organizations, including the City, operated Outreach Worker programs. There appeared to be no interoperability among the outreach workers which limits their potential effectiveness in assisting at-risk and vulnerable persons.	The Director of Public Safety should undertake to develop an Outreach Worker Plan that maximizes the efforts of Outreach Workers deployed by the City and various organizations in the municipality. This will maximize the return on investment of all the stakeholders.
A recent BC provincial all-party report on policing in British Columbia highlighted the importance of moving to a tiered model of policing. This would include Bylaw Officers, Community Safety Officers, Special Municipal Constables, and Sworn Officers. This model holds the greatest promise to contribute to the safety and security of all residents in the community.	Steps should be taken to address the lack of interoperability between Bylaw Officers and Sworn Officers. Also, the bylaw program could benefit from examining successful bylaw programs in other municipalities, e.g., Penticton, or Maple Ridge specifically with respect to training and deployment.

The Community Safety Officer (CSO) program is no longer operable. The RCMP CSO program was a pilot project in selected municipalities and the decision was made to lapse the program. Some communities, including Kelowna and Penticton, continued the CSO program on the City-side. The City of Prince George decided not to continue the program.	The municipality should consider re-establishing the CSO program. If the decision is made to proceed, the Director of Public Safety should work with the RCMP and bylaws to prepare a business case to be presented to Council. The proposed program should be informed by best-practice programs in other communities.
Provisions in the Province of BC Municipal Police Services Agreement gives municipal councils a direct role in setting policing priorities for the community.	Municipal Council should ensure there is an ongoing dialogue between the City and the Officer in Command (OIC) of the detachment regarding policing priorities for the City.
Although beyond the scope of the review, private security can be a component of the Continuum of Public Safety in the community.	The City should develop a strategic plan for the effective and efficient use of private security and ensure interoperability with Bylaw Officers and Sworn Officers.
There are organizations in the community that have expressed an interest in collaborating in the development of innovative programs and initiatives to address the challenges facing the community. At present, however, there is no framework in place to mobilize and facilitate collaboration, resulting in a siloed approach to community safety and the needs of at-risk and vulnerable persons.	The municipality, in collaboration with public safety partners, should create a Continuum of Public Safety model. This would be a component of the recommended CSWB plan and will improve the interoperability, effectiveness, and efficiency of community safety initiatives.
Concerns were expressed by staff in frontline service delivery organizations that City Hall staff often do not consult with them or access their expertise in initiating projects to address the challenges in the community. Several staff commented that they often first learned of specific initiatives in the newspaper. This siloed approach is not likely to produce significant change and does not maximize the expertise and experience of community stakeholders.	The City should make it a priority to develop a consultative framework that will facilitate ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders in the community, including staff in frontline service delivery organizations.
A review of the operations of bylaws was beyond the scope of this project. However, materials gathered during the study reveal that there is very little interoperability between the RCMP and Bylaw Officers, e.g., few if any joint patrols. Bylaw Officers were initially co-located in the new detachment, but were subsequently removed for space reasons and due to Bylaw Officers not working with Sworn Officers as was originally intended. Concerns were also expressed by community stakeholders about the limited hours of Bylaw Officer availability and it was suggested that Bylaw Officers be shifted on a 24-hour basis.	The Director of Public Safety should develop a plan in consultation with the RCMP and Bylaw Officers to create interoperability. Strategies could include joint patrols and an extension of the hours that Bylaw Officers are available. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project involving an expansion of the hours that Bylaw Officers are deployed.

RFR Table 2 Review Findings and Recommendations – Quality of Life Issues in the Community

Finding	Recommendation
There are several significant features of the community that are having a significant impact on the quality of life for residents and that are placing demands on the police as the primary public safety agency.	A coordinated approach involving all stakeholders in the community is required to address these issues. The police are one component of a comprehensive model should be developed. A CSWB plan holds the most promise for effective utilization of resources and for maximum impact of participating stakeholders. The development of this plan could be coordinated by the Director of Public Safety.
These include:	
In 2021, Prince George had a Criminal Code crime rates **150 times higher** than the average for all RCMP served municipalities over 15,000 in population in the province.	
The rate of violent crime per 100,000 population in the community is **66% higher** than the overall BC violent crime rate, according to data provided by Statistics Canada.	
In 2021, Prince George had a **168% higher rate of Criminal Code Property occurrences** than the BC average for all larger municipalities.	
Research by the Canadian Institute of Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria found that the Prince George Local Health Area continues to experience rates of hospitalization for opioid use well above the provincial average and that the rate is projected to continue rising.	
The BC Coroner's Office reports a more than **400% increase in illicit toxicity deaths** in Prince George between 2012 and 2022, with the rate projected to trend higher over the next two years.	
The volume of ambulance calls in Prince George progressively **increased 34%** between 2017 and 2022 and many of the calls are related to individuals in distress due to illicit drug overdoses.	
An October 2022 report to City Council prepared by the Prince George Fire & Rescue Service revealed that **61% of its calls** to that date for the year involved medical emergencies compared to 26% of calls that were fire related. This very high percentage of medical calls, including illicit drug overdoses, represents a municipal expenditure for provincially mandated responsibilities.	
The 2021 Prince George Point-in-Time Homeless Count Report reveals that, of the 122 respondents to a survey, the highest percentage (14%) listed substance abuse issues, followed by mental health issues (7%) When asked about their current health challenges, 28% (the highest percentage) named "substance abuse issues," while 25% named "mental health issues."	

To date, there have been few efforts to mobilize citizens and neighbourhoods of assist in addressing quality of life issues in collaborative partnerships.	

RFR Table 3 Review Findings & Recommendations – Perspectives & Lived Experience of Community Residents

Finding	Recommendation
In Prince George 79% of the population believes crime has gone up/gone up a great deal. This aligns with the actual statistical increases in crime in the community.	This is a significant finding from the study and should be provide the catalyst for innovative approaches to address crime and disorder in the community and residents' fear of crime. Crime and disorder have a significant impact on the quality of life in the community.
Most residents who completed the community survey feel unsafe/not at all safe in the City's downtown core. However, analysis also revealed that residents in certain post code areas have higher levels of feeling unsafe in their neighbourhoods. The survey findings also revealed a "hidden figure" of crime due to residents' not reporting victimizations.	A Community Safety Plan should be developed involving a tiered policing approach (private security, Bylaw Enforcement Officers, re-instated CSOs, and RCMP officers) to increase visibility in high trouble areas and to provide reassurance to residents, businesses, and visitors. A primary objective of this plan is to ensure interoperability between public safety entities and to maximize the impact of resources. The detachment should conduct a public relations campaign to increase crime reporting by residents. This will reduce the "hidden figure" of crime and provide a more accurate picture of the nature and extent of criminality and victimization in the community.
Although the detachment does have support from the community, this may be at risk if crime rates keep increasing and the community feels that the detachment is not engaged with residents in a collective effort to address the challenges facing the city. All communities have a "tipping point" where residents feel unsafe and are concerned about the ability of the police to keep them safe.	There are several initiatives that the detachment, in collaboration with community stakeholders, can implement to increase citizens' feelings of safety and security and their trust and confidence in the police. These are included in recommendations in this report.

RFR Table 4 Review Findings & Recommendations – Policing Environment

Finding	Recommendation
Prince George Municipal RCMP officers have an **individual caseload burden 84% higher** than the average for all BC RCMP policed municipalities over 15,000 in population. RCMP officers in Prince George carry an individual property crime case burden **twice as high** as the average for all BC RCMP policed municipalities over 15,000 population.	To ensure the safety of community residents and visitors, there must be interoperability between private security, Bylaw Officers, Community Safety Officers, and Sworn Officers. Uniform visibility and reassurance policing will increase feelings of safety and security. This report recommends that the City develop a CSWB plan. This report contains recommendations designed to reduce the call load of officers. There are alternative response measures that can lessen the call demand on the detachment, including increasing interoperability with Bylaw Officers, a robust restorative justice program, and the development of collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders.
The challenges of homelessness, addiction, and persons with mental illness are placing increasing demands on the detachment, its officers, and civilians.	The detachment should expand its capacity to engage in collaborative partnerships with NGOs and other agencies and services to effectively respond to the needs of this vulnerable and at-risk population. The detachment should resist being drawn into resource-intensive areas that are within the mandate of the provincial government.
The trend line provided by this report suggests that at this rate, Prince George's municipal RCMP needs may continue to significantly outpace rural policing needs for the detachment, highlighting the needs for additional police resources if current policing practices continue, including no change to social-mental health related issues.	A multi-faceted approach is required to address the challenges being faced by the detachment. This report makes several recommendations designed to reduce the demands for service on the police, including the recommendation that the detachment pivot from a sole focus on call response and crime suppression and develop the capacity for community engagement, collaboration with agencies and organizations, prevention, and problem-solving. The current model of policing has not contributed to addressing the challenges facing the community and adding additional resources within the current model is unlikely to result in a different outcome.

RFR Table 5 Review Findings & Recommendations – The Detachment

Finding	Recommendation
The sworn members and civilian employees in the Prince George detachment are dedicated professionals who, in many instances, are unable to meet the service demands being placed on them.	Every effort must be made to provide the sworn members and civilian employees with the resources and strategies to be successful. Most notably, the detachment needs to regain its capacity for proactive community engagement and community policing. Recommendations set out in this report are designed to accomplish this.

A lack of resources to effectively respond to increasing service demands is having a significant impact on the mental health of sworn members and civilian staff. Approximately 20% of the Sworn Officers are on leave, many for mental health related issues. Civilian staff are also challenged with the demands of their positions.	Sworn members and civilian support staff should be provided with the necessary resources to respond to the demands for service that have been documented in this report. Particular attention should be given to ensuing the mental wellness of sworn and civilian members in the detachment.
The detachment is currently under-resourced and has difficulty meeting shift minimums. Officers are reluctant to take shifts on an overtime basis due to mental fatigue and concerns with work-life balance. This impacts the ability of the detachment to respond to service demands from the community, to develop strategic partnerships with the community, and to implement and sustain effective crime prevention, crime suppression, and crime response strategies.	This report contains specific recommendations to reduce the call load on officers. There are alternative response measures that can lessen the call demand on the detachment, including interoperability with Bylaw Officers and private security and a robust restorative justice program.
Civilian units in the detachment are experiencing increasing workloads which, if not effectively managed, can impact police operations and employee mental health.	It is recommended that an additional ten MEs be hired in the detachment to ensure that the civilian units have the capacity to effectively meet the demands for service being placed on them and to ensure their mental health and well-being.
Data from the survey administered to the Sworn Officers and MEs revealed the following: On average, less than half of all employees (46%) agree/strongly agree that 10 measures of a positive detachment **culture** exist (37% civilian employees and 55% sworn Police Officers). On average, almost two-thirds (63%) of all employees agree/strongly agree that six measures of a positive detachment **structure** exist, with significant differences between civilians (56%) and sworn Police Officers (71%). On average, less than half of all employees (43%) agree/strongly agree that 10 measures of a positive detachment **system** exist, with differences between civilians and sworn Police Officers (40% civilian employees and 46% sworn Police Officers). On average, 60% of employees agree/strongly agree that eight measures of a positive **detachment workplace climate** exist (58% civilian employees and 63% sworn Police Officers). Specifically, civilians have lower morale (58% satisfaction with working conditions) than Sworn Officers (63%), and similar job satisfaction (nature of the work itself (61% civilian, 59% sworn members).	These findings provide important insights on the dynamics within the detachment that may affect the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization. They can inform the decision-making and strategies of officers and MEs in leadership positions.

Other than providing a limited visible police presence, the RCMP's Downtown Safety Unit (DSU) does not appear to be effective in contributing to solutions to crime and disorder in the downtown core.	It is recommended that the DSU be re-imagined to include the capacity to assist persons in crisis and to problem solve. Northern Health should be approached to contribute two mental health workers to be co-deployed with the DSU. This unit can be modeled on the Human-centred Engagement and Liaison Partnership unit in Edmonton.
At present, the full potential of crime analysis is not being realized. Uniformed Patrol Officers do not receive "real time" crime analysis data that would assist them in policing hot spots or to otherwise guide their deployment.	The detachment should ensure that the full potential of crime analysis is being realized, including the provision of "real time" data analysis to uniformed Patrol Officers and their supervisors.
The detachment is not practicing the principles of the COMPSTAT model. Rather than having the officers in charge of each patrol district report out on the challenges and opportunities for addressing crime and disorder and improving the quality of life in each district, the detachment's COMPSTAT exercise consists of the crime analysis presenting the results of data analysis.	COMPSTAT sessions in the detachment should include report-outs by district supervisors and specialty units.
The detachment currently has very limited capacity to conduct tactical analysis that would improve the effectiveness of specialty units, including the General Investigation section the Downtown Street Crew.	It is recommended that funding be provided for a tactical crime analyst to support the General Investigation Section and the Downtown Street Crew.
The results of the community survey reveal that the Prince George RCMP detachment is the **most trusted source of information** (58%) about community safety but is only consistently accessed by 8% of the community.	This finding suggests the need for the detachment to have a robust, proactive public communications strategy. This would ensure that community residents receive ongoing information on a variety of public safety and policing issues. It is important that the community hear about *good news* stories, information on the detachment's challenges and initiatives as well as on critical incidents and events.

RFR Table 6 Review of Findings & Recommendations – Community Policing

Finding	Recommendation
The detachment currently has virtually no capacity to do community policing, including proactive community engagement, police-community partnerships, crime prevention, and problem solving. Previously existing programs and units have been discontinued and officer resources directed to front-line call response. The detachment is not currently participating in the Community Safety Hub nor is there an officer seconded to Northern Health's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team. Community policing, as practiced by the detachment, is primarily directed toward crime suppression. Research studies have found that police services cannot "arrest	The detachment's decision to dismantle its capacity to do community policing is a zero-sum game. Putting more officers on the front line at the expense of prevention will likely result in increased demands for service in the absence of addressing the underlying factors associated with crime and disorder in the community. A traditional, reactive, call-response model is resource intensive, has a significant impact on the health and well-being of sworn and civilian personnel in the detachment, and does not improve the safety and security of the community. The detachment's crime response capacity should be balanced by the capacity for proactive, collaborative approaches.

their way out of the issues confronting the community." Rather, innovative, collaborative approaches hold the most promise for improving the quality of life in communities. The core principles of community policing include community engagement, proactive policing, prevention, and problem solving.

The detachment received low marks from community residents with respect to consulting and maintaining a dialogue with the community.

In collaboration with the Director of Public Safety, the detachment should develop and present to Council a Community Policing Plan that incorporates best practices in community policing and is evidence-based. The plan should include (1) objectives; (2) strategies; (3) performance metrics; and (4) regular report backs to Council. It would include provisions for crime prevention, enforcement, and the identification of current and potential collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders. This strategic plan would be a component of a CSWB plan.

It is recommended that funding be provided for four Sworn Officer positions for a re-imagined Community Policing Team. These officers would focus on community engagement, prevention and problem-solving. Crime suppression should not be part of the team's mandate. There are several models that could inform this initiative, including the Neighbourhood Empowerment Teams in the Edmonton Police Service.

It is also recommended that funding be provided for four Sworn Officers for the position of Neighbourhood Police Officer (NPO). These officers would be deployed to policing districts for sufficient periods of time to facilitate the development of police-community partnerships and neighbourhood-specific programs and interventions. The NPOs would be responsible for conducting an environmental scan of their district to identify challenges and opportunities for improving community safety and meeting the needs of residents and potential partners in this endeavour. The efforts of the NPOs would begin to address the high levels of residents' concerns with personal safety in the city's neighbourhoods.

At present, the detachment is not practicing Zone policing, wherein Patrol Officers remain in their assigned district except when required in certain events. This precludes officers from developing relationships with stakeholders in their patrol districts and limits the ability to problem-solve. Having officers dedicated to a specific zone for a period of time facilitates building relationships with the neighbourhoods and is a core tent of community policing.

Every effort should be made to practice zone policing on a consistent basis. When a particular district is slow with respect to calls for service, officers should engage in proactive, engagement activities in the community.

The detachment no longer has a dedicated SRO program, which was highly valued by students, teachers, and administrators. At present, school visits are done on a "time-permitting" basis.

Research studies have found that, if properly operated,

School Resource Officer (SRO) programs can have a significant impact on the quality of life in the school community, improve student and teacher morale, have a

It is recommended that funding be provided for four full-time SRO positions to cover the eight high schools and 30 elementary schools. Officers should be selected for these positions who intend to remain in the program for several years and who are not intending to transfer in the immediate future. Priority should be given to selecting officers who have a demonstrated interest in working with youth and families. During the summer months, the SROs would assist the Youth Liaison Team.

positive impact on student behaviour, and are valuable in identifying at-risk youth. A key feature of best practice SRO programs is that the same officers remain in the program for an appreciable period. Best practice SRO programs involve officers who have a special interest in youth and families.	In addition, every patrol officer should identify a school that they will attend when available under an "adopt a school" program. The creation of alternative call response options should create the opportunity for Patrol Officers to have more proactive time in the schools.
The detachment previously supported a Youth Liaison Officer (YLO) position. However, this position was collapsed and the officer assigned to frontline patrol.	**It is recommended that funding be provided to create a four officer Youth Liaison Team** (YLT) that would focus on prevention and intervention with young persons in the community. The officers on this team should collaborate with the Senior Leadership Team to create a Youth Strategy that will provide a framework for their activities. The work of the YLT will be enhanced by the municipality hiring two mental health workers who will be deployed out of the detachment with officers in the YLT. **This report recommends that the municipality provide funding for two mental health workers to be employed as MEs in the detachment and co-deployed with the YLT.**
The detachment operates no operational community police offices, having closed one that was previously located in the Hart. This was one of the last vestiges of the detachment's community police model. There is a critical need for the detachment to develop a community outreach/engagement capacity.	A feasibility study should be conducted to explore the potential of re-establishing an operational community police office at a suitable location. This will improve officer visibility and provide reassurance policing.
The detachment's Restorative Justice (RJ) program has to date not been viable and there are concerns about its sustainability. A major challenge is getting officers to refer files to the program. In addition, there has been no follow through on an initial effort to develop an MOU with the Crown Counsel based on the MOU for the RJ program in Williams Lake.	The detachment should complete an MOU with the Crown Counsel for the referral of certain files to the RJ program. There should be a plan to increase referrals to the program from officers in the detachment.
Presently there are no provisions in place to give young persons in the community a *voice* on challenges and opportunities in police-youth relations.	The OIC should create a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) that meets with the OIC and the SLT on a quarterly basis. The YAC should reflect the diversity of the community.
Although individual officers in the detachment are involved in community-based programs designed to improve the quality of life in the community and to address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons, there is currently no framework whereby the detachment has ongoing contact and dialogue with organizations involved in frontline service delivery. This limits the interoperability of the police and community stakeholders in addressing the challenges and opportunities in the community.	The OIC should create a Community Service Advisory Committee composed of staff involved in frontline service delivery, the committee to meet on a quarterly basis. This will provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue and facilitate the development of collaborative partnerships.

Finding	Recommendation
Situation tables bring together provincial and municipal agencies and community stakeholders to address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons. These tables are a core component of a community policing strategy. At present, the detachment appears not to be playing a significant role in the Prince George situation table, which limits its potential effectiveness and impact.	The detachment should commit to being a substantial partner in the activities of the Prince George situation table.

RFR Table 7 Review of Findings & Recommendations – Police Response to Calls for Service

Finding	Recommendation
The detachment is experiencing increased calls for service, many of which are not police matters, e.g., mental health calls where there is very limited potential for violence. The detachment currently responds to a high number of mental-health related calls. As the issues confronting the community become more acute and, in the absence of substantive investment in program and treatment resources by the province, it is likely that the demands on the detachment will continue to increase. Time and a dynamic community environment have caught up with the detachment and its operating model. Car 60, staffed by a Sworn Officer and a Psychiatric Nurse, is a valuable and effective component of the detachment's response to calls for service involving persons experiencing a mental health crisis. It is of immense assistance to Patrol Officers. There is a need for an additional CAR 60 that would focus its activities on youth mental health, including the 60% of missing persons who are youth.	The City should support efforts to develop alternative call response capacities to divert calls away from Sworn Officers that are best responded to by other trained professionals. **It is recommended that an additional CAR 60 unit be created, co-funded with Northern Health. This unit will have as its primary role a focus on youth mental health calls.**
Currently there is little or no triaging of calls for service. Officers are being dispatched to calls for service. It does not appear that either the OCC or dispatchers screen calls that would best be responded to by telephone or by another agency or entity. A consequence is that Patrol Officers have little or no opportunity for proactive, community-focused policing. The current system of having the Watch officer triage calls for service is not effective.	The detachment should establish a system for triaging calls for service, including developing interoperability with bylaws and establishing a telephone response capacity. This tiered model of policing will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of bylaws, (re-established) Community Safety Officers, and Sworn Officers. Council should join other municipalities in advocating for the authority to hire Special Municipal Constables.
A fully staffed patrol Watch is 17 members; the minimum staffing levels are 10–11 officers. At times, however, there are as few as 7–8 Patrol Officers on the road. This situation is like that in most RCMP detachments across the province.	The recommendations in this report are designed to relieve the caseload burden of Patrol Officers. In addition, an effort should be made to ensure that officers at the Corporal rank are on the road as much as possible.

Analysis of the calls for service in the detachment found that the demands on Patrol Officers are consistent throughout the week. This pattern is reflective of the pervasiveness of crime and disorder in the community and the increased burden on patrol officers. It is likely that demands for service on the detachment will continue to increase. This has a significant impact on Patrol Officers who are left with little time for proactive policing and community engagement.

Many of the recommendations in this report are designed to reduce the demands on the detachment. Re-establishing the detachment's capacity to do community policing, including crime prevention, problem-solving, and working in partnership with community stakeholders is the only strategy that will reduce demands for service while at the same time providing an opportunity to successfully address issues in public safety and quality of life in the community.

There are increasing demands being made on the detachment. Between 2017 and 2021:

Officers consistently responded to **more calls per Police Officer** than the average for all 32 RCMP-served municipalities in BC with a population above 15,000.

In 2021, Prince George municipal RCMP had a Criminal Code case burden of 118 files, **84% higher** than the BC average for municipalities over 15,000 in population served by the RCMP.

Also in 2021, Prince George RCMP had 336 calls for service per member, **41% higher** than the provincial average for all municipal RCMP detachments serving populations over 15,000.

The **violent crime rate** for Prince George in 2021 was 32 per 1,000 population, **113% higher** than the BC average for larger municipal RCMP Detachments.

The Criminal Code **property crime rate** per 1,000 population for Prince George in 2021 was **168% higher** than the municipal RCMP average for all.

While the municipal strength of the Detachment is **basically status quo**, a projection of workload demand on individual members is accelerating.

This is clearly an untenable situation. These factors are compromising public safety and threaten the mental health and well-being of officers and MEs in the detachment.

To address this situation, this report recommends that the detachment take the initial steps to pivot toward a community policing model. The detachment needs to develop collaborative partnerships to address the *causes* of crime and disorder in the community as well as having the capacity for responding to calls for service.

RFR Table 8 Review of Findings & Recommendations – Addressing Needs of At-risk & Vulnerable Populations

Finding	Recommendation
Similar to their municipal and detachment counterparts across the province, the Prince George RCMP are responding to an increasing number of calls for service involving at-risk and vulnerable persons. This includes persons who are experiencing housing challenges, mental health issues, and/or addiction issues. These increasing demands are due, in part, to downloading that has occurred due to the provincial government not providing adequate funding for mental health and social services, housing, treatment, and other services. An increasing number of municipalities and police services are developing their own capacities to engage with and respond to the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons in the community. The Edmonton Police Service (EPS), for example, employs Social Workers who are deployed to certain calls for service. In Edmonton, the Edmonton Police Service (EPS) has hired Social Workers who respond to calls for service either individually, in teams, or with sworn members. The EPS also participates in the Human-centered Engagement and Liaison Partnership (HELP), a multi-agency collaboration designed to address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons.	The role of the detachment in responding to at-risk and vulnerable populations should be clearly set out in a CSWB plan. The police should not be the default for the failure of other agencies to provide sufficient resources to fulfill their legislated mandate. **It is recommended that funding be provided for two Sworn Officer positions to form a component of a HELP unit.** The Director of Public Safety, in collaboration with Northern Health and community-based organizations involved in frontline service delivery, should prepare a business plan for council for the creation and operation of an EPS-style HELP unit. A site visit to Edmonton by a multi-agency group from Prince George would enhance this endeavour. The officers and service delivery staff can be co-located to facilitate interoperability. The Community Safety Hub would be an ideal location for this unit.
Outreach workers can be an important component of an overall strategy to address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons. At present the City and several front line service organizations deploy outreach workers although there is very limited, if any, interoperability between them.	It is recommended that the Director of Public Safety develop a strategic plan that will integrate the activities of the outreach workers in the community. This will maximize the return on investment for the municipality and for vulnerable and at-risk persons.
Public libraries are one of the last remaining public, indoor spaces for persons and are often accessed by vulnerable and at-risk persons. Several libraries in BC, including Kelowna, have Peer Navigators who have proven to be very successful in assisting persons in need with information on how to access services and referrals.	**It is recommended that funding be provided for a Peer Navigator** whose office would be situated in the Prince George Public Library.
There are a myriad of agencies and organizations in the community providing services to vulnerable and at-risk persons. Most of these efforts, however, are siloed and there is little interoperability among them that would increase their efficiency and impact.	A CSWB plan would provide the framework for interoperability among the agencies and organizations involved in service delivery to vulnerable and at-risk persons.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams have proven to be successful in addressing the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons. In addressing the needs of persons who have frequent contact with the justice and social service/health systems, the demand load on frontline officers is reduced. Police services are playing an increasingly active role in these teams via officer secondments. Currently, the Prince George detachment does not participate in the Northern Health ACT.	The detachment should commit to seconding an officer to work with the Northern Health ACT team.
The Missing Persons Unit in the detachment has a high workload and the Corporal in the unit is unable to meet demands for service. A high percentage of missing persons are youth.	Included in the request for ten additional ME positions in the detachment is a social/family worker position in the Missing Persons Unit. This person would have training and experience in working with families. The Missing Persons unit can work closely with the recommended Youth Liaison Team.

Summary of Recommended Positions

Sworn Officer Positions

The resource review identified the need for nineteen additional positions in the detachment. These additional positions will begin to address the current lack of capacity for the detachment to engage in proactive policing within a community policing model that has the potential to reduce crime and disorder in the community and to create an opportunity for officers as well as municipal employees in the detachment to engage in prevention, proactive intervention, and problem solving. Each of the positions has been prioritized in terms of the budgeting process. See Table 1.

RP Table 1 Recommended Sworn Officer Positions

Position	Number
Detachment HELP Unit (based on the EPS model) (2024)	2
Neighbourhood Police Officers (2024)	4
Car 60 Sworn Officer and Psychiatric Nurse (co-funded with Northern Health) (2025)	1
Community Policing Team (2025)	4
School Resource Officers (2023)	4

Youth Liaison Team (2023)	4
Total Recommended Sworn Positions	**19**

Detachment Civilian Municipal Employee Positions

The civilian municipal employees (MEs) play a critical role in the operations of the Prince George Detachment and are a vital component in the effective and efficient delivery of policing services. The project team facilitated a focus group with the MEs and, as well, reviewed the responses of MEs who completed an online survey. A review of the civilian units resulted in the identification of several gaps in capacity and the need for ten additional ME positions in the detachment. Each of the positions has been prioritized in terms of the budgeting process. See Table 2.

RP Table 2 Recommended Detachment Municipal Employee Positions

Position	Number
Community Policing Coordinator (2026)	1
Victim Services Worker (2025)	1
Transcription (2023)	1
Crime Analyst (tactical) (2024)	1
Forensic Identification Technician (2023)	1
CPIC Operator (2023)	1
Exhibits (2025)	1
Mental Health Workers (to be co-deployed with the Youth Liaison Team) (2023)	2
Missing Persons Unit Social/Family Worker (2023)	1

Data Processors (time frame unknown)	Unknown as of December 2022. There is currently one Supervisor and three Data Processors who focus on electronic disclosure in the detachment. It is uncertain how the adoption of body-worn cameras beginning in Spring, 2023 and the implementation of PRIME Case Management-Electronic Disclosure for all General Duty files (currently this applies only to General Investigation files), will affect workload and the requirement for additional data processors.
Total Recommended Detachment Municipal Employee Positions	**10** (plus, in the future, an unknown number of Data Processors required for servicing the body-worn camera program and the adoption of the major case management model for General Duty files).

Municipal Employee Positions

One additional Municipal Employee position is recommended. The position has been prioritized in terms of the budgeting process. See Table 3.

RP Table 3 Recommended Municipal Employee Positions

Position	Number
Peer Navigator for Public Library (2024)	1
Total Recommended Municipal Employee Positions	**1**

Going Forward

The present project was designed to conduct a resource review of the Prince George RCMP and to identify how the detachment is allocating its resources and any gaps in capacity to respond to demands for service from the community. The study also attempted to identify the opportunities that exist to maximize police resources.

A notable feature of the Prince George community landscape is the issue of the availability of provincial resources to assist the City in addressing several of the more pressing and challenging issues including homelessness, addiction, and mental health. It could be argued that provincial agencies have fallen short of fulfilling their legislated mandates. More specifically, this study found widespread concern among the community residents who completed the survey as well as among service providers and stakeholder groups that insufficient funding has been provided to address the opioid crisis, mental

health, addiction, and homelessness. This has not only resulted in the growth of social issues, but also has resulted in downloading onto the municipality generally and, more specifically, onto the RCMP, Bylaw Officers, and the Fire & Rescue service. This, in turn, effectively means that the municipal government is subsidizing the provincial shortfalls.

Compounding the efforts of the municipality and the police to address the challenges surrounding safety in the community is the absence of a comprehensive plan developed by the province and municipal governments to address the needs of vulnerable and at-risk persons. As a result, service delivery is fractured, not coordinated, and individual provincial agencies, e.g., Northern Health, BC Housing, City Hall, often work in *siloes* that do not facilitate an integrated approach. As an enforcement official stated, "An integrated approach is necessary. There are no solutions in this City that will be implemented by one agency."

The municipality alone should not be held accountable for addressing these issues. Moving from reactive mode to problem solving will require a comprehensive CSWB plan, one in which all stakeholders contribute resources and collaborate within a problem-solving framework. A fragmented approach, which was evident from the materials gathered for this review, will not suffice. A CSWB plan is required for a coordinated, problem-solving approach to the challenges faced by the City. There are many opportunities to better leverage existing municipal and provincial resources, to identify specific areas where additional funding is required, and to define the parameters of police responsibilities.

The challenges facing the municipalities and the opportunities to successfully address them can only be met by a comprehensive plan that is sufficiently resourced on a long-term basis. In the absence of such a plan, the issues will continue to worsen, the resources expended will continue to increase, and long-term solutions will be elusive.

The provincial government has a much more substantive role to play in meeting its mandated responsibilities. This is particularly true with respect to addressing the needs of at-risk and vulnerable persons. To date, its efforts have often been undertaken without substantive consultation with all stakeholders in the community. It is important that the Municipal Council advocate with provincial authorities to develop partnerships so that the municipality and the detachment do not bear the full cost of developing initiatives for populations whose needs fall under the mandate of provincial agencies. Without substantive involvement, and funding from the province, many of the challenges facing the community will continue to fall to the police and the other municipally funded entities of Bylaw Officers and Fire & Rescue.

This report recommends that the municipal council fund several newly created positions designed to address issues facing the community. There is an opportunity for the Municipal Council to be more assertive in supporting innovation and the development of collaborative partnerships in the community. These efforts would ensure that resources that are allocated to various initiatives are

effective in contributing to community safety and quality of life in the community. An example is the authority given to the City to ensure that its priorities are reflected in the operations and activities of the police. Similarly, the council can require business cases for proposed initiatives that include an evaluation component.

Going forward, it will be important for Municipal Council to continue to be proactive in considering innovative programs to address the challenges facing the community and to ensure that resources are maximized. Many communities in BC and across the country are presented with many of the same challenges and opportunities as exist in Prince George. It would be beneficial to examine initiatives taken in other communities and jurisdictions and to learn from their collective experiences.

In 2022 the police constituted approximately 26% of the City's operating budget. Since it is likely that the costs of policing will continue to increase, Municipal Council can ensure that the priorities of the City are reflected in the operations and activities of the police. Schedule B, Section 7.4 of the *Province of British Columbia Municipal Police Services Agreement* states that, "The CEO may set objectives, priorities and goals for the Municipal Police Unit that are not inconsistent with those of the Provincial Minister for other components of the provincial police service" (p. 15). This provides authority for council to set priorities and to have an expectation that police activities will be directed toward addressing them (Province of British Columbia, 2012).

This report makes recommendations for funding **specific** Sworn Officer and ME positions (plus an additional municipal position for a Peer Navigator to be situated in the public library). This report is **not** a general *ask* for more positions. Rather it recommends that funding be provided for **specific positions** that will re-establish the capacity of the detachment to engage in partnerships, community engagement, and problem solving. The view of the project team is that, if funding is provided for these positions, there should be assurances that the positions will be created, staffed, and maintained.

Although for fiscal reasons, it will be necessary to prioritize positions and to re-establish the detachment's community policing capacity over a multi-year period, it is important that the recommended *teams*, e.g., the four School Resource Officers, the four-officer Youth Liaison Team, the four officer Community Policing Team and the four Neighbourhood Police Officers, be implemented as a complete unit rather than only partially or piecemeal. e.g., only one SRO versus the four recommended positions, only one of the recommended four NPOs. Doing so would compromise the potential effectiveness of these teams in addressing the challenges that have been identified in this report and hinder the pivot that is required.

The challenges facing Prince George are significant and will require a collective effort to address and to take advantage of the opportunities that exist to effectively meet them. This report recommends that the City develop a Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) plan to guide this collective effort. In the absence of a blueprint, initiatives will continue to be designed and implemented in siloes. This is a major reason that efforts to date have not been successful. There is in Prince George, in the public,

NGOs, community and private sector, considerable expertise, experience, and enthusiasm that can be mobilized to address the City's challenges. Within such a framework, the resources provided by Municipal Council will have the best chance of being impactful.

The RCMP in Prince George cannot assume responsibility for addressing all the challenges facing the community but can be an active, dynamic partner in collaborative problem-solving endeavours while at the same time working to ensure the safety of the community. The recommendations in this report are designed to ensure that the municipality receives value for money for its investment in the police. This, in turn, will contribute to the safety, security, and quality of life for all community residents.