

Community Policing Engagement Strategy: Final Report

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SUBMITTED TO: TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT
NEUQUINN CONSULTING

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Executive Summary

The Township of Esquimalt is currently policed by the Esquimalt Division of the Victoria Police Department as part of a 10-year Framework Agreement (FA) with a term that expires December 31, 2023. In December 2002, through an Order in Council, the police departments of Victoria and Esquimalt were amalgamated by the Province effective January 2003. This created a board to guide Victoria and Esquimalt to negotiate and agree upon cost sharing for the police service. In 2009 a Financing and Accounting Agreement for the Victoria/Esquimalt Amalgamated Police Service was established and expired December 31, 2013, at which time the term of current FA began.

The terms of the current FA provide both parties with Early Termination or Election to Not Extend clauses and outlines the notification requirements which are no earlier than July 1, 2022 and no later than January 1, 2023. Unless either party to the FA elects to not extend its term, the agreement will automatically renew for 10 years with the existing Budget Allocation Formula (BAF) in place until the municipalities agree to a new BAF. The Township of Esquimalt has made numerous attempts to renegotiate the funding formula.

The Community Policing Engagement Strategy initiated important community conversations regarding the level of satisfaction with community policing services and furthered a dialogue with the community on the current FA. There was a large component of community education required to simply demonstrate how Esquimalt policing costs compared to similar size municipalities regardless of police service model. What the analysis of open source data concluded is Esquimalt has the highest operating costs per capita among comparable municipalities. Input through engaging diverse stakeholder groups indicates community support for the Township of Esquimalt to review of the FA while the window of opportunity exists.

While the FA is complex and the cost of policing services is generally not on the radar of the average citizen, the citizens of Esquimalt showed a high level of interest in learning more about the funding model and asking the hard questions. As well, participants provided highly diverse personal perspectives on their thoughts and opinions of the level of service. The comparative analysis of municipalities, both regionally and across the Province of B.C., indicate that the funding model currently in place appears to place an unfair burden on Esquimalt taxpayers in terms of value for money until further analysis is completed.

The findings of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy clearly indicated a desire from the community for Council to further look into options to either request an opt out of the current FA or look at other service delivery models. While the report on Police Act Reform was introduced by the Province of B.C. during the community engagement, the Consultancy Team recommends further follow-up on support of their recommendations as requested by the Province.

1. Project Overview

In November 2021, the Township of Esquimalt issued a Request for Proposals to undertake a Community Policing Engagement Strategy (CPES). The goal was to determine the level of satisfaction with the current amalgamated police service delivery model, in the context of funding levels and as compared to other municipalities. Esquimalt is currently policed by Victoria Police Department (VicPD), an arrangement that is guided by a framework agreement (FA) set to expire in 2023. The FA articulates several areas including costs, resources, and service delivery expectations, with an 'opt-out' clause to be communicated to the other parties; City of Victoria and the Victoria/Esquimalt Police Board.

The CPES project is a result of Council direction, made through their 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities Plan that outlines under the goal to “efficiently and effectively provide local services and infrastructure”:

Work to achieve equitable costing and optimization of policing in Esquimalt:

- *Explore all possibilities to ensure compliance with Victoria and Esquimalt Police Framework Agreement*
- *Review all alternatives for provision of police services to the community*
- *Clarify and establish Esquimalt position on the Framework Agreement with Victoria & Esquimalt Police Board*

1.1 Purpose and Intent of the Project

In January 2022, Neuquinn Consulting was retained by the Township to undertake a project to inform Council's decisions on whether to advance discussions with the City of Victoria and the Victoria/Esquimalt Police Board and provide notice to the Province related to renewal of the FA. The following report provides the results of the analysis conducted as to costing models across comparable municipalities, as well as the input gathered through a variety of community engagement initiatives, which included an online survey, focus group discussions, interviews with community representatives, an open house, and information booths.

1.2 Scope and Objectives

Esquimalt police services were integrated with VicPD in 2003. In 2011, the Township requested to have policing taken over by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) but at the time, this was not supported by the Solicitor General. As such, the FA was developed to ensure a better policing model and accountability structure with the existing amalgamated police service.

With the FA set to expire in 2023 and the upcoming deadline to provide notification related to the renewal of the FA by December 2022, the Township is once again considering options as it relates to policing. The CPES project was designed to better understand the current level of satisfaction with the existing amalgamated service delivery model, in the context of funding levels and as compared to other municipalities.

At a high level, the project objectives were to:

1. Conduct a high-level comparative analysis of the other municipal policing models and costs;
2. Gather and analyse relevant qualitative and quantitative feedback and input on the strategies, goals, priorities and desired outcomes related to community policing;

3. Engage key stakeholders and the Esquimalt community in an inclusive and respectful manner, while following COVID-19 protocols; and
4. Provide a comprehensive summary of engagement results for Council’s consideration of next steps.

1.3 Methodology and Approach

The Official Community Plan for the Township offers a rich vision of Esquimalt as:

...a caring and welcoming community that has strong relationships with our First Nation, Naval and regional neighbours. Our vibrant economy is supported by an engaged community. As a coastal community, we are stewards of our environment and value our past, present and future.

This vision, along with the associated theme areas, provided the ideal context, intent and inspiration for a Community Policing Engagement Strategy (CPES) that would resonate with constituents. The project was conducted in phases as depicted in the diagram below.



Other core methodology considerations that were imbedded into the project and guided the engagement strategy include the IAP2 Spectrum, Results-Based Accountability, and Appreciative Inquiry as outlined below.

1.3.1 International Association of Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2)

When it comes to engagement, it is important that the level of interest and impact of a project on a given stakeholder group is relative to their opportunity to engage and influence.

In order to strike the appropriate level of engagement with the Township of Esquimalt’s specific stakeholders and rights holders, the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) [spectrum of public participation](#) was applied. It was determined that the CPES fell within the areas of Inform and Consult, with the goal being to provide the public with balanced and objective information and obtain public feedback on analysis, alternative and/or decisions.

1.3.2 Results Based Accountability (RBA) – Measuring Community Well-being

Integral to the approach used within the CPES was a longer-term assessment of community well-being and satisfaction indicators to better track outcome measures. Traditional approaches often focused on service-based outputs to justify budget outcomes. With the CPES, a result-based methodology was used to develop baseline measurements for community well-being and happiness. Core questions of the RBA methodology include:

- How much did you do? (outputs)
- How well did you do it? (efficiency & effectiveness)
- Is anyone better off? (outcomes)

The RBA methodology seeks to assess the different populations of the community with respect to safety, well-being and happiness. It also seeks to look at baseline measures about

community health overall. The Esquimalt Division can not deliver on this alone but the service is an instrumental part of how connected the community is to support services and the findings help to outline a path forward for policing in the Township.

1.3.3 Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

An AI methodology of value was employed to guide facilitated discussions that recognize the best in people, affirm the past, and present strengths related to the increasing value that the police service brings to the Township. Engagement questions were intentionally designed to demonstrate the Township's desire to listen with curiosity and their openness to new ideas and possibilities. Through AI, the Community Policing Engagement Strategy (CPES) endeavored to discover, search and systematically explore how to build on what is currently working well to increase the value of the Esquimalt Division for the community.

Representatives from the Esquimalt Project Team reviewed and approved the CPES, which for brevity's sake has not been included here, but it is the results achieved through that strategy that are presented within this report.

2. Community Profile

Located in the Greater Victoria Area of the Capital Regional District, the Township of Esquimalt is home to a diverse mix of commercial, residential, and industrial development. The Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt is the community's largest employer, and the Esquimalt Graving Dock is the largest non-military site for ship building and repair on the West Coast. The Township has varied residential neighbourhoods and diverse amenities including over 30 parks and beaches, scenic waterfront walkways, modern recreational facilities, schools, a library, archives, and commercial services.

Community safety is largely provided by the Esquimalt Division of the VicPD, which is located in the Township's Public Safety Building near Municipal Hall. The Esquimalt Fire Department is also a critical component of community safety and it serves the Township, as well as several other communities when requested including CFB Esquimalt, City of Victoria, District of Oak Bay, District of Saanich, District of Central Saanich, Town of View Royal, City of Langford and City of Colwood.

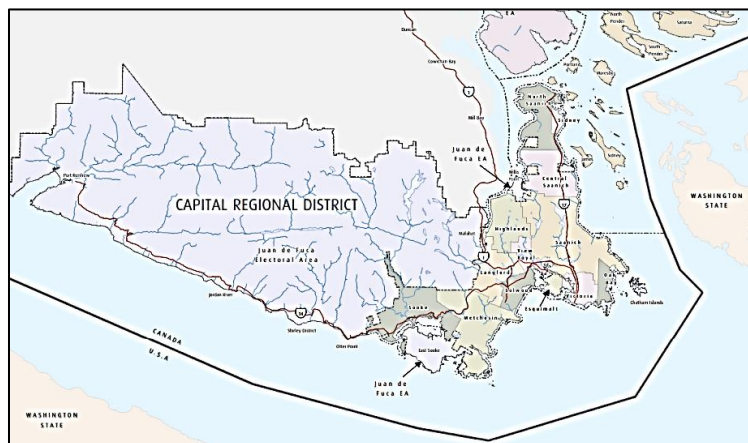
2.1 Historical Context

The First Nations people of the Coast Salish linguistic group inhabited the area now known as Esquimalt for approximately 4,000 years before the arrival of European settlers. Today, the main Esquimalt Nation is located on the north shore of the Esquimalt Harbour, adjacent to View Royal. The main Songhees Nation community straddles the municipalities of Esquimalt and View Royal, five kilometres from Victoria.

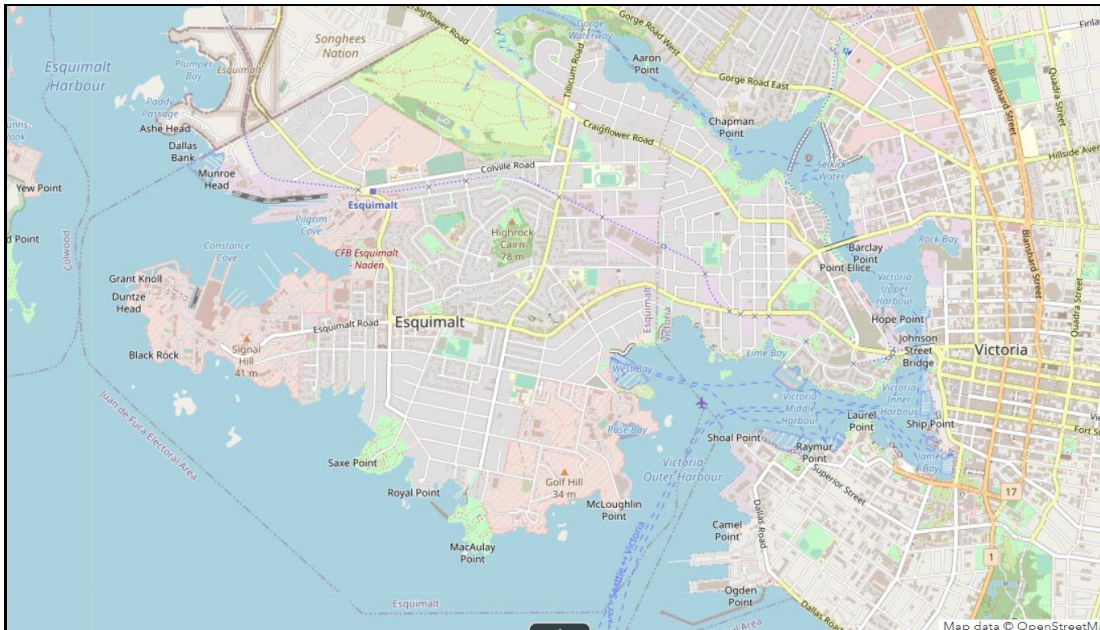
Esquimalt is the home of Canada's naval presence on the West Coast and was first used by the Royal Navy as early as 1837. The Township of Esquimalt began as an agricultural settlement and was incorporated in 1912.

2.2 Topography and Map

Esquimalt is a peninsula bounded on the south by the Juan de Fuca Strait, on the west by Esquimalt Harbour, and on the north by a long finger-like inlet of tidal water called the Gorge. A narrow neck of land joins Esquimalt to the neighbouring municipality of View Royal to the west, and two bridges link to Saanich in the north and Victoria to the east. The municipality covers approximately 10 square kilometres (or 1000 hectares) of land and water.



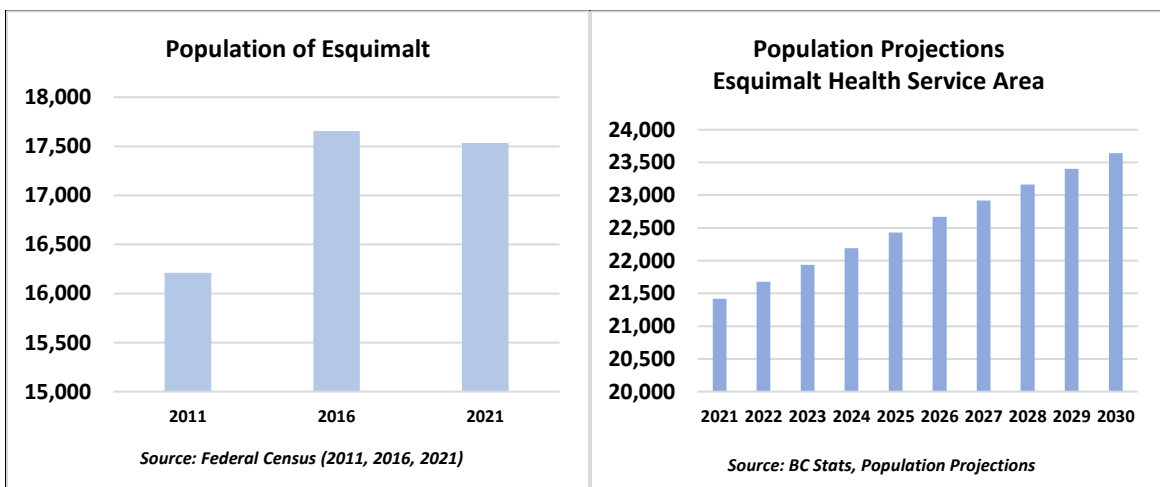
Source: Capital Regional District



Source: Capital Regional District

2.3 Demographics and Characteristics

The Township of Esquimalt currently has an estimated population of 17,500. This reflects 4.6% of the Capital Regional District (CRD). Over the past 10 years, the Township has experienced modest population growth. Although it is an established community, the Township still provides opportunities for new commercial, industrial and residential developments. Despite a slight decline since the 2016 Census, population growth is expected to increase through to 2030, as a result of increased residential development and continued in-migration.



Given the expected increase in population in the coming years, it is timely to review the community policing model and the resources that are allocated to the Township through VicPD.

3. Esquimalt's Police Service Model

The Township of Esquimalt established a joint police and fire service in 1912 when it was incorporated. On January 1, 2003, Esquimalt and Victoria amalgamated their police services into a single police department. The Victoria Police Department (VicPD) operates an Esquimalt Division, which is located at the Township's Public Safety Building.

Since amalgamation, there have been several reviews, reports and recommendations aimed at ensuring that the Township of Esquimalt receive the policing services they have contracted and are expecting. Having once had a standalone police department based in Esquimalt, a standard of high visibility, engagement with citizens, and strong community policing principles, is firmly established and expected. Accountability on resource utilization and finances are equally important, and the Township wants community-based policing with a strong prevention focus.

In 2012, Jean Greatbatch and Associates produced a report entitled, *A Framework for Effectiveness, Report on Victoria and Esquimalt – Governance and Funding Issues*. This report identified several areas for improvement including increased uniformed patrols, stronger community visibility, more crime prevention and additional time interacting with local citizens. This report contributed to the creation of a new Framework Agreement (FA) which was signed in 2014.

3.1 Framework Agreement Overview

With the need for better management and comptrollership, a Policing Framework Agreement was signed in April 2014 between the City of Victoria, the Township of Esquimalt, and the Victoria and Esquimalt Police Board. The agreement sets out several crucial areas of focus including the need to work collaboratively, fair and equitable allocation of police resources, and involvement in the annual budget process.

Key aspects of the Agreement included the establishment of a dedicated division, performance metrics and budget. Section 4.1, under the Dedicated Division Requirements, calls for the VicPD to:

- Provide a regular patrol function adequate to police the area and the population in the municipality
- Provide adequate community policing resources
- Ensure consistent police presence in the municipality served by the dedicated Municipal Division
- Promote co-operative and productive relationships between members of the dedicated Municipal Division and the community

Section 6.1 on Performance Metrics outlines:

- **Quantitative Measures** – Police Records Information Management Environment (PRIME), Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and other statistics on crime rate, call volume and response time.
- **Qualitative Measures** – Community Engagement which may include participation in community meetings or events, problem oriented policing projects, programs to promote visibility in the community, crime prevention programs and community outreach initiatives.

The budget percentage of the total VicPD budget that the Township of Esquimalt paid, over the first five years of the Agreement, were:

- 2014 (15.2%)
- 2015 (15.0%)
- 2016-2018 (14.7%)

A new formula was to be developed after the first five years.

The 2014 Policing Framework Agreement has been met with on-going critical review and the Township has worked to address concerns raised regarding police resources and deployment, finances, and consistent reporting on crime trends. In an effort to be more responsive, consistent and efficient in their reporting to the municipalities' Mayor and Council, VicPD created a Community Safety Report Card. This document provides similar information to both Victoria and Esquimalt, and attempts to ensure the FA expectations are being met.

The challenges of the FA, according to VicPD, is that it can hinder operational effectiveness, restrict specific resource assignment, fails to account for the 'surge capacity' from headquarters resources, and runs the risk of having the cost of policing in Victoria negatively impact Esquimalt. There are also concerns that on-going issues related to the FA affect morale.

The Esquimalt Division also provides policing to the Vic West area of Victoria. Vic West is easier to access from Esquimalt and does not require officers to go over a bridge. This arrangement has caused concerns around funding the policing of another community, and the challenge of and desire to separate their crime statistics from Esquimalt. Previously, Statistics Canada could not separate Esquimalt's Crime Severity Index (CSI) from Victoria's, which is high in comparison to other communities, although this has been resolved in recent years.

An independent contractor was hired to conduct two reviews of the 2014 Policing Framework Agreement. One review focused on budget allocation and the second on issues relating specifically to particulars outlined in the Agreement, including accountability.

The first report, *Police Act 42 Review – Budget Allocation Formula for Policing in the City of Victoria and Township of Esquimalt*, was released in September 2020.

As per the report, the costing formula was based on 60% resident population and 40% dispatched calls. A new formula was put forward through the report, which outlined 25% population, 25% crime rate, and 50% dispatched calls. This new budget allocation formula was reduced from 14.7% to 13.67%, which would be phased in over two years.

This report also noted that Esquimalt expects more unassigned time for proactive patrols, traffic and bylaw enforcement, and other crime prevention and community focused duties.

The second report, *Police Act Section 42 Phase II Review – Analysis of Framework Agreement Issues Regarding Policing in the City of Victoria and the Township of Esquimalt*, was released in November 2020, and focused on better accountability measures. The report referenced a public meeting held in 2010 where the community expressed that:

- Visibility and interaction with officers were needed within the community and events
- Community partnership is essential for crime prevention
- Citizens want value for money through dedicated police presence

- Being part of a larger organization adds value in the form of access to specialized services

This report explored Esquimalt's desire to reduce policing costs, concerns with reallocation of resources from Esquimalt, initiatives only benefiting one municipality with shared funding, and performance metrics and statistics. The result was recommendations on more efficient aligning of staff for demands in service, performance metrics and communication strategies.

As noted in the section 2.6 of the Agreement, "*The expiry or termination of the Agreement does not affect the amalgamation of policing. Therefore, the parties agree to work collaboratively, in the event of expiry or termination of this Agreement, to develop a new arrangement for policing services in the Municipalities which may involve negotiation of a new agreement or petitioning the government to amend or replace the 2002 Order in Council*".

3.2 Profile of Esquimalt Police Division

Esquimalt is one of 13 municipalities in BC that has its own dedicated police department outside of the RCMP. What makes Esquimalt and Victoria unique is that they are the only two municipalities that have been amalgamated into one department with a funding formula to share the cost of services.

Two Community Resource Officers (CRO) working at the Esquimalt Division of VicPD prepare quarterly reports on their activities, however other officers' time is not tracked in terms of proactive activities unless captured in the CRO reports. This has resulted in a data deficiency in that a clear alignment of actual expenditures for the service delivered is not available. As such, the information available in this report is limited.

3.3 Partnerships and Integrated Units

In 2022, the Township of Esquimalt is required to pay 13.67% of all the costs of VicPD, both operationally and administratively. Most of the administrative resources work at the main headquarters building in Victoria and many provide support remotely. In a smaller police service, such as Central Saanich, some of these services (such as IT and finance) are provided in-kind by the municipality at no cost. In the larger departments, including VicPD, these functions are carried out by full-time resources. Operating costs for these functions can be expensive.

VicPD has several specialized sections providing operational policing support. The Township of Esquimalt has access to these resources in consideration of surge capacity (extraordinary needs for an incident). There is also an ability to draw from resources across the region in cases of an extraordinary event. Some of the operational units include:

Community Services:

- Beat and Bicycle Squad
- Assertive Community Treatment
- Community Resource Officers (note: 2 assigned to Esquimalt Division)
- Traffic Section
- Motorcycle Escort Team

Investigative Services Division:

- Analysis and Intelligence
- Strike Force
- Special Operations
- Detectives
- Financial Crimes
- Integrated Technical Crimes Unit
- Special Victims Unit
- Major Crimes
- Historical Case Files
- Behavioral Assessment and Management
- Forensic Identification

All municipal police departments in the Capital Regional District (CRD)/Greater Victoria Area fund the costs of various integrated teams that are staffed with sworn police officers and civilians from those departments and the RCMP. A specific funding formula sets the cost each department pays. The larger departments contribute human resources and/or funding and smaller departments only provide funding. The Township of Esquimalt pays their percentage of the VicPD costs.

The CRD's integrated teams include:

- Integrated Mobile Crisis Response Team
- Greater Victoria Diversity Advisory Committee
- Mobile Youth Support Team
- Greater Victoria Regional Domestic Violence Unit
- Vancouver Island Integrated Major Crime Unit
- Crime Stoppers
- Greater Victoria Emergency Response Team (only municipal police agencies)
- Integrated Canine Unit (only Victoria and Saanich Police Departments)
- Crowd Management Unit (only municipal police agencies)
- Crisis Negotiation Unit (only municipal police agencies)
- Explosive Disposal Unit (only municipal police agencies)

The following units are funded through federal and provincial funding with positions staffed with municipal and RCMP officers, with no cost to the individual municipalities in the CRD:

- Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit
- Capital Region District Integrated Road Safety Unit
- Integrated National Security Enforcement Team
- National Weapons Enforcement Support Team

4. Other Police Service Models in the Capital Regional District

Within the Province of British Columbia (B.C.), the provision of policing to all communities is governed by the *Police Act*.

The Provincial Government must provide policing and law enforcement to rural, unincorporated areas and municipalities with a population under 5,000. The RCMP is currently contracted as B.C.'s Provincial Police Service.

For communities over 5,000, the *Police Act* requires the municipality to be responsible for managing all costs related to municipal policing with minimal federal government support. Some communities have elected to create their own municipal police service, while others have contracted with the RCMP to provide the delivery of policing.

Municipalities contracting the RCMP must align with the Municipal Policing Service Agreement (MPSA), which states that communities of 5,000 to 14,999 citizens must pay 70 per cent of police costs and the federal government pay the remaining 30. For communities larger than 15,000, the municipality pays 90 per cent of the costs, with the federal government covering 10 per cent.

The provision of policing services within the Capital Regional District (CRD) is carried out by four municipal police services, including Victoria, Oak Bay, Saanich and Central Saanich, with the RCMP contracted to police the remaining eight municipalities.

The concept of a regionalized police force in the CRD has been discussed and reviewed previously and more recently as part of the Provincial report, *Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia Police Reform Act Report*. Currently the CRD, similar to the Lower Mainland, remains a combination of RCMP and Municipal Police Detachments. Several integrated teams, however, have been established to support all police services within the CRD.

4.1 Comparison of Municipal Police Services

In considering the future of policing services in the Township of Esquimalt, it is critical to review other police agencies, in terms of their service delivery models and costs to their communities. A clear understanding of how other Capital Regional District (CRD) police services operate can help to inform decisions on the future of policing in the Township and/or participate in a larger regionalized model.

Central Saanich Police Service (CSPS) and the Oak Bay Police Department (OBPD) are the two most comparable municipal police services within the CRD as their populations and number of policing resources being paid for by the municipality are similar.

Police Department	Population Served	Size of Department	Coverage	2022 Provisional Budget	Increase from 2021	Cost per capita
Esquimalt (vicPD)	17,500	25, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer in Charge (1) Sworn police Officers: 24 (4 assigned to Vic West) 2 civilian staff members 	4 shifts of 5 officers, 24-hour coverage	\$8,666,731	\$256,871	\$487
Central Saanich Police Service (CSPS)	18,000	23, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief (1) Deputy Chief (1) Sworn Officers (21) 	4 shifts of 4 officers, 24-hour coverage	\$5,721,100	\$371,000	\$278
Oak Bay Police Department (OBPD)	19,000	21, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief (1) Deputy Chief (1) Sergeants (6) Constables (13) 	Shifts of 4, 24-hour coverage	\$5,639,700	\$6700	\$273

The other police departments and RCMP Detachments that make up the CRD are not comparable to the Township of Esquimalt but are presented below for additional context.

Police Dept	Population serviced	Size of department	2022 Provisional Budget	Cost per capita
Saanich Police Department	125,000	166 sworn officers	\$38,806,000	\$286
Westshore RCMP <i>Contracted through the province</i>	Colwood: 19,387	18 police resources	\$4,019,642	\$207
	Langford: 44,044	53 police resources	\$11,743,755	\$267
	View Royal: 11,809	12 police resources	\$1,479,755	\$125
Sidney/North Saanich RCMP*	Sidney: 12,312	15 officers	\$2,653,39 (30% covered by federal funds)	\$216
	North Saanich: 11,965	11 officers	\$1,756,400 (30% covered by federal funds)	\$147
Sooke RCMP <i>Contracted through the province*</i>	15,083	13 officers	\$2,265,030 (10% covered by federal funds)	\$141

*As per Police Resources in BC 2020 Report. Information on the budget for contracted RCMP services was based on the 2020 totals.

Note: There are two officers paid through a Federal/Provincial cost sharing agreement to provide enhanced community policing to the Tsawout and Tsartlip First Nations. The Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Detachment resources attend complaints received on the two First Nations.

5. Other Police Service Models in B.C. and Lower Mainland

When considering the cost of policing in the Township of Esquimalt, it is useful to not only compare the Township to other police departments within the Capital Regional District (CRD) but also to others across British Columbia (B.C.). As Central Saanich Police Service and the Oak Bay Police Department are the only two municipal police forces within the district that have similar sized populations, number of officers, and policing budgets, comparisons were also made with four other police departments in B.C. and the Lower Mainland.

Municipality	Police Department	Population Served	Dept Size	Provisional Budget	Cost per capita
Squamish	Squamish RCMP <i>Pay to receive services as required from various integrated units within the Lower Mainland.</i>	21,761	26 officers	\$5,590,982 (10% covered by federal funds)	\$257
White Rock	White Rock RCMP <i>Pay to receive services as required from various integrated units within the Lower Mainland.</i>	20,922	25 officers	\$5,471,288 (10% covered by federal funds)	\$282
Pitt Meadows	Ridge-Meadows RCMP	19,717	25 officers	\$4,683,476* (10% covered by federal funds)	\$238
Cranbrook	Cranbrook RCMP	21,513	26 officers	\$6,085,941* (10% covered by federal funds)	\$283

*As per Police Resources in BC 2020

Of particular relevance to the Township of Esquimalt, is that after three years of extensive consultation, review and research, Pitt Meadows has received approval from the Province of B.C. to transition to an autonomous RCMP Detachment. They will become the first community to de-integrate from a combined Detachment, with the goal to enhance police visibility, increase public safety, improve service levels and be more responsive.

6. Evaluation Approach

The approach taken to both assess the current state of policing models, and the costing associated, has been guided by three different methodologies – Results-Based Accountability (RBA), International Association of Public Participation Spectrum (IAP2) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) which are further described in this section of the report.

6.1 RBA Overview

The approach used to evaluate performance metrics for police servicing in the Township of Esquimalt followed a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) methodology. RBA provides a framework to understand performance indicators, according to effort and effect, with a focus on outcomes. Output measures, focused on volume and meeting pre-determined targets, do provide value in terms of trends, however, there is more value to focusing on desired outcomes. As such, RBA shifts the focus of performance indicators from quantity and quality (how much did we do and how well did we do it) as measures of effort, toward a larger question as to the effect of the service on the population (is anyone better off?).



A two-pronged approach was used to assess current information available including:

- Reviewing existing information publicly available from VicPD
- Collecting and analyzing comparable municipalities through provincial and federal open data sources

The purpose of this approach was to collect quantity, quality and outcome measures to inform Council and residents of the current police service model and trends, as well as identify gaps in the measures, to link the desired effects (outcomes) to the community engagement plan.

6.2 Lines of Police Services

The VicPD 2020 Strategic Plan articulates the agency’s vision, mission, goals and values. In order to assess community experience with community policing services in Esquimalt, the following five main categories of externally facing community policing service areas were assessed:

- **Crime Prevention**—Proactive crime prevention by engaging and informing community partners and the public.

- **Response, Investigations and Enforcement**— Reactive response to calls for service, investigations of complaints and crimes, and enforcement of laws.
- **Community Well-Being**—Contribute to community vibrancy by supporting social well-being, protecting vulnerable citizens, and improving road safety.
- **Build Public Trust**—Engage the public through partnerships, community events, public safety campaigns, and community and business surveys. Collaborate with diverse communities, including Indigenous groups, youth groups, the LGBTQ2S+ community, intercultural and faith-based groups, and social service providers. Maximize transparency through accountability, open communication, two-way dialogue, open data, and a transparent feedback process.
- **Value for Money**—Provide cost-effective policing services that meet the needs of residents and businesses.

**Note: Integrated Services provided for the Greater Victoria Region has not been included in the assessment, nor have internally-facing services areas, such training and technology improvements as included in the 2020 Strategic Plan. These service areas have been simplified for public engagement to allow the public to focus on the lines of service that they receive from the current policing model.*

6.3 Information Sources

As previously mentioned, VicPD provides Community Safety Report Cards. These report cards, published quarterly with an Esquimalt-specific version for select metrics, provide a significant amount of quantitative information about volume and demand, crime trends, and programs. In addition to the Community Safety Report Cards, VicPD conducts a community survey of residents and businesses, and has published information related to resident perceptions and satisfaction with police services, as well as overall community safety.

In addition to the information summarized below, the Community Policing Engagement Strategy collected and analyzed additional data from comparable municipalities, both across the Capital Regional District and across British Columbia, to fill in gaps of information. Additional information was sought specifically regarding the service area of *Value for Money* to inform related discussions and survey questions. Open-source data was collected and analyzed for the purpose of illustrating how Esquimalt compares to similar municipalities. A detailed budget comparison was not conducted as part of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy. The information collected was used to inform Council’s future decision-making process, as well as shared with residents to inform the community survey and open house discussions.

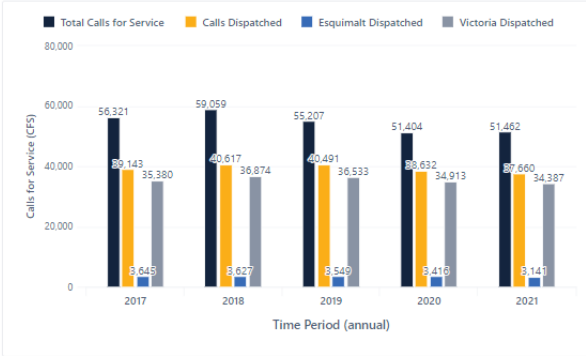
6.4 Quantity Measures—How much did we do?

Quantity measures focus on outputs related to police servicing and provide insight into the volume of work generated through various lines of service.

Calls for Service (Service Area: Response)

A Call for Service (CFS) is logged anytime a report to the police department results in any action taken on the part of the police department or a partner agency (such as E-Comm 9-1-1). CFS are not generated for proactive activities unless the officer generates a specific CFS report. CFSs are broken into six main categories: social order, violence, property, traffic, assist, and other.

VicPD Jurisdiction Calls for Service – Annually



Source: VicPD

Esquimalt Total Calls for Service – By Category, Annually

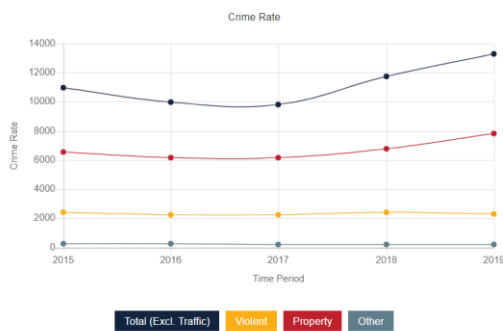


Source: VicPD

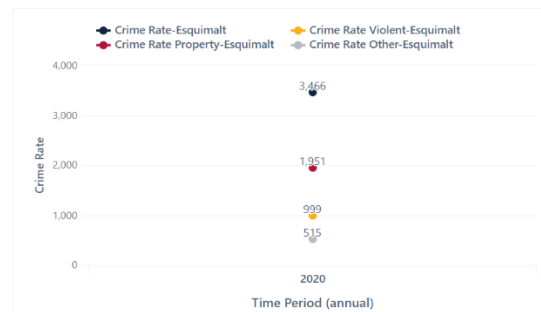
Note: Annual trends show a decrease in total CFS in 2019 and 2020. Since January 2019, abandoned calls, which are included in the total number of calls and can often generate a police response, are no longer captured by the E-Comm 911/Police Dispatch Centre in the same way. This has significantly reduced the total number of CFS.

Crime Incidents and Crime Rate (Service Area: Response)

Crime Incidents (which fall within the VicPD’s jurisdiction) includes violent crime incidents, property crime incidents and other crime incidents. The crime rate, as published by Statistics Canada, is the number of Criminal Code violations (excluding traffic offences) per 100,000 population.



Crime Rate – Esquimalt

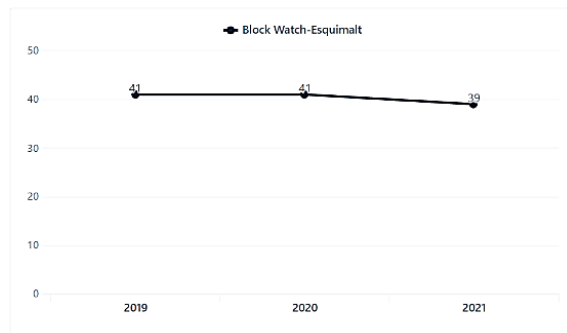


Source: Statistics Canada

Block Watch and Public Safety Campaigns (Service Area: Prevention)

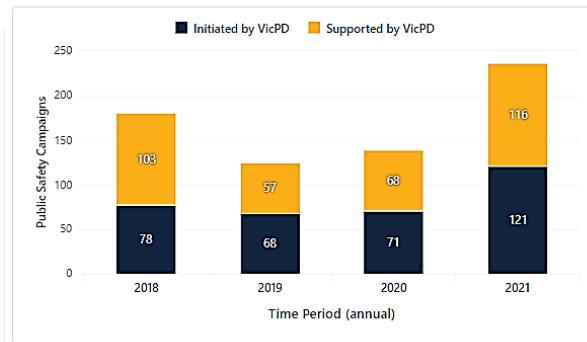
Block Watch programs are an indicator of proactive measures to work with the community at a neighbourhood level to support community safety. The number of public safety campaigns include those initiated by VicPD and those local, regional, or national campaigns supported by, but not necessarily initiated by VicPD. The number of Block Watch and public safety campaigns are not an indicator of quality or impact on the community, but rather an indicator of effort.

Block Watch – Esquimalt



Source: VicPD

Public Safety Campaigns (VicPD)

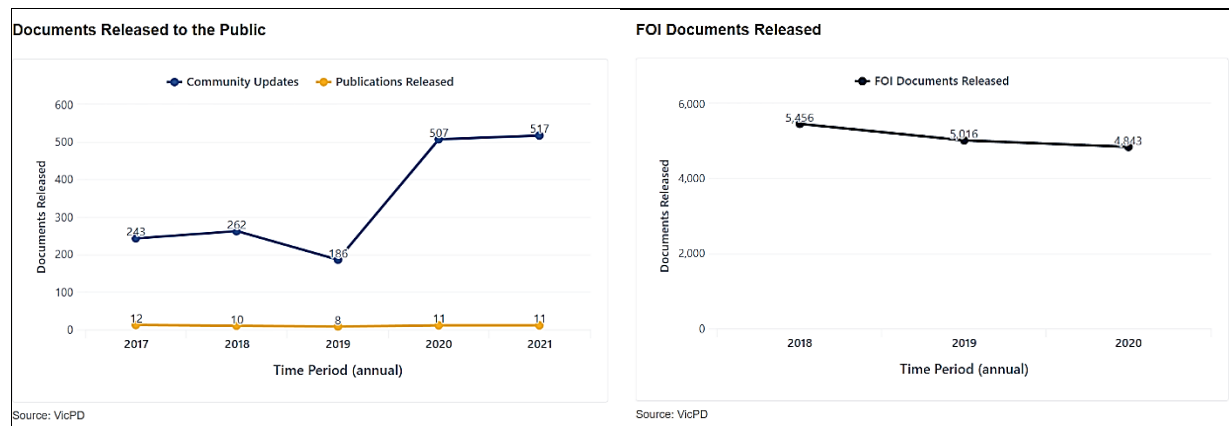


Source: VicPD

Note: The number of Public Safety Campaigns include Victoria and are not specific to the community of Esquimalt.

Publicly Available Documents (Service Line: Public Trust)

The charts below show the number of community updates (news releases) and annual and quarterly reports published in a given year, as well the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests that are released by VicPD. Documents released to the public are considered leading performance indicators, whereas FOI documents released to the public are lagging indicators, which means that they are in response to requests and not pro-active information disclosure.



Note: This data is for VicPD as a whole, and not specific to the community of Esquimalt.

6.5 Quality Measures – How well did we do it?

Quality measures go beyond volume counts and are generally assessed through percentages or ratios that require a calculation. Quality measures provide greater insight on the use of resources and impact on the community.

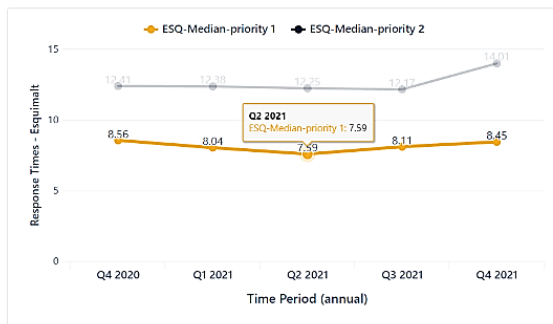
Response Time and Weighted Clearance (Service Area: Response)

Response time is defined as the time that elapses between when a call is received to when the first officer arrives on scene. Timely responses to calls for service can help reduce further harm to victims or property, increase the likelihood of successfully apprehending offenders, and help to meet the public’s expectations and build trust.

Priority One calls are the most serious emergency calls and require immediate police response. They involve a risk of loss of life or grievous bodily harm. Examples include in-progress abductions, assaults, domestic disputes, home invasions, robberies, sexual assaults, shootings, stabbings, and suicidal persons. Priority Two calls are urgent calls that require immediate police attention, such as an in-progress residential break-and-enter. Response times are calculated using “time call for service received” to “time on scene” using standard police data analyst quality control methodology. Clearance rates represent the proportion of criminal incidents solved by the police.

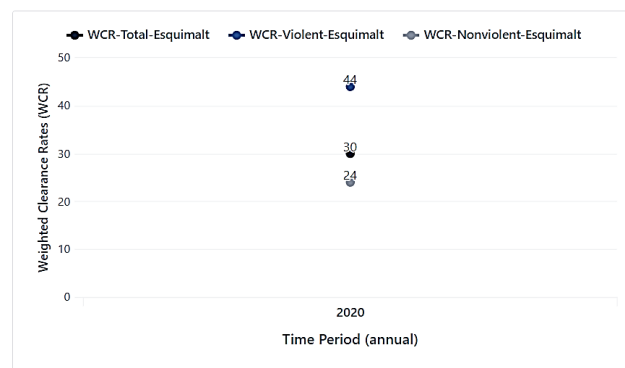
The charts below reflect median response times for Priority One and Priority Two calls in Esquimalt.

Response Time – Esquimalt



Source: VicPD
NOTE: Times are displayed in minutes and second. For example, "8.48" indicates 8 minutes and 48 seconds.

Weighted Clearance Rate (Esquimalt)



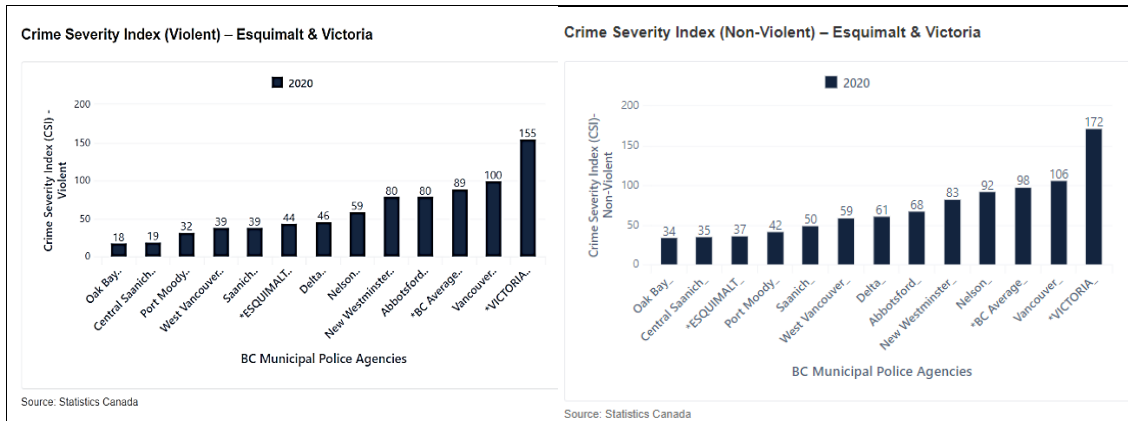
Source: Statistics Canada

6.6 Outcome Measures - Is anyone better off?

Outcome measures focus on the benefits of the service provider (in this case, VicPD) to the community. The thoughts and perceptions around community policing have been rolled up into a population focus in terms of overall satisfactions, perceptions and opinions on the current Agreement.

Crime Severity Index (Service Area: Community Well-Being)

The Crime Severity Index (CSI), as published by Statistics Canada, measures both the volume and severity of police-reported crime in Canada. In the index, all crimes are assigned a weight by Statistics Canada based on their seriousness. The level of seriousness is based on actual sentences handed down by the courts in all provinces and territories.

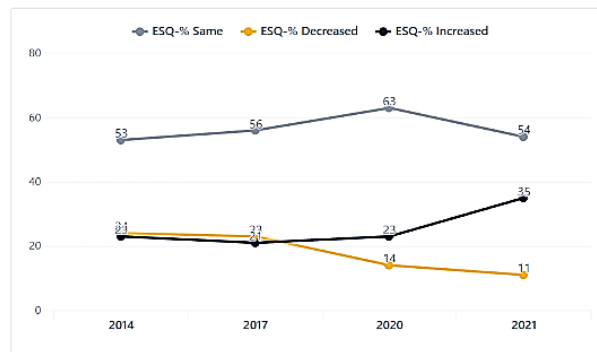


Perceptions of Crime and Accountability (Service Area: Community Well-Being)

Past community surveys provide insight into the feelings of the community regarding public safety and trust in policing services. Two key indicators from the 2021 VicPD Community Survey speak to citizens’ perceptions of crime and accountability.

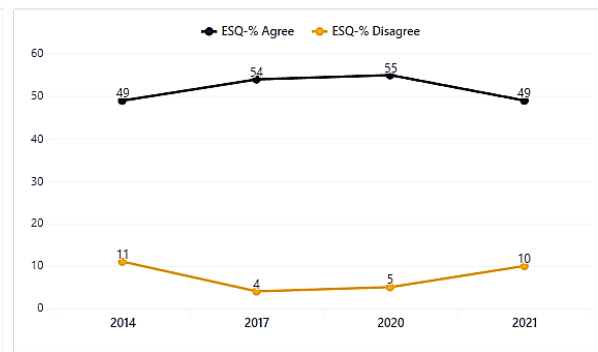
- “Do you think that crime in Esquimalt has increased, decreased or remained the same during the last 5 years?”
- “Based on your own personal experience, or what you may have read or heard, please indicate whether you agree or disagree that the Victoria Police is accountable.”

Perception of Crime (Esquimalt)



Source: VicPD

Perception of Accountability – Esquimalt



Source: VicPD

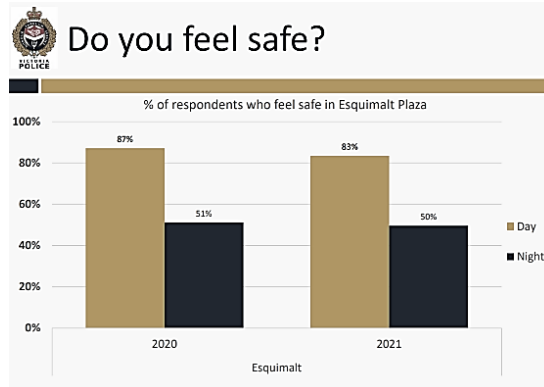
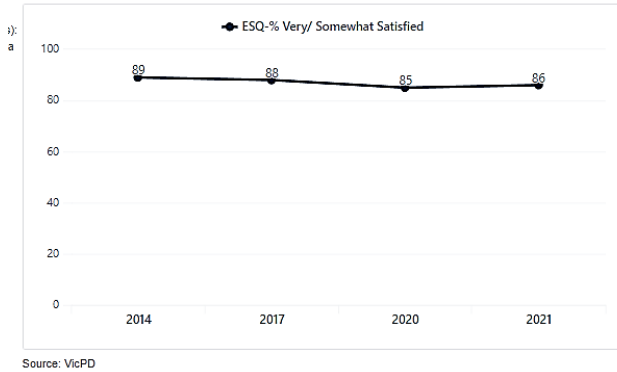
Perceptions and Satisfaction of Police Service and Perceptions of Safety (personal, neighbourhood, community) (Service Area: Community Well-Being)

Public satisfaction with VicPD has been measured through various community and business surveys over the years. Two of the many key questions that were asked were around:

- “Overall, how satisfied are you with the work of the Victoria Police?”
- “Do you feel safe?”

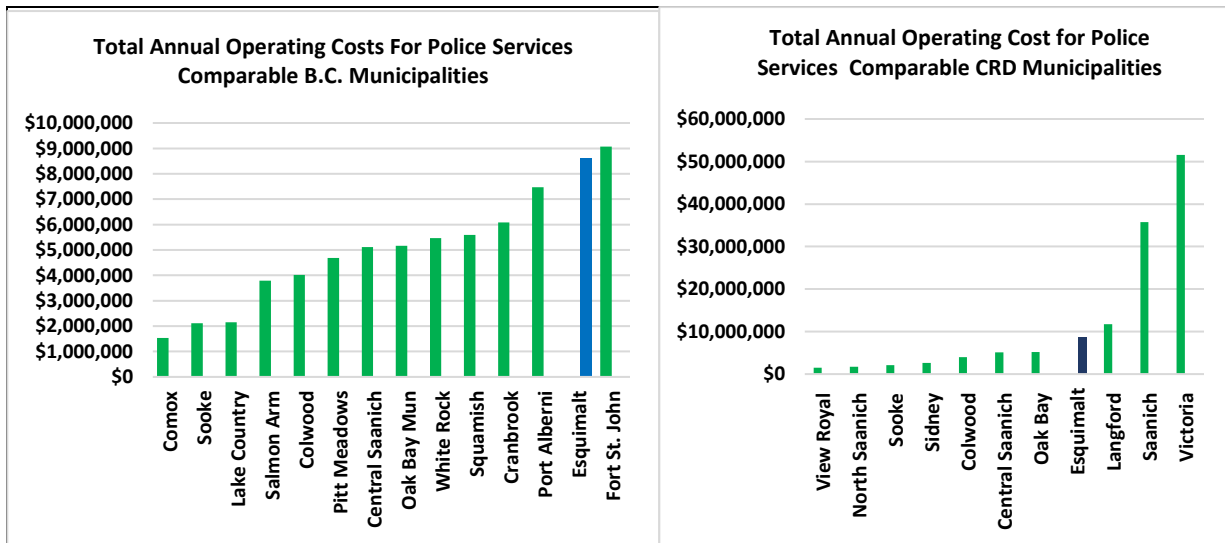
As noted in the graph below, there is a high level of satisfaction with overall services.

Public Satisfaction – Esquimalt

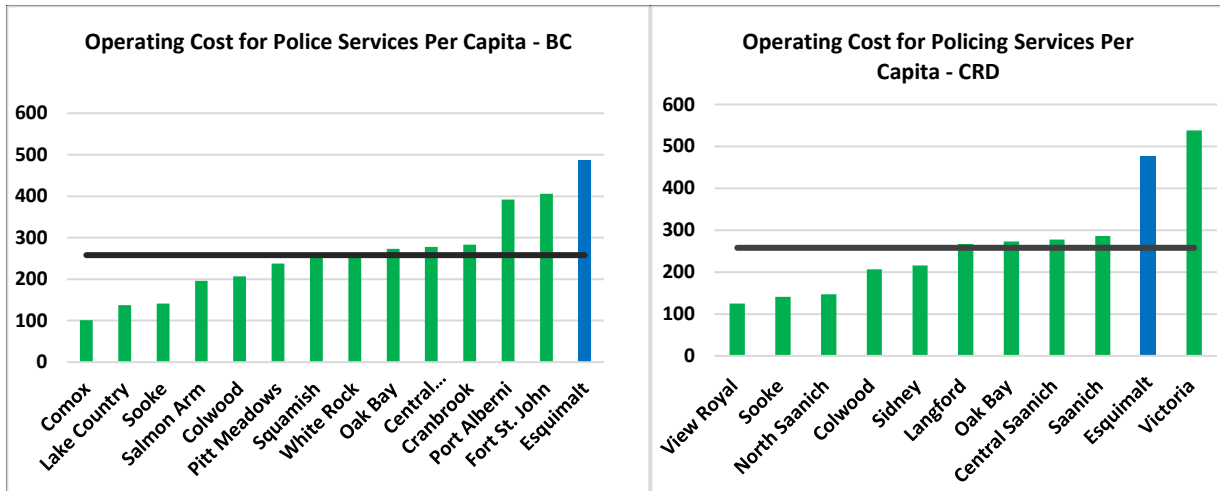


Service Area: Value for Money

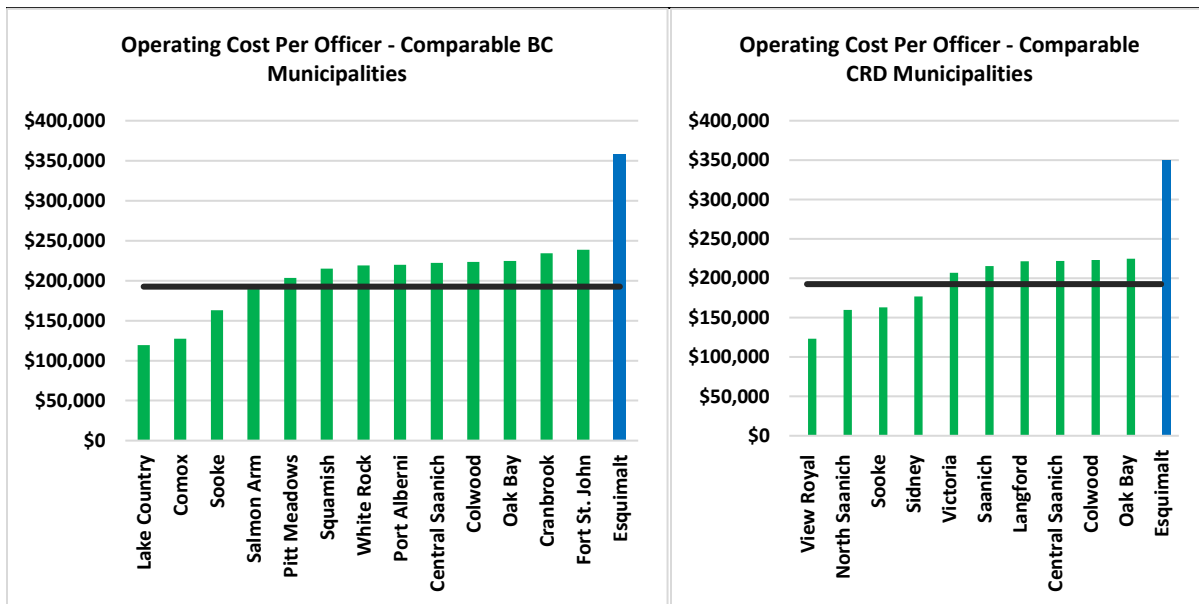
Information provided by VicPD provides significant insight into four of the lines of service provided by VicPD (Prevention, Response, Community Well-Being, and Public Trust). One area not sufficiently reported on through the available information is the ‘Value for Money’ provided to the Township of Esquimalt by VicPD. As such, additional analysis was conducted. Comparisons were made between 13 comparable municipalities across both the CRD and British Columbia, all of which have populations of 15,000 – 25,000 residents. The following graphs provide the municipal comparative analysis.



Esquimalt has the second highest total annual operating costs among comparable jurisdictions in B.C., falling in between Fort St. John (having the highest) and Port Alberni (having the third highest). Esquimalt ranked fourth highest among CRD municipalities.

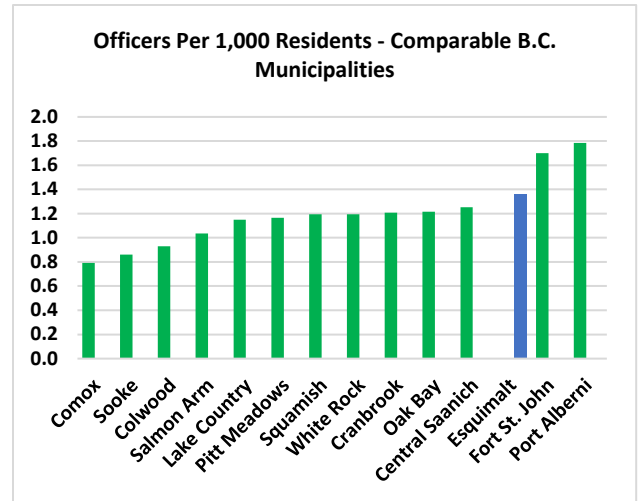
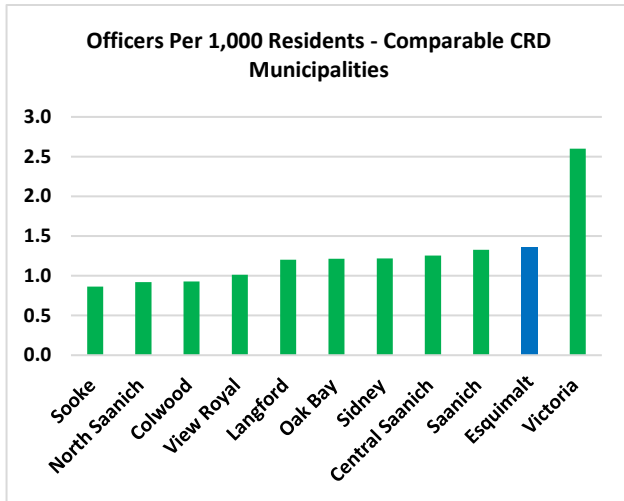


The operating costs per capita for Esquimalt were the highest among comparable municipalities.



Esquimalt has the highest total operating costs per officer in the CRD and across comparable B.C. municipalities.

In addition to the overall operating cost analysis, a comparison of service levels provided by comparable municipalities was conducted. As depicted in the graphs below, Esquimalt ranks high in terms of the number of Officers per 1,000 residents with comparable municipalities in the CRD and British Columbia. This high number indicates a high level of service.



Saanich, Esquimalt and Victoria have the highest operating cost of police services per capita within the CRD.

6.7 Summary of Findings

The comparative analyses provided in this section of the report were shared with the community through information boards, as well as embedded into the online survey to help inform respondents about the cost burden for policing services to similar sized jurisdictions. Overall, key findings of the comparative analysis indicate a relatively high operating cost for police services in Esquimalt, both total and per capita, across the Capital Regional District and across B.C. municipalities.

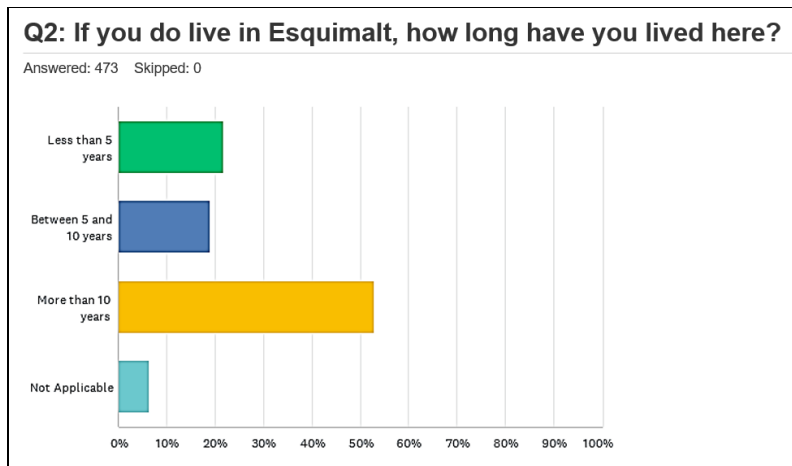
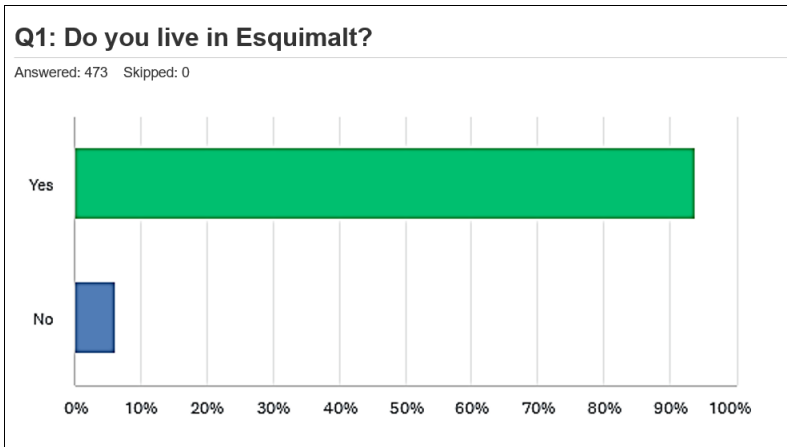
7. Community Engagement – What We Heard

Residents and business owners of Esquimalt were notified of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy through the Esquimalt Community Connections newsletters in the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2022. Outreach to the community was conducted through the Township of Esquimalt website, social media platforms, as well as through emails and a mass mailout to all residents.

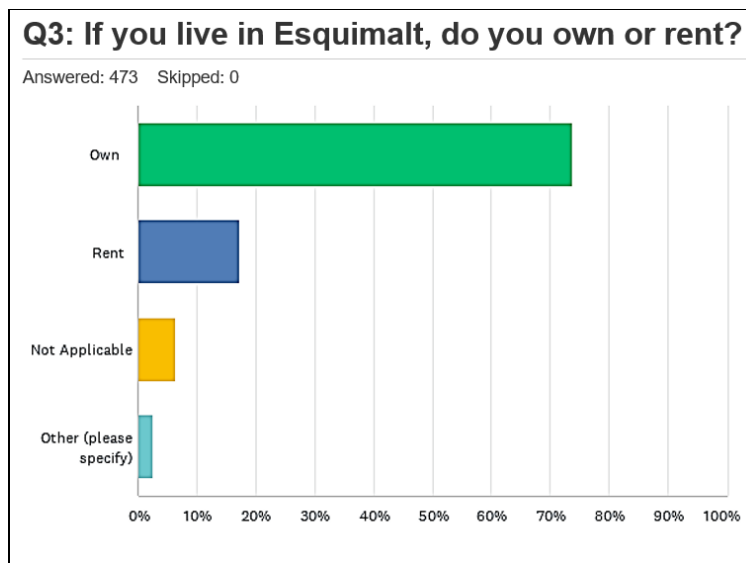
Community engagement largely took place between April 24 and May 20, 2022. In addition to an online survey, there were seven focus group participants with representatives from key sectors of the community including education, marine industry, residents, seniors and not-for-profits. Six one-on-one interviews were also conducted. An estimated 50 individuals participated in the open house and information booths.

7.1 Survey Respondent vs Community Profile

Paramount to the Community Policing Engagement Strategy was ensuring that the input collected came directly from stakeholders most impacted by police services in Esquimalt. Esquimalt residents provided 94% of the 473 responses to the online survey. Of the respondents who indicated that they live in Esquimalt, over 53% have lived in the community for more than 10 years. In addition, 33% of survey respondents work or own a business in Esquimalt.



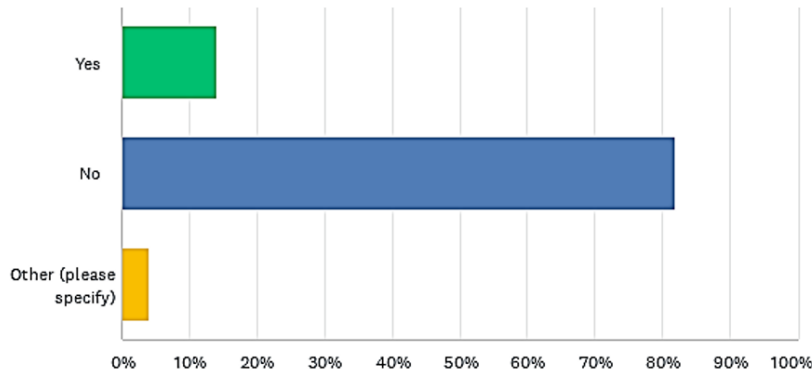
There was a higher representation of homeowners that responded at 74% versus those that rent at 17% as compared to the community profile of the ratio to homeowners and renters as being approximately 49% homeowners versus renters at 51%.



There was a relatively low response rate from individuals that have household members attending schools in Esquimalt with 14% having a family member in the Victoria Public School District #61 system in the community. However, it is recognized that the survey was targeted to residents and businesses in Esquimalt – the four public schools in Esquimalt have a far reach across the Greater Victoria Area in terms of where students that attend these schools reside.

Q6: Do you have any household members that attend school in Esquimalt (Rockheights Middle School, Esquimalt High School, Macaulay Elementary School, L'ecole Victor-Brodeur)?

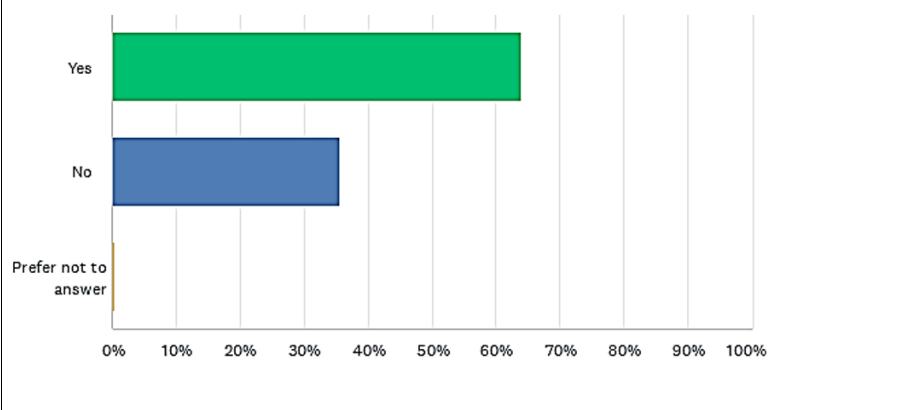
Answered: 464 Skipped: 9



Almost 65% of respondents had a direct interaction with VicPD over the last 10 years. Of these respondents, 62% were satisfied or very satisfied with the interaction. That said, the survey did not probe into the nature of the interaction (victim of crime, proactive community patrols or programming).

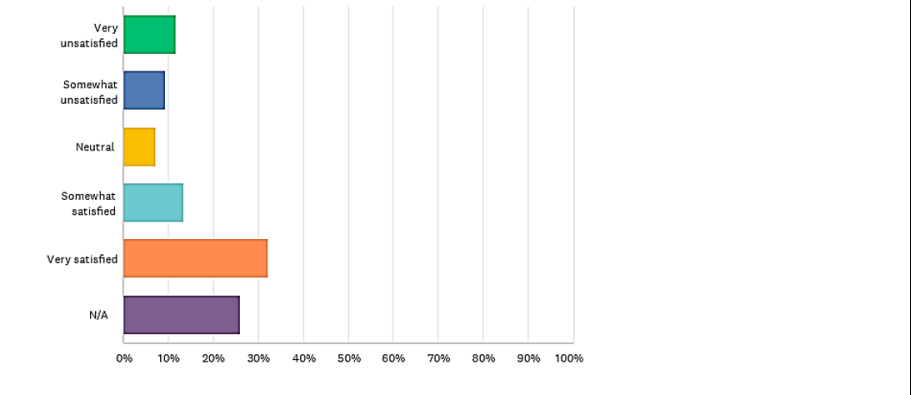
Q21: In the last 10 years, have you had any direct interactions with the Esquimalt division of the Victoria Police Department?

Answered: 416 Skipped: 57



Q23: Generally, how satisfied were you with your interaction(s) with policing services (in terms of timeliness of response, quality of service, respect received, etc.)?

Answered: 385 Skipped: 88



7.2 Survey Findings

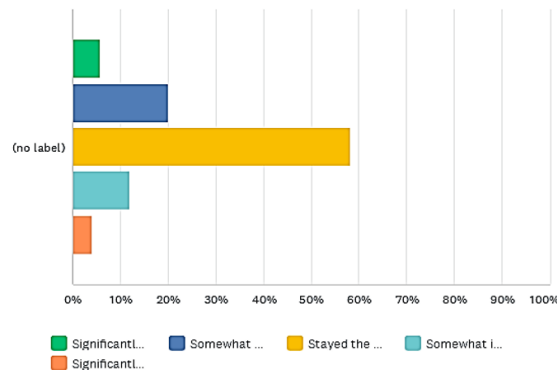
The online survey was specifically designed to sequence questioning to both inform respondents about personal and community safety, as well as the current FA regarding policing services. It was understood at the outset that the general population may not understand the complex nature of the policing model and the funding formula. The information provided in the following sections are intended to inform Council regarding baseline information.

7.2.1 Feelings of Personal and Community Safety

Feelings and perceptions of personal safety were analyzed to understand a baseline of the current perceptions of individual safety. This information is augmented with comments that are summarized in section 7.2.5 of this report. Of the survey respondents, 58% indicated that they feel that their personal safety has stayed the same over the last five years, and an additional 16% indicated that their feelings of personal safety have increased or significantly increased. Residents were also asked about whether the visual presence of policing in Esquimalt contributed to their feelings of personal safety. 30% of survey respondents indicated that they do not notice the presence of police, with another 35% feeling that police presence somewhat contributed toward personal feelings of safety.

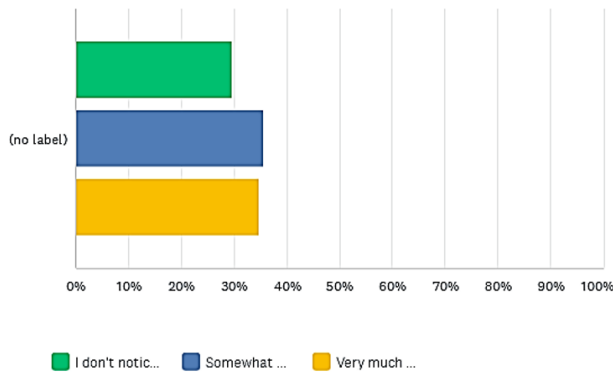
Q13: In the last five years, have your feelings of personal safety increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Answered: 424 Skipped: 49



Q14: Does the visual presence of policing in Esquimalt contribute to your feelings of personal safety?

Answered: 418 Skipped: 55

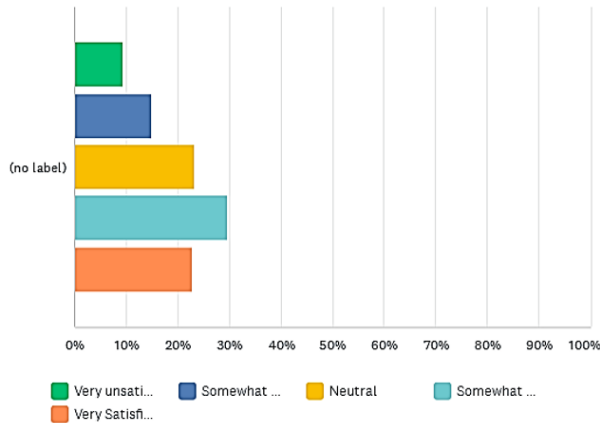


7.2.2 Service Satisfaction

Satisfaction with police services can be influenced by the degree to which an individual has had direct or indirect interactions with community police services. Service satisfaction can also be influenced by media and other secondary information sources. The survey results indicate that over 52% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of policing services, with another 23% being neutral. Satisfaction with the level of service was generally higher for those that have lived in Esquimalt for more than five years.

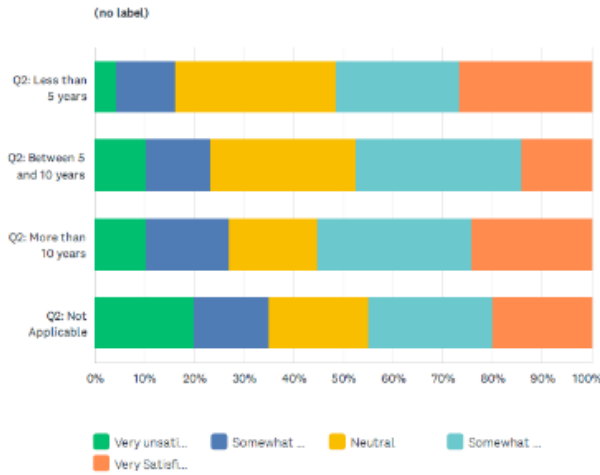
Q18: How satisfied are you with the level of service for community policing in Esquimalt?

Answered: 417 Skipped: 56



Q18 How satisfied are you with the level of service for community policing in Esquimalt?

Answered: 417 Skipped: 56

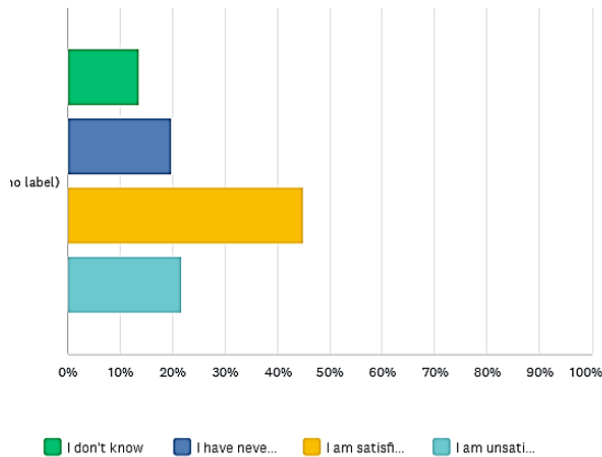


7.2.3 Knowledge and Perception of the Agreement

In regards to awareness of the FA that governs the provision of policing services to the Township of Esquimalt by VicPD, 16% of respondents report being very aware of the Agreement and 25% report that they are not at all aware or somewhat unaware of the Agreement.

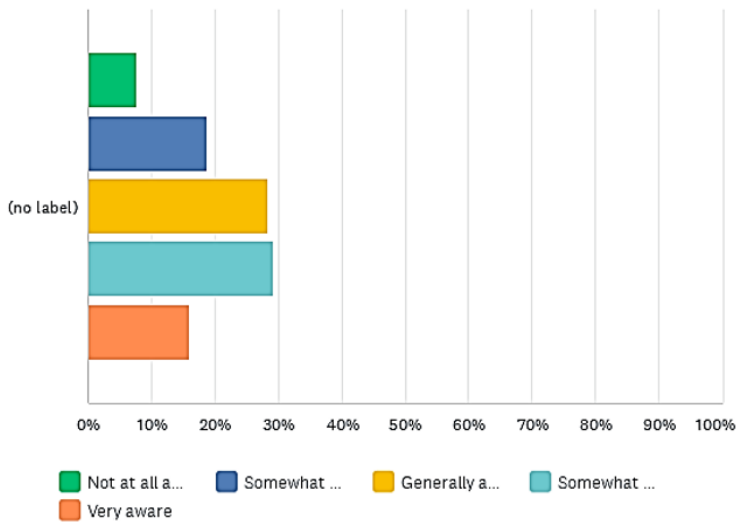
Q24: Based on your experience, do you think that the policing services provided to Esquimalt is adequate?

Answered: 405 Skipped: 68



Q16: How aware are you of the agreement that governs the provision of policing services to the Township of Esquimalt by the Victoria Police Department?

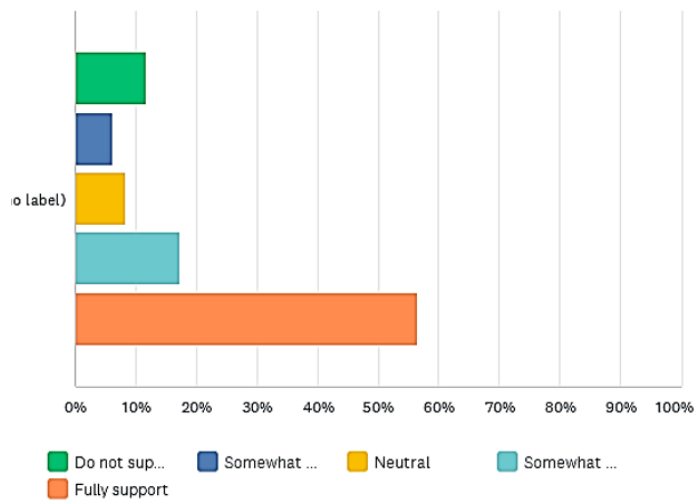
Answered: 417 Skipped: 56



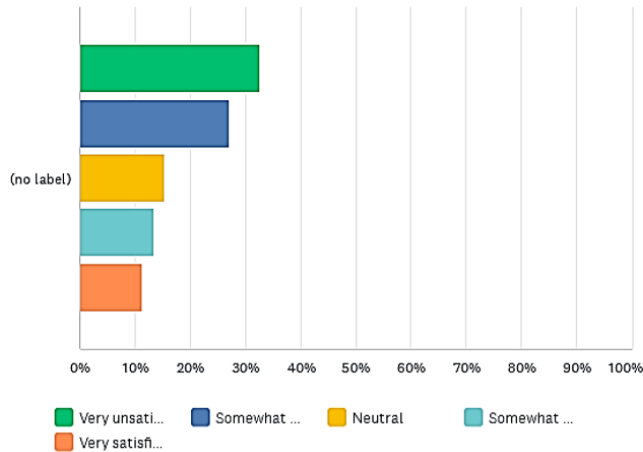
The awareness level and satisfaction with the policing services was further assessed through a question on perception of value for money. 33% of respondents are very unsatisfied with benefits and costs of policing services, and 27% report being somewhat unsatisfied. Overall, there is a high degree of support (74% somewhat or fully supporting) for Esquimalt Council to further review alternative policing models as part of the renewal process. An additional 8% were neutral on this question. Further commentary on the reasons for support are provided in the open-ended answer summaries below.

Q20: To what degree do you support Esquimalt Council to further review alternative policing models as part of the agreement renewal process?

Answered: 409 Skipped: 64



Q19: Value for money is your perception of how much benefit you receive from community policing versus the cost that you pay as a resident or business owner, either directly through taxes or as a renter and worker where these costs are paid for by others for your benefit. How satisfied are you with the value for money from community policing?



7.2.4 Summaries of Qualitative Input Questions of On-Line Survey

Qualitative research was conducted to gather input from Esquimalt residents and business owners through open-ended survey questions, individual interviews and focus groups providing insight from participants to give decision-makers a more complete understanding of their perceptions and level of satisfaction with the current agreement. These opportunities afforded participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings in their own words and in some cases, permitted in-depth probing of participants to understand different perspectives. Qualitative research is valuable because it captures a range of opinions and ideas and, in combination with quantitative research, provides a balanced approach to community engagement.

1. *What factors contribute to your feelings of safety (Question #8)?*

Survey respondents were asked to explain what factors contribute to their feelings of safety, with 363 comments received in response. Nearly a third of all responses mentioned the degree of illumination or light, including 78 indicating that adequate lighting makes them feel safe, 13 indicating that dark areas or darkness make them feel unsafe, 13 commenting that they feel safer going out in the daylight and three mentioning that they don't feel safe going out at night. Other environmental factors that impact respondents' feelings of safety include the presence of cameras, good sight lines and high visibility, and businesses and street fronts being open.

After adequate lighting, having people around was the second-most mentioned factor contributing to respondents' feelings of safety. 69 responses mentioned that having people around made them feel safe, 11 indicated that isolated areas or being alone makes them feel unsafe, and five respondents shared that having a dog or companion contributes to their feelings of safety.

Many respondents (54) commented on the impact that homeless, drug-addicted, unstable, unpredictable or threatening individuals have on their feelings of safety, with two mentioning that the existence of social services contribute to their feelings of safety. 17 respondents feel safer when civic infrastructure and community surrounds are well-maintained, with six feeling unsafe when the same are not well-maintained or when they observe unkempt properties.

Police presence was often mentioned as a factor contributing to respondents' feelings of safety. 38 comments indicate that the presence of police makes them feel safe, further supported by the 11 that mention the absence of police presence makes them feel unsafe. Some respondents said that police presence makes them feel unsafe, while others mention that their feelings of safety depend on the appropriate degree of presence. Nine respondents identified police responsiveness as a factor in making them feel safe, eight mentioned proximity to help, and eight commented on quality policing impacting their sense of safety.

30 respondents identified the Township's friendly and welcoming vibe, its quiet nature, and its smaller population, as contributing to their feelings of safety. 17 feel that knowing their neighbours contributes to them feeling safe.

12% of respondents shared traits unique to their individual circumstance, or within their control, make them feel safe. This includes being male, special training, maintaining safe practices, carrying a cell phone, personal awareness and intuition. Conversely, ten respondents mentioned their age, ability and/or gender, as a contributing factor to them feeling unsafe, including being a woman, being disabled and being a senior citizen.

Respondents' personal experience with crime or the police is another factor in their feelings of safety. 22 stated that they feel safe as they have not been impacted by crime, with five others citing that personal experiences with crime have left them feeling unsafe. Two respondents cited previous negative experience with police as making them feel unsafe. There is nearly an even split between those who expressed that their knowledge/understanding of local crimes makes them feel safer, with those who feel less safe as a result of hearing about crime in the community.

Feelings of safety are impacted by the area of town that respondents live or visit, as well their familiarity with a given area. While some feel safe because their homes are secluded, others feel safe living in a more central area. As for specific areas of concern, respondents identified sections of the E & N Trail, industrial areas, downtown Esquimalt, Esquimalt Plaza and Saxe Point Park.

A few respondents mentioned that their confidence in the prosecution of offenders makes them feel safe, while others say their knowledge of the justice system's limitations have a negative impact on their sense of safety. Other factors mentioned once or twice in relation to feeling safe include less bars, lower traffic speeds, and the presence of the Fire Department. Factors mentioned once or twice in relation to people feeling unsafe include the Township's Administration, proximity to Victoria, racism and wildlife.

Many respondents identified Esquimalt's low crime rate as making them feel safe, with 35 sharing that they perceive the area as safe, and nine indicating that Esquimalt is safer than Victoria. Five respondents commented that they are less satisfied with policing now than before, and two believe it is better than before.

2. Do you have any thoughts to share about how community policing or other community supports could enhance your feelings of safety in Esquimalt (Question #11)?

288 comments were received in response to the above question, including suggestions, positive feedback, negative feedback and specific concerns. The most commonly shared suggestion, a full 15% of all suggestions made, were from respondents wanting to see more patrol officers out of their vehicles, with the majority of those wanting more officers on bikes, especially to patrol the Township's parks.

Another primary theme (30 comments) was the desire to have officers further integrated into, and interacting with, the community. Many respondents would like to see meaningful and on-going relationships built between community members and the officers serving in Esquimalt, with some expressing a desire for officers who live within the community and others commenting on the importance of officers who have intimate knowledge of the people and problems facing the community. It must be noted, however, that while there is a marked desire for officers to be involved in the community, many respondents would like to see that involvement be in a more friendly, unofficial and (as was mentioned in four comments) unarmed capacity. Three suggestions called for the re-instatement of the school liaison officers, and multiple respondents mentioned the important role of other types of community-based liaisons.

As for more official police presence, 52 respondents called for greater police presence, wider coverage and/or more officers out after dark. A handful of respondents, however, state that police presence makes them feel unsafe and they would like to see less of it. One respondent feels strongly that Esquimalt is over-policed and would like there to be less officers in general. In terms of wider coverage, respondents mention the need for 24/7 service, a police station that is local and accessible to citizens, more presence within Esquimalt's parks and additional traffic enforcement measures.

Beyond policing itself, nine respondents would like to see the Block Watch Program enhanced or revitalized, and five respondents commented on the potential benefit of expanding Bylaw presence and enforcement within the Township.

Other less common suggestions included a change to Township Administration, communicating patrol routes and intervals, funding specific activities and initiatives to enhance safety, more secure cycling infrastructure, and improving the quality of policing, responsiveness, and the judicial system to keep offenders off the streets.

Of the positive feedback received:

- 16 respondents support the current model of policing,
- 11 respondents appreciate seeing officers interact with the community,

- 10 respondents are satisfied with the current degree of police presence,
- Nine respondents feel safe, and
- Four respondents shared specific positive experiences with the police service.

Of the negative feedback received:

- 21 respondents commented on the lack of police presence, while five feel there is too much.
- 12 respondents do not feel that the current model of policing is working.
- Five respondents do not feel that they and/or the community have personal relationships with the officers.
- Four respondents shared specific negative experiences with the police service.

Respondents had concerns about responsiveness, the use/abuse of power, the Police Board, the impact of budget restraints, the detachment being inaccessible/closed, and the presence of homeless/addicted individuals.

3. Do you have any thoughts to share about how policing or other community supports could enhance your personal feelings of safety (Question #15)?

243 responses were received for Question 15—many of which are closely aligned with and reflect the suggestions and comments made in response to Question 8 and 11.

In terms of suggestions, there were more calls for officers on bike and on foot, a desire to see the Block Watch Program prioritized, and the need for better integrated and resourced social service and mental health supports and programs. Some respondents would like to see more officers, more financial support for policing, more traffic enforcement, and a stronger police presence with more frequent and wider spread patrols, especially at night. Others call for Esquimalt to reduce funding for the police, some suggest diverting resources towards community programs, and a few would like to see improved sidewalks, lighting and traffic calming. Two respondents call for the creation of a Regional Police Service, with another suggesting a return to dual-role Police and Fire. One respondent suggests that the reserve constable program be based out of Esquimalt and their deployment be encouraged within the Township, and another asks that Esquimalt Council provide “as much data as possible so we can be knowledgeable about the financial costs and social order/sense of safety costs when deciding on how Esquimalt is policed.”

4. Is there anything you would like to share about your experience with community policing in Esquimalt (Question #26)?

207 responses were received for Question 26 and again included suggestions, positive and negative feedback, and some specific concerns. The most frequently received suggestions were to continue funding the police service (seven comments), to divest and fund community needs (five comments), and to create a Regional Police Force (six comments). Five respondents communicated the need for more

information, specifically around comparing costs, three called for a larger bylaw force and two would like to see the police funding reduced.

30 respondents expressed their support for the current service and/or policing model, with another 10 expressing their general satisfaction with how things are today. 21 respondents shared a positive experience or sentiment about the Esquimalt police service.

10 respondents do not support the current policing model, seven expressed dissatisfactions with the current police service, and four stated that they are less satisfied with the service now than they used to be. Eleven respondents expressed concern or dismay over the current after-hours/weekend service and/or issues with their ability to access support over the phone.

Fifteen comments expressing concern or dissatisfaction with the survey tool were received, with some feeling that the survey was biased and may not accurately reflect citizens' opinions and perspectives. Others are concerned that the implications of reviewing and possibly amending the existing police model have not been effectively explored and explained.

Other concerns include the lack of police presence, funding as it relates to policing in Esquimalt, the detriment of having the RCMP provide police services, response times, lack of resources, the justice system, fear mongering by the media, and concerns around Township and Police executive and administration.

7.3 Focus Groups

Many participants in the focus groups shared a general desire for additional information regarding the funding formula used to determine Esquimalt's portion of the annual VicPD police budget. They expressed the perception that a deeper level of analysis and data reporting is required to determine an Esquimalt-specific policing model. Participants shared that clear communication on police-related issues and updates specific to Esquimalt are at times absent but considered necessary. Overall, the perception of community policing and feeling safe in Esquimalt was highly correlated to a sense of community and community connectedness. Another commonly heard desire was for higher visibility of police in non-emergency situations and/or interacting with the public in schools, parks and community events.

7.4 Open House

An open house was held on May 4, 2022, and was attended by approximately 50 individuals, the majority of whom live, work or own a business in Esquimalt. Attendees reviewed information boards and were encouraged to ask questions and dive deeper into the information with four senior administrative staff from the Township of Esquimalt and three consultants from Neuquinn Consulting. Much of the discussions related to the cost of policing in Esquimalt, as compared to other municipalities, and there was a general sense of dissatisfaction with the value for money for community policing in Esquimalt. Attendees generally supported Esquimalt Council in conducting a further review of alternative policing models as part of the agreement review process.

7.5 Interviews

Six one-on-one interviews were conducted with representatives from key sectors of the community including local business, education, military, law enforcement, veteran's care and not-for-profit. A seventh interview was conducted with an engaged member of the local community (a 20-year resident of Esquimalt).

Generally speaking, the individuals interviewed feel that crime is not a particularly big issue in Esquimalt and they believe it to be a safe place to live, work and conduct business. 'Social disorder' disturbances are identified as the most visible and pressing issue as it relates to community safety and was repeatedly acknowledged as one that creates a significant challenge for effective local policing. Other issues identified include traffic safety and dangerous driving, as well as the proximity to downtown Victoria and the impact and burden of an increasing population density within the Township.

Nearly all of the interviewees commented on how social connectedness, community development, and/or interpersonal engagement, are critical facets of public safety. Many shared that while local policing can contribute to their overall feelings of safety, it is but one of many factors.

Most interviewees feel that the level of policing in Esquimalt is adequate for the size and nature of the community, and those who report an absence of visible police presence often referenced the negative impact this has on effective community building, rather than its impact on effective law enforcement. One interviewee explains this as, "not an issue of too few officers but more a weakness within the current business model that values response to calls for service more than community relationship building."

All interviewees support exploring a more cost-effective service delivery model for policing in Esquimalt, as many question whether the current costs related to the structure of policing for the Township represent a positive value proposition. Rationale for this support includes the desire to strike a fairer deal for the Township, the need for meaningful ROI measures in order to truly evaluate the value for money proposition, and the belief that all publicly funded institutions owe a duty of explanation around budgets and expenditures to the communities they serve and the corresponding sponsoring government body. A concern shared repeatedly was that the high costs of policing could be distracting from the efforts and investments required to meet the larger social and community development needs within Esquimalt, and that the high cost does not justify the limited role that the police service currently plays within the community.

Another concern expressed includes whether the current framework agreement was adequately structured around appropriate expectations for financial accountability, cost justifications performance measures, or dispute resolution mechanisms. Several interviewees also reference the recent proposal to BC Police Services Act reforms and wondered whether the Township should wait to see how or if the reports recommendations will be activated.

Many of the interviewees report having a positive relationship and high level of satisfaction with the existing police service, although some issues in regards to police response (or lack thereof) were also reported. Some jurisdictional challenges were noted, both with the RCMP and the Military Police. Several individuals commented on their appreciation and support of the Community Resource Officer program, and for time and energy that local officers have contributed to not-for-profits within the community, including at the Rainbow Kitchen.

8. Recommendations and Next Steps

Based on the comparative analysis and community feedback through the Community Policing Engagement Strategy, the following are recommended next steps for Esquimalt Administration and Council consideration. These recommendations are not mutually exclusive and may be addressed concurrently or separately as a menu of options to further advance discussions with the Police Board, Council, the Province of British Columbia, and the community.

8.1 Recommendation #1: Provide notice to the Province of B.C.

Provide notice to the Province of B.C. of the Township's desire to Elect Not to Extend the current Agreement under Section 2.3 of the Framework Agreement set to expire December 31, 2023, including rescinding the 2002 Order in Council amalgamating Victoria and Esquimalt police departments

The foundational purpose of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy, as directed by the Township, was to seek public input on whether there is support from the community to look at other police service and funding models. The quantitative and qualitative data from the community engagement indicates a strong desire for further analysis to explore alternative models and funding systems. While developing options for alternative models or funding formulas are outside of the scope of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy, it is recommended that a second RFP process be initiated to retain the expertise for a second phase based on the evidence presented in Section 7 of this report, and to support recommendation #2 and #3 below, including shared costs with the Province of B.C.

8.2 Recommendation #2: Zero-Based Review

Conduct a Zero-Based Review to determine actual costs and resource allocations for the future policing model

Through the planning and execution of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy, it was revealed that there is a lack of information and data available on the actual resourcing costs for the services provided to the Township of Esquimalt (i.e., staffing levels, overtime rates, operational costs, uniforms, capital equipment, etc.). A comprehensive breakdown of all expenditures to specific lines of service is similarly unavailable. Another unknown is to what extent have VicPD officers, assigned to Victoria, provided assistance to the Esquimalt Division.

It is acknowledged that some of this resource allocation information has not been collected due to the challenges associated with the topographic nature of the area and the close proximity of neighbouring communities and municipalities. It was noted in focus groups and interviews that vacancies for periods of time have occurred, particularly with the school liaison officers positions in recent years.

A zero-based review would help inform an evaluation of the existing Agreement by helping Administration understand what an appropriate funding model for a relatively small municipality would look like, including costs for the actual services provided. In order to undertake a zero-based review, all expenditures associated with the actual staffing costs from a year prior,

aligned with the service benefits achieved, would need to be undertaken to determine how closely the current funding model meets the needs and benefits of the community.

8.3 Recommendation #3: One-Time Funding

Request the Province provide one-time funding of up to \$150,000 for the Township of Esquimalt to conduct the Zero-Based Review

The work noted in recommendation #2 will represent an additional cost to the taxpayers of the Township of Esquimalt. Given that the existing arrangement is the result of direction provided by the Province – which led to the creation of a unique governance structure and Victoria/Esquimalt being the only one of thirteen municipal police forces to amalgamate and report to a joint Police Board - it is recommended that the Province provide funding for the review process to avoid burdening Esquimalt with additional costs. The amount calculated is based on a one-year term for a full-time FTE (including salary and benefits) and/or a dedicated consulting team.

8.4 Recommendation #4: Police Reform Act

Explore the ‘Reforming Police Act’ report

Since December 2020, the Province, through a Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, has been inquiring into and making a number of recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on reforms related to the modernization and sustainability of policing under the Police Act.

With a report from the Province released in April 2022, there has been significant discussion on the equity of policing costs across the Capital Regional District. In particular, there was an acknowledgement of the benefits received from having a capital city with a vibrant downtown core and tourist hub that spreads economic benefits across the region. It is worth noting during engagement the consulting team heard support for a future cost sharing model among the region to assist VicPD with the related police service costs that ultimately support the CRD, and the desire to further explore a regional service for the future. The consultancy team recommends Council consider the recommendations from the Province of B.C. and provide a formal response.

8.5 Recommendation #5: Communicate to Community

Communicate to the community the status of the current Framework Agreement and associated future work regarding an Esquimalt police model

Through the Community Policing Engagement Strategy, residents were informed about the current FA and funding model. The results of the engagement with the community were highly conclusive in terms of support for a further discussion of value for money and the services provided for community policing in Esquimalt. It is recognized that community engagement is a complex issue, such as community safety and policing services, and can be challenging. Continued communications with residents on the status of the discussions with the Province through the Current newsletter, website updates and social media are recommended.

8.6 Recommendation #6: Results-Based Accountability

Consider application of Results-Based Accountability to future on-going community surveys

The information collected through the Community Policing Engagement Strategy regarding perceptions and feelings of personal and community safety, can be used as a baseline for community surveys in the future. Using a Results-Based Accountability (RBA) lens, it is suggested that the focus of the Community Policing Engagement Strategy was quite narrow, and that the Township would benefit from a more broad and open approach to evaluating overall community priorities and outcomes around happiness, health and well-being. To take an RBA approach, it is recommended that this work be undertaken in collaboration with community social service and support agencies to better recognize that no one service provider supports community safety alone, and that a collective approach to supporting residents and businesses will provide a more holistic view of where to direct future investments.