

City of Richmond

Richmond
Police Services
Review 2016:
Discussion Guide

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Introduction

As our community grows and plans for the future, Richmond City Council is looking to determine the best approach to ensuring police services meet local needs and priorities, and that Richmond continues to be a safe place to live, work and visit.

The City of Richmond wants to ensure that our residents feel safe in their community and that we continue to have safe neighbourhoods and a safe environment for economic development.

Policing services are the largest single cost incurred by the City of Richmond. Currently, 20 cents of every municipal tax dollar in Richmond goes to fund police services. City Council wants to ensure it has the best model available to ensure police services provide the best value for this investment.

In addition to cost, it is important that Richmond's police service reflects local needs and concerns. Considerations in this area would include the ability to:

- exercise influence over the police services budget;
- influence key decisions such as setting service levels and priorities, and hiring a Chief Constable;
- respond to local community needs, such as vision, values and mission; and
- have a stable, experienced core of officers and staff with strong local knowledge of the community and its concerns.

Richmond's policing is currently provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The Province of BC has a Municipal Police Service Agreement with the federal government that governs the provision of police services to those municipalities served by the RCMP.

Over the past several years, Richmond City Council has repeatedly raised concerns about the limited ability municipalities have to control costs and make important decisions about police services management in the community under the current RCMP contract model.

For those reasons, Richmond reluctantly agreed to the latest Province of BC contract with the RCMP. Upon signing this contract in 2012, Richmond City Council committed to exploring its options for the future provision of policing services.

Since then the City has extensively reviewed options for the delivery of police services in our community. Based on that review, public input is being sought on two options:

1. continuing the RCMP contract for police services; or
2. creating a new, independent Richmond police service, which would contract with other police forces for specialized services, such as homicide investigation, forensic service and emergency response teams.

A Report to Council examining the two options under consideration can be found on the City website at www.richmond.ca (under Featured Topics on the home page) and at www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca.

Getting Ready for the Future

The public now has an opportunity to comment on which police service model they feel is best for Richmond, particularly in areas such as:

- *Decision-making authority* – the ability to set the budget, the priorities, goals and objectives of the police service.
- *Local needs and values* – the ability to ensure that the police service is in harmony with community priorities and local culture.
- *Finances and cost controls* – the ability to predict costs accurately and to set and control police service budgets.
- *Service delivery and staff* – control over recruitment, retention of officers in the community, and scheduling to meet service demands.

Some key issues to consider are listed below.

Decision-Making Authority

RCMP: The RCMP is a Canadian national police force. The local RCMP detachment is led by a Superintendent (Detachment Commander), who reports to the RCMP's Lower Mainland District Office in Surrey, which reports to the BC 'E' Division Commander. The RCMP's Commissioner in Ottawa has ultimate control and management of the national police force.

Under the terms of the Provincial contract with the federal government, decisions and standards that impact upon local costs and service needs and priorities may be made at national, provincial or regional levels, with limited input from the City.

The RCMP is subject to investigations and oversight regarding complaints by the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission, and is also under the purview of the Independent Investigations Office of BC as these pertain to police-related incidents resulting in serious injury or death.

The City is consulted about its priorities in the development of an Annual Performance Plan. The City may participate in the process for the selection of the Detachment Commander.

Richmond is one of the largest RCMP detachments in Canada. Burnaby, Surrey and Coquitlam also have RCMP detachments.

Independent Richmond Police Force: A new independent Richmond police force would be supplemented by specialized contracted services, which would be provided by other police forces, such as homicide investigation, forensic services and emergency response teams.

An independent police force would be governed by provincial standards and regulations and be accountable to a local police board.

An independent Richmond police force would be accountable to a local police board. The board would be chaired by the Mayor of Richmond and would include up to eight other members from the local community – one appointee by City Council who is not a member of Council and up to seven appointed by the provincial government.

The police board would present an annual operating budget for the Richmond police force to City Council for approval.

The local police board would approve the new Richmond police force's strategies, objectives and long-term plans. It would oversee the force's performance, and appoint a Chief Constable who would lead the force and all police operations, and who would be accountable to the board.

The local force would be subject to oversight and investigations both by the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner of BC and the Independent Investigations Office of BC.

Many communities in the Lower Mainland have an independent municipal police force, including Vancouver, Delta, West Vancouver and Abbotsford.

Local Community Needs and Values

A key consideration in the delivery of any policing model is to ensure the local needs and culture of the community are understood, respected and considered in both policing provisions and staffing.

RCMP: The current local administration of the RCMP and its officers have strived to meet local community needs and values as identified by the City. However, many decisions about local priorities and costs are made outside of Richmond.

The RCMP currently recruits officers from every region of Canada, and basic training for cadets is centralized in Regina, Saskatchewan. After completion of training, successful officers are posted to jobs in communities where the RCMP provides service. Officers posted to Richmond who come from other parts of Canada may have limited local knowledge of the community or may not reflect its values.

Over periods of time, officers are able to move from one position to another. The RCMP has a practice of attempting to retain staff at detachments for three to five years before transferring them, depending on the circumstances. The Richmond detachment experiences a high turnover rate of officers, due to promotions and relocations.

Independent Richmond Police Force: If a new independent Richmond police force is established, recruitment strategies may be tailored to encourage local candidates to apply. This may include both new recruits and experienced police officers from other police forces.

These recruits would be trained closer to home at the Justice Institute of BC. In terms of retaining police officers and other personnel in the community, independent municipal forces tend to see less turnover than the RCMP. Ability to recruit locally will ensure more police officers have a good knowledge of the community and reflect its values. Many municipal police officers spend their entire careers with the same police force.

Transition

The City of Richmond can give notice of the termination of the existing RCMP policing contract no later than the end of February each year, with a transition period of 25 months from the notice date. The City must also satisfy the Province of BC that the transition plan for an independent police service will maintain appropriate levels of public safety. Any change in the policing model for Richmond will ultimately need to be approved by the provincial Minister of Public Safety.

RCMP: Continuing with the RCMP would see Richmond maintain its existing model for delivering police services. Richmond would keep its local Richmond RCMP detachment, led by the RCMP's national, regional and local chain of command. The police officers in Richmond would be RCMP police officers. Richmond would continue to draw on specialized RCMP services and police units, such as the RCMP's Emergency Response Team and Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT). Police officers would continue to be recruited nationally by the RCMP, and posted and moved based on RCMP policies and requirements.

Independent Richmond Police Force: A new independent Richmond police force would change how Richmond delivers police services. Richmond would have a new local police service, led by a Chief Constable who would be accountable to an independent local police board.

The new force would need to recruit new officers, and hire and train them with the community's specific needs and priorities in mind. Both new recruits and experienced officers from other police forces would be hired.

The City would need to make arrangements with the RCMP or other police services to secure continued access to specialized services, such as homicide investigations, forensic services and emergency response teams.

New administrative staff would need to be hired, a new organizational and command structure would be required and new police equipment would need to be sourced. Civilian staff employed by the City and currently working at the Richmond RCMP detachment could fill many of the administrative and support positions in an independent Richmond police force.

Richmond's community safety building is a City-owned facility and a new Richmond police force would be able to use it as its headquarters.

Finances and Cost Controls

The City of Richmond has carefully reviewed the two options' costs and potential budget implications. This is important because the City spends more on policing than anything else, 20 cents of every tax dollar, and we want to be sure police services are delivered efficiently and cost-effectively. The largest proportion of police costs are wages and benefits tied to benchmarks set either by the RCMP or other municipal police forces. It is important to note that policing costs will continue to rise as Richmond's population increases, regardless of whether services are provided by the RCMP or an independent force.

RCMP: Current police services cost the City of Richmond an estimated \$41.5 million annually, which includes all police services funded by the City.

Detachment budgets are developed by the RCMP with limited input from the City and are based on the Municipal Police Unit Agreement provisions where the overall budget limit is set by Council.

The City determines how many police officers will be funded within the Richmond RCMP detachment. The Federal Treasury Board determines RCMP wages and benefits of police officers.

At times, some new policing costs have been imposed on municipalities with little or no consultation or notice. For example, the City of Richmond and other municipalities have disputed costs passed on by the federal government related to the establishment of the RCMP's new BC provincial headquarters in Surrey.

Historically, RCMP officers, unlike their municipal and provincial police officer counterparts, have not been unionized. However, a recent Supreme Court of Canada decision has given RCMP officers the right to collectively bargain. It can be anticipated that there will be increased costs associated with any collective agreement that is reached between the federal government and RCMP officers and that many of these costs would impact municipalities that are policed under contract by the RCMP.

Independent Richmond Police Force: For an independent Richmond police force, the annual operating cost is projected to be higher than the cost of RCMP service. This reflects the need to hire new administrative staff, higher salaries and the loss of federal and provincial contributions for RCMP specialized services in communities with local RCMP detachments.

An independent Richmond police force would be unionized. Existing municipal policing contracts would be used as a template for the union contract of a new Richmond police department. Municipal police

departments in British Columbia have traditionally followed the lead of the Vancouver Police Department in terms of negotiating wages and benefits.

The police board would work with the Chief of Police to develop a provisional annual operating budget, which would be approved by Council. In addition, the City of Richmond would incur one-time transition costs. The transition cost is estimated to be \$19.6 million spread over three years. The City could fund the transition to a municipal police force through a variety of sources, which may include reserve accounts, such as accumulated budget surpluses or gaming funds. However, Council has made no decision on which funds might be used.

The annual operating costs for an independent Richmond police force are estimated to be \$2.2 million to \$3.9 million higher than the RCMP.

We Require Your Input

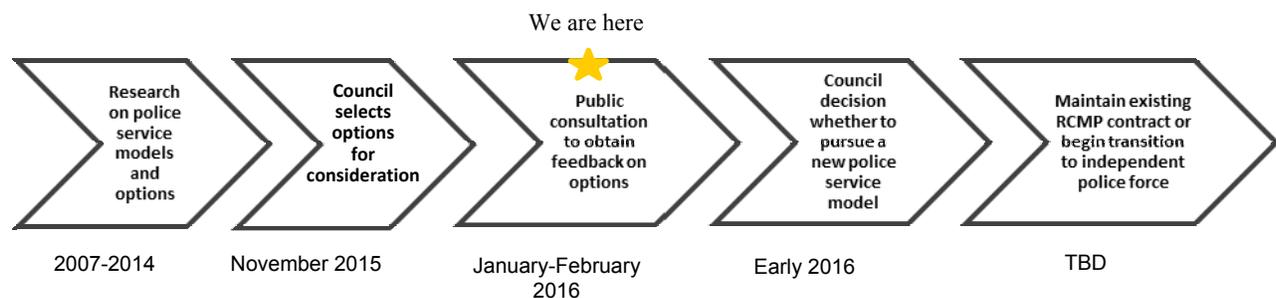
The City of Richmond wants to hear from you on this important issue.

All feedback received will be compiled, summarized and presented to City Council prior to Council making a decision on a future model for police services.

There are many ways you can share your comments:

- Complete the feedback form.
- Visit www.LetsTalkRichmond.ca to fill out the feedback form online.
- Written submissions may be sent to the City of Richmond via email to policingconsult@richmond.ca, or by mail to Law and Community Safety Division, 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond BC V6Y 2C1.
- Submissions must be received by Monday, February 29, 2016, to be included in a report to City Council on public feedback.
- The City will also be undertaking public polling of Richmond residents on this issue to ensure a broad sample of community feedback is received.

The following graphic provides an overview of the consultation and decision-making process.



Who Should Participate

- Richmond residents and taxpayers.
- Business owners and business tenants.
- People who are employed in Richmond or enrolled in post-secondary studies in Richmond.
- Representatives of community groups, agencies or organizations with a direct interest in policing in Richmond.



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