



Minister's Decision:

City of Surrey's Police Model Transition

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

July 19, 2023



Minister's Decision

- The Minister has made a decision under s. 2 of the *Police Act*:
 - As the City has failed to meet the mandatory requirements to safely go back to the RCMP
 - And to ensure an adequate and effective level of policing in Surrey, and province-wide
 - And prevent a potential crisis in policing in Surrey
 - The City must continue moving forward with its transition to the Surrey Police Service.



Background

- Sections 3(2) and 15 of *Police Act* require municipalities greater than 5,000 population to provide policing by one of three models:
 - establishing their own municipal police department,
 - contracting with a municipality that has a municipal police department, or
 - contracting for RCMP municipal police services.
- The Minister has a broad statutory responsibility to ensure an adequate and effective level of policing is maintained throughout the province (s. 2 of the *Police Act*).

Background

- The Minister previously approved (February 2020) Surrey City Council's 2018 decision to change its police model away from the RCMP to the Surrey Police Service (SPS).
- Transition of this scope and size is unprecedented and required the collective efforts of several levels of government.



Review Process





Review of Requirements to retain RCMP

- Stability of SPS is not ensured – no plan to prevent SPS officers departing en masse when going back to RCMP
- RCMP emergency plans will draw officers from other communities, specialized units – such as major crimes, organized crime and BC Highway Patrol, and officers from Surrey police programs
- RCMP's re-staffing strategy was not validated & is substantively unchanged
 - Proposes to re-staffing Surrey RCMP at the expense of other BC RCMP resourcing needs.
- The issues identified are not a reflection of the quality of the RCMP and their dedicated officers. These findings are regarding the RCMP's corporate ability to staff critical positions.

RCMP Staffing Challenges

- RCMP historically challenged to produce the required number of officers to address attrition and growth, nationally
- There are about 1,500 hard/soft vacancies across the BC RCMP
- Local detachments, highway patrol, federal specialized and organized crime units have concerning vacancy rates that impact officer well-being and can diminish public safety and public confidence in the police.
- More RCMP officers are retiring or leaving the RCMP than are graduating from depot
 - 638 cadets graduating this year, compared to 842 retiring or leaving.
- RCMP also needing to respond to population growth and experiencing other demands (e.g., wildfires, protests, etc.)
- RCMP does tremendous work, but is overstretched.

Surrey Police Service – Current State

- Transition to SPS is well advanced with SPS integrated into BC's policing landscape:
 - SPS is now the 2nd largest municipal police agency:
 - Employs 400 sworn officers and support staff
 - Is now providing front-line policing for 50% of calls in the jurisdiction
 - SPS recruit training included in JIBC's Police Academy multi-year planning
 - SPS Police Board in place since 2020



Transition Steps to SPS

- Provincial oversight and approval of SPS' hiring plans
- Continued SPS recruitment and hiring
- Appointment of BC RCMP Senior Transition Leader for Surrey
- Appointment of Strategic Implementation Advisor



Strategic Implementation Advisor

- Jessica McDonald has been appointed by the Minister
- Leader in organizational change, negotiation, dispute resolution, driving reform
- Her work experience includes Deputy Minister to the Premier of British Columbia (2003-2009) and President and CEO of BC Hydro (2014-2017) and serves on corporate boards.



Misconceptions

“Concerns of officer experience and SPS’ ability to deliver effective policing for Surrey”

- SPS is the second-largest municipal police department in BC
- SPS officers have significant experience
- Concerns about RCMP ability to maintain capacity

“JIBC can't train enough recruits/SPS will steal from municipal police departments”

- SPS recruitment needs are factored into the Justice Institute's Police Academy planning
- The Police Academy has been able to meet all of the SPS's seat requests to date.

“Going to SPS will increase costs for other cities that use the RCMP”

- RCMP costs increase for cities each year
- **We do not expect costs to be passed on to other cities - unless there is a net decrease in RCMP officers in BC**



Next Steps

- Community and policing partners have been informed of the decision.
- Engagement by the Office of the Director of Police Services and Strategic Implementation Advisor.
- Continuing to work with federal government to address RCMP vacancies to support over-extended RCMP officers
- Proposal for legislative reforms in Fall 2023 to prevent a situation like this from happening again



Questions?