

# Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia

Special Committee on Reforming the  
Police Act



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
*of* BRITISH COLUMBIA

# Introduction

Unless specified otherwise, use of the terms to “police” and “policing” refer to the delivery of police services in general rather than to specific police departments or detachments.

The Committee’s recommendations focus on systems and structures and are not a comment on the work of individual police officers or specific police departments or detachments.

Committee Members recognize the challenging work performed by police officers and the need to provide them with the tools, structure, and support to achieve the vision set out in our report.

# Introduction: Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act

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Appointed July 8, 2020

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10 Members representing all 3  
official parties

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Mandate to undertake a broad  
inquiry on policing and public  
safety



# Consultation Process

## Consulted widely over 15 months

- Met with a range of agencies, service providers, and individuals
- Accepted written submissions
  - 411 individuals and organizations made submissions and presentations
- Confidential survey
  - 1,432 respondents

# Key Themes: Local Government Perspective

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Governance

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Funding

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Service Delivery



# Governance

## Key issues

- Uneven levels of involvement
- Limited opportunities for local governments to advance improvements
- Municipal police boards:
  - Need for diversity and representation
  - Challenges related to mayor as chair
  - No municipal police boards in communities policed by RCMP

## Recommendation

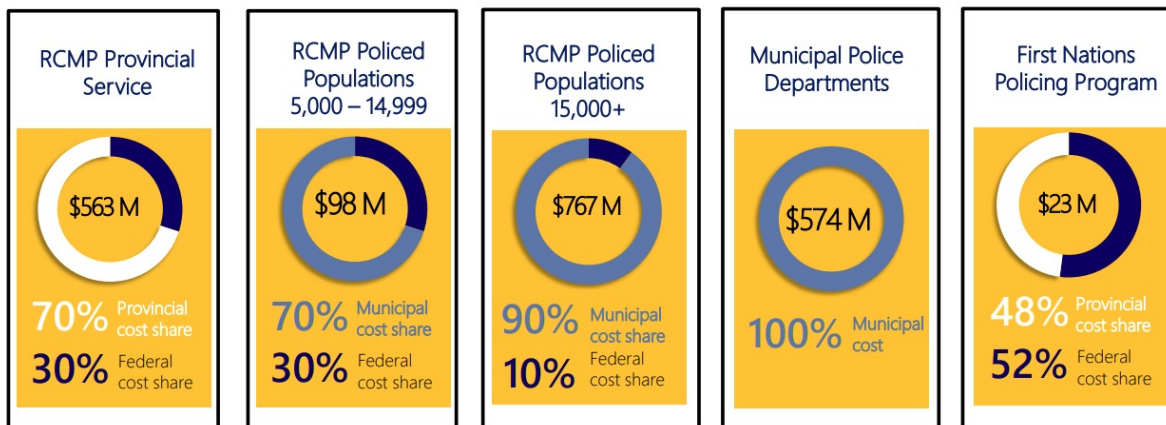
- Establish a governance model, such as municipal or regional police boards or committees, that is representative of the community and provides opportunities for local input on policing and public safety priorities
- Ensure municipal council representation on municipal police boards or committees, while not allowing the mayor to serve as board chair

# Funding

## Key issues

- Population thresholds
- Significant portion of costs paid by local government

### Cost of Policing in BC, 2019



## Recommendation

- Create a fair and equitable shared funding model for municipalities. Including:
  - Consideration of local needs, health and social supports, and the geography
  - Exploring options to phase in or incrementally increase the municipal share of policing costs



# Service Delivery

## Key issues

- Top-down approach
- Unique challenges in different communities
- Regionalization
- Concerns related to staffing:
  - short postings
  - high rates of turnover and burnout
  - difficulties with retention
- Tiered policing models

## Recommendations

- Amalgamate police services on a regional basis
- Adopt a dynamic and flexible approach to policing that provides for different categories of policing and public safety personnel who have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and functions



## Other Key Themes:

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Mental Health and Addictions

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Complex Social Issues

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Systemic Racism

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Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

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Recruitment and Training

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Oversight and Accountability

# Mental Health and Addictions

## Key issues

- Need for collaboration
- Co-response models
  - “Car programs”
- Role of civilian-led teams
  - Peer Assisted Crisis Teams
- Police as first responders to mental health crises
- Role of police under the *Mental Health Act*

## Recommendations

- Create a continuum of response to mental health, addictions and other complex social issues
  - Increasing coordination and integration across police, health, mental health, and social services.
  - Integrating mental health within 911 call options.
- Appoint an all-party parliamentary committee to undertake a broad review of the *Mental Health Act*



# Complex Social Issues

## Key issues

- Criminalization of homelessness and poverty
- Appropriateness of police response
- Prevalence of gender-based violence and sexual assault
  - Need for standards in this area

## Recommendation

- Implement and enforce provincial standards, policies, and expectations for service with respect to:
  - responding to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis
  - conducting wellness checks
  - responding to sexual assault
  - conducting trauma-informed interviews

# Systemic Racism

## Key issues

- Evidence of systemic racism
  - over-policing
  - lack of trust
- Collection of disaggregated demographic data
- Increased training and education for police officers needed

## Recommendations

- Require police services to collect and publicly report disaggregated race-based and other demographic data
- Implement mandatory and meaningful ongoing education with respect to anti-racism, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practices



# Indigenous Peoples and Reconciliation

## Key issues

- Communities are over-policed and underserved
- Challenges building relationships:
  - Mistrust
  - Lack of communication
  - Short-term nature of officer postings
- Desire for greater police presence

## Recommendation

- Ensure all Indigenous communities have direct input into their police service structure and governance, including self-administered services which could provide policing to neighbouring non-Indigenous communities.

# Recruitment and Training

## Key issues

- Training is delivered by multiple agencies
- Broader community representation
- Community-specific training
- Police culture is resistant to transformative change
- Existing training has not resulted in the desired shift in police culture

## Recommendations

- Ensure police and public safety services are representative of the diversity of the communities served
- Require police officers to complete training and education that is based on the historical, cultural, and socio-economic context of the communities in which they will be serving
- Develop benchmarks to measure the efficacy of police training and education



# Oversight and Accountability

## Key issues

- Inefficiency and duplication
- The existing system includes:
  - Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner
  - Civilian Review and Complaints Commission
  - Independent Investigations Office
  - municipal police boards
- Complaints process is dense, complicated, and intimidating

## Recommendations

- Establish a single, independent, civilian-led oversight agency
- Provide navigation and triaging services to assist complainants
- Implement a multi-stream approach to processing complaints

# Vision

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Transformational change

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11 Key Recommendations

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Rooted in decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability



# Community Safety and Policing Act

- Values of decolonization, anti-racism, community, and accountability
- Subject all police services to the same standards, requirements, and policies
- Engage Indigenous peoples and nations and municipal governments in the drafting of this legislation
- Framework for the Committee's other recommendations

# New Provincial Police Service

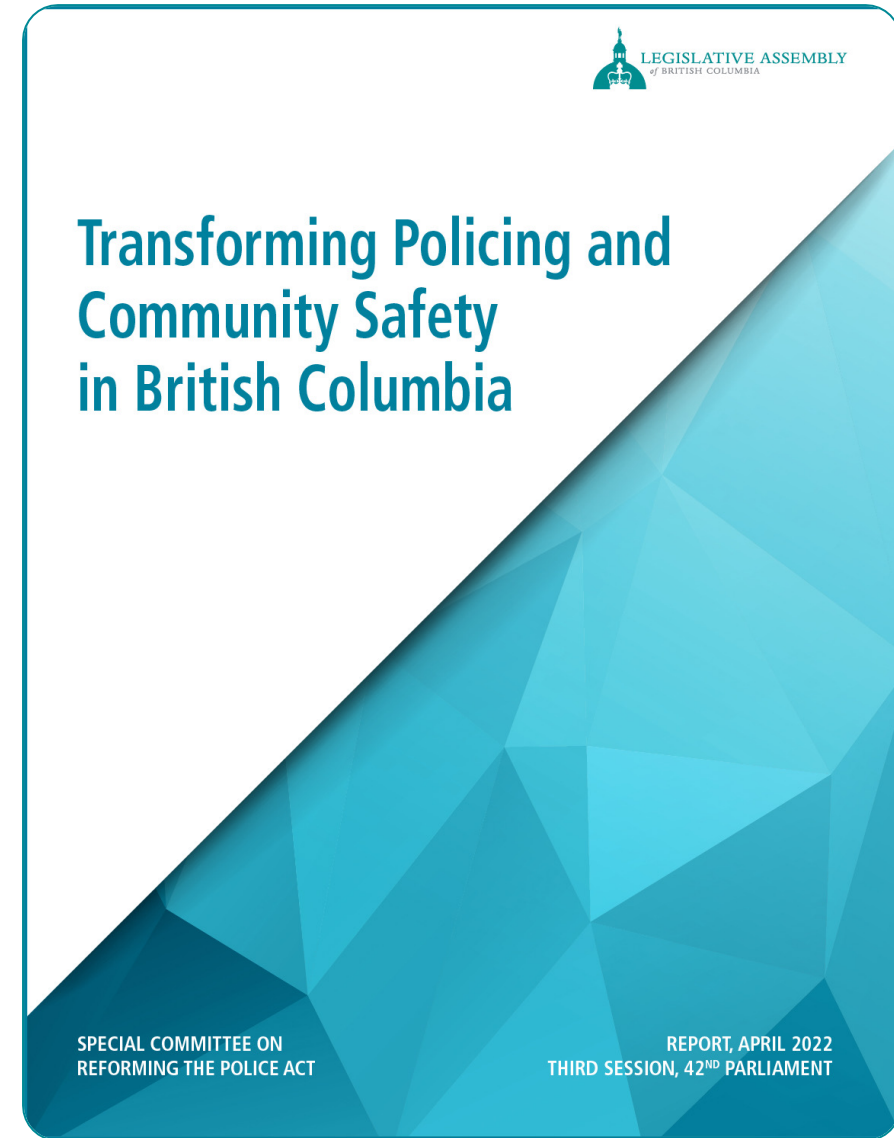
- Improve local accountability and decision-making
- Improve responsiveness and connection to the community
- Consistency of services, training, oversight, standards, and policies
- This recommendation is not a reflection on the work of individual RCMP officers - it reflects the challenges with governance and accountability with the current federal model.



# Ongoing Review and Oversight

- Recommendations will take years to realize
- Ongoing review and oversight is needed
- Establish an all-party select standing committee on policing and community safety

Thank you





# Questions?

Presenters:

Doug Routley, MLA, Nanaimo-North  
Cowichan

Dan Davies, MLA, Peace River North

Read the Committee's report:

[www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/rpa](http://www.leg.bc.ca/cmt/rpa)