

Nelson Police Department Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023

Key Direction #1: Community Communication, Engagement & Relationship

Effective community partnerships are essential to our department to better address crime and social disorder, and also to address their underlying causes. Working together, we can ensure that everyone is accountable for their own responsibilities and delivers services more efficiently by reducing duplication and fragmentation. We often join forces with other groups to address specific concerns or issues, but partnerships need to be the way we always do business in our community. This long-term approach is often the only way to find solutions to the underlying causes of crime and disorder: mental health, poverty, homelessness and substance abuse.

Since 2018, the environment in which policing operates has changed drastically, due to local, regional, national and even global events. The role of police officers has become even more complex, and at times pressured. Communities have become more open in expressing their concerns and dissatisfactions, in particular with regard to equity and racial justice. These trends require an even stronger commitment to external communications, to active listening, and to effective partnerships with various groups, to maintain, or in some cases rebuild, trust in local policing.

1.1 Improve External Communication with the Community and our Policing Partners

- Explore and enhance multiple avenues of communication targeted to various community audiences, such as: Indigenous, youth, LGBTQ2S+, multi-cultural groups, faith-based groups, vulnerable and marginalized individuals, elderly, new immigrants.
- Develop and communicate plans to address issues of racial justice in the community.
- Maintain productive relationship with RCMP for mutual benefit and enhanced service to the community.

1.2 Build and Maintain Effective Relationships to Respond to Changing Community Needs

- Improve communication and interaction with our business community.
- Develop new partnerships with emerging diverse groups in our community, i.e., refugee groups.
- Develop relationships with those representing Indigenous, youth, LGBTQ2S+, multi-cultural groups, faith-based groups, vulnerable and marginalized individuals, elderly, new immigrants, and others to actively listen and respond to their concerns.
- Increase public awareness and access to Police Department and Police Board activities.
- Regularly recognize significant contributions from community groups and individuals.

Key Direction #2: Focusing on a Healthy and Engaged Workforce

At the heart of every successful organization is its people; this is certainly no different in policing. The sworn, civilian, and volunteer members of the Nelson Police Department (NPD), when engaged, properly trained and equipped, and provided appropriate, meaningful work opportunities and a positive work environment, will best be able to serve our community to their highest potential.

Changes in the wider world should lead to changes in how NPD members adapt their skills and approaches to each other and to the community. We have an obligation to provide our people with not only technical training, but with the soft skills training they need to deal with a changing environment.

2.1 Enhance Internal Communication

- Encourage all employees in open and supportive communication.
- Ensure multiple and varied opportunities for all staff to provide input and feedback.
- Survey all staff to gauge overall work satisfaction.

2.2 Providing Guidance, Support and Development to NPD Staff

- Facilitate and support mental health and wellness among staff.
- Provide access to professional assistance in group and individual settings.
- Develop a comprehensive training plan for NPD staff to address technical training as well as soft skills training to ensure positive interactions among staff and with the community.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for growth including secondment and promotional opportunities through successful succession planning.

Key Direction #3: Best Value for Tax Dollars

In 2017, a review of the department's operations and requirements was completed and presented to the Police Board and Nelson City Council. The review recommended a number of changes to enhance effectiveness and efficiency, many of which have been implemented. Through effective use of existing resources, we will continue to provide timely responses to calls, increased community safety and decreased traffic incidents, and increased public contact. We are committed to working with our policing and community partners to find more effective ways to address disorder and crime. Working within our annual operational budget, we will have as our primary goal to provide the citizens of Nelson the best value for tax dollars of any police department in the province, if not the country.

In our community, as in many others, there have been calls for reductions and/or elimination of police budgets. In many cases, those calling for such changes are unaware of the limitations and constraints of the NPD budget, the role of the municipality and the province in police force funding, and the jurisdictional boundaries and responsibilities that impact the ability to redirect any resources. It is our obligation to ensure that the public, the NPD members, the NPD Board, and the City Council fully understand all the factors impacting these important decisions. It remains our goal to provide the citizens of Nelson the best possible value for their tax dollars.

3.1 Increase the Visibility of Officers

- Explore multiple avenues to ensure all segments of the community are aware of and reassured by the presence of officers in the community.
- Develop new opportunities for all officers to interact with, and actively listen to, individuals and groups expressing concerns or dissatisfaction with the NPD.

3.2 More Efficient Use of Existing Staff and Resources

- Pursue flexibility in staff deployments to more efficiently serve the public.
- Maintain appropriate staffing levels through formal planning with input from NPD management, the Nelson Police Board, Nelson City Council and the Nelson Police Association.
- Communicate effectively with the community about the value of the NPD budget.
- Deliver high quality sustainable service within annual operational and capital budgets, exploring potential areas of additional revenue.
- Maintain and enhance local value-added services such as restorative justice, regional victim services, local 911 and dispatching services and reserve officers.