



**Vancouver Police Department**  
Strategic Plan

2004  
—  
2008



## Street Disorder

The City-Wide Enforcement Team (CET) implemented in April 2003 has assisted in restoring order in the Downtown Eastside (DTES), where chaos and violence generated by the open drug market once prevailed. The resource commitment for the VPD was substantial (originally 60 officers, since reduced to 48). Initial analysis has demonstrated a quantifiable reduction in disorder and open drug use. A scientifically conducted public survey found very strong support for the CET initiative, particularly among residents and businesses in the DTES. An independent research project funded by the "Vancouver Agreement" ([www.vancouveragreement.ca](http://www.vancouveragreement.ca)) will provide an in-depth evaluation of the enhanced policing, including the impact on access to health services.

In the Fall of 2003 the Department worked closely with the City and with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to assist in opening the first legal Supervised Injection Site (SIS) in North America. The project was designed to reduce the harm of disease transmission and overdose, and provide a point of contact to encourage users to begin treatment. The working relationship among the police, VCH and the City has been outstanding. Police officers working in the area now direct users to the SIS, which assists the users and helps to reduce disorder on the streets.

Over the past 10 years the City of Vancouver has changed tremendously, with significant increases in population, particularly in the Downtown/Yaletown area. The entertainment district has been revitalized, dramatically increasing the number of young people who visit the area for the nightlife, but alcohol fuels considerable public disorder. The open drug market in the Downtown Eastside generated chaos and violence and considerable police resources had to be diverted from other services to restore order to a community in distress. The increase in the "scavenger economy" has resulted in considerable upset in the Downtown Business District and the West End, where petty crime, aggressive pan handling, and the introduction of "crystal meth" have generated unprecedented community concern. A considerable coordinated effort will be required, including adequate police resources, to reverse the deterioration in the quality of life in the northwest area of the city.

## Organized Public Disorder and Security Concerns

The VPD Emergency and Operational Planning Section (EOPS) has seen its workload increase with the state of world and local affairs. There were approximately 400 special events in 1993. In 1999, there were 1,889 special events. EOPS prepared policing plans for 1,791 events in 2001 and 2,294 events in 2002.

The size of the demonstrations and the number of police resources required has also increased. In 2001 there were 130 demonstrations, and in 2002 there were 159 demonstrations. One anti-Provincial Government demonstration attracted 25,000 participants who walked through city streets. Other issues include squatters in various city parks, and the increased security concerns following September 11th, 2001.

## Gangs and Guns

There has been an increase in the number of firearm related incidents and firearm seizures in Vancouver over the past several years. In 2002, 94% of all firearms seized in Vancouver originated from the United States, and 60% of those firearms originated from Washington State. In 2003, 97% of all firearms seized originated from the United States, with 54% coming from Washington State.

In 2002 there were 41 firearms seized by the Vancouver Police Department; this number increased 20% to 49 firearms seized by the VPD in 2003. Handguns have accounted for 78% of the firearms seized over the past two years. Suspects associated to organized crime accounted for 41% of the firearm seizures in 2002 and 31% of the seizures in 2003.

In the first five months of 2004 there were 66 confirmed incidents involving firearms in the City of Vancouver. The trend in Vancouver shows that most of the weapons are originating from the United States, most of them are high quality handguns, and many of them end up in the hands of people with ties to organized crime. Another trend is the large number of firearm incidents that have been occurring in and around bars and nightclubs. The VPD is committed to working with our Canadian and U.S. partner agencies to curb these disturbing trends.



## 6.3 Community Policing Survey



Constables Kevin Critchley & Kevin Bernardin

In 1998, the Vancouver Police Department commissioned a tracking survey to accomplish two goals:

- Analyze the effectiveness of police services
- Identify areas of improving and declining service

This benchmark community attitude survey was repeated in 2000 and again in 2002 to facilitate comparisons of changing community perceptions. Telephone interviews were conducted with residents across the City. The 2002 Residential survey results noted consistent attitudes with the previous 1998 and 2000 Residential surveys (See figure 4).

Figure 4: City Wide Perceptions

### Community Perceptions of Vancouver Police Officers and Police Department Personnel for the City as a Whole



## Advancing Community Action

In general, the majority of residents said that ordinary citizens could get more involved in dealing with crime or safety issues. In particular, more than half of residents were willing to volunteer to help with programs designed to deal with crime or safety issues. Respondents were asked if they had contacted an agency or public official, other than the police, to discuss crime or nuisance problems in the City of Vancouver within the last 12 months. On average, less than a tenth of all respondents had done so. As well, more than 12% of the all respondents had attended a meeting of neighbours in their immediate block to discuss crime or nuisance problems.