

# Vancouver Police Department

## 2009 Action Plan

*November 2009*

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The Vancouver Police Department (VPD), under the leadership of Chief Clifford Cook has established the following set of five priorities as the foundation of its Action Plan for 2009/2010:

- 1. Increase transparency**
- 2. Increase accountability at all levels of the agency**
- 3. Enhance training programs to improve accountability and police services**
- 4. Organizational performance under territorial command**
- 5. Enhancing core and specialty services**

These priorities have been identified through an evaluation of best practices from Washington law enforcement agencies, evaluating the effectiveness of department policy and processes, and hearing from the community, officers, the Vancouver Police Officers Guild (VPOG) and command staff on how we can better equip the department to provide the highest quality law enforcement services to our community.

The Action Plan addresses specific issues that staff members from all levels of the department have identified as important, and presents action items to address those issues in approximately the next 12 months. The Action Plan is a supplement to the department Business Plan, which identifies longer-term goals and objectives.

To report on where we are to date, the following actions have been implemented over the last 12 months in an effort to improve internal and external communications, staffing and leadership/professional development:

- 1. To improve VPD's **Internal Communications**, we:**
  - Distributed regular Chief's e-mail messages to all department members
  - Established an Internal Affairs (IA) review work group with representation from VPOG and Command Union
  - Held monthly department-wide VANSTAT meetings
  - Extending open door policy through bi-monthly , individual meetings with personnel
  - Regular Command Updates on designated training days
- 2. To improve VPD's **External Communications**, we:**
  - Established quarterly meetings with Columbian staff
  - Established quarterly Community Forums
  - Established Neighborhood Police Officers (NPO)
  - Implemented the Neighbors on Watch (NOW) program
  - Created the Chief's Diversity Committee, and initiated meetings
  - Chief's message on VPD website
  - Increased number of presentations from Chief to community groups.

3. To improve **staffing** levels and efficiency, we:
  - Standardized selection process for all specialty units including representation from the Office of the Chief and HR
  - Rotated 25 police officers back to patrol to support core services and reduce overtime
  - Obtained grant funding for 3 new officer positions, and 7 grant-funded programs:
    - Auto-theft Task Force
    - Safe Streets Task Force
    - Sex Offender tracking
    - DUI and Traffic Safety programs
    - Diversity recruiting
    - \$425,000 JAG grant for equipment to improve services
4. To improve **Leadership and Professional Development**, we:
  - Included line staff members as subject matter experts in the policy development process and are currently involved in new policy making decisions.
  - Continued a Territorial Command structure designed to encourage and permit staff to problem-solve in their respective areas of responsibility.
  - Developed a master training plan to better address the career development needs of staff, and based upon surveys completed by line level staff
  - Brought nationally recognized training programs to reach larger internal audience

Based on these five priorities, the Chief is suggesting the following Action Plan. Once implemented, we will measure our success and incorporate new feedback and information to improve the action plan for the Vancouver Police Department.

#### 1. **Increase transparency**

By increasing transparency of policy, operations and processes, VPD can improve lines of communication both internally and externally, present a clear and unambiguous view of the disciplinary and internal affairs processes, and offer greater insight on police operations, and solicit greater input by community members and officers on decision-making.

- Public dissemination of VPD's Internal Affairs policy, which will be posted on the VPD website.
- Recommending a quarterly, public report of data and statistical information on Internal Affairs Investigations with a compilation of those reports on an annual basis. Recommendation includes that these reports would be posted on the VPD website.
- Suggestion that within the quarterly reports the following case information be included: sustained, not-sustained, unfounded, and exonerated IA cases. To prevent undue criticism to our personnel, VPD will not include identifiers of involved VPD personnel or complaining party. These reports would be posted on the VPD Web site as is commonly practiced by other Washington police agencies

- *Mandatory Subject of Bargaining (MSOB)*
- Increase opportunities to share information and solicit input and recommendations from citizens by increasing the NOW Program membership, continuing quarterly community forums and increased participation in community events via precinct command.
  - *Public forum plan is drafted and implemented. Public outreach/communication includes media as part of outreach target audience.*
- Produce a quarterly program through CVTV highlighting various units of the Vancouver Police Department. First program anticipated in Fall 2009.
  - *First VPD All Access program aired October 2009.*
- Input from all levels of the organization will be required for the policy development process, audit process, command updates, and divisional and department Van Stat meetings
- Conduct command staff meetings at several VPD facilities to increase opportunities to dialog with staff at all levels.

## **2. Increase accountability at all levels of the agency**

By increasing accountability at all levels of the agency, VPD can strengthen public confidence in the department, and achieve a greater sense of fairness in employment, promotional, disciplinary, administrative processes, and critical systems

- Implement a full time audit function to conduct ongoing assessments of VPD's critical systems, policies and procedures. Act on the audit report findings and publish the department's response and results.
  - *Sergeant selected. Plan to implement in January 2010.*
- Develop and publish a complaint flow chart to ensure tracking, triaging, and resolution of complaints. Use this complaint decision making flow chart to investigate and resolve complaints at the most appropriate level within the department.
  - *Some of this will be MSOB*
- Establish and publish a Discipline Matrix which will be applied to all levels of the department.
  - *MSOB*
- Establish a standardized department recognition process to include tracking and posting of commendations by the Professional Services Unit (PSU) and posted on the VPD website
- Implement VPD civilian employee, officer, and supervisor of the year award recognizing excellence in service
- Increase the thoroughness of PSU disposition letters which are sent to complainants at the conclusion of an internal investigation. This will be used for both internal and externally generated complaints.
  - *In place and practiced.*
- Implement vehicle accident review board to identify factors causing accidents, risk management, and for training purposes and trends
  - *MSOB*
- PSU early warning review by subject matter experts for training purposes and identifying trends. Enhance the early warning review to include use of force incidents and other key indicators of potential concern. Divisional command of the involved employee will be included in the early warning review process

- Continue to manage overtime costs. In 2008 VPD decreased overtime use by \$663,000 and reduced their use to 5.1% of personnel costs

### **3. Enhance training programs to improve accountability and police services**

A team of highly trained professionals is the earmark of effective law enforcement. Having the proper training programs and resources in place will improve expertise throughout the agency, and ensure efficient use of training dollars.

- Training Advisory Committee Established to evaluate the department's training curriculum and provide strategic recommendations to improve training programs. The advisory board will be made up of law enforcement and education professionals, risk management and human resources professionals, and community business representatives. Suggested implementation Fall 2009.
  - *Training Advisory Committee consists of five community/business members and three VPD staff.*
  - *First meeting held September 23, 2009 to develop the purpose of the committee and provide them with an overview of VPD Training.*
  - *Second meeting scheduled for October 28, 2009 to go over plans to renovate Training – the training VPD delivers, how it is delivered, and the use of a variety of delivery channels. The group will also look at the tentative first quarter 2010 Training Schedule.*
  - *After the October meeting, the group will meet quarterly – starting in January 2010 to review the renovation of Training and solicit advice on other changes or how to best implement changes.*
- Broaden the scope of the performance evaluations to include a professional development component. Ensure that the professional development component is forwarded to the training unit to identify and facilitate future training courses
- Update Master Training Plan to include a more global approach to training programs for both sworn and civilian staff. Offer elective style courses to include supervisory and leadership courses
- Ensure that mandated training, hosted classes, on-line training, career development courses and high liability training are posted, updated, and currently listed on the training schedule
- Increase the number of hosted courses at VPD to minimize travel related expenses and provide training opportunities to more members of the department
- Continue research into innovative ways to deliver training on line to the department (i.e. FBI Virtual Academy, Webinar, and CVTV, video conferencing)
- Clearly identify State and department mandated training programs

### **4. Organizational Performance under Territorial Command**

Alignment of resources to most effectively address critical crime and livability issues under the territorial command structure is vital to effective community policing and efficient use of tax dollars.

- Enhance current core services of traffic enforcement by redeploying traffic officers back to patrol and reinstating the motor unit

- Institute an expanded serious injury and fatality traffic collision investigations team through a collateral duty assignment also providing greater career development opportunities for personnel
- Deploy resources to highest prioritized areas of need as determined through crime analysis and Van Stat
- Expand Community policing programs such as NOW, Cadets/interns, and volunteer opportunities
- Expand investigative function at the precinct level to include an effective property crimes response, dependent on staffing and funding.

**5. Enhancing core and specialty services.**

Identify funding sources to expand core and specialty service delivery consistent with community needs and expectations.

- Seek grant opportunities through federal and state stimulus programs which may include funding for staffing, training, technology, and equipment
  - VPD was recently awarded a COPS Hiring Recovery Program (CHRP) grant award for 10 officer positions for an estimated amount of federal funds to be awarded over the three-year grant period is \$2,582,710.00.
  - We have 2 additional grants in process which we are awaiting decisions on which would fund additional Gang Detectives (which would include a CCSO compliment) and additional grant funding for civilian support positions (PST's).
- Continue to enhance cost recovery programs for police services at all levels of the organization whenever possible

We will be reporting on our progress on a quarterly basis. Any questions regarding this plan can be directed the office of Chief Clifford Cook at 360-487-7473.