

The Surrey Police Board is a non-partisan independent oversight body with legislated authority to hire a chief, submit an annual budget to Council for approval, establish all operational and administrative policies for the SPS, and investigate Service or Policy complaints made against SPS.

The Board is made up of 8 appointments (7 provincial appointments and 1 municipal appointment) and the Mayor of the Municipality sits as Chair as established in the Police Act. The Chair does not vote except in the case of a tie. All but the Mayor are appointed through an Order in Council by Provincial Cabinet.

The Board is not responsible for, nor does it have oversight of the work of City of Surrey or the RCMP during the transition phase. The sole purpose of the Board is to have oversight of the development of SPS in the areas of human resources, budgeting and financial planning, policy development, strategic plan and risk management.

Surrey RCMP continue to have operational command of policing during this first phase of the policing transition. All contact information to report crime or request policing service remains the same: 604-599-0502 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency); www.surreyrcmp.ca

Brief Overview to Date

- The Province of BC established the Surrey Police Board in June 2020.
- Surrey Police Service (SPS) was established by the Surrey Police Board on August 6, 2020.
- A Chief was hired in December 2020.
- The Board and the Chief assumed control of the structure and development of SPS and did not commit to any particular dates related to becoming fully operational.
- Surrey Police Union has been certified to represent SPS police officers, and the first [collective agreement](#) has been ratified. CUPE 402 represents SPS civilian employees.
- The first group of SPS officers were operationally deployed in November 2021, marking the beginning of Surrey's phased, integrated policing transition. Additional groups of SPS officers are now being deployed every two months, working alongside the Surrey RCMP.
- As of mid-July 2022, 237 police officers and 52 civilian employees have been hired, making SPS the third largest municipal police agency in BC (soon to be second largest).
- SPS's first group of 14 new recruits are currently training at the JIBC Police Academy. The second group of 14 recruits will start at the JIBC in the fall of 2022.
- The joint SPS-RCMP Human Resources Strategy and Plan sets out the deployment and demobilization numbers up to May 2023. By May 2023, SPS will have a total of 295 officers deployed; and the Surrey RCMP will demobilize up to 195 officers during that timeframe.
- The Province capped hiring to ensure stability in the region. The Board and SPS agreed with the Province and have reached all targets for hiring both new and experienced police officers.

- Mayor and Council cannot direct the operations of SPS nor make changes to the City's policing model without the approval of the Province.
- The provincial government has supported the transition since before the Board was established. From establishing its own Policing Transition Secretariat (to inform future transitions) to participating on the Surrey Police Transition Trilateral Committee to approving a hiring cadence for 2022, government officials continue to work with SPS and the Board to ensure a smooth transition from a contracted policing model to a municipal one.

Surrey Police Transition Trilateral Committee (SPTTC)

The federal, provincial and municipal governments established the Surrey Policing Transition Trilateral Committee (SPTTC) in 2020. The SPTTC is tasked with guiding and supporting the development, negotiation and implementation of a phased transition of policing services in Surrey.

The SPTTC is made up of senior representatives from the three levels of government: Assistant Deputy Ministers from the Government of Canada and the Province of BC, and the City Manager from the City of Surrey. The RCMP, SPS and the Board also participate in an "ex officio" capacity. The SPTTC supports key decision making throughout the transition, however it does not replace the legislated powers of provincial government who has ultimate decision-making authority on policing in BC.

The SPTTC is supported by a Working Group and obtains subject matter expertise to plan and implement transition activities. There are dozens of experts in HR, law, finance, policing and project management from all levels of government who are working collaboratively to ensure government decision makers have the information required to continue implementing a timely and effective transition.

Deployment

Surrey Police Service deployed its first members alongside the RCMP in November 2021. Additional cohorts of experienced officers are deployed on a bi-monthly basis in alignment with the overall joint SPS-RCMP Human Resources Strategy and Plan. The majority of SPS officers are deployed to Frontline policing, with some in Investigative Services and Community Services positions.

When people call for police service, they may see an officer from the Surrey RCMP or SPS (or both). Surrey RCMP will dispatch the officer who is closest and available to the complainant's location. SPS police officers are in SPS uniforms, which has not caused any confusion in the public. SPS has ordered vehicles, which will be branded specific to SPS and deployed in the near future. Anecdotally, SPS has been met with positive support from the community when attending calls and engaging the public.

As of July 25, 2022, 120 SPS officers have been deployed in Surrey, with more deployments coming every two months. By May 2023, SPS will have 295 officers deployed.

The next phase of the transition deals with the transfer of Police of Jurisdiction status, giving the SPS command of policing in Surrey. The SPTTC, through its subject matter experts, is developing the most appropriate model for transition that will ensure no disruption in services. The timeframe will be established by the SPTTC in the coming months.

Costs

Likely the most-debated issue, it is important to understand who has control of what costs and how those costs are reported publicly – and what the facts are.

The Board has control of and reports publicly on \$72.5M or 37% of the overall City of Surrey police operations budget. As of July, the SPS budget is underspend by \$7.5M. The remainder of police operations budget, or \$122.3M, includes RCMP contract billings and City-managed civilian support services (transcription, call takers, etc.) which is managed by the City of Surrey and is reported publicly on a quarterly basis. The Board does not have access to any of the details related to this portion of the budget except for what is reported publicly by the City of Surrey.

The one-time budget of \$63.7M was established by City Council to support infrastructure development for SPS including Information Technology (IT), the purchase of new equipment and one-time staffing costs such as for the Transition Recruiting Unit. To date, the one-time budget is underspent due to timing on significant capital purchases related to IT. It is anticipated these monies will be spent by end of year. The one-time budget increased from original projections due to a decision by the City to build the IT infrastructure from new rather than using aging technology that currently exists.

The Board is accountable to the public with respect to its share of the budget and reports out on these costs on a monthly basis (with the exception of August). To date, SPS is on track with its budget and hiring for 2022 and 2023 hiring is anticipated to remain on target due to the continued interest of both experienced officers and new recruits in coming to Surrey. The Board financial reports can be found at surreypoliceboard.ca/news-publications.

As it relates to costs for the transition time is of the essence. While it is necessary to ensure the transition is done right, not fast, the longer the transition takes the more costly to the City of Surrey as it will be required to carry two policing administrative overheads. Once SPS reaches Police of Jurisdiction, the RCMP should be required to demobilize its detachment-level administrative work.

Benefits of a Municipal Policing Model

Surrey is the largest city in Canada without an independent police service. There are a number of reasons why municipalities such as Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Toronto choose to have their own municipal police service, instead of contracting the RCMP to provide policing services. Ultimately, the choice to have a municipal police agency is about increased accountability and responsiveness, rather than focusing on costs savings that come with a contracted service. While the cost is often slightly higher to a municipality, the benefits of municipal policing are significant:

- **Modern Police Training & Equipment:** Police officers are trained in modern practices that emphasize de-escalation and are provided with the most up-to-date equipment including less lethal use of force options. National training and related equipment is less agile to meet the changing expectations of the public as it relates to use of force – particularly where it impacts vulnerable populations (Indigenous persons, those living with mental health and addiction issues and the homeless).
- **Surrey-specific Training:** Police officers who are trained in the specific needs of Surrey and its various communities, as opposed to training for officers serving all across Canada.

- **Consistent Staffing Levels:** The 10% federal subsidy brings with it a cost to Surrey. Up to 10% or 73 RCMP members can be redeployed from Surrey to deal with provincial and federal policing needs (i.e., fires, blockades and protests, government summits, etc.). Under SPS, staffing levels will be consistent and appropriate for Surrey’s public safety needs, with any vacancy trends reported to the board on a monthly basis. If there are urgent provincial policing needs and resources are requested, officers would only be deployed if approved by the Chief Constable.
- **Transparency:** Independent municipal police have greater transparency as it relates to monthly expenditures, public complaints, and collective agreements. Comparable information is not posted publicly by RCMP detachments.
- **Surrey-specific Policies:** Policies and practices are developed specifically for Surrey, instead of national policy that does not consider community demographics, needs or expectation.
- **Longevity & Relationships:** The vast majority of Surrey Police officers will stay in Surrey for the duration of their policing careers, which will translate to more meaningful and long-lasting relationships with the community and our partners.
- **Respectful Workplace:** SPS is built on a foundation of compassion and wellness and will not tolerate bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, or toxic work environments.
- **Nimble & Responsive:** SPS will procure equipment and technologies to improve policing at the local level (drones, body worn cameras, etc.), instead of going through a lengthy national process. Policing models and strategies can also be changed quickly, based on the public safety needs and expectation of the community.
- **Local Control:** The Board will have full control of the type of policing model required in Surrey, including tiered policing using Community Safety Officers and Auxiliary Officers which are currently not allowed in the contracted service.
- **Civilian oversight:** the SPS are subject to oversight by a local police board and by the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner. Locally based and responsive, publicly accountable oversight serves to build and maintain trust and confidence in the police officers serving the community. Public Safety Committees in RCMP-policed communities do not have legislative powers and cannot direct policy or budget development.