

NO: P006

DATE: May 6, 2019

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## **PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**TO: Mayor & Council**

**DATE: May 3, 2019**

**FROM: Assistant Commissioner  
Officer in Charge, Surrey RCMP**

**FILE: 7400-01**

**SUBJECT: Police Mental Health Outreach Team**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Surrey RCMP recommends that the Public Safety Committee receive this report for information.

## **INTENT**

This report is intended to provide the Public Safety Committee with information on the Surrey RCMP's new Police Mental Health Outreach Team ("PMHOT").

## **BACKGROUND**

Police across Canada are increasingly called upon to deal with situations where a mental health component is manifest. Quite often, these calls for service result from the convergence of a multitude of underlying social issues (e.g., mental health, addictions, homelessness, etc). To contribute to addressing these persistent social issues, the Surrey RCMP has developed different strategies and specialized teams to not only provide emergency response and enforcement functions where needed, but also to partner with other agencies to provide timely intervention to connect people with support services.

In 2000, the Surrey RCMP launched the Car 67 program in partnership with Fraser Health Authority Mental Health & Addictions Services. This initiative paired police officers with mental health nurses in a first responder capacity to attend police calls for service involving a mental health component to provide specialized intervention. Car 67 initially was deployed 12 hours a day (from 2 pm to 2 am), but over time was expanded to provide 24/7 coverage.

In 2011, a new Mental Health Liaison Officer ("MHLO") position was added. The MHLO worked independently of Car 67, focusing on strengthening working relationships with health professionals in the Fraser Health Region, and attending to the needs of repeat (longer term) clients and/or high-risk situations related to chronic mental health issues. This position complemented the Car 67 operations by coordinating and enhancing information sharing, training and case management strategies among police and partners. At this time the

Neighbourhood Liaison Units also partnered with community service agencies to conduct outreach to vulnerable populations in an effort to facilitate access to services and healthier lifestyles and accommodations.

In 2014, the service delivery model was modified further with the formation of a Vulnerable Persons Section (“VPS”) which brought together the Missing Persons Unit (“MPU”), the Domestic Violence Unit (“DVU”) and the Police Mental Health Intervention Unit (“PMHIU”) under one business line. In 2016 the VPS was expanded to include a Special Victims Unit (SVU) and at the same time the PMHIU was enhanced to strengthen outreach activities by way of involvement in the two Mental Health Assertive Community Treatment Teams (“ACTT”) in Surrey.

In 2017, the Surrey Outreach Team (“SOT”) was created as part of the City Centre Response Plan to address the urgent need to manage public safety issues in the 135A Street area related to the homeless camp (tent city) that had emerged. The SOT was developed to collaboratively address public safety and public health challenges in the City Centre by enhancing area maintenance, case management and enhanced services. The SOT, comprised of 16 RCMP Members and 4 Bylaw Officers working out of a site on 135A Street, led the overall area management and were responsible for dealing with criminal behaviour, keeping the area clean, and ensuring the general well-being of individuals in the area. However, they also worked closely with other partners (Lookout, Fraser Health, BC Housing) to address long term needs of the local clientele.

In June of 2018, the Rapid Response Housing phase of the City Centre Response Plan was actioned and the City, with full support from the Surrey RCMP and community partners, successfully transitioned the residents of 135A Street from tents into shelters and transitional accommodation units (temporary modular homes).

## **DISCUSSION**

Once the Rapid Response Housing phase was complete and all former tent residents of 135A Street were moved into more stable housing, the SOT focused its attention to maintaining stability of the area and supporting clients in and around the transitional/temporary housing locations. They also turned their attention to other areas where homeless encampments had surfaced (i.e., displacement), while at the same time enhancing outreach to other vulnerable client groups at the street level (i.e., where they had a visible public presence).

This presented an opportunity to revisit and enhance the Surrey RCMP Detachment’s service delivery model with respect to targeted outreach to vulnerable populations and persons dealing with homelessness, addictions and/or mental health issues; while building off the successes of previous approaches to ensure public safety and security of marginalized persons not just only in the City Centre area, but across all Surrey communities.

The Surrey RCMP amalgamated the former SOT and PMHIU into a new PMHOT that became operational in March 2019. The new Unit continues to provide specialized mental health support (via Car 67 and the Mental Health Liaison and Treatment team functions), but also maintains a focus on targeted outreach to support interventions in homelessness and addictions.

The PMHOT will work collaboratively with partners to develop integrated strategies to address crime, community concerns and personal crisis in an inclusive manner. This will be achieved through a combination of community engagement, crime prevention, crime reduction strategies

and collaborative problem solving, based on a four pillars approach: engagement, education, intelligence and enforcement.

PMHOT Objectives:

- Enhance the Car 67 program to provide immediate intervention and support to mental health related calls for service;
- Maintain oversight and proactive engagement in the immediate area surrounding modular housing locations and homeless shelters;
- Gather intelligence on new camp locations (i.e., evidence of displacement);
- Conduct selective enforcement and patrols of emerging encampments or other problematic areas and individuals identified through intelligence and crime analysis/trends;
- Engage locals/vulnerable persons in an effort to facilitate referrals and develop individualized action plans aimed at transitioning them from the street into available facilities/services;
- Develop and maintain partnerships with members of the community agencies and other stakeholders to bring about solutions to related community issues and concerns regarding nuisance and criminal behavior;
- Assist in the development, implementation and coordination of initiatives with the Surrey RCMP Community Response Units, other detachment units, and external partners (including multi-agency situation tables and case management teams); and
- Complement and support all other policing services by providing a visible and accessible uniformed presence to improve the quality of life in the community and offer greater public reassurance.

Anticipated outcomes from the amalgamation:

- Enhanced outreach throughout Surrey;
- Improved subject matter expertise by cross-training all unit members in mental health, addictions and homelessness intervention;
- Improved awareness/knowledge of individuals in crisis and enhanced relationships with this specific clientele; and
- Enhanced community, partner agency and organizational communication.

### **Mobile Street Enforcement Team**

The Detachment also recently introduced another unit specializing in targeted outreach and enforcement activities in known hot spots and problem areas. The Surrey Mobile Street Enforcement Team (“MSET”) conducts pro-active enforcement activities to address issues such as nuisance crime and social chronic offenders through project-based policing. Using primarily bike and foot beat patrols, MSET maintains a high degree of visibility and accessibility with the public.

#### Roles & Responsibilities:

- Provide a highly visible presence throughout the City;
- Conduct selective enforcement and investigation of problematic areas and individuals identified through intelligence and crime analysis/trends;
- Develop and maintain partnerships with members of the community, units within Surrey RCMP, various agencies, and other stakeholders to bring about solutions to community issues, concerns, and problems;
- Develop and employ operational plans and initiatives; and
- Assist in the development, implementation, and coordination of initiatives with various levels of leadership.

Since its launch in May of 2018, MSET has made significant contributions to public safety. While deployed to areas across the City, MSET has sustained a visible presence in District 1 (Whalley/City Centre) for over 53 weeks. Outcomes from MSET activities since its inception include:

- 7214 persons checked;
- 475 arrests;
- 155 Street checks conducted;
- 852 self-generated files opened and investigated;
- 155 persons arrested on outstanding Court Warrants; and
- 87 Court packages forwarded to Crown Counsel proposing 155 separate charges.

#### **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The implementation of the Police Mental Health Outreach Team supports the Sustainability Charter 2.0 theme of Public Safety. Specifically, it supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DO”):

- Public Safety DO1: Residents are safe and have a strong sense of security in all neighbourhoods and throughout the City;
- Public Safety DO2: Police and fire services provide timely and reliable responses across the City;
- Public Safety DO3: There are minimal community safety issues in the city, and the public is fully engaged in preventing and reducing crime;
- Public Safety DO4: Local residents and businesses are connected and engaged within their neighbourhoods and with the broader community - including police, public safety partners and social service agencies - to enhance safety; and
- Public Safety DO5: Surrey is recognized and perceived as a leader in establishing and maintaining collaborative partnerships for community safety and well-being.

## CONCLUSION

The Surrey RCMP's Police Mental Health Outreach Team is committed to working in partnership with other health and social service agencies to provide ongoing support to vulnerable persons dealing with homelessness, addictions, and mental health issues.



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Surrey RCMP