

# Amherst

NOVA SCOTIA



## Amherst Police Department 2025-2030 Strategic Plan





# Introduction

---

Policing plays a critical role in maintaining public safety, protecting citizens, and upholding the rule of law.

As crime patterns evolve and communities grow, it is essential for law enforcement agencies to adapt their strategies to meet new challenges.

A well-defined policing strategy not only helps in reducing crime but also fosters community trust, improves officer effectiveness, and ensures equitable treatment for all individuals.

This strategy seeks to blend proactive measures with responsive tactics, emphasizing the importance of community engagement, data-driven decision-making, and resource allocation.

By focusing on prevention, collaboration, and innovation, we aim to create a safer and more inclusive environment for both officers and citizens.

Through continuous assessment and adaptation, the goal is to ensure that policing remains responsive to the needs of the community while upholding justice and ensuring equity and fairness to all.

# Key Components of the Policing Strategy

---

## Community Engagement

Foster strong partnerships with community members to build trust, encourage cooperation, and address local concerns.

## Data-Driven Decision Making

Utilize crime analytics and intelligence to inform resource deployment, targeting high-crime areas, and tracking trends.

## Proactive Policing

Focus on preventing crime before it occurs through education, outreach programs, and early intervention strategies.

## Resource Allocation

Ensure optimal use of law enforcement resources, with a focus on efficiency and effectiveness in addressing specific needs.

## Officer Training & Development

Equip officers with the skills and tools necessary to handle emerging challenges, including mental health crises, de-escalation techniques, and diversity training.

## Collaboration With Other Agencies

Work alongside social services, healthcare professionals, and local organizations to provide comprehensive support and tackle the root causes of crime.

## Transparency & Accountability

Maintain clear communication with the public, ensure accountability through regular evaluations, and remain responsive to community feedback.

## Innovation & Technology

Leverage technology to enhance policing efforts, from body cameras and surveillance to predictive policing models and real-time crime mapping.





# About Amherst

---

Amherst, Nova Scotia, is a charming town nestled in the northeastern part of the province, known for its rich history and picturesque landscapes.

Located near the border of New Brunswick, Amherst is often referred to as the "Gateway to Nova Scotia." It boasts a welcoming community that prides itself on its strong cultural heritage.

The town is characterized by its historic architecture, vibrant local arts scene, and a variety of outdoor activities, from hiking in nearby parks to exploring the surrounding natural beauty.

With a blend of small-town warmth and modern amenities, Amherst offers a peaceful yet dynamic atmosphere for both residents and visitors alike.





# About APD

---

The Amherst Police Department was formed in 1890, just one year after the town of Amherst was incorporated and the population was 3,781. The first Chief of Police Dennis Madden was paid \$391.51 for his first 11 months of service to the town, while his partner and Constable A.L. Jones was paid \$366.63.

For a brief period in 1897, the Police Department was reduced to only one person: Chief Madden. The town council decided that in a law-abiding community such as Amherst, there was little need for more than one police officer.

Since this time, the Police Department has grown considerably and has occupied many different locations.

The department moved out in 1963 returning again to the same location in 1967. During the years at the Prince Arthur Street location, the department grew from 3 full time members in 1937 to 16 members in 1974. In 1996 the department moved once again to 45 Victoria Street, until that location was destroyed by a fire.

The Amherst Police Department moved to it's present location in 2015.

Over the years, the department evolved and grew to keep up with the demands and needs of the community, adapting to new problems and expanding police training with new technology and investigative techniques.

Currently the Amherst Police Department has an authorized strength of 27 full-time members including several specialized sections and ranks. Located at 21 Havelock Street, the department has remained an important part of the town of Amherst and its history.

(Leonard Harkness (1989) History of the Amherst Police Department. Amherst NS., B.H. Publications Ltd.)



# Message from the Chair of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners

---



As Chair of the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners I am pleased to share the Town of Amherst Police Strategic Plan.

This plan is a framework that will guide the actions, priorities, and goals of our police department over the next five years. It is an essential tool for ensuring that our police department is aligned with its mission and vision while also addressing community needs, maintaining public safety, and adapting to emerging challenges.

The strategic plan serves as a blueprint for achieving long-term objectives and improving overall police services.

Over the past year we held extensive engagement opportunities with our community. Feedback from these sessions has informed our Goals and Actions moving forward. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with our community partners to ensure Amherst is a safe place to live, work and play.



# Chief of Police's Message

---



As the Chief of the Amherst Police Department, I am pleased to present to you the Amherst Police Department's Strategic Plan.

Our history of policing the Town of Amherst dates back to 1890, just one year after the town was incorporated. Since its inception, our department has been committed to serving the needs of our citizens by continuously working closely with our community partners to ensure a safe and prosperous town.

Our strategic plan outlines how we will implement change and achieve set goals that are in line with our community needs. This plan outlines our priorities, goals, and actions to ensure accountability.

Our members take great pride in serving the community and our approach to ensuring the safety of our residents utilizes values we hold most dear: integrity, honesty, dedication, kindness, dignity, compassion and inclusiveness.

We rely on the relationships we have built within our community, ensuring that the priorities of the community are also our priorities which enables us to effectively work together to identify needs and implement solutions.

We continue to focus on our organization, our people, and our community to strengthen these relationships, to build and maintain public trust and confidence and to ensure the delivery of a police service that is committed to excellence. This includes utilizing effective crime prevention strategies that provide support for victims and hold offenders accountable.

As a police service, we are fortunate to have the support of our community, our Council and our local police board. All of our strategic goals are aimed at improved quality of life, a safer community and building partnerships that enhance public safety. The Amherst Police Department is committed to providing a high standard of policing services to the people of Amherst.





# Community Consultation and Engagement

---

Community consultation was key to the development of this plan. An internal review was done with the Amherst Police Department staff to review the 2012 strategic plan determining what was accomplished and what was still left to do.

There were two sessions internally with members, support staff and dispatch to ensure everyone had a say in the plan. From there we met with the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners and Amherst Town Council. In May 2024 we invited over 30 community stakeholders/partners in policing including organizations representing Indigenous persons, African Nova Scotians, members of the 2LGBTQ+ community, Immigrants and newcomers, business associations, advocacy groups, community services, health, addictions, mental health, homelessness and housing, NS legal aid, Crown prosecutor, Parole and Probation.

We also held two sessions open to the public and conducted an online survey. The information is contained in appendices A & B.  
From this feedback the strategic goals and objectives were developed.





# Our plan moving forward

---

At the core of this strategic plan is our commitment to community service. We know that strong community partnerships and public trust are key to our success.

Effective engagement and relationship building is essential in being able to serve the community, respond to crime, address public safety and maintain mutual respect.

Identifying and committing to the goals of this plan is our starting point. Completion of the goals will require support in the following areas:

## **Human Resources**

Having a full complement of well-trained staff, up to date technology and equipment is key to effective service delivery.

## **Community Collaboration and Partnerships**

Working in the context of a small community requires the trust of the public, strong allies in policing and effective partnerships with community groups to tackle the ever-increasing complexity of policing. It is also essential to work collaboratively outside our community as criminals don't respect municipal and provincial borders.

Citizens today have complex needs and with the increase in drugs, addiction, mental health issues and homelessness our police department must rely on our partnerships to assist in tackling these needs.

## **Innovation**

Communities are evolving, crime is evolving and so we must as well. Looking for innovative ways to communicate, respond to and solve these complex issues in an ongoing changing world is critical to success

## **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Every citizen has the right to belong. We must embrace our differences and ensure an environment that is free of bias, hate and racism. We will continue to seek understanding of our community recognizing that together we are stronger.



# Strategic Goals

Recruitment & Retention



Training



Community Partnership



Communication







# Recruitment & Retention

Develop a process for successful recruitment and retention of new and existing members.

## How

- Investigate other municipalities on best practices in recruitment.
- Partner with Atlantic Police Association to develop a strategy on recruitment.
- Develop APD Auxiliary Program.
- Recruit 3 Auxiliary officers this year, provide training and onboarding.
- Expand program in year 2 & 3.
- Implement a rewards and recognition program.
- Research best practices of other departments.
- Work with Community Living, Communications and HR to define process.
- Develop presentation for delivery at the Police Academy and/or at other recruitment opportunities.
- Deliver 2 presentations per year.
- Increase communicating successes through social media.
- Share to a larger audience using social media.
- Engage on other policing recruitment platforms.
- Provide on the job training for other justice programs.
- Build relationships with programs and administration.

## Who /When

APD Senior  
Management - 6 months

APD Senior  
Management, Sergeant  
Aaron Graham 8-12  
months

APD Senior  
Management, HR &  
Local 104 - 12 months

APD Senior Management  
6 months

APD Senior  
Management, Crime  
Prevention Coordinator  
On-going

APD Senior Management  
On-going



# Training

Provide training to meet the Nova Scotia training standards.

## How

- Ensure available / eligible candidates receive training in Major Case Investigations, MC Management, Digital Technologies.
- Investigate partnerships for training in, CIT Critical Incident, Mental Health & Addictions. Combine resources with other departments.
- Ensure continued education in drug and alcohol impairment programs for new recruits.
- Investigate opportunities for local training in drug investigators techniques.
- Conduct ongoing training including table top exercises for Critical Incident Response. ( Containment SARV Incident Commander Negotiator Scribe )

## Who/When

Senior Management Team  
2025-2027

Senior Management Team, All Staff  
2025-2028

Senior Management Team- On-going

Senior Management Team- On-going

Senior Management Team- 2025-2030



# Community Partnership

## Increase and retain impactful community partnerships.

### How



- Continue to develop relationships with agencies for homelessness, substance use disorder, mental health & addictions.
- Partner on new funding for Critical Incident Response Program.



- Develop Neighborhood Watch Program.
- Meet with citizens, build relationships and provide training where necessary.



- Continue participation in Critical Incident Team program.
- Mental Health collaboration.
- Build relationship with the Integrated Youth Services Site and In The Works.



- Increase awareness in programs for Crimestoppers/MADD



- Promote and engage with Autumn House Resiliency program.



- Increase communication to the public on the successes of our community partnerships.



- Continue awareness and promotion of victim services and canine support program.
- Conduct regular visits with schools, Integrated Youth Support Site, Mental Health & Addictions, and Cumberland Housing and Homelessness Association.



- Conduct joint presentations with service providers

### Who / When

Crime Prevention  
Coordinator - On-going

Crime Prevention  
Coordinator - 1-2 years

CIT Program Coordinator-  
On-going

Crime Prevention  
Coordinator - On-going

Domestic Violence  
Coordinator, Crime  
Prevention Coordinator -  
On-going

Senior Management Team,  
Crime Prevention  
Coordinator - On-going

Senior Management Team,  
Crime Prevention  
Coordinator & School  
Resource Liaison - On-going

Senior Management Team  
On-going

A photograph of a police officer in a dark blue uniform with "POLICE" on the back, walking a golden retriever on a red leash along a sidewalk. In the background, there are utility poles, trees, and a modern building.

# Communication

Increase our communications to the community.

## How



Provide regular releases to charges laid.



Set schedule to share weekly and monthly stats. Communicate successes to the public.



Identify and respond to requests for public assistance, ensure public is aware of policing capabilities.



Increase foot patrols for community engagement regarding camera registry.



Develop communication process for a Please Call Us Program. Work with communications department to get message out to the public sector.



Seek engagement from our allies and the public regularly on policing practices.

## Who/When

Chief- Crime Prevention Coordinator & Communications. On-going

Crime Prevention Coordinator - Monthly

Senior Management - Crime Prevention Coordinator & Commission - On-going

Senior Management - & Staff - One year

Senior Management - Crime Prevention Coordinator & Commission - One year

Senior Management - Crime Prevention Coordinator & Commission - On-going



# Summary



Our strategic plan is a comprehensive guide that shapes the future direction of our law enforcement agency. It ensures that the police are well-equipped to address current challenges, while also remaining proactive in addressing emerging trends.

Our plan not only focuses on improving law enforcement practices but also on fostering positive community relationships, ensuring transparency, and building trust with the public.

We commit to serving our community through an equity lens focusing on the best practices in recruitment and retention, providing relevant and essential training, enhancing our community partnerships and increasing our communication to the public on all matters related to policing and public safety.



# Strategic Plan 2012 Review

The APD planning began with a review of the previous Strategic Plan plan from 2012. This was conducted with the internal staff members of the APD. Table enclosed. A series of information sharing and consultation with the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners, Amherst Town Council, Community Stakeholders/Partners and the public at two public sessions.

The objectives set out in the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan were:

Objective	Completed	Additional Notes
Develop and implement a transition plan for the move to a new police facility. .	Yes	
Develop and implement a community engagement and communication strategy to enhance service delivery	Yes	<p>Some revisions or further development needed as it is challenging to reach certain demographics (seniors) with social media alone.</p> <p>Social Media posts can be shared, commented on which leads to different perceptions and theories, which can be unsafe.</p> <p>Challenges in how news is shared/spread.</p>



Objective	Completed	Additional Notes
Conduct regular Management-Union meetings to improve labor relations and internal communication	Yes	This is now an operational component.  Quarterly
Review Human Resources practices to make recommendations to implement changes to enhance personal development	N/A	There is a need to modify PR Process/Performance: update job descriptions, create different evaluations based on job duties/descriptions.  More competency with role expectation-based assessments and performance reviews
Conduct an efficiency review to enhance service delivery	Yes	
Determine the feasibility of adding new sections to enhance service		Adaptable for ex: communications and dispatch service can connect with other locations to have larger scope and support.  Skills and techniques in house  Shared services in emergency

# Phase 1 - Internal APD and Staff

---

## What has Changed / Issues

### 1. Increase in/Going to more calls for:

- Domestic Issues
  - Mental Health
  - Homelessness
  - Substance use disorders
- 

### 2. Increase in investigation times:

- Time it takes to investigate an impaired driver
  - Everything needs to be transcribed and videoed
  - Increase number of transcripts
  - Security videos are met with need for warrants
  - Increase number of warrants
  - Cost has gone up
  - Technology back log
- 

### 3. Increase in jurisdiction processes:

- Back up in legal systems- back logs in courts
- Back logs in processing
- Court and crown are setting new lengthy expectations
- Case law
- Leniency

### 4. Public Perception/Public Communication

- Public doesn't understand gaps
  - How to interact with people on a good day
  - Increase in expectations
- 

### 5. Relationship with Hospital

- Mental health push back from Health Service and other service providers
  - Police not trained (nor have time and supports) to handle mental health situations (de-escalation)
  - When bringing client in to hospital for mental health- must wait with them creating backlog
  - Liability issues as EHS tied up so police take over a lot of their calls
- 

### 6. Relationship with RCMP

- Putting out more fires as RCMP removing services

## What are the Opportunities

- Town can get ahead of change and take a leadership role- controlling the narrative
  - Policing review
  - Expand boundaries (where fire department goes, we go)
  - Can be larger and more self-sufficient
  - Changing phone lines- voice over IP: new phone line system; new dispatch services
  - Newer/Updated dispatch system- shared services with other organizations (tech)
  - Learning how we can share resources with other departments/back up partner agencies: MOU partnerships (Truro, New Glasgow)
  - Growth-more specialty services: Canine
  - Human Resources
  - Have all Officers get involved with some sort of community organization. Make this an ongoing project for new and senior members. This will have our Officers seen as part of their community that they serve. Bringing the community closer with the Department through unofficial interactions, showing the human side of the badge.
  - Other community Police events could have members that meet to plan for the following year.
-



# Phase 1 - Internal APD and Staff

---

## What Training is Needed?

- Source Program
  - Shooting Range
  - Peer to Peer Investigation
  - Computer Aided Dispatch System
  - Forensic Identification Services
  - Drug Investigation
  - Case Management
  - Module Village for training (high school partnership?)
  - Drug Training
  - In House Training
  - Advance computer investigations
  - Tech Crime Training
  - Surveillance
  - Scenario Training
  - Containment Training (negotiations)
  - Court Section
  - Table top sessions with management team
  - Specialized training- ballistics for example
  - Training section- departments get what they need
  - Formation/Basics training during different Shifts
  - School Resource Officers
  - More non-online learning/training for support staff/admin. ie, a course that Curtis White and Rhonda Weatherbee were sent to at CRHCC to field calls for persons in mental health crisis. Other position related training would be beneficial also.
- 

## What Supports are Needed?

- Dedicated mental health supports:
  - Phycologist/Psychiatrist- mental health supports for after calls: priority clients
  - Mental health-crisis navigator/negotiator for on calls accumulate a mental health day once every 3 months.
  - This mental health day would not go against your vacation days (but could be used as a vacation day if it is scheduled for that month), nor would it go against your sick time
  - Traffic vs Impaired Unit
  - Ability to go out and train
  - Civilian Positions
  - Major Crime Unit
  - Tech in vehicles
  - Booking officers
  - Check ins with dispatch to make sure open communication remains
  - Mobile Pros
  - Major and Street Crime Resources
  - More guards
- 

## Gaps in Community Collaboration

- EHS & Hospital
- Crown Policies-Difference in opinion
- Resolution Process
- County & RCMP (can have better relationship)
- Animal Control
- Adult Protection
- Access to New Brunswick Court

# Phase 2 - Role of Council/ Commission in Policing

---

## Amherst Board of Police Commissioners and Council Session Feedback

- Keeping up with common law
- Technical expertise
- Subject matter expert
- 1 year terms is not realistic/not enough time to take in all the information
- Long wait times- 2 years to get application through
- Who should sit- What to consider- How long should they be considered
- Commission primarily responsible for direction
- Accountability from all sides
- Public to police /police is to public
- Always trying to raise bar to reach goals
- Legal aspect increase
- Legal council sitting in on commission
- Commission is not involved in operations- eyes on hands off
- Police act answer
- Community expectations and values with community members on commission
- 1/2 terms max 3 - 5 pieces of legislation to consider
- Province legislation
- Oversight from the commission
- Commission and council-word of mouth to apply
- Understanding of what goals are
- Changing times
- Diversification vs expertise
- Fatal to just have law enforcement
- Budgetary
- Committee expos
- Commission reflection of community expectations
- Keeping up with the times
- 7 reps doesn't give the most flexibility
- Reflection of what community wants
- Adequate training- make it mandatory
- Realistic expectations
- Commission role in set community priorities
- Look at commission in different way- solicitor sit in on council
- Broader representation not just criminal justice system
- Recruitment roles- whose responsibility?
- Liability



# Phase 2 - Role of Council/ Commission in Policing

---

## What has Changed / Issues

- Changing trends/times
  - Negativity from citizens
  - Drugs
  - 3-4 calls for sharp pick up- resources
  - Constant back and forth/wheel
  - Expected to address all service gaps
  - Mental health crisis can happen anytime- not just during mental health hours
  - Increase in offenses
  - False narratives
  - Can't control public comments on socials
  - Vulnerable people no place to go
  - Poor service gets all the attention
  - Individual need to make decisions that they may not be capable to make
  - Social media side of it- huge problem
  - With capacity can be reached after they've been in care for a few days but its known that during crisis they can't seek support
  - Can always find position on socials that fits your needs- all opinion based
  - Response to social media
  - Changing trends need to be better understood- harm reduction
  - Lack of trust
  - Resources used in monitoring comments
  - Mental health calls- hospital wait times
  - Lack of services
  - Adult protection is nonexistent
  - Problems that fall in police hands- nothing to do with them
- 

## Opportunities

- EHS & Hospital
  - Crown Policies-Difference in opinion
  - Resolution Process
  - County & RCMP (can have better relationship)
  - Animal Control
  - Adult Protection-Town can show we encourage community policing and inclusiveness
  - Encouraging community policing
  - Potential for more trust in smaller community- Hard to gain
  - Better relationships can lead to better ways on how to handle issues
  - New businesses/restaurants police can go welcome them to the town
  - Recognition from outside
  - Visibility of police
  - Enabling community policing
  - Consistency of same face in your community
  - Out of uniform opportunities
  - Foot patrol
  - Engrave police into community
  - Celebrate positives more
  - Police relationships with community
  - Multiculturalism
  - Opportunities for PR- Make a wish to Sean for good news story?
  - How can you relate to younger generation when they have different experiences
  - Consider people's strengths and weaknesses
  - Some push back about newcomers- Is there a way for police to encourage more acceptance
  - Police presence=positive vs negative
  - People are motivated by different things
-

# Phase 3 - Community Partners

---

## Changing Needs of the Community

- Poverty
  - Transportation
  - Substance use
  - The changing face of trauma
  - Community support
  - Violence
  - Lack of access to healthcare
  - Primary care
  - Mental health care
  - Alleviated Crime rate
  - More severe weather events/Causes increasing demands on services
  - Challenges with access to technology/internet/phones
  - Lack of educational opportunities
  - Multi-cultural/Multi-lingual needs
  - Economic development
  - Impacts on accessing basic needs (housing costs, food, kids returning to schools, childcare to participate in community.)
  - Demographics
  - Social-Economic
  - Food security
  - Criminalization of poverty
- 

## Community Policing

- Education of law enforcement on community partners and existing resources
  - Community visibility
  - Building threats/safety of employees
  - Non uniform engagement at times
  - Equity
  - Education on the roles of law enforcement
  - Public safety of officers
  - Engage with restorative justice
  - More community outreach
  - De-escalation training
  - Building trust (youth)
  - Contribute to sentencing reports
  - Partnerships/community agencies
  - Positive relationships especially with newcomers/equity seeking groups
  - Walk a street, common face
  - Schools
  - Awareness community phone line dedicated to questions, scenarios and referrals
-



# Phase 3 - Community Partners

---

## Challenges in Policing

- Sharing information when supporting vulnerable people- seniors – children - people who struggle with mental health
  - Public attitude/response to police
  - Lack of community support
  - Social work for health care checks, mental health, and crisis support
  - Interprovincial matters particularly as a Bordertown
  - Ineffective adult protection
  - Citizens calling for civil matters
  - High staff turnover - lack of knowledge of community resources
  - Wait times for EHS
  - Mental health calls
  - Lack of resources to refer to - detox, treatment, mental health
  - Gaps in community service
  - Inappropriate referrals due to lack of understanding of supports and services available
  - Population increase without a corresponding increase in community supports
  - Language issues
  - Lack of understanding of the criminal justice system
  - Transparency
  - Border area challenge
  - Significant substance use in communities
  - APD/RCMP integration and coordination/ inner agency relationship
  - Mass media/Social media portrayal of the police
  - Court system – backlog, culture, catch and release
  - Lack of trust
  - Lack of respect
  - Hate/fear
  - Unavailability of mental health crisis team
- 

## What are the Police Roles and Responsibilities

- To serve and protect all citizens
  - Alarm responses to some community partners
  - Consistent policies
  - Keep up on training/best practices/education -culture, safety
  - Measurable and visible Equity Diversity & Inclusion goals
  - Collaborate with community partners – HRDV – restorative justice - wellness courts – victim services
  - Pro-active education
  - Safety and security of our employees
  - The folks we call when things are bad/scary/out of control
  - Keep the community safe for all
  - Promote positive image of policing
  - Maintain relationships with community partners
  - Educate community on their roles within the community
  - Build community relationships
  - Consistent use of policies for sexual assault/family violence
  - Safety of citizen/community
  - Maintain order and safety for all
  - Respectful interactions with the public
- 

### What is not the police responsibility?

- Unhoused issues
  - Clinical mental health supports
  - To parent for parents
-

# Phase 3 - Community Partners

---

## Opportunities for Enhancement / Engagement

- Drop in events - coffee with cops
  - General member community presences- youth events – schools – newcomer events
  - Integration of APD/RCMP for mixed jurisdictional issues/enforcement
  - Having members maintain a presence out of uniform when appropriate
  - Use social media platforms to promote positive image and community interactions
  - Highlight the unknown parts of policing
  - Introductions to community partners if new and existing members
- 
- Participations in community led improvement events – recent one would be “we like more”
  - Police week + more public engagement events
  - Fostering partnership with new programs Ex: recovery unit
  - Rotate members through Cumberland partner meeting
  - Social work ride along
  - Increase mental health supports for staff
  - Community releases from the top
  - Communication
  - Stigma training for all
  - Internal recognition for handling complex situations
  - 18 million dollars available due to the mass causality commission
- 

## Ideas / Strategies to Improve

- Networking
  - Fully participate in existing programs working with the community already
  - Sit down meetings with other provincial agencies responsible for challenging areas
  - Explore provincial/federal partnerships for recruitment for clinical positions
  - Education
  - Rely on non profits for de-escalation and non violent scenarios
  - Education – addictions – health vs. criminal
- 
- Collaboration with local health authority re: APA/IPTA assessment in emergency
  - Mobile crisis unit
  - Increase capacity for Federal , Provincial, and Municipal partnership to employ community social workers for ride along
  - Better communication strategies
  - Outsource tasks that are not police matters
  - Outsource outreach
-



# Phase 4 - Open Community Forum

---

## Session 1

### Changing Needs of the Community

- More diverse population
- Lack of affordable housing
- Increased homelessness
- Increased mental health issues
- Less respect for authority
- Overloaded systems (food insecurity, welfare)
- Increased cost of living
- Accessibility issues/barriers due to cost-of-living increases
- Encampments
- Increase in hard drugs
- Increased need for different specialized skills due to multi dimensional issues
- Labour shortage
- Awakening of racial issues and being more brought to light
- Lack of diversity in the police force
- Technology changes
- Changes in legislation
- Lack of training
- Changing expectations of the police duties/ lack of parenting
- Shift in family dynamics
- Changing neighborhoods
- Dual income homes no one parenting
- Lack of daycare/discipline/consequences
- Perceived high wages=greater expectations
- Community not knowing the role of police officers vs expectations
- Change of culture within the police department
- Increase in intergenerational trauma
- Lack of supports for trauma PTSD mental health and family supports

### Community Policing

- Police working with the community in all aspects
- Interaction in schools
- Engagement with those who are most at risk
- Being human developing relationships
- Officers involved in community events/sports/schools
- Consistent foot patrol
- Visible front and centre
- Volunteering in community

### When it Breaks Down

- Disconnection
- Overwhelmed overworked
- Blame less safe
- More fraud more afraid
- -Lack of knowledge of resources
- When people don't feel safe they don't participate in community
- Investor insecurity
- Bordertown issues
- When trust is not there less reporting of crime Amherst Crime Stoppers
- Public not caught up with the changes in policing

# Phase 4 - Open Community Forum

---

## Session 1

### What are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Police?

- Public safety
  - Serve and protect
  - Intervention drugs and alcohol
  - Informing public on emergencies
  - Investigate crime
  - Deal with court system
- 
- Being navigators/having connections to resources
  - Undercover work
  - Cultural awareness???
  - Navigating to other resources
  - Wellness checks
  - Review and interpret evidence based on technology
  - Traffic control
  - Enforce the law
- 

### Opportunities for Enhancement / Engagement

- Find shared values
  - Promote neighborhood watch
  - Family friendly events
  - Positivity
  - Basic needs met
  - Cops for Kids
  - Increase promotion of events involving police
  - Increased shared presentations with service providers
  - Communications feel good stories
- 
- Celebrate the wins
  - Regular updates to the public on Strategic Plan
  - Making sure they have adequate resources to do their job (tech, equipment and training)
  - Reviewing processes to be more streamlined
  - Intergenerational engagement
  - Shared understanding of cultural differences
  - More involvement with new comer events
  - Onboarding package for new officers to integrate them into the community
- 

# Phase 4 - Open Community Forum

## Session 2

### Changing Needs of the Community

- More homelessness, immigration, drug use, mental health issues
  - Changing equipment needs, cost of living, lacking in the mental health services, addictions, medical needs are not being met.
  - On call, mental health crisis team is needed to support the police.
  - Not the job of the police to take mental health calls.
- 
- Mental health workers to do possible ride a longs for evening shifts to help get people the services they need.
  - Technology – more scams. Criminals have more sophisticated in technology.
  - Aging population – Stats Canada
  - Aging population afraid to go out at dark. Lock your door type of community now.
-



# Session 2

## Community Policing

- People should get to know the officers in their town, police attending events, interacting with the community.
  - Important for the community to know who they are. Anything happening downtown, they should be there. The dogs help with community policing, are approachable.
  - Anytime they can be in the public, they should, and it is good for the community, hockey games, events, senior activities etc. Show that they are also part of the community.
- 

## Absence of Community Policing

- Less trust. Lots of paper work for police – change in systems to help them have more time for community policing. Advocation on the provincial level to help. Need to make their jobs easier to keep them more in the community. Equity and Inclusion and important piece, immigrants, minorities need to feel trust. New growing and changing population, officers need to recognize the issues and differences.
  - Translators maybe needed.
- 

## Community Side

- Self-policing – keeping an eye and watching out in your neighborhood. Look out for each other.
- Neighborhood watch. Walk around or drive around. Police rely on the community to call in reports. ( SCAN )  
– Safe Communities and Neighborhoods Nova Scotia.

## What are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Police?

- Uphold rule and law. Having security to be able to call them to react to citizens' concerns.
  - Taking concerns seriously. Roles have expanded for police, need upgrades in training. Learning on the different needs of the population. They have become social workers, doctors, etc. Hard on officers mentally.
  - Catch and release program – doesn't work. General public doesn't understand how it works or the conditions legally, through criminal justice system and court system. Police take the brunt of it. How do you educate the public?
  - C5 & C11 – educating the public
- 

## Opportunities for Enhancement / Engagement

- More people in the community – increased presence from the police.
- Invite public to come in- Municipal Awareness Week – Police Week
- May help with recruitment – Nice if they have a connection to the community
- Community groups also to invite officers to certain events they host.
- More recruitment efforts to take advantage of the opportunities that are out there.
- Pro-active recruiting. Atlantic Police Academy - present at the police academy in Halifax
- Change the image – more positive
- Remove obstacles when people call and report - issues around intake
- More community use of Crime Stoppers – Level of detail people do not understand (used for more things you have witnessed)
- Have police present at welcoming week – to build trust with people who immigrated here.
- Break the stigma for newcomers.