

# The Amherst Police Department Strategic Plan 2025-2030

*Special thanks to Sharon Bristol and her amazing team for all the hard work and dedication on this project.*



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Work on the Amherst Police Department began in the winter of 2024.

It was decided to utilize internal expertise to head this project.

Sharon Bristol, the Town of Amherst Community Living Director, was designated as lead.

Sharon and her team dedicated countless hours of their time to this initiative, and came up with a process to determine what the priorities of the Amherst Police Department should be for the next 5 years.

Sharon met regularly with the Amherst Board of Police Commissioners and Police Management while working on this project.



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## Why do we need a Strategic Plan?

A police department needs to be a reflection of the community it serves. This includes mirroring the concerns and priorities that the community has in relation to public safety and policing.

In order for any plan to be successful, it must include information from the applicable stakeholders, which includes not only the police, but also the public and our community partners.

A plan must include what the intended outcomes are, must assign responsibility and include a timeline for completion.



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The Strategic Plan identifies our long-term goals and objectives and is our roadmap to how we will achieve these goals, often focusing on central issues of public safety, community trust and utilizing our resources efficiently.

By defining clear goals and targeted outcomes, it unifies our department and ensures that we are all moving in the same direction.





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Community consultation was key to the development of this plan.

- 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 2SLGBTQ+ 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 from these sources was used to develop the strategic goals and objectives for the next 5 years.



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## The Plan moving forward:

At the core of this strategic plan is our commitment to Community Service. 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**

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION  
AND PARTNERSHIPS**

**INNOVATION**

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND  
INCLUSION**

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## STRATEGIC GOALS:

**RECRUITMENT AND  
RETENTION**

**TRAINING**

**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS**

**COMMUNICATION**

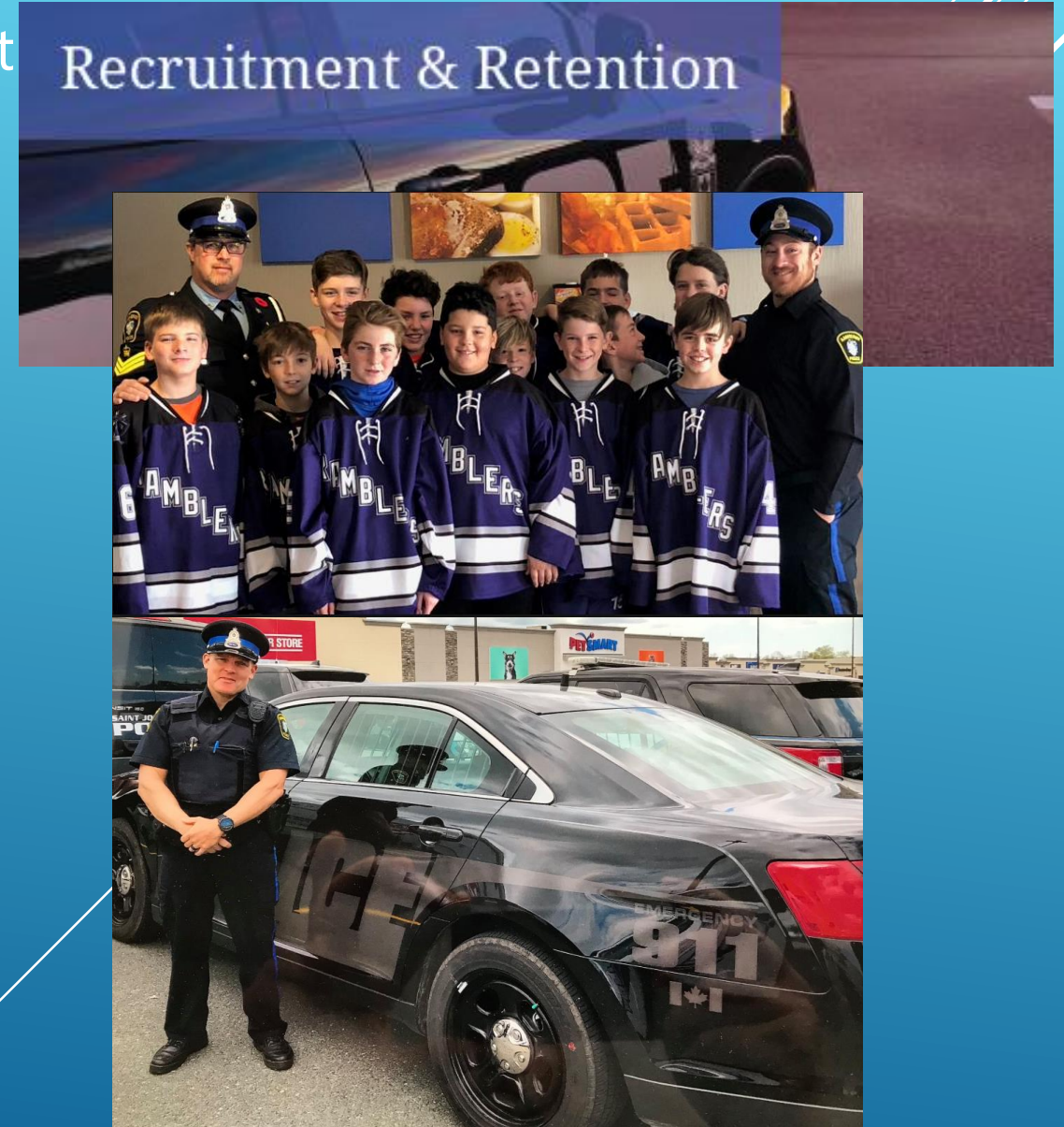




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Develop a process for successful recruitment and retention of new and existing members:

- Investigate other municipalities on best practices in recruitment.
- Partner with the Atlantic Police Association to develop a strategy on recruitment.
- Develop the Amherst Police Department Auxiliary Program.
- Implement a rewards and recognition program.
- Develop presentations for delivery at the Police Academy and/or at other recruitment opportunities.





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Provide training to meet the Nova Scotia Training Standards:

- Ensure candidates receive training in Major Case Investigations and Management and Digital Technologies.
- Investigate partnerships for training in:
  - CIT (Crisis Intervention Team/Mental Health and Addictions.
  - Drug and Alcohol Impairment Training for new employees.
  - Drug Investigators Techniques.
  - Critical Incident Response.



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## **Increase and Retain Impactful Community Partnerships:**

- Continue to develop relationships with agencies for homelessness, substance use disorder, mental health and 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 CIT program
  - Mental Health Collaboration
  - Build relationships with the 'Integrated Youth Services' and 'In the Works'.
- Increase awareness for other community programs.
- Promote and engage with Autumn House Resiliency program.
- Increase communications on our partnership successes.
- Continue awareness and promotion of victim services and canine support program
  - Regular visits with schools, Integrated Youth Servies, Mental Health, etc.
- Conduct joint presentations with our partners.





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## **Increase our Communications to the Community:**

- Provide regular releases on charges laid.
- Set schedule to share weekly and monthly stats.
- Identify and respond to requests for public assistance, ensure public is aware of policing capabilities.
- Increase foot patrols & 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 police practices.





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## 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.

