



**NATIONAL  
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FEDERATION**

**FÉDÉRATION  
DE LA POLICE  
NATIONALE** <sup>TM</sup>

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November 22, 2023

Mayor Douglas and Council  
Municipality of North Cowichan  
Delivered Via Email: [mayor@northcowichan.ca](mailto:mayor@northcowichan.ca)

Dear Mayor Douglas & North Cowichan Municipality Council,

**RE: CLARIFYING MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING SURREY TRANSITION AND POLICING IN B.C.**

I am writing on behalf of the National Police Federation (NPF) and our ~6,700 dedicated Members across the province regarding the Surrey transition and policing in British Columbia. It has come to our attention that there may be some misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding the Surrey transition and the implications it may have on policing in B.C. It is crucial to address these misconceptions promptly, as they could prove detrimental to our collective efforts to address existing policing vacancies in the province.

During the recent UBCM Convention in Vancouver, we engaged in numerous discussions with mayors and councillors from across British Columbia. While many expressed support for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), a few also voiced their support for the transition of Surrey to a municipal police service. This support is primarily based on the belief that this transition will help alleviate policing vacancies across the province, including in your community. This is a misconception, and it does not align with the facts.

In the most optimistic scenario, the Surrey Police Service (SPS) transition is expected to take at least five **more** years, and, realistically, extend to a decade. The first SPS officer deployment took place in November 2021 as part of Phase 1 of the SPS-RCMP Human Resources Strategy and Plan. Phase 1 was the result of negotiations between the City, Province, Federal government, and the RCMP to ensure a transition that is both efficient and safe for the community. Phase 1 required several months of negotiation before it was initiated. Phase 2, which deals with the change of command, remains without a timeline or any substantive discussions to date. Such a substantial change of command has never been attempted before and will likely require many more months of meetings and deliberations before any significant progress can be made.

Leaving aside various other challenges that the SPS may encounter in completing the transition, it is imperative to be realistic about the recruitment hurdles the SPS, as well as all police services across Canada, are currently facing. The SPS has been vocal about receiving hundreds of applications, but applications are just that – applications. They are not job offers, nor are all applicants hired. As of October 2023, the SPS has 333 sworn police officers and requires a minimum of an additional 401 to meet the current agreed upon deployment numbers for effective policing in Surrey. In B.C., police applicants are all trained at the Justice Institute of BC (JIBC). Before the SPS hiring freeze, the SPS had planned to train 15 SPS cadets in each of the 3 training blocks at the JIBC. This would have resulted in 45 new police officers annually. While these recruits will help, they do not even keep pace with attrition through resignations or retirements. This means that new SPS recruits will

maintain the current numbers (+/-333) but will not grow, leaving the SPS still with the challenge of hiring +/- 400 new police officers to reach their full complement.

As a result, Members of the RCMP in Surrey or the B.C. RCMP will be required/retained in Surrey to keep the community of Surrey safe until the SPS can hire, train, and deploy enough officers to achieve that goal. The limitations on the JIBC and normal attrition will require the RCMP to remain in Surrey for years to come – which does not free up resources for other communities within B.C.

The RCMP is not immune to attrition and those Members remaining in Surrey will be impacted – some will retire, some will resign before the SPS transition is complete, and some will leave General Duty for specialized teams or federal policing – hence not all Members of the Surrey RCMP will be deployed to other parts of B.C. In addition, the RCMP is a national organization, and some will choose to relocate outside of B.C.

The intent of this letter is to emphasize that the decision to replace the RCMP in Surrey will not immediately, nor in the near future, address staffing issues experienced across the province. In 2022, the province announced funding to hire 277 RCMP officers to fill vacancies in rural RCMP detachments and specialized services - positions that had been previously unfunded by the province. Despite this funding, there remain an additional ~240 unfunded positions in the B.C. RCMP. For the B.C. RCMP to reach its authorized 2012 strength of 2,602 officers, all 520 “hard” unfunded positions must be filled. It should be noted that since 2012, the province has maintained an B.C. RCMP authorized police strength of 2,602 officers, even though the population has grown exponentially over that same period.

If the government is genuinely concerned about RCMP vacancies, they could begin by fully funding all current vacancies. During the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General’s April 28<sup>th</sup> announcement, he noted that these unfunded vacancies may pose a challenge to public safety across the province, however, in that same announcement, he announced funding of \$150 million over five years for the City of Surrey’s policing. This funding only benefits one city and is not available to all B.C. municipalities that may also be facing public safety challenges. The NPF has been [advocating to the province](#) to invest the \$150 million across the province so all British Columbians can benefit, including investing \$50 million to hire the additional ~240 B.C. RCMP officers.

We believe it is essential to address the misconceptions surrounding the Surrey transition and its impact on policing in British Columbia. We remain committed to working together to find comprehensive solutions to the staffing challenges facing the province's law enforcement agencies.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

Sincerely,



Brian Sauvé  
President & CEO