

POLICING IN THE TERRITORIES

REPORT ON A PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

Scott Clark Consulting Inc.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The community consultations on policing in the territories is an initiative of the three territorial Departments of Justice and the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The territories jointly contracted with Scott Clark Consulting Inc., an independent company with experience in northern community policing and justice issues, to hold community consultations and to report on the findings. The RCMP lent support to the project as requested by the territories.

The overall purpose of the consultations as agreed by the territories and Canada is to “increase awareness and seek input on matters related to community safety.” While there are similarities among the three territories, there are also differences that were taken into account in the consultation process. In Yukon, for example, several First Nations view the connection between policing and community justice, on one hand, and self government and devolution, on the other hand, as critical. At this time these issues are not as critical in the Northwest Territories and are not likely to arise at all in Nunavut. Generally, the territories view the process as an opportunity to inform communities, get feedback, and develop programs with respect to policing and community involvement.

The twenty-year *Territorial Police Service Agreement* between the Government of Canada and each of the territorial governments expires in 2012. In anticipation of that date and the need to ensure the timely preparation for new arrangements, the territories are viewing the consultation process as providing valuable insights. Therefore, the consultations are also intended to provide a starting point for the territories to evaluate the model of policing currently operating in the North, and possibly to develop a new model that could be used as the basis for discussions with the federal government.

To that end, each territorial Department of Justice previously received from the consultant a report specifically respecting that territory. The current report is a synthesis of the three territorial reports and the information gathered throughout the consultations. It identifies common themes and unique issues with regard to policing in the territories.

The consultation process is the first comprehensive attempt to get community input on territorial policing by an independent consultant. This is an important fact from the perspective of all parties: the territorial governments, the federal government, the RCMP, and, significantly, communities. It should be stressed that the findings derive from the input provided directly by community members and others throughout the consultation process. There was consistency in the views of community residents and others, such as community service workers, who participated in the consultations. Similarly, RCMP officers shared many of the same views. The resulting ideas are not from the consultant, although the consultant did edit and organize the information gathered in the consultations in order to produce a manageable report.

The report does not reproduce the narrative that came from the many consultations and meetings held throughout the territories. This would have been lengthy, repetitive, and would have confused the important ideas that were raised. In the interest of clarity and practicality, the report is a synthesis of the information that was provided in the consultations. The report attempts to include the messages participants wanted conveyed, particularly the community-level participants. However, certain specific problems and examples are not included in the report. These omissions may be for reasons of confidentiality, or because they do not add to the larger ideas that are covered. Individuals should not read the report with a view to finding their own experiences in print.

1.2 Government of Canada Policing Policies

The policing arrangements currently in place in the territories have not changed for many years. In other parts of the country, however, innovative arrangements between the provinces, First Nations and the Government of Canada have been implemented. These arrangements, which take various forms, are covered by the *First Nations Policing Policy* (FNPP) of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The Government of Canada describes the *First Nations Policing Policy* in the following way:

In June 1991, the federal government introduced the First Nations Policing Policy (FNPP) in order to provide First Nations across Canada with access to police services that are professional, effective, culturally appropriate, and accountable to the communities they serve....The FNPP operates on the principle of partnership to negotiate tripartite agreements for police services that are responsive to the particular needs of each community.

The purpose of the First Nations Policing Policy is to contribute to the improvement of social order, public security and personal safety in First Nation communities. This is accomplished through cost-shared funding arrangements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. First Nations communities may choose to develop and administer their own police service, or they may choose a police service delivered by a contingent of First Nations officers working within an existing police force (e.g. the RCMP). The FNPP is implemented across Canada through tripartite agreements negotiated among the federal government, provincial or territorial governments and First Nations. The Policy applies to all Indian reserves, to certain other Indian communities on Crown land and to Inuit communities, and is designed to give First Nations communities greater control over the delivery and management of policing services in their communities.¹

The types of agreements that are possible under the FNPP vary from an arrangement whereby a First Nation has its own dedicated contingent of officers from an existing police service, to a First Nation managing its own police service under provincial (and

¹ Solicitor General of Canada, 1996. *First Nations Policing Policy*.

perhaps territorial) legislation with an independent police commission providing oversight for the self-administered police service. The Liard First Nation in Watson Lake, Yukon is the only community in the three territories that is currently policed under an FNPP arrangement.²

It is the *First Nations Policing Policy* – or some equivalent suited to the North – that the three territorial governments are interested in exploring. The community consultations are a first step in that exploration process.

1.3 Issues Addressed in the Consultations

People who took part in the consultations identified a number of issues. These can be broadly categorized in the following way:

Perceptions of crime and public safety: Views on the problems facing communities are important in understanding communities' expectations and wishes regarding the policing services they receive. However, the problems identified by community members are not always matters that the police are directly responsible for addressing. It is important to recognize that all social issues are interrelated in small communities. Poor attendance rates at school, for example, is not directly a police issue; but it can be symptomatic of something police could address, and it may be a forewarning of serious problems to come. All professional workers in the communities, including the RCMP, should be aware of the range of issues facing communities.

Views on policing in the territories: The information gathered in the consultations refers mainly to issues of crime and safety, crime prevention, community justice, and police-community relations. Consultation participants' views of the policing services provided by the RCMP in the territories vary widely, from seriously lacking to extremely effective. When trying to understand the formation of community views, it is important to recognize that community and individual expectations are relevant. Similarly, community members' understanding of the role and responsibilities of the police, as well as the limitations under which the police operate, all affect community views.

What is working and ways to address the issues: Participants in the consultations were encouraged to identify what was working well with respect to the policing in their communities, and to build on those ideas when trying to identify solutions to the shortfalls. People were also asked to be creative in their thinking about how to solve their community problems, whether or not the problems concerned the policing service directly.

² *Agreement among Canada, the Government of the Yukon Territory, and the Liard First Nation for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) First Nations Community Policing Service (FNPPS).*

1.4 Territorial Approaches to the Consultations

Each territory chose a different approach to acquiring community input. In large part this was due to the varying costs of travel among territories. In Nunavut, for example, the substantial distances between communities and the high cost of air travel precluded travelling to every community. The same challenge faced the NWT, while Yukon communities, except for Old Crow, are all accessible by road and therefore relatively inexpensive to visit.

1.4.1 Yukon

In Yukon, the decision was made to visit every community. The Yukon communities are:

- Beaver Creek
- Burwash Landing and Destruction Bay³
- Carcross
- Carmacks
- Dawson City
- Faro
- Haines Junction
- Mayo
- Old Crow
- Pelly Crossing
- Ross River
- Teslin
- Watson Lake
- Whitehorse

An open community session was advertised in advance in every locale (three in Whitehorse and surrounding area). A consultation session was then held in each community, usually in the community hall or at the local school, and facilitated by the consultant. Separate meetings were held between the consultant and local authorities and service providers, either as individuals or in groups. These included First Nation Chiefs and Councils, Mayors and Town Councils, local RCMP members, social workers, nurses, school principals, probation officers, Community Justice Committees, Community Justice Committee Coordinators, women's shelter workers, victim service workers, addictions counsellors, and others. One or two Yukon Justice officials attended all community sessions and other meetings, and local RCMP members attended the community sessions.

The sessions with RCMP members in the local detachments were informative. In many cases, officers shared the concerns expressed by community residents in the open consultation sessions. On other issues, officers were able to provide a different

³ The Burwash Landing consultations included Chief and Council and social service workers, as well as an open community meeting. In Destruction Bay, which is also served by the Haines Junction Detachment, the consultation only involved the nurse at the local nursing station.

perspective that reflects the realities within which they must work. These views are contained in the report. Meetings were also held with senior management in “M” Division Headquarters. These meetings provided insights to the objectives and operations of the RCMP in the Yukon.

Meetings were also held with Yukon Government officials from various departments with an interest in issues related to policing. Similarly, discussions were held with Justices representing the Yukon Territorial Court and the Yukon Supreme Court, as well as representatives of the legal community.

A survey form was designed specifically for the Yukon and was made available to the public in hard copy and electronically on the Department of Justice website. Hard copies of the form were distributed in the communities at the public meetings and were sent to First Nations and Town Councils for distribution. One hundred and twenty-three completed survey forms were returned to the consultant. The form was designed to be anonymous. The results of the Yukon survey are included in the findings of this report.

1.4.2 Northwest Territories

In the Northwest Territories, consultation sessions were held in five regional centres to which community representatives were invited.⁴ Participants were invited on the basis of their involvement with justice issues in their communities. For example, many participants were members of the local Community Justice Committee. In the case of several communities, the delegation included individuals who work on relevant matters in the community, most often a social worker or the coordinator of the Community Justice Committee.

RCMP members from most of the detachments of the communities represented at each consultation attended that particular session. NWT Department of Justice officials also attended the sessions and facilitated the community break-out groups.

Consultation sessions were held in Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Norman Wells and Fort Simpson. Community representation at the five consultation sessions was as follows:

- Yellowknife
 - Dettah/N’Dilo
 - Gameti
 - Behchoko
 - Wekweti
 - Wha’Ti
 - Yellowknife
- Hay River
 - Enterprise
 - Fort Providence

⁴ The Northwest Territories Department of Justice covered the travel expenses of community participants.

- Hay River
- Kakisa
- Katlodeeche First Nation (Hay River Dene Reserve)
- Lutsel K'e
- Inuvik
 - Aklavik
 - Fort McPherson
 - Holman
 - Inuvik
 - Paulatuk
 - Sachs Harbour
 - Tsiigehtchic
 - Tuktoyaktuk
- Norman Wells
 - Colville Lake
 - Deline
 - Fort Good Hope
 - Norman Wells
 - Tulita
- Fort Simpson
 - Fort Liard
 - Fort Simpson
 - Jean Marie River
 - Nahanni Butte
 - Trout Lake
 - Wrigley.

1.4.3 Nunavut

In Nunavut, consultation sessions took place in a number of selected communities to which representatives from other communities in the region were invited.⁵ Participants were invited on the basis of their involvement with justice issues in their communities. For example, many participants were members of the local Community Justice Committee. In the case of a few communities, the delegation included individuals who work on relevant matters in the community, most often a social worker or the coordinator of the Community Justice Committee.

RCMP members from the detachments of the communities where the consultation sessions were held attended that particular session. Nunavut Department of Justice officials also attended the sessions and assisted in facilitating.

Consultation sessions were held in ten communities, including Iqaluit. The following list indicates the locations of the consultations, as well as the communities represented at each session.

- Baker Lake

⁵ The Nunavut Department of Justice covered the travel expenses of community participants.

- Baker Lake
- Chesterfield Inlet
- Cambridge Bay
 - Cambridge Bay
 - Kugluktuk
- Cape Dorset
 - Cape Dorset
- Gjoa Haven
 - Gjoa Haven
 - Kugaaruk
- Igloolik
 - Hall Beach
 - Igloolik
- Iqaluit
 - Iqaluit
 - Kimmirut
 - Pangnirtung
 - Qikiqtarjuaq
- Pond Inlet
 - Arctic Bay
 - Clyde River
 - Grise Fiord
 - Pond Inlet
 - Resolute Bay
- Rankin Inlet
 - Arviat
 - Coral Harbour
 - Rankin Inlet
 - Repulse Bay
 - Whale Cove
- Sanikiluaq
 - Sanikiluaq
- Taloyoak
 - Taloyoak

1.4.4 Limitations to the Process

If the process could be said to have a limitation, it would be that not all territorial residents were able to provide input. In the Yukon, while consultation sessions were held in every community, they were only held once with no return visit by the consultant. For those individuals who might have been away or otherwise indisposed at the time, the opportunity to participate in person may have been lost. Questionnaire forms were made available in hard copy and on the Internet, thus providing another way for individuals to express their views. However, it is possible not everyone was able to access the questionnaire. In the NWT and Nunavut, participation from many communities was by invitation because representatives from communities had to fly into the consultation

locations. (However, everyone who showed up was welcomed to participate.) With those qualifications stated, community residents from the three territories freely expressed their views on community needs and the policing services they receive.

1.5 Structure of the Report

Section 2 briefly provides background information on the RCMP Divisions in each of the territories. Various agreements between the Government of Canada and the Territorial Governments are described, as is the unique (for the territories) agreement regarding policing for the Liard First Nation. General responsibilities at the detachment level are outlined, as is the RCMP community policing policy.

Section 3 addresses community perceptions of crime and public safety, and overall views of the RCMP. Section 3 also covers additional community challenges and concerns. These are the challenges that territorial communities face on an ongoing basis and that could be categorized generally as social problems. They do not necessarily refer directly to the RCMP, but are important in understanding specific problems the police and other community-based professionals must face in doing their jobs.

Section 4 addresses the views of community residents and others who participated in the consultation process. This Section is structured according to the general areas of crime prevention, community safety, communications, community justice, and police roles and priorities. As well, the views of consultation participants on ways to address concerns are laid out in Section 4.

Section 5 contains a summary of the main messages regarding policing in the territories. These messages derive from a synthesis of the extensive information and views provided by community members and others who took the time to participate in the consultations.

2. BACKGROUND: POLICING IN TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES

2.1 Policing in the Territories: Some Basic Facts

The *Territorial Police Service Agreement* is an agreement between the Government of Canada and each of the three territories that provides for the majority of RCMP policing services in each territory. The twenty-year agreement, which ends on March 31, 2012, covers several major aspects of policing, described below for each territory.

2.1.1 Yukon

- The cost-shared arrangement for policing requires the Government of Canada to cover 30 percent of the costs, while the Government of Yukon covers 70 percent. The Yukon Government is spending approximately \$12 million on policing services in the 2005-06 fiscal year. This is approximately 30 percent of the annual budget of the Yukon Department of Justice.
- Divisional Headquarters (“M” Division) is located in Whitehorse and thirteen detachments of varying sizes are located throughout the territory in Beaver Creek, Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Old Crow, Pelly Crossing, Ross River, Teslin, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse.
- In 2005 there were 109 regular RCMP officers, four Special Constables, 16 civilian members, and 33 public service employees working as part of the RCMP effort in Yukon. The ratio of officers to citizens in the territory is 1:257.
- As outlined in the contract (see below), the Minister for Yukon Justice sets the priorities and goals for the RCMP police service in Yukon each year. In 2003-04, the Minister, in consultation with “M” Division, developed a strategic plan with the following priorities for policing in the territory:
 - Healthy communities
 - Youth
 - First Nations policing
 - Safety and security

2.1.2 Northwest Territories

- The cost-shared arrangement for policing requires the Government of Canada to cover 30 percent of the costs, while the Government of the Northwest Territories covers 70 percent. The GNWT is spending \$23.969 million on policing services in the 2005-06 fiscal year. This is approximately 30 percent of the annual O&M budget of the NWT Department of Justice.
- Divisional Headquarters (“G” Division) is located in Yellowknife. Twenty-one detachments of varying sizes, including Yellowknife, are located throughout the territory. The detachments are organized under three Commanders: the Detachment Commander Yellowknife, the District Commander North, and the District Commander South. Detachments align as follows:
 - Detachment Commander Yellowknife

- Communities served: Dettah, N'Dilo, Gameti, Wekweti
 - District Commander North
 - Detachments: Aklavik, Deline, Fort Good Hope, Fort McPherson, Holman, Inuvik, Norman Wells, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tuktoyaktuk, Tulita
 - District Commander South
 - Detachments: Lutsel K'e, Fort Liard, Fort Providence, Fort Resolution, Fort Simpson, Fort Smith, Hay River, Behchoko, Wha'Ti.
- In 2005 there were 209 regular RCMP officers dedicated to territorial policing. As well, "G" Division had four positions dedicated to First Nations policing, thirty-four public service employees, and thirty-nine Auxiliary volunteers in ten detachments.
- In consultation with "G" Division, the GNWT Minister of Justice sets the priorities for the RCMP police service in the NWT. In the last legislative session the GNWT Minister set out the following priorities for policing in the territory:
 - Working with the RCMP to build a representative police service;
 - Working with federal Ministers to open more detachments in the NWT; and
 - To further meet the NWT community needs and ensure public safety.

2.1.3 Nunavut

- The cost-shared arrangement for policing requires the Government of Canada to cover 30 percent of the costs, while the Government of Nunavut covers 70 percent. Nunavut is spending \$20,927 million on policing services in the 2005-06 fiscal year. This is approximately 37 percent of the annual budget of the Nunavut Department of Justice.
- Divisional Headquarters ("V" Division) is located in Iqaluit. Twenty-five detachments of varying sizes, including Iqaluit, are located throughout the territory.
- In 2005 "V" Division had 110 regular RCMP officers dedicated to territorial policing.⁶ As well, "V" Division had five members dedicated to other federal programs, and six public service employees in support capacities in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet and Cambridge Bay.
- In 2004 there were 13,701 *Criminal Code* offences reported in Nunavut. Of that total, 2,929 were crimes against the person, 2,451 were property crimes, and 8,321 were other types of crime such as drug, alcohol and serious traffic offences.⁷
- In consultation with "V" Division, the Nunavut Minister of Justice sets the priorities for the RCMP police service in Nunavut. For 2005-06 the following priorities were identified:
 - Individual and community wellness
 - Youth crime prevention
 - Support for Community Justice Committees
 - Reduction of family violence
 - Implementation/delivery of a traffic safety program
 - Accountability and superior service delivery.

⁶ This category is referred to by the RCMP as the "Contract/Inuit Policing Program. See 2004-05: *The Year in Review* report by "V" Division.

⁷ "V" Division, 2004-05: *The Year in Review*.

2.2 Agreements on Policing

2.2.1 Territorial Police Service Agreement

Each territory is a party to a *Territorial Police Service Agreement*, which took effect on April 1, 1992 in the Yukon and the NWT, and on April 1, 1999 in Nunavut. It was signed by the respective territorial Ministers of Justice and Territorial Commissioners, and the Solicitor General of Canada. The Agreements are in effect until March 31, 2012. Under the terms of the Agreements, the RCMP is to provide policing services in each of the territories with a certain number of personnel. This number could be changed with the agreement of both parties.

The RCMP is obliged, according to the Agreement, to do the following in each territory:

- a) perform the duties of peace officers; and
- b) render such services as are necessary to
 - I. preserve the peace, protect life and property, prevent crime and offences against laws of Canada and the Territory, apprehend criminals, offenders and others who may be lawfully taken into custody; and
 - II. execute all warrants and perform all duties and services in relation thereto that may, under the laws of Canada or the Territory, be executed and performed by peace officers.

The Commanding Officer of each Division can also agree upon request from the territorial Minister to provide assistance or special expertise temporarily to other police agencies in the territory (although none exist at present).

In terms of management, the Agreement states:

The internal management of the Territorial Police Service, including its administration and the determination and application of professional police procedures, shall remain under the control of Canada.

It also states that “The [territorial] Minister shall set the objectives, priorities and goals of the Territorial Police Service.” The priorities as currently set by the Ministers are listed above.

With respect to paying for policing services, generally each territorial government is responsible for 70 percent of the total cost. This includes the direct costs of policing, such as salaries, transportation, equipment, repairs, etc., as well as the indirect costs, such as pension contributions for RCMP members, divisional headquarters administration,

recruit training, the computerized Police Information Retrieval System, and certain accommodation for members.

The three *Territorial Police Service Agreements* are coming up for renegotiation and possible renewal in 2012. The community consultations, in part, are intended to provide information to the territorial governments and the RCMP as they prepare for that process.

2.2.2 Agreement for the Continuation of the RCMP Aboriginal Community Constable Program / Inuit Policing Program

These Agreements were signed by the Solicitor General of Canada, the territorial Ministers of Justice and the Commissioner of the RCMP. The Aboriginal Community Constable Program, which is in place in the Yukon and the NWT, is designed to provide at least one RCMP member in certain detachments to be dedicated to policing the First Nation community(s) served by that detachment. In the case of Nunavut, the Inuit Policing Program aims at placing as many Inuit officers as possible in the communities, although not all Nunavut communities currently have an Inuit officer. The costs for the officers in these programs are shared by Canada and the territories at 46 percent and 54 percent, respectively.

2.2.3 Framework Agreement for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) First Nations Community Policing Service (FNCPS) in the Yukon Territory

This Agreement was signed by the Yukon Minister of Justice, the Solicitor General of Canada and the Commissioner of the RCMP, and took effect on April 1, 2004. Yukon is the only territory to have such an agreement at present. The Agreement sets the stage for possible dedicated RCMP policing arrangements with specific First Nations or groups of First Nations in Yukon. According to the Agreement, the RCMP is able to provide its First Nations Community Policing Service to First Nations using a mechanism called Community Tripartite Agreements (CTAs). The terms of each CTA could be unique to the needs of each First Nation, as long as the Yukon Government and the RCMP agreed. CTAs can give a certain degree of authority to First Nations in determining how the police service would be provided to their community; however, certain minimum standards of policing and law enforcement would always have to be maintained. The costs for policing under a CTA would be shared on the basis of 52 percent by the Government of Canada and 48 percent by the Yukon Government.

According to Article 8.1 (c) of the Framework Agreement, the assigned RCMP members would be obliged to do the following under any CTA arrangement:

... ensure that all Members deployed through the RCMP FNCPS will devote one hundred percent (100%) of their on duty time to the policing needs of the First Nations with at least eighty percent (80%) of this time to be spent within the boundaries of the First Nation Territory of those communities:

- I. ensure that any on duty time spend by all Members deployed through the RCMP FNCPS outside the boundaries of First Nations Territories will be related to the handling of policing services for the First Nations except where a specific Critical Incident occurs requiring an immediate short-term response

The Liard First Nation at Watson Lake is the only First Nation in Yukon (and in all three territories) to have entered a CTA. (See below.)

2.2.4 Agreement Among Canada, the Government of the Yukon Territory, and the Liard First Nation for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) First Nations Community Policing Service (FNCPS)

This Agreement essentially involves the Government of Canada and the Government of the Yukon sharing the cost of policing in the Liard First Nation (52 percent and 48 percent, respectively), and the Liard First Nation taking on responsibilities for managing the policing budget and providing certain levels of direction to the RCMP FNCPS. Policing services are provided to the First Nation by four FNCPS dedicated officers from the Watson Lake detachment, which is also responsible for non-First Nation policing in the detachment area.

A Liard Police Advisory Board is responsible for working with the Watson Lake Detachment to develop an annual operational plan. The plan is to identify the objectives, goals and priorities for policing for the First Nation; identify special strategies for addressing community issues; and identify crime prevention and other initiatives in the community. Two other Police Advisory Board responsibilities are especially notable. First, the Board can “identify desirable attributes for Members who may be considered for assignment to the Liard RCMP FNCPA”; in other words, the Board can specify the kinds of characteristics it wants in members who might be posted to the community. The Detachment Commander receives this list. Second, the Board can work with the RCMP “to develop an annual training plan for the Members of the Watson Lake Detachment assigned to the Liard RCMP FNCPS....”

The RCMP is responsible for several sets of responsibilities under the terms of the Agreement, including the attempt “to ensure that Members of the RCMP FNCPS assigned to the Liard RCMP FNCPS are culturally compatible with the community....” This clause, while explicitly stated only in the Liard First Nation Agreement, was a particularly salient point in the community consultations.

2.2.5 Pre & Post-Charge Diversion Protocol between the Teslin Tlingit Council, Justice Canada, the Yukon Government and “M” Division, RCMP

This Agreement is an example of the community justice protocols in place between specific northern communities, the RCMP and the territorial governments. The Teslin Tlingit Agreement which was signed in September, 2003, provides the opportunity for the Teslin Tlingit Nation to exercise restorative justice approaches through its

Peacemaker Diversion Process. The process is based on the five Clans of the Teslin Tlingit Nation taking responsibility for dealing with offenders and victims in certain types of offences and under certain conditions. In pre-charge diversions, the RCMP refers the cases to the Peacemaker Diversion Process; in post-charge diversions, it is the Crown Prosecutor who makes the referral.

Many other First Nation communities in Yukon and the NWT, as well as communities in Nunavut, have similar agreements with the RCMP and their territorial governments. In the NWT and Nunavut, the local Community Justice Committee is the community level body most often party to the Agreement.

2.3 Detachment Responsibilities

Smaller communities typically have from two to four RCMP members in the detachment, while larger centres might have six or eight, and the cities of Whitehorse, Yellowknife and Iqaluit significantly more. Some detachments have civilian clerks who assist with administrative duties and phone calls during office hours.

Officers are responsible for a range of duties from patrolling the community to investigating cases to preparing matters for Court. The number of offences in most communities represents a substantial workload for police officers. Even in small communities, individual RCMP members say they carry a significant number of files at any given time. Associated with all police activities is a substantial amount of paperwork that officers say is increasing yearly. Community members and police officers alike believe that the paperwork requirements interfere with officers' ability to spend time in the communities. In addition to the responsibilities just described, RCMP members are expected to engage in the kind of activities that define community policing; i.e., engaging with the community in recreational, social and crime prevention activities. In short, the work demands are substantial but time and personnel are at a premium throughout the territories.

2.4 Community Policing

The RCMP is committed to community policing throughout Canada, including the three territories. This was confirmed by officers in each of the territories during the consultation process. Community policing involves the following commitments by RCMP members:

- to work together with community authorities and agencies;
- to provide policing services in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner;
- to provide healthy alternatives, especially for youth;
- to be involved in the schools with a view to educating children about healthy ways to live;
- to make regular, personal contact with as many community members as possible;

- to engage in the life of the community;
- to work with the community regarding public awareness and crime prevention;
- to maintain public safety and security.

The extent to which the RCMP is able to carry out its commitments to community policing was a key question discussed in the consultations. Participants generally appreciate the policing service they receive, however, certain components of community policing, such as visibility and access, were often seen by communities and individuals to be inadequately addressed.

It became clear in the community consultations the RCMP faces a certain legacy of distrust and misunderstanding. The reasons for this are complex and were not addressed in depth. However, adults often said that as children their parents would point out the local police officer as someone frightening and who should be avoided. These negative connotations have followed the RCMP to the present. In many cases, officers have been able to establish relationships of trust and respect with both youth and adults in a community. But, as community participants pointed out, building those relationships requires interpersonal skills and dedication on the part of the officer. In many communities RCMP members begin their posting with a strike against them, at least in the eyes of a substantial number of community residents. As residents see it, the job of each police officer is to work to overcome the stigma and to engage in positive community policing. Many participants in the consultations said the best place to begin is with the youth.

3. COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS: CRIME, SAFETY AND THE RCMP

3.1 Introduction

Consultation participants were asked to identify and discuss the most serious issues facing their communities. The concerns are not necessarily directed at the RCMP. In some cases, residents had specific concerns with RCMP policies or activities (e.g., problems in arresting drug traffickers). In other cases, however, participants said that a particular problem was not a police issue or responsibility but that the community must find solutions on its own (e.g., the loss of parenting skills). These issues form an important background to the work of police.

3.2 Perceptions of Crime

Community residents are concerned about a range of crime problems. The concerns vary somewhat by community and by territory; however, there was a high degree of consistency expressed throughout the consultations. Community perceptions of the most serious crime problems are listed below. In general terms, the list is based on the frequency with which different types of crime were identified in the consultation sessions, beginning with the crimes most frequently cited.⁸

The main points of variance were with respect to drug trafficking and illegal drug use. This concern was expressed most frequently in the Yukon, although it was also raised often in the other territories. Impaired driving and speeding are major concerns in the Yukon, as they are in certain communities in the NWT (primarily those located on the Dempster Highway). In Nunavut, however, the concern is not with car and truck drivers as much as it is with the dangerous operation of snow machines.

The consultation process was not structured to allow the ranking of categories of crime. However, it is reasonable to say that property crimes, alcohol related crimes, drug trafficking and illegal drug use, and domestic violence were invariably raised as serious community concerns. The most serious crime problems are seen as:

- property crimes
 - break and enter
 - theft
 - vandalism
- alcohol abuse and related behaviour
 - bootlegging
 - underage drinking
 - assault
 - impaired driving (all motor vehicles, including snow machines)
 - creating a disturbance

⁸ The results of the Yukon survey are also factored into the list.

- drug trafficking and illegal drug use
- domestic violence
- sexual assault
- dangerous driving (mainly speeding; all motor vehicles, including snow machines).

Community participants frequently expressed the view that alcohol and drug abuse underlie much of the criminal and anti-social behaviour they witness in their communities. In particular, property crime, domestic violence, assault, and creating a disturbance are seen as directly linked to alcohol or drug abuse in almost every case. Police generally agree with community assessments that substance abuse is strongly linked to property crimes and personal violence.

3.3 Perceptions of Safety

Consultation participants in all three territories had somewhat differing views on personal safety. Not surprisingly, age is a factor and elderly people generally feel less safe. Among those for whom personal safety is an issue, the most commonly cited reason was the perception that drug trafficking and illegal drug use have made communities more dangerous. The rate of break and enter in homes, businesses and vehicles, for example, is seen to have increased rapidly in recent years, almost exclusively because of drug abuse. Drug users are perceived as desperate for cash or for goods that can be sold in order to support their habits.

In several consultation sessions, residents said they no longer feel they can leave their homes unattended, while only a few years ago they could be away indefinitely without having to lock their doors. Now, even during the day, many residents (especially elders) will rarely leave their houses for fear they will be broken into. For those individuals who are not able to have a family member or another trusted community member house-sit for them, it has become essentially impossible to leave home. The implications are serious for people needing to travel for medical or other important personal reasons. The RCMP agree the problem is as serious as residents are claiming. Again, the common perception is that increased drug trafficking and use, as well as alcohol abuse, are the primary reasons for the decline in community safety and security.

3.4 Overall Community Views on Policing Services

It was clear throughout the consultation process that for communities in the Yukon, the NWT and Nunavut, the RCMP is the police service of choice. Accolades for the RCMP were common. And while participants expressed concerns in some areas, it was rarely said a problem could not be resolved by police and communities working together. In some ways, this report might lead the reader to believe community members were only critical of the RCMP. This was not the case. However, the emphasis is on the problem

areas as perceived by communities and others because it is these areas where additional effort is required.

Many factors can affect the way an individual officer or group of officers are viewed by the community in which they serve. A frequent comment in every territory was that “it depends on the individual officer.” Most RCMP members are respected and viewed in a positive light; however, in some instances, it appears this is not the case. Ways to minimize negative relations between individual officers and the community are discussed in this report.

From the perspective of the majority of consultation participants, the more important questions concern the broader policies and procedures of the RCMP in the territories, not the behaviour of individual officers. The areas where communities see improvements needed are listed below.

- Crime prevention
 - visibility
 - working with children and youth
 - preparing for the pipeline (in NWT)
- Community safety
 - response time
 - alcohol abuse: bootlegging and underage drinking
 - drug trafficking and illegal drug use
 - spousal assault and sexual assault
 - property offences: break and enter; theft; vandalism
 - impaired and dangerous driving
- Communications
 - accessibility of police officers
 - RCMP – community relations
 - social and cultural awareness
 - accountability to the community
 - excessive use of force
 - public complaints
- Community justice
 - numbers of diversions to Community Justice Committees (primarily in NWT and Nunavut)
 - communications and cooperation
- Police roles and priorities
 - standards and selection of officers
 - length of postings.

Each of the areas for improvement listed above is addressed in section four of the report.

Community expectations for the RCMP are high. RCMP members themselves say communities are right to have tough requirements and standards, and that they are trying to make sure communities’ expectations are met. However, police maintain a significant

challenge for the RCMP is budgetary. For example, while both community members and police believe there is a shortage of officers at the detachment level, the RCMP points out the resources are not currently in place to assign more officers to the territories. Community members who understand this limitation often said in the consultations this is even more reason for police and communities to work cooperatively.

3.5 Additional Challenges and Concerns for Communities

Communities face challenges that are not directly police responsibilities; however, these issues have a direct bearing on the overall dynamics of the community, and they influence the issues police must handle. The concerns described below inevitably arose in consultations because of their significance to community residents in the three territories.

3.5.1 Inadequate Community Programs

There is a common belief more recreational opportunities are essential in diverting youth away from unhealthy lifestyles and crime. Similarly, the availability of programs such as substance abuse counselling varies but such programs are perceived by community residents to be lacking in many, if not most, communities. Women's shelters are seen as essential in protecting women and children, although they exist in few communities.

People generally see the development and maintenance of recreational and social programs as a community responsibility (with government assistance). However, it was made clear in the consultations in several communities that community members are not making the required effort in this regard. The lack of community volunteerism is seen as a serious problem.

Some RCMP officers in the territories are actively engaged in organizing or, at least, participating in recreational activities for youth. As well, some officers are active in the schools in terms of educating children about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. While community members would like to see more police involvement in this regard, they view ongoing efforts positively.

3.5.2 Loss of Parenting Skills

This is not a policing issue; however, it affects the community context in which police officers must work. Community respondents often cited the loss of parenting skills as a serious problem. They say the loss results mainly from the traumatic impact of the residential school experience on individuals' lives, and the often related problems of alcohol and drug abuse. During the consultations community members frequently cited the need for families and communities to work together to address the range of problems that underlie poor parenting, as well as the immediate problem of young parents who are unequipped to raise their children in a healthy way. Residents noted government must assist communities in their endeavours. In several consultations, participants also

indicated, while parenting is not a police responsibility, RCMP members should be aware of and sensitive to contributing factors, such as the residential school experience.

3.5.3 Loss of Culture and Respect for Elders

Again, this is not directly a policing issue but was discussed often in the community consultations. It is clearly related to the issues outlined in the point above – loss of parenting skills, the residential school experience, and alcohol and drug abuse. Community members also pointed out the loss of culture has resulted from the imposition of non-First Nation culture over the last few generations. Most believe it is a community responsibility to address the problem; however, awareness and sensitivity on the part of the RCMP are important.

3.5.4 The Youth Justice System and the Courts

There is a range of opinion on this matter. However, the majority of consultation participants in the three territories believe the youth justice system (the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*) and the courts are too lenient on young offenders, particularly violent and repeat offenders. Many participants pointed out communities do not have adequate local programs for young offenders. These youth are simply left in their communities with no punishment and no positive programming. Communities see this frequently leading to habitual offending by youth and young adults. Participants recognized this is not a problem that the RCMP can fix, but it is indicative of a broader frustration with the entire justice system as seen by the communities.

4. COMMUNITY VIEWS ON POLICING SERVICES

4.1 Introduction

This section of the report contains the views, both negative and positive, offered by the consultation participants. It should be noted that while there was a significant degree of consistency in views expressed throughout the consultations, there were also opinions that did not correspond to the generally expressed messages. Those opinions are not included here as they would have added detail which, in most cases, would not be helpful to the overall report.

It is worth repeating there was an underlying consensus in the consultations that the police cannot be expected to address and solve all the communities' problems alone. This applies especially to drug, alcohol and domestic violence problems. Each set of problems will require effective communications and cooperative efforts among the RCMP, the communities, and other stakeholder groups such as the courts, community workers, and government departments and agencies.

4.2 Crime Prevention

4.2.1 Visibility

It was made clear in every consultation session that community members think of police visibility as both a crime prevention issue and a public safety issue. Residents do not see police officers patrolling their community, especially at night, as much as they did in former years. This belief appears to be particularly strong in Yukon and the NWT. Participants say a decline in the number of patrols contributes to fear of being victimized, especially among elders and people who live alone. There is a belief police officers spend most of their time during the day in the detachment office and, in many cases, only leave in response to a call or to perform some other duty such as attendance at a meeting. At night, especially in the smaller communities, the detachment offices are normally closed and the officers are at home. Residents would prefer to see them patrolling in their vehicles more often during both day and night.

Evening and night patrols are seen as an effective way to deter bad behaviour, especially among youth. The reasoning is that if someone is contemplating a break and enter, for example, the possibility of police in the area will make that person think twice. Residents also see patrols as a way for officers to make informal contact with community members. Officers who take the time to chat with young people are seen as being more community minded and possibly having a positive effect on youth. Residents in some communities in Yukon and the NWT recommended officers patrol on bicycles or on foot in the summer to make their presence felt and to connect more with the community.

In order to lower incidents of drinking and driving, many community members also want police officers to be more visible in bars and bar parking lots at closing time. This idea is described later in the report.

4.2.2 Public Awareness and Involvement

Public awareness and crime prevention are important aspects of the RCMP mandate, especially in the context of community policing. Formal programs such as *Neighbourhood Watch* and *Citizens on Patrol* (COPS) have been delivered by the RCMP in some communities. Consultation participants generally spoke highly of these programs because they provide an opportunity for the community to take responsibility and to work with the police to protect the community, their families and themselves. This is especially significant in light of community perceptions that break and enter, theft and vandalism are getting out of hand. Residents see sanctioned participation by citizens as an effective way to complement the efforts of an overburdened police service. The difficulty from the community perspective is that the programs are now offered infrequently, if at all.

RCMP officers place a priority on engaging with young people in the schools. Their involvement can be formal, as in the presentation of the Drug Abuse Resistance Program (DARE) to either senior or, more commonly, to junior grades. However, DARE and other programs such as anti-bullying require the presenting officer to be trained and certified in their delivery. Community consultations suggest the programs are seldom delivered. The RCMP acknowledges the number of members with the required accreditation is too low to meet the needs of communities.

Officers can also involve themselves in the schools on an informal basis by visiting and chatting with children in their classrooms when invited by the teacher or principal. This occurs frequently and is appreciated by students, teachers and parents. As participants in the consultations said, speaking with children in school is an ideal opportunity for police officers to build a relationship of understanding and, perhaps, to become a role model. As well, it is another opportunity for officers to educate children regarding personal safety and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

Ultimately, the purpose of speaking to youth in the schools is to educate them about crime and safety. This kind of engagement, while appreciated by communities to the extent it occurs, was identified by consultation participants as deserving greater RCMP commitment. Community residents in the three territories believe police engagement with school children is a low cost activity with potentially high returns. RCMP members also see the value in working with youth in the schools and some actively enjoy the opportunity, although police say time constraints have a negative effect on the ability of officers to get into the schools

4.2.3 Police – Youth Relations

Youth is a priority area for the RCMP and was raised consistently in the consultations as an important issue. Positive interaction between police officers and youth is therefore seen as essential in terms of the RCMP fulfilling its community policing mandates.

Young people have little to occupy them in most communities and RCMP members can contribute through organizing and taking part in recreational activities. The involvement can take various forms. In some cases the interaction is programmed and requires organization and, possibly, financial resources. Examples include cadets, Girl Guides, hunting and skiing trips, and trips to sports tournaments. In many cases RCMP members have taken the lead in organizing these events with other adults in the community and have accompanied the youth on the trips. At a more modest level, RCMP members in many communities have organized Hallowe'en parties, bike rodeos and boat safety demonstrations for youth. These are events consultation participants often held up as good examples of police-youth relations. They have the double advantage of instructing children on safety, and establishing a bond between officers and youth.

Consultation participants said they see RCMP members also engaging with the youth in more informal ways such as coaching or playing hockey and basketball. This type of activity is voluntary and generally takes place during officers' off-duty time.

Community residents often said they see police-youth interactions occurring less frequently than a few years ago. In many communities, in fact, consultation participants shared the view that these kinds of activities never occur in their communities any more. Residents recognize there may be budgetary restrictions and personnel shortages which have prevented RCMP members from engaging the youth in recent years. However, the shared community view is that when it does occur, police-youth activities are a healthy way for young people to spend their time. As well, residents see these activities as an opportunity for police officers to become part of the community and to gain the trust and respect of youth. Community members believe establishing positive relations with youth will result in lower rates of alcohol and drug abuse, and crime in general.

RCMP officers can also engage with youth on an informal, daily basis aside from activities such as sports. Community participants said stopping to talk with young people while patrolling the community serves two purposes. First, it tells the youth the police are present and watching the community. Second, it establishes a personal link between the officer and the individual young person. This is significant because it indicates to the youth that the officer is aware of his/her identity – being nameless and faceless is not possible if an officer knows one personally. Personal contact can also establish a feeling of trust between the officer and the youth, if the relationship is approached in a positive, respectful way. Several parents who spoke in the consultations said their sons and, occasionally, daughters looked on a particular officer as a role model and had expressed a desire to join the RCMP.

Community participants observed there appear to be various reasons why many officers do not engage with the youth. It may be that some are simply not inclined to spend their off duty time playing sports or organizing trips. In some cases these officers have young families and want to spend time at home. Community members view these reasons for non-involvement with the youth as legitimate. However, they also believe an officer can still make personal contact and establish a bond of understanding with young people while on patrol.

Finally, participants observed that two of the most common reasons for police not to engage with youth appear to be workload and a shortage of officers at the detachments. People feel increasing amounts of paperwork keep officers in the office more than in past years. RCMP members say their ability to patrol and to maintain the desired level of communication with youth and other community members has become increasingly difficult. According to the RCMP, establishing and maintaining meaningful community relations becomes unlikely in those circumstances.

4.2.4 Preparing for the Pipeline

Concern was expressed by participants representing several NWT communities in the Sahtu, Deh Cho and Beaufort Delta regions that the pipeline would result in serious problems for residents, particularly youth. RCMP representatives advised the consultant the police are developing crime prevention and management plans. However, communities do not see the RCMP actively planning for the pipeline and its impacts and generally believe (a) the police have a responsibility to be proactive in this regard, (b) working with the communities in preparing for pipeline impacts would be an effective approach, and (c) the RCMP has a responsibility to inform community residents regarding police plans.

4.3 Community Safety

4.3.1 Response Time

Response time is an important issue from the perspective of community members, as well as the RCMP, and it arose frequently in the consultations. Many participants from all territories spoke in positive terms of the efforts made by police to respond to calls in a timely manner, day or night. However, many others cited instances when, in their view, officers were slow to respond. These individuals spoke of having to wait one or two hours for a police response and, in occasional cases, an officer did not appear until the following day.

The concerns about response time were expressed most seriously by consultation participants in Yukon. Community members in the NWT and Nunavut were less critical of the RCMP, although concern was also voiced in those territories. Yukon participants cited instances when a police officer did not respond at all to a night call, even after the caller had fully answered the questions of the Whitehorse dispatcher. More frequently,

community residents spoke of cases when an officer responded after more than one hour. Some police officers in Yukon stated in the course of these consultations that they use discretion in responding to calls, especially after hours. In some cases an officer will telephone the residence of the caller before responding, while others will attend immediately without a phone call. In certain instances, an officer may decide to wait until the next day to attend. An officer's discretion is based partly on the nature of the call and partly on his/her knowledge of the individuals involved and their domestic situation. This might make some operational sense, but it is often cited by Yukon community residents as an example of insensitive and ineffective policing.

RCMP protocol in responding to calls, particularly domestic calls at night, was not made clear during any of the territorial consultations. If officers are using discretion in responding, the basis for discretion (if any) does not appear to have been communicated to the communities. Consultation participants, particularly in Yukon, view police protocol and response time as serious concerns the RCMP could address through discussions with the communities.

4.3.2 Drug Trafficking and Illegal Drug Use

Consultation participants often indicated drug and alcohol abuse and related criminal behaviour has increased significantly in the communities, especially in Yukon, in recent years. Most communities from all territories indicated marijuana, cocaine, and crack cocaine are available. There is serious concern that crystal methamphetamine has either arrived or will arrive soon, especially in Yukon because of relatively easy road access. RCMP members acknowledge drug trafficking and use are serious problems and are linked directly to other forms of criminal behaviour throughout the territories.

Drug dealers in the communities, especially those who are community members, are well known to residents and concern was expressed that organized crime is responsible for supplying illegal drugs to northern communities. Community residents also commonly link the presence of drug dealers to specific types of crimes such as break and enter, and to an increase in violence in the communities.

Another issue of real concern to community residents is that the young people are in danger of becoming involved in the drug trade, either as users or – in very serious cases – as dealers. It is general knowledge that a significant number of youth are using marijuana on a regular basis, but there is also concern youth are being exposed to harder drugs by the dealers. The perception among many residents is that youth have become less responsible and are frequently skipping school or dropping out altogether. In some cases, young people are viewed as dangerous to other residents because of their involvement in the drug scene.

Communities tend to see the drug problem as bad and getting worse due to perceived increases in drug availability, the imminent arrival of crystal methamphetamine, the increasing involvement of youth in drug usage, and increasing levels of violence among

those dealing drugs and between dealers and ordinary citizens. The police do not disagree with this assessment.

Community workers such as social workers are also deeply concerned about drug abuse and participants said they had seen an increase in recent years. They see the dangers, especially for older youth, of becoming users, or even traffickers. As well, they are concerned about the indirect effects of drug use on children, especially younger children. Parents who are drug users are perceived by community workers as having diminished interest and abilities to care adequately for their children. Further, social workers are concerned about the level of violence that accompanies drug use, including in homes with young children. They see a rise in incidents involving violence, particularly against women, as well as an increase in the numbers of children requiring protection and other forms of assistance. In these respects, social workers view the dangers associated with drug use as comparable to the dangers of alcohol abuse for women and children. Social workers are generally aware of the challenges facing the RCMP in making headway with the problem of illegal drugs, but they share with others an uncertainty as to how to address the problem in the immediate future.

There is a substantial degree of community frustration with the RCMP regarding the problems associated with illegal drug use and trafficking. The most common perception and frustration is that police are ignoring the drug problem. The reasoning of community residents is this: *Everyone in the community knows who the drug dealers are and where they live. The dealer-buyer transactions are fairly obvious and residents know which community members are making purchases. Drug houses are well known and are known to be violent places. The police also have all this information. Therefore, why are the police not doing more searches and making more arrests of local and out-of-town drug dealers?*

It is also true that community residents, while very concerned about the drug problem, are usually not willing to give evidence that would involve a statement and a possible court appearance. This situation is acknowledged by RCMP officers, who feel limited in their options, as well as by community workers. The reasons for community non-involvement are fairly complex. First, people believe the police have the same knowledge – perhaps more – than they do and so should be able to make arrests without the help of witnesses. This suggests a lack of understanding as to how police are required to do their job in terms of evidentiary procedure, searches, arrests and charging. Second, it was often pointed out in community consultations that the social dynamics of small communities make it difficult to take action anonymously. The high probability of being identified as a witness is linked to fear of reprisal from drug dealers or their friends and families. Most participants in the consultations could cite at least one instance of drug related violence against someone in their community who was not a drug dealer or user. People involved in the drug trade are seen – rightfully, according to the RCMP – to be potentially violent and unpredictable. Third, in spite of the high level of concern about illegal drugs, individuals are often reluctant to provide information to police because the same individuals are related to the drug dealers. A feeling of family solidarity is strong in the communities. Finally, residents occasionally expressed the view that the courts

were too lenient on drug dealers and, even if sent to court to face charges, dealers would be back in the community very soon after. The risk of reprisal is therefore perceived to be much too high relative to the likelihood of the problem being solved. These reasons for non-involvement may at one level seem contradictory. They are, however, all reasons given frequently by individual participants in the consultations.

The reluctance of community members to actively support police attempts to address the drug problem is a source of real concern for the RCMP. However, while police officers sometimes attempt to explain the legal process and the need for witness statements, it appears this may not be done regularly or systematically. The level of community misunderstanding about the operational requirements facing the police remains high. The RCMP may therefore want to consider a program to educate community members in this area. However, this is only one aspect of the challenge facing police and community residents. Increased awareness about the need to provide statements would not lessen (immediately, at least) residents' fear of reprisal from drug dealers, nor would it overcome the reluctance of people to provide statements against family members.

RCMP members see drug use as a serious and destructive problem for communities, and increasingly, for young people. Police officers attempt to spend time in the schools talking to students about the dangers of drugs and alcohol, whether through the official DARE program or on a more informal basis. The difficulty according to police, however, is in finding the time for this kind of work in small detachments with limited numbers of officers.

4.3.3 Alcohol Abuse: Bootlegging and Underage Drinking

Many community residents identified alcohol abuse and its related problems as serious issues that have plagued their communities for a long time and that increasingly involve youth. Residents generally do not see alcohol abuse *per se* as a police problem. The actual phenomenon of alcohol abuse and certain related problems such as child neglect are generally viewed as problems families and communities should address themselves. However, the related issues of domestic violence, bootlegging, underage drinking, public drunkenness and driving while impaired are aspects of alcohol abuse people often believe should be addressed more proactively by police.

Bootleggers live in every community in the territories, according to consultation participants, and, like drug dealers, bootleggers are known to community residents. Also like drug dealers, they are perceived to be dangerous in many instances, and the fear of reprisal affects the likelihood of residents working with the police to bring bootleggers to court.

Community residents are aware of the levels of violence associated with alcohol abuse. Family violence is common in homes where heavy drinking occurs but most communities do not have dedicated shelters for abused women and their children. Many residents are concerned women are being hurt, but also that children may be neglected,

especially in homes where both adults engage in heavy drinking. The concern for children's long term well-being was raised frequently.

Consultation participants in every community are also increasingly concerned about perceived increases in the level of drinking among youth, especially teens. Many residents believe youth drinking leads to drug abuse. Drinking parties involving young people are known to take place regularly, usually outside town (in Yukon and NWT). The concern of residents in Yukon and NWT is not only that youth are developing unhealthy habits, but when they attend drinking parties they drive – often while intoxicated – to and from the community. Perhaps the biggest concern with teen drinking parties is the level of violence that is believed to occur, particularly assault and sexual assault. This issue was raised repeatedly in community consultation sessions, especially in Yukon, as well as by elected officials and others in the communities. In some communities, RCMP officers are aware of the date and location of youth drinking parties and make their presence felt. Although they may not make an arrest unless a serious incident occurs, they sometimes attempt to ensure young people, especially girls, have a safe means of getting home. In some cases, officers will make the effort to break up a party before it gets out of hand. In other communities, residents say the police do not attempt to monitor the parties or make an appearance. Finally, with respect to youth drinking, consultation participants frequently noted young people are buying alcohol either directly from bootleggers or – in Yukon and NWT communities with liquor stores or off-sales – from adults who buy for them. Again, community members usually know who the suppliers are and believe that the police should be more actively monitoring the situation and making arrests.

It should be noted that RCMP officers are active, to varying degrees, in some communities in terms of drug and alcohol education (formal or informal) for school children. These efforts are appreciated by community residents.

Consultation participants are also concerned about the extent of public drunkenness in their communities. Residents can feel threatened by this kind of behaviour, whether the intoxicated individual is in the open or is entering a public building such as the First Nation or Hamlet office. In some communities, residents believe police officers are effective in removing drunken individuals from public places; in other communities, they see the police as too lenient with respect to public drunkenness. The latter approach is believed to offer encouragement to heavy public drinking.

The concern with drinking and driving was raised often in the consultations. This issue is discussed in section 4.3.6, below.

Community workers at the consultations unanimously viewed alcohol abuse as a serious problem in every community across the territories. The levels of family violence associated with heavy drinking, as well as the potential for child abuse and neglect, suggests to social service workers that more local programming should be put in place to support people in their efforts to stop drinking. These respondents also see a need for a shelter for abused or threatened women and their children in every community. Neither

of these responses are the responsibility of police, although they might help to address the problems.

4.3.4 Spousal Assault and Sexual Assault

Community participants are concerned about domestic violence and police responses to it. This is a difficult issue for individuals, families and communities, and one that police officers acknowledge the RCMP has wrestled with since the implementation of the mandatory charging policy in 1983. The issue is complicated because the views of community members range across the spectrum. At one end are victims who want the police to respond immediately to a domestic call but who do not want charges laid. As they often say, they “just want the violence to stop.” At the other end of the spectrum are those who want the police to respond immediately and to lay charges without question. These community members often say repeat offenders should be sent to jail.

Three related concerns were expressed with some frequency in the consultations. First, some community members cited instances when police were slow in attending a night-time domestic call even after the central dispatcher had been contacted. Second, communities are concerned about “dual charging.” A significant number of residents indicated police are increasingly charging both parties to a domestic dispute when, in fact, one participant is the perpetrator and the other a victim. Finally, community respondents sometimes said male victims of domestic violence are not taken seriously by police. It was also frequently acknowledged that men are less likely to report being victimized because of the associated stigma.

Community workers are at the front line – along with police – with regard to domestic violence. Like other community members and the RCMP, community workers are clear that abuse is linked directly to alcohol and drug abuse. They see immediate and long-term physical and psychological impacts on victims and, equally importantly, on the children who are involved as victims or witnesses in incidents of violence at home.

Community workers and others in the consultations said that for many reasons, women in abusive relationships often feel intimidated by police. In part, this may be due to a legacy of mistrust of police officers in the past who demonstrated a dismissive attitude towards abused women. They also said many women do not call police to report domestic or sexual assault because they are aware of a community stigma against reporting and pressing charges.

It was expressed in some consultations in each of the territories that police officers often become frustrated with women repeatedly subjecting themselves to violent situations and the failure of those women to follow-up with police on sending the perpetrator to court. Participants frequently said the police view is simply: “Why don’t women just leave the abusive relationship, or at least obey the court ordered no-contact restriction?” Many community representatives believe police often become desensitized to the plight of women victims, whether the issue is spousal abuse or sexual assault. While social workers say that police officers are generally improving in this regard, there are still

officers they believe have become desensitized to abused women, especially repeat callers. Social workers and representatives of women's groups (in Yukon) said that special training for police officers on women's issues, domestic abuse and sexual assault, and First Nation and Inuit community dynamics would help to address the problem of possible desensitization of officers.

Community workers share the view that more programs and facilities such as shelters are needed to prevent domestic violence, to protect victims and children, to treat victims and their children through physical rehabilitation and counselling, and to counsel offenders who want to break the cycle of violence.

RCMP officers are obliged to lay charges in cases of domestic violence. Discretion is more limited in this kind of incident than perhaps any other. The "mandatory charging policy," as it is called, has been in effect since 1983 and has not been reviewed in any substantial way since its inception. As described above, however, police officers are often challenged in the application of the policy. From the police perspective, relatively few victims will agree to pursue charges in court. In other words, most victims in the communities view the role of police as stopping the immediate abuse. This can be frustrating for police officers who recognize the abuse will likely continue in the absence of charges that would lead to trial and perhaps jail.

It must be stressed there is no evidence that RCMP officers are not taking domestic violence seriously. However, it is possible there is some inconsistency with respect to the protocol for attending domestic calls in terms of timeliness. It is also unclear if officers are, in fact, laying charges in every domestic violence call, even when there are reasonable and probable grounds for so doing. These are questions the communities appear to want to discuss further with the RCMP.

4.3.5 Property Offences

Consultation participants commonly pointed out the offences of break-enter, theft and vandalism have increased in the last few years. They often say that until recently no one needed to lock their doors in the communities. Now, however, people in some communities are reluctant to leave their homes unattended overnight. This means either people do not leave the community, or they arrange for a house-sitter while they are gone.

Residents attribute the problem of increased property offences to the illegal drug trade and the increased use of drugs by local people. They maintain drug users are breaking into homes in search of cash or goods they can sell in order to buy drugs. RCMP members agree with this assessment. Community members tend to believe that with current human resource levels, the police are not capable of stopping the break-enters and thefts. Instead, they say the root problem – the trafficking and use of illegal drugs – must be addressed.

Vandalism is growing worse in the eyes of community residents and is most often attributed to three factors: the absence of recreational and other positive opportunities for young people; an increasing abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs by youth; and an increasing lack of parental control. Consultation participants view vandalism as a policing problem to the extent they believe RCMP officers should be more visible and should more actively deter this kind of behaviour. However, residents also see it as a community problem for which parents and other community members should take proactive responsibility. This would involve parents watching their children more closely, and working together to provide recreational opportunities.

4.3.6 Impaired and Dangerous Driving

Impaired driving was frequently raised in the consultations, particularly in Yukon and NWT communities with a public bar. Participants often stated the view that the presence of police officers in bars, especially just before closing, would have an effect on drinking and driving. It was suggested officers could do a walk-through in the bar and wait in their cars in the parking lot as patrons exit. Further, they could follow-up with breathalyser tests and arrests as appropriate. While police do these kinds of activities in some communities, in many others residents do not see it happening. Residents believe this would ideally be a regular part of policing, at least on Friday and Saturday nights. It was also suggested that if police could be present at bar closing every night for at least one week, then intermittently but reasonably often after the first week, they would have an impact on impaired driving.

Community participants also identified dangerous driving as a serious concern. On the Dempster Highway, for example, private automobiles and commercial trucks pass through some communities in large numbers every day and night. The rate will increase as the pipeline work proceeds. Community residents believe these vehicles are often breaking the posted speed limit by significant margins, thereby endangering community members. Residents would like to see a greater police presence on the highway, using radar to help enforce the speed limit. Similarly, many communities in Yukon, especially those located on highways, have serious concerns about the extent of speeding through the communities, as well as the apparent inability of the police to deter it.

The RCMP is aware of the problem with speeding. In some communities, officers are able to dedicate time to radar enforcement, although this is acknowledged as being inadequate. With other, more pressing demands on the time of individual officers, extensive radar enforcement is seen by the detachments as impossible. As well, certain detachments have the responsibility to patrol long sections of highway on a regular basis, which becomes a significant challenge when the detachment is frequently short staffed.

4.4 Communications

4.4.1 Accessibility

Participants in the community consultations frequently spoke about difficulty in contacting their local detachment members. This is seen as a problem especially at night (more or less between midnight and 6:00 am) when residents say most serious incidents such as assault occur and when the detachment offices are usually closed. Calls for assistance at night are automatically patched through to the RCMP call operations centre in Whitehorse, Yellowknife or Iqaluit. Respondents, especially in the smaller communities with three- or four-member detachments, also expressed concerns their phone calls to the detachment office are often not answered even during the day but are forwarded to the call operations centre. There is a high degree of frustration at calls being transferred when people want to talk with a local police officer.

There are two concerns with central dispatch. First, people usually phone the police during the night when they need immediate assistance. However, in many cases callers find the dispatch operators ask too many questions and take too much time to be of help in an emergency. People often hang up in frustration. Second, community residents would prefer to speak with an officer whom they know and who knows them, their family and the community. Many people view dispatch operators as distant and impersonal, and therefore unable to understand or to be sensitive to local and family problems. In Nunavut, an additional problem arises for unilingual Inuktitut speakers who are unable to converse with the central dispatchers, most of whom only speak English.

The RCMP has implemented the central dispatch model in communities across Canada, essentially to enable officers to rest at home. At least one officer is always on call and is connected by radio to the central dispatcher who will make contact when the officer is required to attend an incident. This is particularly relevant in the communities with detachments of two or three members. In these smaller detachments, a 24-hour on-duty presence would not be possible. In some communities, RCMP members have given their home numbers to community residents and will take calls at home during the night. The communities are appreciative of this level of commitment from their officers; however, the officers concerned admit this can lead to unnecessary calls (unscreened by central dispatch) and eventually to a higher risk of burnout due to lack of rest.

Many community residents are not aware of the reasons for the transfer of calls to central dispatch. Yet even among residents who understand the reasoning, there is a belief the issue needs to be resolved in a different way. In the consultations, the most common solution identified by community respondents and police alike is to increase the number of RCMP officers in the detachments, thereby enabling the detachment to staff its office and take calls directly 24 hours per day every day.

An alternative, suggested by consultation participants, is for every detachment to hire one or two “auxiliary members” from the community. These individuals could take calls during the night and could, in turn, phone or radio the officer on call. Similarly, in cases

when a detachment clerk was not available to handle calls during the day, an auxiliary could take calls for officers who might be on patrol or handling an incident. Residents who raised this idea believe the local knowledge possessed by “auxiliaries” would serve the police and the community better than the central dispatchers.

4.4.2 RCMP – Community Relations

Consultation participants spoke about the importance of police officers becoming community members in their own right as individuals. Residents say some police officers and their families integrate fully with the community, taking part in extracurricular activities such as youth sports and community dinners. However, other officers keep strictly to themselves when off duty. This is often perceived as a lack of willingness to learn about the community and its residents, as well as a lack of sensitivity. While there is variation on this question among communities and among residents of the same community, it appears to be a significant concern.

Community residents, including elected officials and community workers, often remarked they had never met one or more of the RCMP members from the local detachment. The issue was raised more frequently in Yukon than in the other territories, although the concern exists to some extent in the NWT. This is seen as an indication that officers do not spend enough time in the community patrolling or engaging with youth and other community members. It should be noted, however, that community members acknowledged they did not normally initiate contact with new RCMP members or make efforts to welcome them to the community. When this discussion arose in consultations and meetings, people generally thought it would be a good idea for communities to reach out to new officers. Further discussion often led participants to think of including new teachers, nurses and other professionals in welcoming events. In several communities in the three territories, the welcoming process already occurs.

4.4.3 Social and Cultural Awareness

Community representatives frequently said RCMP members are not aware of the social issues facing individuals, families and communities. This lack of understanding is perceived to affect the ability of some officers to demonstrate sensitivity or to work effectively with community members. Community workers and residents said many RCMP members are unfamiliar with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and how to interact with people with this condition. As well, police officers are seen as unsympathetic to the experiences many people endured in residential schools. The legacy of residential schools is a debilitating reality affecting individuals and families, and is closely connected with alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence and FASD. Consultation participants believe RCMP members should make more effort to understand these realities in the interest of working more effectively with community residents. Specific training was frequently identified as a first step.

Consultation participants raised the concern that RCMP officers usually lack an understanding of local First Nation and Inuit cultures, and small community dynamics.

This is not seen as surprising in view of the fact that cross-cultural training at Depot is neither intensive nor specific to the communities where officers are posted. Similarly, most RCMP members posted to northern communities come from southern Canadian cities and have not had small community experience. The RCMP acknowledges, as well, that members in the northern Divisions are relatively young overall, possibly making the job of those officers more challenging.

Community residents believe most RCMP members require special training and orientation with respect to local First Nation and Inuit cultures and small community dynamics. Participants further emphasized the idea that officers require orientation with respect to the specific communities in which they are serving. Many consultation sessions addressed the perception that local knowledge would assist RCMP officers in doing their jobs. For example, an understanding of traditional dispute resolution processes could assist police in working with local Community Justice Committees. In the absence of RCMP programs for such training, residents often discussed the possibility of communities taking on the responsibility for training new officers upon their arrival in the community. The training itself would address local First Nation and Inuit history, values, customs, and views on dealing with interpersonal disputes and social problems.

4.4.4 Accountability to the Community

Local elected officials who attended the consultations⁹ said they normally receive monthly status reports from local detachment commanders. However, elected officials find the reports relatively unhelpful unless accompanied by a meeting with the Detachment Commander, at least, and preferably with other officers as well.

In several First Nation communities in Yukon, Chief and Council expressed concern they rarely – if ever – meet with local RCMP members to discuss community issues or priorities.¹⁰ This is seen as a missed opportunity to work together on addressing community problems, perhaps even joint program development. At the same time, Councils which have this concern said they did not make special efforts to set up meetings with the local detachment. This is an area where community leaders and officials, on one hand, and the RCMP, on the other, could attempt to establish a more effective working relationship. Again, this applies only in some Yukon communities; in others the Chief and Council and the local detachment (usually the Detachment Commander) have an effective working relationship based on quarterly meetings.

Elected officials who took part in the consultations expressed the view that, in addition to regular meetings, they would appreciate informal visits by RCMP officers. Informal visits are seen as opportunities for both police and officials to share information and to keep current on community issues. Perhaps even more important, it is seen as useful for RCMP members to drop into First Nation offices in Yukon and NWT, and Hamlet offices

⁹ In Yukon and NWT, elected officials attending the consultations included the Chief and Councillors from several communities. In some cases in Yukon, non-First Nation Mayors and Councillors took part. In Nunavut, elected officials, comprising Hamlet Mayors and Councillors, generally did not participate.

¹⁰ Too few elected officials in NWT or Nunavut were involved to point to an overall response on this point.

in Nunavut to talk with program staff. Again, the informal sharing of information is regarded as important, although it does not occur as often as it should.

Community respondents in the three territories often said that when RCMP officers are actively engaged in planning, priority setting and regular consultations with other community-based agencies, the results are positive. However, participants often indicated this does not occur frequently enough. Most importantly this engagement would include professionals such as social workers and school principals. It appears interagency committees exist in some communities and that RCMP members participate on an occasional, if not a regular basis. Community members stressed that, ideally, police would work with other social agencies as the norm, whether or not a community interagency committee exists.

Another frequently expressed concern of residents, especially parents and grandparents, is that police officers in some communities are not advising them when their children are in trouble. People want to talk to police about their children. This is seen as an RCMP responsibility which would both assist families and help to ensure good police-community relations.

4.4.5 Excessive Use of Force

The allegation of excessive police force arose occasionally in the consultations. This is a difficult allegation to assess in a relatively informal process such as this. However, there is no doubt individuals in many communities believe themselves or other community members to have been the victims of excessive force by police. There appears to be some misunderstanding between the RCMP and many community residents with regard to the use of force, including tasers. The RCMP has not been clear on explaining police protocols in this area. Community residents are left with no markers by which to judge whether an officer has overstepped the limits in his/her use of force. Again, the perception by residents that RCMP members sometimes use excessive force is hard to assess – but it is a perception that exists fairly commonly in the communities.

4.4.6 Public Complaints

The question of public complaints regarding the RCMP is a matter of concern for some community members. While this naturally tends to be an issue raised by individuals who have a particular issue for complaint, the consensus in consultations was that the process is both unclear and ineffective. Several individuals said they had conveyed their concerns about police actions in a particular incident to the detachment in their community, others to Division Headquarters. As far as the complainants were concerned, their complaints had not been dealt with in a serious and satisfactory manner.

4.5 Community Justice

4.5.1 Diversions to Community Justice Committees

There are active community justice programs in the NWT and Nunavut, where the RCMP makes pre-charge diversions to Community Justice Committees in most communities. The majority of the cases diverted involve relatively minor offences committed by youth. Community Justice Committees are less active in Yukon, although Community Justice Coordinators in some communities are accepting youth diversions from the RCMP and playing a role in monitoring their progress.

Community members in the NWT and Nunavut believe community-based justice, as managed by their Community Justice Committees, is a good thing. They also say the police are generally doing an effective job of making referrals to the Committees. However, many consultation participants said that the RCMP should refer more cases to the Committees and that a broader range of both adult and youth offences (i.e., more serious offences) could be handled by the Committees. This matter was raised most frequently in the communities with strong Community Justice Committees. In other communities, residents saw the value of increasing the number of diversions in the future, but acknowledged their Justice Committees would need strengthening before this could happen.

Significantly, representatives from many NWT and Nunavut communities said the extent to which the RCMP diverts cases to local Community Justice Committees appears to depend largely on the commitment of each individual officer to the concept of community-based justice. Even in communities which regard themselves as having experienced and effective Justice Committees, some officers are reluctant to divert straightforward youth cases. Consequently, cases which could be handled locally result in a charge and possibly a court hearing.

4.5.2 Communications and Cooperation

Community Justice Committees are seen as a good liaison point between the RCMP and the communities and regular communication between the two groups would provide a forum for several purposes. First it would enable the Committees to educate the RCMP regarding community dynamics and issues. It would also provide the opportunity for the RCMP and the Justice Committees to discuss plans and priorities for community initiatives.

The view was also expressed that police would benefit from consulting the Community Justice Committees for information on particular individuals (especially youth) and families who are at risk of becoming involved with the justice system. Community respondents see this as a way to ensure that police officers have a complete and fair understanding of an individual's background and family situation, in turn important for providing fair treatment to people with problems.

In summary, communities want the RCMP to continue or increase diversions to Community Justice Committees. They also see value in the RCMP and the Committees maintaining ongoing communications for other purposes beneficial to both the RCMP and the community.

4.6 Police Roles and Priorities

4.6.1 Standards and Selection of Officers

There was considerable discussion in the consultations about the kind of police officers needed by communities in the territories.

First – and with very little variation – community respondents would see several advantages in having more First Nation officers in Yukon and the NWT, and more Inuit officers in Nunavut. Aboriginal officers are perceived as understanding their culture and the dynamics of small northern communities, and are therefore better able to relate to the issues facing residents. As well, people in the communities simply tend to feel more comfortable dealing with a First Nation or Inuit police officer than with a non-Aboriginal officer.

Second, the point was often made that any police officer – whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal – must meet certain character standards. RCMP members should only be posted to territorial communities if they truly want to be there. This means the officer should understand before being posted that the living conditions can be harsh from both an environmental and a social (isolation) perspective. Further, it is essential that officers posted to the communities be willing to take part in the community as residents in their own right. It was often repeated in the consultations that the best officers were those who presented themselves as “human beings” and as willing members of the community. This willingness to be a community member involves a commitment to the youth of the community, demonstrated through mutual trust and communication, as well as active involvement in community events such as suppers, and in youth activities such as sports.

Third, communities expect their RCMP members to be effective in carrying out traditional policing responsibilities. Most community respondents said public safety and the enforcement of laws are the most important aspects of policing and, given the many challenges of policing in the North, it is essential that police officers in the territories be of exceptionally high calibre in this regard.

In light of community needs and expectations as described above, the consultations contained a fairly clear message that communities should play a role in determining which RCMP members are assigned to them. While some respondents said one or more community representatives should actually participate in the selection process with the RCMP, generally it was acknowledged this would not be possible. Instead, there was some consensus regarding the idea that each community should be invited to provide Division Headquarters with criteria which would be applied in the selection of every new

officer to be assigned to that particular community. This was suggested by community participants as a way to help ensure the communities got the kind of police officer they wanted, and that the officer, once living in the community, would be satisfied in his/her own right. Clarity regarding community needs and expectations is seen as important in maintaining good police-community relations.

4.6.2 Length of Postings

An issue often raised in the consultations concerns the length of individual officers' postings in communities. A common comment was: "We just get to know them and they're gone." Most commonly community residents want particular officers to stay longer than the two or three years currently allotted. Communities reason that if the officer is doing a good job, if he/she is liked by the community, and if he/she wants to stay, then the RCMP should extend the posting. Residents believe more than two years are required by RCMP members to get to know their communities. Individuals, families, interpersonal dynamics, local culture and social issues must all be understood by officers in order to enable their most effective job performance. Similarly, communities need time to become familiar with an officer as an individual, and to help him/her integrate as a community member.

5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND MAIN MESSAGES

5.1 Introduction

The following points are based on the information and views provided by participants in the consultation process. The consultant's role was to organize the findings, to identify clear messages, and to frame those messages concisely.

Many of the concerns expressed are the responsibility of the RCMP to consider. However, two previously noted caveats are warranted. First, as RCMP respondents stressed, the RCMP has been operating under serious budget restrictions for several years and there is no reason to believe this will change significantly. Second, some concerns and suggestions expressed by consultation participants are directed not to the RCMP alone, but also to communities and other stakeholders. Participants were clear the solutions to community problems will involve everyone working together. The problems are community problems, not just police problems.

Finally, it is worth noting again that the community consultations have demonstrated the RCMP is the police service of choice in the territories. Communities believe improvements are needed, but are not impossible to achieve.

5.2 Crime Prevention

- Community members who participated in the consultations are concerned about the level of police visibility in their communities. Police visibility is perceived to be decreasing over time, due to a variety of possible reasons. Residents believe if officers patrol communities more regularly at night and during the day, there will be a positive impact on crime prevention and levels of personal safety. Participants frequently said more frequent community patrols will also enable the police to establish good relations with community residents, especially young people.
- Community participants in the consultations were very clear that communities value the efforts of RCMP members in working with children and youth. Events planned in collaboration with community authorities, schools and youth workers are seen as a positive contribution by police in helping youth find a healthy path, and in contributing to crime prevention.
- Community participants strongly indicated their appreciation of RCMP programs aimed at children and youth, and at the community generally. Programs such as DARE, Neighbourhood Watch, and Citizens on Patrol were identified frequently as having the potential to contribute both to crime prevention and to public safety. These kinds of programs are seen by participants as an effective way for communities and police to work together for the improvement of community life. Community members would like to see more programming of this type.

- Participants stressed the importance of RCMP attempts to engage children and youth in informational and preventative sessions in the schools (e.g., the DARE program). Communities also see value in RCMP officers speaking informally to children and youth in the schools. School principals and teachers could encourage this involvement by RCMP officers.
- Community members view ongoing, informal contacts between RCMP officers and youth as valuable for building mutual respect and understanding. The building of positive relationships is seen as ultimately helping to reduce crime.
- Residents in the NWT believe it is important for the RCMP to prepare for possible impacts resulting from the pipeline project. They want to be informed of those plans and believe communities have a role in working with police to develop strategies.

5.3 Community Safety

- Consultation participants in many communities are concerned about the timing of police responses to emergency calls, especially during the night. Community members believe every call should be responded to as quickly as possible. Based on information provided by RCMP members in the consultation process, it appears some police officers are less clear on this point and, in some cases, exercise discretion in responding to night calls.
- Community members who participated were very clear about the high level of concern regarding drug trafficking and illegal drug use. This is seen as an area where the RCMP and the communities could work cooperatively by jointly discussing the problems and designing community-based strategies. This could be done on a community-by-community basis, but participants were clear it must be taken seriously for follow-up by both parties.
- Community residents are often unclear as to the legal requirements of the RCMP in making drug arrests. Police and community members both indicated a protocol for educating and informing community residents would be helpful.
- The problems associated with alcohol abuse are of grave concern to community residents. This is also an area where police and communities believe cooperation could more effectively address the issues. Participants indicated community members could be supportive of the RCMP in their efforts and could volunteer to assist police in their monitoring activities.
- Youth drinking is a serious problem from the community perspective. It is also an issue on which participants believe community members and police could work effectively together by monitoring youth and youth drinking parties. As well, RCMP efforts to engage children and youth in informational and preventative sessions in the

schools is viewed positively by community members and could be encouraged by principals and teachers.

- Property crime, especially break-enter and theft, are seen to be linked in large measure to drug and alcohol abuse. From the community perspective, more arrests of bootleggers and drug traffickers would help to control these problems. Vandalism could be addressed in part by greater police visibility through more patrols and informal contact with youth.
- Domestic violence is a serious problem throughout the North. The RCMP mandatory charging policy is problematic in that community members are unclear and often frustrated regarding police practices. In the first instance, community members believe RCMP officers should respond to every domestic call, regardless of the time of day or night, or where the call originated. Public safety is seen as the primary issue and the primary responsibility of the RCMP.
- Consultation participants expressed concern the RCMP does not understand the importance of establishing cooperative working relations with other community professionals. While RCMP members usually attend interagency committee meetings when requested, community workers stated in the consultations there does not appear to be the degree of commitment needed from the police, particularly on matters relating to domestic violence.
- Social workers and representatives of Yukon women's groups who took part in the consultations said RCMP officers should be given specialized training regarding women's issues, domestic violence, sexual assault, and Aboriginal community dynamics prior to being posted to communities. They expressed concern that some recent recruits were traumatized by the kinds of incidents they were expected to handle in communities, and that some officers might become desensitized to the plight of women victims. (This view was not confirmed by the RCMP.)
- Community residents are concerned about impaired driving. Participants stated their belief that regular police walk-throughs of bars before closing time are effective, as is time spent by officers waiting in their vehicles in bar parking lots in the evening and at closing time.
- Residents who participated believe police patrols of bars and bar parking lots in the evening and at closing time have a significant impact on drinking and driving. Participants said these activities could have a positive effect if done nightly for one week and regularly after the initial week.
- Nunavut residents are concerned about the operation of snow machines while the driver is impaired. Public education by police, as well as greater police visibility are seen as ways to address the problem.

- Residents are concerned about the extent of speeding that takes place on NWT and Yukon highways. Efforts by the RCMP to enforce speed limits, especially in communities located on the highway, are viewed positively.

5.4 Communications and Accessibility

- Community participants frequently expressed concern with the RCMP system of central dispatch in Whitehorse, Yellowknife or Iqaluit as the only means of taking after hours calls. Community residents find the system to be slow and somewhat frustrating when they are calling for an emergency response. People prefer talking to a local police officer. This is a difficult issue for the RCMP because they point out that current staffing levels do not permit detachment offices to stay open 24 hours per day. At this point there does not appear to be a clear solution to the problem. Community suggestions included hiring auxiliary members to work the detachments telephones during the night shift.
- Community members said phones in some detachment offices often go unanswered even during the day, depending on the operational situation facing officers at any given time. Again, according to the RCMP, this is a challenge in light of current staffing levels. Community participants suggested the ideal situation would be to have a public servant answering phones in every detachment during office hours.
- Elected community officials appreciate receiving monthly reports from local RCMP detachments. These reports contain statistics on local criminal and other activity for the previous month. However, there appears to be slippage as some community authorities indicated in the consultations they do not receive the reports on a regular monthly basis.
- Quarterly meetings between the Detachment Commander and elected community officials are viewed as an effective opportunity to discuss issues of concern to the community and ways to address those concerns. It is the responsibility of the Detachment Commander and the local authorities to set up, attend, and follow up on these meetings. Many community authorities would like to have meetings more frequently than every three months.
- Mental health issues are of great concern to community residents and to the mental health service providers who participated in the consultations. They stressed the importance of RCMP officers communicating and collaborating with mental health professionals through regular meetings and planning. Mental health workers in the Yukon also expressed the view that RCMP members require training on FASD and the effects of residential schools with respect to both recognition of the conditions and the handling of individuals with these conditions.
- Community participants expressed concern about the lack of clarity regarding the RCMP public complaints process. Residents said they would welcome any efforts by

the RCMP to help ensure that community residents understand the existing complaints options available to them.

5.5 Community Justice

- Communities believe the role of Community Justice Committees to be effective in handling offenders and victims, and valuable in strengthening community and culture. Communities are interested in expanding the role of Community Justice Committees. This would involve more referrals from the RCMP, including more serious cases for both adult and youth offenders. However, not all communities believe their Committees are presently ready to make on more serious cases and will need to do their own developmental work first.
- The Community Justice Committee is viewed as an appropriate liaison point between the police and the community. Regular contact would enable Committees to educate the police regarding community dynamics and issues, including relevant information on individuals (especially youth) and families at risk. Ongoing communication between the RCMP and the Community Justice Committees would also provide an opportunity to discuss plans and priorities for community initiatives.

5.6 Police Roles and Priorities

- Communities want their RCMP members to be community members as well as police officers. Participants in the consultations therefore view every effort by RCMP officers to involve themselves informally in community life as a positive step in maintaining good police-community relations.
- Concern was expressed by many community participants that they had never met their local RCMP members. It was often agreed in community sessions it is the responsibility of both the Detachment Commander and the community to ensure recently arrived officers meet elected community officials, community workers, and the general public.
- Community participants expressed the view that communities could take the responsibility to ensure that very soon after arrival in the community, new officers are welcomed and given an orientation to the community, its history, its culture, its problems and aspirations, its approaches to problem solving, and its unique dynamics.
- Community members frequently expressed the belief that many RCMP officers require more cultural sensitivity training than they receive at Depot. Participants also believe cultural training would be of greater benefit to the individual officer, and therefore to the community, if it were tailored to local cultures and issues. Again, community participants indicated this is, in part at least, a community responsibility and an opportunity for communities and the RCMP to work together.

- Community participants often expressed the belief that certain RCMP officers are not suited to living and working in small northern communities. Residents see it as important for the RCMP to make individual officers aware of the challenges inherent in working in northern communities, and to screen individuals before posting them to the communities. Communities indicated an interest in having the opportunity to provide Divisional Headquarters with a list of community oriented criteria to be used in the selection of officers.
- Many community participants expressed the view that they want their local officers to remain in their communities longer than the typical two or three year posting. Communities believe it takes at least two years for an officer to get to know the community, and for the community to know and respect the officer. In cases where both the community and the officer agree the posting should be continued, this would be the community's preference. Many RCMP members who participated in the consultation process agreed with this idea.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community consultation on policing in the territories is an initiative of the three territorial Departments of Justice and the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The overall purpose of the consultations as agreed by the territories and Canada is to “increase awareness and seek input on matters related to community safety.” While there are similarities among the three territories, there are also differences that were taken into account in the consultation process.

The twenty-year *Territorial Police Service Agreement* between the Government of Canada and each of the territorial governments expires in 2012. In anticipation of that date and the need to ensure the timely preparation for new arrangements, the territories are viewing the consultation process as providing valuable insights. Therefore, the consultations are also intended to provide a starting point for the territories to evaluate the model of policing currently operating in the North, and possibly to develop a new model that could be used as the basis for discussions with the federal government.

The report provides a background description of the main agreements on policing in the territories, as well as basic facts regarding RCMP structure and funding arrangements in each territory, responsibilities at the detachment level, and the RCMP policy on community policing.

Each territory approached the consultations in a slightly different way, depending largely on the accessibility of communities and the relative costs of travel for the consultation participants. The territories were effective in achieving substantial community input to the process, given limited resources. While approaches differed somewhat, the same broad sets of questions were addressed in all three territories: crime prevention; community safety; communications with the RCMP; community justice; and police roles and priorities. Consultation participants were asked to offer their positive views on RCMP policing, as well as to identify areas requiring improvement.

It was clear throughout the consultation process that for communities in the Yukon, the NWT and Nunavut, the RCMP is the police service of choice. Accolades for the RCMP were common throughout the consultations. And while consultation participants expressed concerns in some areas, it was rarely said a problem could not be resolved by police and communities working together.

Community participants identified a range of crime problems in their communities. Most significantly, the following were discussed in every consultation session: property crimes (break and enter, theft, vandalism), alcohol abuse and related behaviour (bootlegging, underage drinking, assault, impaired driving, creating a disturbance), drug trafficking and illegal drug use, domestic violence, sexual assault, and dangerous driving (mainly speeding). Perceptions of personal safety vary by individual and by community; however, safety is generally viewed to be decreasing as alcohol abuse and, especially, drug trafficking and illegal drug use increase.

Participants identified additional challenges and concerns for communities: inadequate community programs; loss of parenting skills; loss of culture and respect for elders; and the youth justice system and the courts. These issues are not directly police responsibilities; however, they have a bearing on the overall dynamics of the community, and they influence the issues that police must handle.

With regard to crime prevention, consultation participants are concerned that higher police visibility is required. Communities believe the work of RCMP members with children and youth, whether in school or in the community is important and that more is needed. NWT communities have unique concerns regarding RCMP planning in anticipation of the pipeline and believe the process should involve community members.

Communities in the three territories want to see a more proactive approach by police regarding bootlegging and drug trafficking. There is recognition that communities must work cooperatively with police in order to achieve results in this regard. Consultation participants believe that if drug and alcohol abuse were addressed more effectively by police and communities, related problems such as underage drinking, domestic violence, sexual assault, public disturbances, and impaired driving would also decline.

With regard to communications and accessibility, consultation participants have serious concerns regarding the central dispatch system in effect during the night. Community members see the system as ineffective and would rather speak directly to someone (perhaps an auxiliary) at the detachment office. Participants see value in police working closely with elected community officials both in terms of accountability and in planning and mobilizing on community issues. Similarly, RCMP engagement with other community-based agencies is seen as necessary. It was also expressed that many RCMP members require training regarding FASD and the effects of residential schools on individuals, families and communities.

Community justice, through the operation of Community Justice Committees, is ongoing in the three territories, especially in the NWT and Nunavut. Community members see value in the process and believe the RCMP could become more engaged by diverting more cases and more serious cases to the Committees. This would apply only in those communities where the Committee has the capacity to handle a greater workload.

Community expectations of the RCMP are high. Communities want RCMP officers to be members of their community as individuals in their own right. Consultation participants also believe officers should be of the highest calibre in terms of traditional policing duties and protecting the public. The view was expressed that both the RCMP and communities would benefit from input by communities regarding the types of officers to be posted to the communities. Community members also noted many officers require cross-cultural training and would benefit from orientation sessions regarding local Aboriginal culture and small community dynamics. Communities expressed an interest in taking responsibility for such training and orientation.

The report concludes with a summary of findings and main messages arising from the consultations.

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