

Building Consistent RCMP Engagement Structures to Support Safer Communities and Stronger Economies (2026)

Issue

Across British Columbia, RCMP detachments engage with community stakeholders in uneven and inconsistent ways. Some detachments maintain regular advisory committees or consult with organizations such as boards of trade and chambers of commerce, while others have no structured engagement at all. This inconsistency weakens policing priorities, reduces trust with the business community, and leads to missed opportunities to address public safety, crime prevention, and economic impacts.

A standardized provincial framework for community and business engagement would ensure consistent and meaningful consultation that reflects B.C.'s diverse needs and strengthens local economies.

Background

The business community is directly impacted by public safety, crime trends, and policing visibility. Businesses, boards of trade, and chambers of commerce routinely gather real-time data and insights on property crime, security costs, consumer behaviour shifts, local hotspots, and impacts to investment confidence. These insights, drawn from on-the-ground experience, are critical for police to accurately assess risks, set relevant priorities, and design effective community safety programs.

However, British Columbia does not currently require RCMP detachments to follow a standardized, province-wide process for engaging external stakeholders. Engagement practices currently vary significantly depending on detachment leadership, municipal capacity, and local needs. This variability creates several challenges:

- Inconsistent policing priorities that may not reflect actual community conditions or economic impacts.
- Limited or ad hoc communication between detachments and business representatives.
- Missed opportunities for collaborative solutions related to crime prevention, hotspot management, homelessness-related safety issues, and emerging threats such as extortion.
- Uneven transparency and accountability regarding detachment priorities, metrics, and follow-up actions.

Recent events, including extortion targeting businesses in Surrey and across the Fraser Valley, demonstrate the risks of this fragmented approach. In Surrey, extortion threats and violence targeting business owners first emerged in 2023,¹ yet it was not until February 2026 that the province announced a newly established community advisory group on extortion to formalize information sharing between police, government, and affected communities.² While this is a positive step, the delay highlights a systemic issue. If structured, province-wide engagement mechanisms existed earlier, particularly with

¹ CBC News (2025). B.C. extortion timeline: when it started and who might be behind it. Accessed February 2026, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/extortion-bc-timeline-9.6950645>

² Government of British Columbia (2026). Setting up a new community advisory group on extortion crisis. Accessed February 2026, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2026PSSG0013-000168>

business organizations, the flow of intelligence, risk identification, and community feedback could have been faster and more coordinated, potentially preventing escalation and harm.

Despite ongoing challenges, there are examples of effective engagement within the RCMP. Business Link programs in Richmond,³ Langley,⁴ and North Vancouver⁵ strengthen communication with the business community, improve awareness of safety trends, and reduce crime through collaboration. However, these initiatives depend entirely on local leadership, rather than provincial requirements, and as a result, are not consistently replicated across all detachments.

In 2024, the B.C. RCMP identified its core policing priorities as:

- Enhancing public safety.
- Accountability and governance.
- Employee excellence and workplace culture.⁶

Under the accountability and governance banner, the B.C. RCMP committed to building trust with the public and stakeholders through enhanced transparency.⁷ However, these priorities have not been updated since, limiting visibility into how they have evolved in response to emerging issues or local concerns, and whether they have met their engagement goals.

While these priorities provide a high-level direction, they largely align with the national RCMP strategy, which focuses on recruitment, improving workplace culture and inclusivity, and modernizing operations.⁸ Although important, these areas are not specifically tailored to British Columbia's localized public safety challenges or the need for consistent, structured community engagement. The absence of regular updates and clear communication on evolving priorities further highlights gaps in transparency, consistency, and sharing information with stakeholders, including the business community.

Because there are no province-wide engagement frameworks or strategic planning structure guiding B.C. RCMP detachments, each detachment is left to create its own. These plans reflect unique local priorities, for example, Mission emphasizes community safety and community connections,⁹ while Burnaby's focuses on enhancing communication and community engagement.¹⁰ Although local tailoring is essential to accurately reflect community needs, the absence of consistent provincial expectations results in uneven information sharing, inconsistent consideration of economic impacts, and unequal access for stakeholders, including the business community, to provide input.

³ Richmond RCMP (2018). Business Link. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/richmond/services/business-link>

⁴ Langley RCMP (2025). Langley RCMP – Programs and Services. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/langley/services#business>

⁵ North Vancouver RCMP (2024). North Vancouver RCMP Business Link Program. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/north-vancouver/community-policing/business>

⁶ BC RCMP (2024). BC RCMP Policing Priorities. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/corporate-information/bc-rcmp-policing-priorities>

⁷ Ibid, 2024.

⁸ RCMP (2024). Our next chapter: The RCMP 2024-2027 strategic plan. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/sites/default/files/doc/our-next-chapter-rcmp-2024-27-strategic-plan.pdf>

⁹ Mission RCMP (2025). Programs and services – Mission RCMP. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/mission/services-and-information>

¹⁰ Burnaby RCMP (2023). Burnaby RCMP Detachment Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/burnaby/corporate-information/burnaby-rcmp-detachment-strategic-plan-2023-2026>

Compounding this challenge, detachments do not follow a standardized timeline for consultation, planning, or priority setting. As a result, strategic plans are developed and implemented on different cycles across the province. For instance, Vernon North Okanagan’s plan spans 2023-2028,¹¹ while Burnaby’s extends from 2023-2026.¹² Without an overarching framework requiring scheduled reviews and aligned planning periods, it becomes difficult to compare data, measure progress consistently, or coordinate responses across jurisdictions.

British Columbia’s Provincial Policing Standards (PPS) recognize the importance of community engagement, including seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders, such as local governments, Indigenous leaders, community organizations, and the business community.¹³ However, the standards do not prescribe how engagement should occur. There are no requirements for structured advisory groups, regular meetings, data-sharing, or reporting other than a survey of citizen satisfaction that is conducted at least one every three years.¹⁴ The lack of direction in consistent practices across detachments limits the effectiveness of stakeholder input.

While similar engagement considerations may apply to municipal police departments, this policy focuses on RCMP detachments due to the province’s direct role in overseeing RCMP contract policing through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. This creates a clear opportunity to implement standardized engagement requirements across RCMP jurisdictions, whereas municipal police departments operate under independent governance structures that require a separate policy approach.

Boards of trade and chambers of commerce, which are already deeply connected to local economic ecosystems, are uniquely positioned to support this engagement. Their inclusion would strengthen evidence-based policing, improve communication, and reduce the economic impacts of crime on businesses and communities. Formalizing a province-wide engagement and strategic planning framework would help RCMP detachments with consistency, accountability, and align local policing priorities with real-time needs, and support safer, more resilient business environments across the province.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. Develop a province-wide RCMP Engagement and Strategic Planning Framework through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General outlining minimum standards for priority setting, stakeholder consultation, reporting, and strategic plan development. The framework should

¹¹ Vernon North Okanagan RCMP (2023). Strategic Plan 2023-2028. Accessed February 2026, https://www.vernon.ca/sites/default/files/2023-06/230614%20Vernon%20North%20Okanagan%20RCMP%202023_2028%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf#:~:text=Our%20four%20strategic%20priorities%20are%20Public%20Safety%2C%20Vulnerable%20Persons%2C%20Community%20outreach%20and%20Policing%20excellence.

¹² Burnaby RCMP (2023). Burnaby RCMP Detachment Strategic Plan 2023-2026. Accessed February 2026, <https://rcmp.ca/en/bc/burnaby/corporate-information/burnaby-rcmp-detachment-strategic-plan-2023-2026>

¹³ Government of British Columbia (2023). Provincial policing standards: Subject 6.1.2 - Community Engagement for Equitable Policing. Accessed February 2026, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/policing-in-bc/policing-standards/6-1/6-1-2-community-engagement>

¹⁴ Ibid, 2023.

- include a structured timeline for the development, review, and release of strategic plans to ensure consistency across all detachments, regardless of geography or community size.
2. Establish a standardized, province-wide RCMP Community Advisory Framework requiring RCMP detachments to maintain formal community advisory committees that actively inform the development of strategic plans and local policing priorities. These committees should include representation from business organizations, enabling input on public safety trends, economic impacts, and community needs.
 3. Mandate consistent transparency and reporting requirements across all detachments, including regular public reporting that outlines policing priorities, demonstrates how community feedback informed those priorities, and provides progress updates on key issues such as property crime, street disorder, and extortion, or other relevant matters.
 4. Ensure consistent resourcing across detachments so that rural and smaller communities have the same ability as urban detachments to maintain advisory committees, support administrative coordination, conduct data analysis and reporting, and meaningfully collaborate with the business sector and stakeholders.

Submitted by the Surrey & White Rock Board of Trade