



VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT 2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

MESSAGE

from the chief



IT'S DIFFICULT TO REFLECT on 2020. It was a year that brought loss and immense change but also showed us how resilient we are and how people can rally together to help each other out.

The COVID-19 pandemic had worldwide impacts, but it also had an impact on local issues, like public safety. Everything the pandemic threw at us was new – the impacts could not be anticipated. However, thanks to the VPD's data and analytics-driven approach, and proven ability to adapt and overcome challenges, we were able to adjust to help maintain public safety in Vancouver.

Many sectors were able to slow down or modify operations during the pandemic to allow employees to work from home so they could stay safe. However, police agencies, including the VPD, were not able to make that change. Due to the nature of our work – an essential and core service – our sworn officers and civilian professionals had to continue to ensure public safety.

In this report we take a look at the 2020 crime statistics and where the pandemic had a big impact. Specifically, there was a significant change in property crime levels in Vancouver and a very dramatic increase in hate crime and hate incidents directed towards Vancouver's East Asian community.

The VPD flagged this trend early on and connected with other major police agencies in the country. We worked with Vancouver's East Asian community to provide information and resources, and to reassure people that the VPD takes these crimes very seriously. We hosted media events and availability to provide the latest information on files. On the investigative side, we appointed a special team commander to lead a task force of investigators.

Last year was transformative not only because of the pandemic, but also because of the attention that was focused on policing following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a police officer. It led to difficult, yet productive conversations about racism and public safety. These conversations are continuing, as they should. To ensure the safety of Vancouver, we need the trust and support of our communities. This trust is built through listening and taking action based on thoughtful discussion and evidence-based decision making.

In our 2020 annual report we focus on the pandemic and its impact on the VPD and public safety. This includes looking at how we worked to keep our employees safe, how crime changed and shifted, and how our frontline members adapted to keep the public, and each other, safe.

CHIEF ADAM PALMER
VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT

CRIME

CRIMINAL OFFENCES	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS 2019	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS 2020	2019 RATE /1,000 POP	2020 RATE /1,000 POP	% CHANGE (RATE)
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VIOLENT CRIME	5,820	5,764	8.41	8.27	-1.7%
Culpable Homicide	11	19	0.02	0.03	71.5%
Attempted Murder	20	10	0.03	0.01	-50.4%
Sexual Offences	628	584	0.91	0.84	-7.7%
Assaults	4,535	4,551	6.55	6.53	-0.4%
Robbery	626	600	0.90	0.86	-4.8%

PROPERTY CRIME	44,582	34,276	64.39	49.16	-23.7%
Break & Enter	4,709	4,814	6.80	6.90	1.5%
Theft of Motor Vehicle	1,384	887	2.00	1.27	-36.4%
Theft from Auto	16,498	9,884	23.83	14.18	-40.5%
Theft (Over/Under \$5K)	13,096	9,615	18.92	13.79	-27.1%
Possession of Stolen Property	632	373	0.91	0.53	-41.4%
Fraud	2,933	2,978	4.24	4.27	0.8%
Arson	250	309	0.36	0.44	22.7%
Mischief (Over/Under \$5K)	5,080	5,416	7.34	7.77	5.9%

OTHER CRIME	6,481	6,576	9.36	9.43	0.7%
Offensive Weapons	862	971	1.25	1.39	11.8%
Other Criminal Code	5,619	5,605	8.12	8.04	-1.0%

TOTAL CRIME	56,883	46,616	82.16	66.86	-18.6%
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DRUGS	1,461	1,160	2.11	1.66	-21.2%
Cannabis	40	37	0.06	0.05	-8.2%
Cocaine	341	275	0.49	0.39	-19.9%
Fentanyl	399	348	0.58	0.50	-13.4%
Heroin	113	82	0.16	0.12	-27.9%
Methamphetamine	402	225	0.58	0.32	-44.4%
Other	166	193	0.24	0.28	15.4%

TRAFFIC	1,422	1,163	2.05	1.67	-18.8%
Dangerous Operation of MV	86	130	0.12	0.19	50.1%
Impaired Operation of MV	827	617	1.19	0.88	-25.9%
Fail/Refuse Breath/Blood Sample	139	94	0.20	0.13	-32.9%
Fail to Stop/Remain at Scene	133	81	0.19	0.12	-39.5%
Driving while Prohibited	237	241	0.34	0.35	1.0%



BY THE

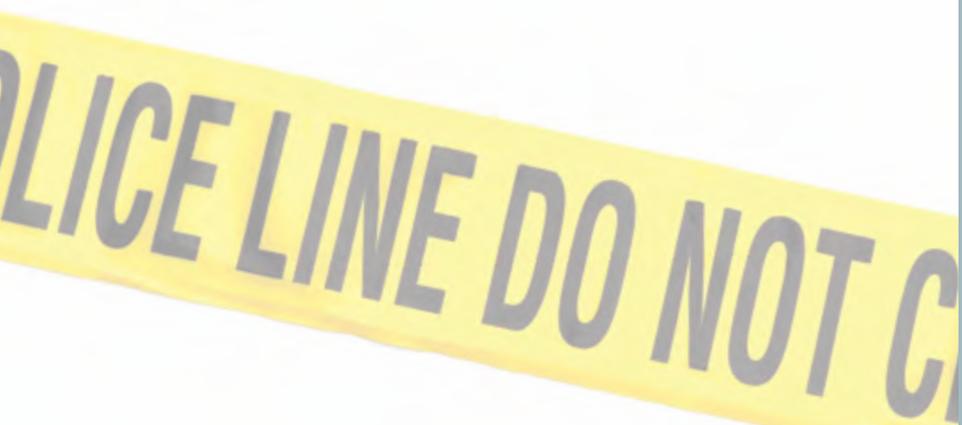
	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS 2019	NUMBER OF INCIDENTS 2020	2019 RATE /1,000 POP	2020 RATE /1,000 POP	% CHANGE
OTHER	14	8	0.02	0.01	-43.3%
TRAFFIC FATALITIES	14	8	0.02	0.01	-43.3%
CALLS FOR SERVICE	268,626	241,611	388.01	346.51	-10.7%

	2019	2020
POPULATION	692,324	697,266

For more information on our data disclaimers and limitations, please refer to: vancouver.ca/police/planning/info.htm

NUMBERS

2020



SUMMARY

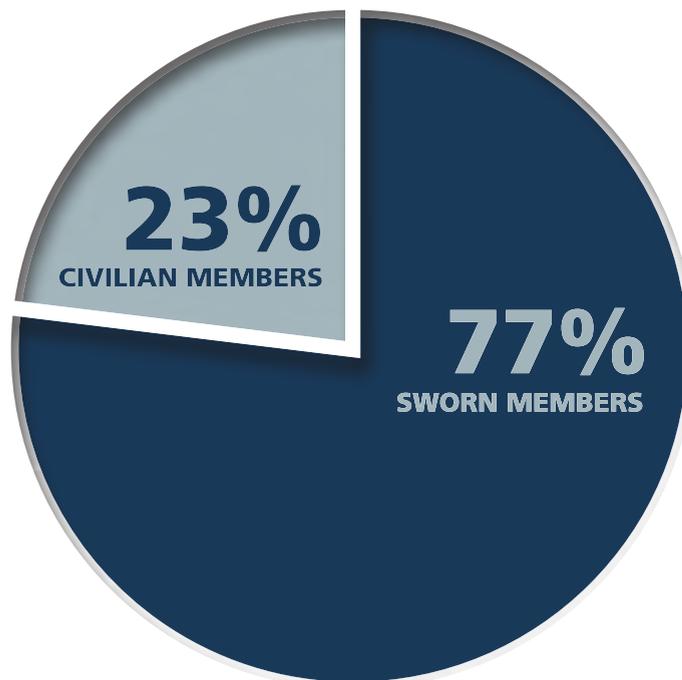
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	2019 (\$1,000)	2020 (\$1,000)	% CHANGE
Budget	\$301,239	\$314,367	4.4%
Cost	\$301,225	\$314,343	4.4%
UNDER BUDGET	\$14	\$24	

This is the 16th consecutive year the VPD has finished the year under budget.

For more details, visit:

<http://vancouver.ca/police/policeboard/financial.htm>

AUTHORIZED STRENGTH	2019	2020	% CHANGE
VPD Sworn Members	1,327	1,348	1.6%
VPD Civilian Members	401	411.5	2.6%
TOTAL POSITIONS	1,728	1,759.5	1.8%



Our PANDEMIC *plan*

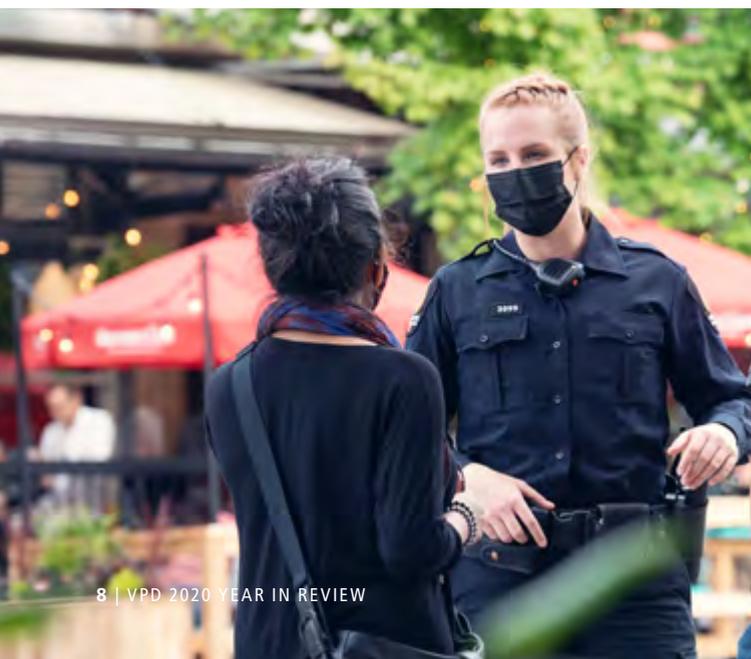


As COVID-19 started to become a worldwide issue, Vancouver Police activated the department's pandemic plan. This included setting up the Pandemic Working Group in January – a cross company group tasked with ensuring employee safety and supporting the continuity of the department's essential public safety functions.

Once the COVID-19 pandemic was officially declared in March 2020 by the World Health Organization, the working group was well-positioned to support VPD members. The working group evolved throughout the year and remained nimble in order to adapt to new measures introduced by provincial and local health authorities – measures introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19.

As Vancouver Police provide an essential and core service, the department could not shut down operations at any point – as some businesses could to limit the spread of COVID-19, and to keep their employees safe. Some VPD functions were limited – for example, early on, traffic officers reduced traffic enforcement to very serious infractions only – but overall, the VPD had to continue to respond to 9-1-1 calls, and investigate crime.





PUBLIC*safety*

Vancouver Police use community feedback, and crime data and analytics, to react to emerging trends and crime “hot spots” and plan an operational response. In the spring of 2020, clear crime trends started to emerge as a result of measures introduced by different levels of government to combat COVID-19.

There was a significant spike in break-and-enters in commercial spaces that were temporarily closed. In response, Vancouver Police launched new investigative projects to identify and target a number of suspects taking advantage of vacant premises. In addition, VPD increased the number of frontline patrol officers in some of the hardest hit areas and trained more officers for bicycle patrols.

One major positive impact on crime trends was a decrease in thefts from parked automobiles. With fewer cars in the downtown core, due to COVID-19 restrictions, there was less opportunity for thieves. In fact, in 2020, the number of theft-from-auto incidents reported to the VPD was the lowest in five years.

The most disturbing crime trend was the dramatic increase in anti-Asian hate crime and hate incidents. Sadly, hate crime incidents targeting the East Asian community increased by 717 per cent in 2020. In response, VPD increased police presence in the hardest hit neighbourhoods and formed a special hate crime project team, led by a senior commander, to investigate the files. VPD also created new forms in simplified and traditional Chinese for reporting hate incidents, and increased outreach and relationship building with the East Asian community to provide transparency and awareness of the issue, and hear directly from people who were impacted or feeling fearful.



EMPLOYEE*safety*

Due to the nature of policing and public safety, VPD members have significant contact with the public. During a typical year, the VPD has more than one million public contacts in the Operations Division alone.

Steps were taken to ensure employees had the most accurate and up-to-date information, and the right equipment, to help keep themselves and the public safe. Changes were made within facilities and to specific processes to ensure safety.

- All members were provided with personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer, in addition to the personal respirator masks they already had.

- Occupancy limits were set for all rooms at VPD facilities.
- New plexi-glass partitions were installed in public lobbies at the VPD’s two main buildings containing public information counters.
- The online crime reporting system was expanded to allow the public to report theft under \$10,000 through the online system. This amount was previously set at \$5,000. The change allowed for more reports of non-emergency situations to be made online to limit in-person police reports.





FRONTLINE *impact*

Maintaining the VPD's frontline response during the pandemic was crucial. Police have to be available to respond to calls for help 24/7. Although there was a slight decrease in the number of 9-1-1 calls to police in 2020, overall, the demand for frontline members remained steady. Further, the number of protests in the city of Vancouver, requiring police planning and/or police presence, was even higher in 2020 than the previous year.

As a COVID-19 outbreak, or even cluster, in one patrol team could have significant implications for frontline resourcing, the VPD prepared for several different scenarios. This included creating a plan for redeploying detectives and other officers from the Investigation Division to patrol teams to provide relief and supplement resourcing to ensure minimal contact between patrol teams.

The VPD's medical director provided advice throughout the year on how frontline members could reduce the threat of exposure to COVID-19 and protect themselves if a suspected exposure occurred. Measures included taking police reports over the phone when feasible; deploying one-person patrol units instead of a two-person team, if possible; and hosting essential pre-shift team briefings outside with physical distancing. A new, special process was developed to disinfect patrol cars after each shift, and a decontamination process was developed for frontline members after a confirmed exposure to an individual with COVID-19.

In addition to regular police duties, officers were tasked, by the Province of BC, with enforcing provincial health orders with special enforcement clauses. These orders and enforcement measures changed and evolved throughout the year. Frontline members were provided with the information and tools about the enforcement measures, and ultimately, used their discretion in the field on when and how to use the tools available to them.







VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD



Left to right: Mayor Kennedy Stewart, Barj Dhahan, Dr. Sherri Magee, Patricia Barnes, Allan E. Black, Frank Chong, Wendy John, Claire Marshall, Merilee Robson, Rachel Roy, Faye Wightman, and Dr. Peter Wong.

THE VANCOUVER POLICE BOARD is the VPD’s governing body. The Board provides strategic oversight and direction and fosters police services which reflect the needs, values, and diversity of Vancouver’s many communities. The Board is made up of eight volunteer citizens who are all residents of Vancouver. The Mayor is the Chair of the Board.

One of the Board’s most important priorities is to ensure an open and transparent link between the community and the VPD. The Board encourages opportunities for citizens to engage with the VPD, and with the Board, to ensure that police services are responsive to the needs and priorities of Vancouver citizens.

Other priorities of the Board include:

- Supporting a healthy workforce. Giving employees access to appropriate health and wellness services makes the VPD more effective and cost efficient.
- Improving safety, care, and quality of life for those living with mental health issues and addiction. By partnering with local health authorities, the Board promotes innovative treatment and support initiatives.
- Fostering a diverse workforce. The Board encourages police programs, services, and recruiting efforts which are accessible to everyone.

The VPD is widely recognized as one of the best police departments in North America. The Board takes great pride in the work of the VPD, and particularly, in the respect and trust it has earned with Vancouver citizens.



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