

For Immediate Release
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Surrey Police Board approves development of city's first policing Indigenization Strategy

Indigenization Strategy a key step towards implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)'s recommendations for more equitable policing in Canada

Surrey, BC – The Surrey Police Board has approved the development of an Indigenization Strategy as one of the first steps toward the advancement of the Surrey Police Service.

The intent of the Indigenization Strategy is to ensure the priorities and perspectives of Surrey's Indigenous population are built into the foundation of the Surrey Police Service's policies and processes, with the long-term goal of reducing Indigenous victimization rates and representation within the criminal justice system.

This initiative further builds on the Surrey Police Board's plans to work with a Chief Constable to engage with the Indigenous population in Surrey, which is the home to 22% of Metro Vancouver's urban Indigenous population and the Katzie and Semiahmoo, the two land-based First Nations whom the SPS will serve.

"This is a critical first step towards reconciliation in policing and an opportunity to reimagine what the relationship between Indigenous groups and police services can look like," said Harley Chappell, Elected Chief of the Semiahmoo First Nation and Chair of the Surrey Police Board's Governance Committee. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build Indigenous strategies, perspectives and priorities into the foundation of a policing model rather than imposing an existing policing structure on Indigenous communities."

The adoption of Indigenization strategies by police services is in accordance with the recommendations of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, which emphasize the importance of acknowledging the legacy of systemic racism and inequality for Indigenous people in Canada.

The Police Board recognizes this is a process that can only move forward with an acknowledgement of the painful legacy of Indigenous people's experience with policing in Canada, and that a community policing model for the future must be built in consultation with Indigenous people to be truly effective, accountable and responsive.

The Indigenization Strategy is one of numerous strategies the Surrey Police Board and Chief Constable will advance in pursuit of greater consultation and engagement with the city's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) communities.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Melissa Granum

604.598.5800

media@surreypoliceboard.ca