

2017 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Overview

This document outlines the Winnipeg Police Board's plan for communicating and engaging with its stakeholders. For 2017, the Board has developed a more streamlined communication plan that focuses on what the Board will do differently in 2017 in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of its communication with the public and stakeholders. In making this change, the Board hopes that the 2017 communication plan will become a living document that is consulted by all Board members and staff on a regular basis.

Objectives

In 2017, the Winnipeg Police Board's communications should:

- Promote public awareness of the Board and its mandate
- Explain to the public and stakeholders how the Board's work is relevant to their interests
- Dispel misconceptions about the Board and confusion about its mandate compared to those of other public safety and oversight bodies
- Encourage citizens and stakeholders to engage with the Board

Key Messages

In 2017, Board communications will reinforce the following key messages in order to promote public understanding of the Board's mandate and to address how the Board is commonly confused or conflated with the Winnipeg Police Service:

- The Winnipeg Police Board wants and needs to hear from community members
- The Board listens to the community to understand what it needs, values and expects from police
- The Board uses that input to set priorities for the Winnipeg Police Service and establish policies for its effective management
- The Board is distinct from but works closely with the Winnipeg Police Service and the City of Winnipeg

Nature and Means of Communication

The Board will use the following means to communicate with the public and stakeholders:

- The Winnipeg Police Board website
- Board meetings, including agendas and minutes on the City of Winnipeg's Decision-Making Information System
- Paid advertising
- News releases
- Targeted outreach
- Quarterly newsletters
- The City of Winnipeg's public engagement newsletter

The notable changes for 2017 are that the Board will begin producing a quarterly newsletter and it will no longer have a social media presence.

The Board will create and maintain a mailing list and will send subscribers a quarterly newsletter that draws on monthly Board reports to provide community stakeholders with information on the Board's activities. The newsletter will be targeted at community and government stakeholders that do not have the time and resources to closely follow the Board's monthly meetings, but which may take an interest in the Board's development of policies as well as the Board's work on the WPS budget, the strategic plan, and other commitments.

The Board is a small organization that channels public communications through its Chair, who acts as the Board's designated spokesperson. As a result, the Board is not well-suited to social media, which requires engagement with followers and a steady supply of new content to be an effective means of communication for a public body. In the past, the Board's primary use of social media has been to share information about the public consultation process and announce media releases. The Board will continue to share these types of information through its mailing list and its media contact list. In addition, the Service and the City of Winnipeg have agreed to use their social media accounts to provide information about the Board's annual community consultations.

Strategies

As the Board seeks to improve its communications capacity and the effectiveness of its communications with the public and stakeholders in 2017, it will adopt the following strategies:

- Adopt, in consultation with the City of Winnipeg's Office of Public Engagement, a new structure for the Board's community consultation process that citizens will find more valuable and convenient
- Reinvest time and resources the Board spent using Twitter on higher-impact communications initiatives
- More regularly provide information on the Board's activities to community and government stakeholders, in formats they find useful and convenient
- Improve the organization of the Board's website to make it easier for visitors to find the information they seek
- Provide greater clarity to citizens on the Board's role with respect to Police Service complaints, making it easier to understand which organization or oversight body has the right mandate to address citizens' concerns and facilitate contact with those organizations

Appendix

The following components of the Winnipeg Police Board’s 2017 Communication Plan are substantially similar to the 2016 Communication Plan. Any changes have been explained in the above sections. This is consistent with the Board’s decision to produce a more streamlined communication plan for 2017 to make the 2017 Communication Plan a more convenient and useful tool for the Board.

1. Risk Factors

There are a number of inherent challenges that must be addressed for the Board to be successful in achieving the objectives of its first communications plan. They are identified and evaluated in the table below.

Risk	Evaluation
Low levels of public engagement and participation due to ineffective communications	Low levels of public engagement undermine the validity of the Board’s policies, strategic priorities and objectives for the Service. The Board needs to mitigate this risk by providing residents with multiple venues and platforms for giving input, and by utilizing the community connections of its Board members to understand public priorities.
Poor or inadequate communications that lead to public misinformation about the Board’s role or mandate or about the Winnipeg Police Service	The Board still needs to promote awareness of its existence and mandate. Misconceptions about the Board’s mandate will undermine the Board’s ability to engage with the public, earn public trust, and manage public expectations. Examples of damaging misconceptions are that the Board is a blindly supportive cheerleader for the Service or, conversely, that the Board has a combative relationship with the Service. The Board will mitigate this risk by providing clear and accessible information about its mandate and the healthy tension that characterizes its governance relationship with the Service.
The public or interest groups do not feel their input or participation is treated seriously or respectfully	The likelihood of this occurring is high because residents have diverse and sometimes conflicting perspectives. The Board can, however, reassure residents that their input has been heard by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing a summary of the feedback received during the public consultation process • Welcoming public presentations on matters related to the Board’s mandate at the Board’s regular meetings • Writing the strategic plan in a way that specifically acknowledges community input received during the consultation process
Inadequate or ineffective communications on critical issues could diminish public confidence and trust in the Board and the Winnipeg Police Service	The likelihood and severity of this risk will be further evaluated in consultation with the Service. The Board will attempt to mitigate this risk through sound governance of the Service (providing appropriate oversight and implementing policies that will reduce the likelihood of a critical incident).

2. Audiences

The Board will direct its communications products and activities toward the following audiences:

- Residents of Winnipeg
- Winnipeg Police Board members
- City of Winnipeg Council and senior officials
- Manitoba Police Commission
- Members of the Winnipeg Police Service
- Winnipeg Police Association and Winnipeg Police Senior Officers Association
- Local media (mainstream and community-based)
- Community organizations and government agencies with mandates related to community safety, crime prevention and justice
- School boards
- Business community
- Volunteer sector
- Provincial and federal government representatives

3. Audience Needs

It should be noted here that for 2017, there are many commonalities in the information and engagement needs of each audience. Since civilian governance of police is still relatively new to Manitoba and Winnipeg, each audience needs to be able to access information about:

- The Board’s scope and mandate
- The Board’s plan and progress at becoming fully operational
- The Board’s operations and activities
- How to engage with the Board

The following table indicates the knowledge base and needs of each of the Board’s target audiences.

Target Audience	Existing Knowledge (on policing, public safety, crime prevention, civilian oversight)	Information and Engagement Needs
Residents	Varies significantly by individual, should not be assumed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to reach out to the Board • Encouragement to engage with the Board and/or attend meetings • Public consultation meetings at convenient times and locations • Information on the environment for policing in Winnipeg and opportunities and challenges for the Winnipeg Police Service, sufficient to enable informed and meaningful engagement • Winnipeg’s diverse communities may require

Target Audience	Existing Knowledge (on policing, public safety, crime prevention, civilian oversight)	Information and Engagement Needs
		different approaches to communication and levels of engagement, such as communities disproportionately affected by crime
Winnipeg Police Board members	High, but areas of expertise depend on an individual member's experience and length of service on the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and orientation upon appointment to the Board • Timely updates • Accessible information on relevant issues and trends
City of Winnipeg Council and senior officials	High familiarity with issues related to policing, public safety, crime prevention; knowledge of civilian oversight may depend on individual councillor's committee involvement, especially because the Board has only existed since 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to the Board and its mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Accessible information on the Board's role in submitting budget estimates for the Winnipeg Police Service • Accessible information on how the City of Winnipeg and the Board interact
Manitoba Police Commission	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely information about the Board's operations and activities
Winnipeg Police Service Executive	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely information about the Board's operations and activities • Timely information about the Board's plans, particularly where they have resource or reporting implications for the Service
Members of the Winnipeg Police Service	Experts on policing, public safety, crime prevention; knowledge of Board and civilian governance function varies depending on the officer and his/her position in the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board's scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities
Winnipeg Police Association and Winnipeg Police Senior Officers Association	Winnipeg Police Senior Officers Association includes members that work directly with the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board's scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to reach out to the Board
Local media	Varies; for journalists reporting on City Hall, crime and public safety, knowledge typically exceeds that of the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board's scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities, with interest in a level of detail that likely exceeds the needs of other community audiences

Target Audience	Existing Knowledge (on policing, public safety, crime prevention, civilian oversight)	Information and Engagement Needs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Board spokesperson(s) for questions, interviews
Community organizations and government agencies with mandates related to community safety, crime prevention and justice	Varies by organization and agency depending on its size and mandate, should not be assumed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to engage with the Board and/or attend meetings • Reassurance that relevant partnerships and presentations are welcomed • Opportunities to contact and/or submit deputations to the Board by phone or electronically
School boards	Varies, with low level of awareness of the Board and its civilian governance function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to reach out to the Board
Business community	Varies, with low level of awareness of the Board and its civilian governance function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to reach out to the Board
Volunteer sector	Varies, organizations represented at the Board’s 2014 crime prevention roundtable will be more familiar with the Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities • Information on how to contact the Board • Encouragement to reach out to the Board
Provincial and federal government representatives	High, but knowledge of civilian governance is not specific to the Winnipeg Police Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible information about the Board’s scope and mandate • Accessible information about Board operations and activities

4. Eliciting Community Input and Engagement

To maximize engagement, the Board will provide multiple opportunities and venues for community members to offer input on priorities for public safety, law enforcement, and crime prevention. For 2017, it will focus on three venues that community members may use to give the Board feedback, and the Board will take steps to promote awareness of these venues:

Regular meetings of the Board: The Board holds regular meetings in public throughout the year. The Board encourages community members and community organizations to contact the Board's Executive Director. If their concerns or input fall within the Board's mandate, they will be invited to make a presentation at one of these public meetings. The Board presents this information on its website, and will highlight it further in 2017.

Community consultation meetings: The Board will hold at least two meetings in 2017 which all community members and organizations are invited to attend. These meetings will be held by the end of June, with the exact dates and locations to be announced. The locations will be selected in accordance with the Board's rules of practice and procedure, with convenience for community members being a priority in the selection. The community consultation meetings will follow a format that encourages attendees to ask questions and to share their own opinions and concerns.

Contacting the Board via its website: The Board's website offers visitors an online form they may use to contact the Board. Queries made using this form are directed to Board staff and are checked regularly so that prompt replies can be provided. The Board's e-mail address for general inquiries, wpb@winnipeg.ca, is included on the Board's website as well.

5. Delivering Board Messages

The Board requires an advertising plan that outlines the means by which it will deliver its messages. The timing of when this plan is implemented is partly dependent on when the Board holds its 2017 public consultation meetings, as a key function of any paid advertising will be to encourage the public to attend those meetings.

Advertising Plan

Objective: To promote public awareness of the Winnipeg Police Board and to drive public engagement with the Board and the Winnipeg Police Service.

Duration: The advertising campaign will run between April 1 and June 30. It will not necessarily cover that entire period, rather it will focus on the weeks before the Board's public consultation meetings. The period and degree of media saturation will depend on the resources the Board has available for issuing media releases, speaking with media outlets, and running paid advertisements.

Advertising Goal: The Board's goal is to have more attendees per public consultation meeting than in 2016, more electronic submissions, and more visitors to the Board's websites.

Recommended Advertising Activities:

Two months before the public consultation meetings:

- Update content on the Board's websites to reflect the current cycle of public consultation
- Update the Board's websites to contain information on the dates and locations of the Board's public consultation meetings
- Upload the Board's strategic plan and environmental scan to the websites for public review

One month before the public consultation meetings:

- Contact community organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders who have engaged with the Board in the past year and inform them of the upcoming public consultation meetings, encouraging them to come and to share the invitation with their own networks
- Share information on the public consultation meetings with any community newsletters or networks that may be able to share the information with their own contacts
- Pursue opportunities for the Board Chair and the Chief of Police to promote the public consultation meetings through appearances on or interviews with local media outlets
- Submit information on the Board's consultation meetings to the City's Office of Public Engagement for inclusion in its regular newsletter

Within two weeks of the public consultation meetings beginning:

- Run any paid advertisements promoting the Board and its public consultation meetings
- Ask the Winnipeg Police Service and City of Winnipeg to promote the public consultation meetings to Twitter followers
- Have the Board Chair and/or the Chief of Police appear on local television and/or radio shows to promote the public consultation meetings

In the two weeks after the public consultation meetings:

- Issue a media release commenting on the conclusion of the public consultation meetings and notifying the public of the deadline for online submissions

One month after the public consultation meetings:

- Issue a summary of the feedback received as part of the public consultation process for the strategic plan update

6. Criteria for issuing news releases

The Board has developed the following criteria to determine when news releases shall be issued:

- The news release must be related to a significant accomplishment that:
 - Pertains to the publication of a public document or report that is a unique, standalone release or is a regular publication that the Board releases on, at most, an annual basis; or
 - Constitutes a milestone because it is the first time the Board has completed a new task or project that will be continued in the future; or
 - Formalizes a partnership with a community organization or government agency which has consented to the issuing of a media release; and
 - Involved the participation of at least four Board members; and
 - Profiles the Board's fulfillment of some aspect of its mandate.

- Alternately, the media release may be issued to share information or state a Board position for the record where:
 - The Board has identified a significant risk to public confidence and trust in the Board and/or the Winnipeg Police Service; and
 - The issue which the Board seeks to address relates directly to some aspect of its mandate; and
 - The Board needs to address an oversight or misrepresentation of the Board and its activities in the media; or
 - The Board needs to address an oversight or misrepresentation of the Winnipeg Police Service and its activities or operations in the media and has consulted with the Winnipeg Police Service in this regard.

The Board will also host the occasional press conference, when warranted, to emphasize the significance of certain announcements. The Board has therefore developed the following criteria to determine when a press conference should accompany a news release:

- The news release pertains to a particularly significant accomplishment that:
 - Initiates a project that has considerable value to the public, or
 - Establishes a best practice for police governance, or
 - Enhances the Board's capacity to fulfill its mandate, or
 - Rectifies or addresses an issue of widespread public concern; or
- The Board identifies a critical need to share information or state a Board position for the record in the most visible way possible or in as many ways as possible; and
- The Board determines that understanding and coverage of its news release will benefit from providing reporters with an opportunity to ask questions; and
- The Board determines it has visual elements, display materials or the presence of community partners to make full use of the press conference format; and
- The Board has the time and resources available to organize a press conference.

7. Required Resources

For 2017, the Board plans to use the resources it devotes to consultation meetings more strategically by selecting venues and meeting formats that make it more convenient for citizens to participate in the consultation process. In addition, while paid advertising in 2016 focused on informing citizens about the Board's upcoming consultation meetings, the Board will make promoting general awareness of the Board and its mandate another goal of its paid advertising.