



**2015 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
MEETING RESULTS**
Newcomer Community Meeting
NEEDS, Inc.
June 16, 2015

A CULTURE OF SAFETY FOR ALL

MEETING ATTENDANCE	
Community Members: 14	
Winnipeg Police Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Scott Gillingham, Board Chair • Barry Tuckett, Board Vice Chair • Ken Matchett, Board Member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leslie Spillett, Board Member • Don Norquay • Mallory Richard • Gwen Kist
Winnipeg Police Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Devon Clunis • Deputy Chief Art Stannard • Deputy Chief Dave Thorne • Superintendent Bill Fogg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Sergeant Andrew Smith • Constable ReJeanne Caron • Analyst Yvonne Pregely Sarzynski
Facilitators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Kehler • Josh Brandon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jovan Lottis • Daniel Thau-Eleff
WRHA Interpreters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netra Kaphle • Yalda Ashtab • Munira Jama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rezene Zmam • Abdalla Hamid • Nikodimos Gezahegn

OPEN QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

- The Winnipeg Police Service conducts a survey that asks the public if they think whether police should be “cracking down on street people” – do the police consider that a priority?
- What will the police do to prevent gang recruitment and provide alternatives to youth?

TABLE DISCUSSIONS

The comments below are a compilation of the feedback provided in discussions involving citizens spread across four different tables. The Winnipeg Police Board used table discussions as a way of giving every citizen an opportunity to be heard. Where there is a number in parentheses, it refers to the number of people who expressed a particular idea.

One table had a general discussion where youth had the opportunity to discuss the issues of greatest interest and concern to them before responding to any of the prepared questions. Below is a summary of the input offered in those discussions.

- It would help youth stay out of trouble if police visited incarcerated youth to talk to them and encourage them to talk about their dreams and desires
- It's good that Chief Clunis visited the Manitoba Youth Centre to speak with youth
- Hearing Chief Clunis speak gives participants a better impression of the WPS
- The WPS should reach out to parents of youth
- The police are good people who are easy to talk to and want to help everyone
- Another participant said some police are nice but others will follow you or ask where you are going
- The relationship between police and the community is important, police should be more involved in the community
- Sometimes there are no police around to help when there are problems
- Seeing police around makes people feel safer
- Videos of police treating people poorly makes people dislike police and think police can get away with doing whatever they want
- One participant told a story about his family being stopped for identification and his brother being mistaken for someone who had outstanding warrants
- Police should have translators available to help people who don't speak English well
- One participant told a story about encountering a group of people acting aggressively and making racist remarks that made him concerned for his safety; when he flagged down a police car, the officers said they were on their way to another call and that he should call the police
- Police treat youth different than adults who look professional
- One participant told a story about a time he was chased back to his home by people in a jeep but was afraid to call the police for fear that would only make the situation worse
- Don't feel Winnipeg is any more racist than other parts of Canada, but some groups of people are more intolerant than others
- Police in Winnipeg are more helpful than the police in the country where I was born
- Some participants felt a more inclusive police service would not impact the overall quality of service they receive from police, while several other participants felt it was better to have more police officers from diverse cultures speaking multiple languages
- One participant told a story about seeing a gang break into a building near the participant's home; the gang members were so confident they didn't even run away from the building after they broke into it
- Police can help with gang problems by connecting with youth before they are recruited into gangs and by monitoring areas where gangs hang out
- One participant said police brought former gang members to that participant's school to talk to students about how they regretted becoming involved in gangs
- If gangs saw police more often, they would curb some of their activities, like stealing people's bikes
- Are police allowed to swear at you? This happens a lot
- Police should be equipped with high-end technology
- Police should respond to 911 calls faster
- Police shouldn't yell at the people who call them for help; one participant tells a story of this happening

1. During the presentation on the strategic plan, were there any parts where you felt the Board and the Police Service are on the right track?

- Have seen positive changes in attitude/language of the Winnipeg Police Service, still room to improve, of course
- Appreciate the youth focus (police and sports programs etc...) but they need to include the adults so they are not disempowered further; need to create liaisons to the adult community so parents have the information they need to support their kids if there is a problem or to avoid them in the first place
- Community consultations are important for citizens to feel heard
- Working with partners is important to protect vulnerable persons
- The police should involve groups that specialize in protecting vulnerable people and consult with, work with, depend on those groups
- Police play with the kids – basketball helps increase communications
- Engaged communities should be the top priority, it will have impacts across all the other priorities
- Focus on the first 7 days when refugees arrive is crucial for settlement, because then you get to know which families and children will be in trouble, and give more resources to them
- With this strategic plan, the Winnipeg Police Service would be the best police service any city could have
- Increasing diversity in the police is important – there are special challenges in recruiting newcomers, they often fail tests, but that is not always an indication of how well they will succeed as police; tests may exclude newcomers
- Set long term goals: zero crime
- Work with partners to protect vulnerable persons – protecting people with mental health issues is related to the refugee experience; current mental health protections are inadequate

2. Were there any parts where you felt the Board and the Police Service are on the wrong track, or that they are falling short of your expectations?

- I thought the Board or the Police Service would address our reputation as “the most racist city in Canada”
- I thought they were going to tell us what their part is in the community; they were talking about their own ideas and goals, didn't seem like they were trying to get the community involved
- We need more cultural services
- There should be education for new Canadians on laws that may not exist in their country of origin (2)
- Police officers should get more cultural awareness training, and not only on Indigenous cultures
- There should still be consultation with newcomers who aren't at this meeting – the community is large and diverse; there should be pre-meetings just amongst community members to have more discussion on the strategic plan so representatives from the different communities could bring the broader perspectives and concerns to the Board's consultation meetings
- There could be better communication about the purpose of these meetings, too
- Police need to remember that many newcomers come to Canada with serious trauma around people in uniform

- People have the right to a translator to assist them in their interactions with police and the justice system, but the reality is that it does not really help because newcomers fear that they will be seen as troublemakers if they demand their rights – they are afraid the consequences will be worse
- Regularly being stopped while doing nothing wrong builds mistrust – it would help if police provided better explanations of the reasons why they were stopped
- If people are unhappy with their interactions with police they need to know who to complain to and how to make a complaint
- “Cracking down on street people” is not a police priority, right? Participants discussed whether this language could have stemmed from complaints sometimes heard by people uncomfortable with aggressive panhandling; *Answer: “cracking down on street people” would be an approach to policing at odds with the Winnipeg Police Service’s commitment to crime prevention through social development, officers are expected to serve all members of the community when they maintain order and control crime*

3. Do you support the vision of the strategic plan, Creating a culture of safety for all?

- Yes
- The phrase is situational, it depends on the lens or perspective from which you view it
- People with bad experiences of police might see it as insincere

4. Police budgets have increased across the country, including Winnipeg. What are your thoughts in regard to policing costs?

- Participants felt that services had increased, therefore, stated that the Winnipeg Police Service needed more funding/resources
- Participants still felt the Winnipeg Police Service should be working to become more efficient to save money where it can
- Support for the cadet program as a way to free up officer time for more important matters
- I will leave it to the experts to determine how much money the Winnipeg Police Service should receive; it’s up to the Board and City Councillors to make sure the money is well spent
- I would pay more taxes for good service, but I want the service to be good for the money
- I think there’s a correlation between spending more money on police and lower crime rates; other participants asked if lower crime had more to do with a decades-long trend than with how much was spent on policing
- No one wants the police to be in a position where the resources aren’t there when they need them, but if too much money is spent on police, it’s less money available for other measures that prevent crime
- Participants discussed the role of technology in affecting police costs, agreeing it is expensive to invest in technology but that the Smart Policing Initiative could cut down costs in the long run
- There should be more resources dedicated to getting police engaged in recreation activities for young people; examples: police camp with newcomers and Aboriginal people, police and inner-city youth basketball games
- Priority should be given to kids who are at risk.
- What is currently being done seems to be working (people took the time to show up at this meeting), keep going with the same process

5. One of the goals of the strategic plan is “engaged communities.” What would that look like to you?

- Visible officers, school officers
- WPS reaching out to newcomers with low English skills
- Cooperation between the police and public
- People looking out for each other
- People feeling they can approach all public services confident their voice matters
- I like that the Winnipeg Police Service was represented at Kidfest, but that is not a time and place for the hard conversations; we need more opportunities for non-confrontational discussion but “real talk” about issues, bad experiences, etc.
- A community that knows everything about the police, knows their part, police would be involved with the kids, talk to them at community centres
- If we see something in the community that's not right, we would phone the police
- More people willing to call the police if they see a fight (not everyone thinks this is their responsibility)
- More police walking the beat, not just driving around in their cars

6. What should the Police Service do to earn greater trust and confidence?

- More, better and consistent cultural sensitivity training for police officers; they need this to work with the thousands of newcomers who settle in Winnipeg every year, this needs to be a priority
- “Police 101” classes offered to all newcomers
- Train a community member so that person understands the justice system and can become their community’s expert in that system
- Police should be more accessible to the public
- Educate people about how to make complaints about police, to make them feel empowered
- How do people contact police in non-emergency situations?
- Police should be sensitive to the fact that some people are afraid of them
- Police should not assume people have been here for ten years
- If people could be given a pamphlet on how to interact with the police
- Domestic violence – child welfare – different cultural bias, how to educate cultures about what is accepted here
- Ongoing relationships with newcomers

7. What are your ideas for making your community safer?

- More engagement – again we help each other for stronger communities
- Better lighting in public places
- Neighbourhood watch
- Neighbourhood e-mail updates
- People working with their neighbours on safety issues, contacting police together
- Police coming out to meet with the community and build positive relationships
- More visible police presence
- Cameras
- Use of mass media (like radio) to share updates on public safety
- If young people volunteer and get involved, they are more likely to be integrated into the community. Lack of information is a problem.

- Living in the same neighbourhood as everyone in the same ethnic community is not always good. We need to give people the opportunities to not live in same neighbourhoods.

8. What are the biggest safety challenges in your community?

- Lack of empowerment – not enough people understand the system and the police, and there's not enough communication to fix this
- Addictions, mental illness
- Street mobility for seniors
- Traffic safety
- Drivers who get their learner's permit but not their full license
- Not enough lighting (2)
- Population density – empty streets make people feel unsafe
- Stranger assaults
- Theft
- Walking alone
- Gangs (2)
- Drugs
- Cybercrime – identity theft
- Boarded-up houses – you don't know what is going on in there, are your kids safe?
- Housing – the housing allowance for refugees the same as it was 20 years ago, the only place people can live is in inner city neighbourhoods; for people to move out, they need more money; we are creating ghettos
- Some newcomers feel they are put into unsafe neighbourhoods to dilute problems in the neighbourhood
- Worried about lack of participation of young people

9. When we report back on our progress a year from now, what do you want to hear?

- Concrete actions on our recommendations about better outreach
- Changes should be visible – examples given of previous changes that were highly visible were new patrol cars, the cadet program, the AIR1 helicopter
- More outreach and consultations to reach collaborative strategies
- We want to hear what worked and what didn't work
- We want to hear about progress and next steps
- Other aspects of justice system crown attorneys, parole officers, housing,
- Partnerships needed
- Police orientation for newcomers – this should be delivered by police officers in uniform