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# **Setting the Stage for Improved Efficiency and Effectiveness**

## **A Review of Victoria Police Department Operations**

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## Introduction

Today police departments all over North America are experiencing unprecedented budget challenges – challenges made especially difficult by the fact that the largest part of police budgets are tied up in rising individual employee costs, which are difficult to change. Moreover, the rising employee cost issue is aggravated by the fact that many things police officers are required to do take more steps and more time than ever before. Increasingly so, police are being asked to do their work in a way that gives greater attention to risk management, safety, and external accountability. As a result, departments continually need more officers to handle the same caseload volume they were being asked to handle in previous budget years with fewer officers. This is not to say that the change in the way police are being expected to carry out their work is a bad thing, because it's not, but together with the increasing complexity of police work and the added time required to complete individual tasks, the pressure on budgeting is largely beyond the control of police leaders.

At the same time, there are certainly things police departments can do to offset costs they can't fully control. They can, as many departments are already doing, cut back on the type of calls they respond to and on the level of service they provide generally. For example, police departments in many jurisdictions now respond differently to residential alarms, minor traffic accidents, selected shoplifting cases, and citizen complaints of minor theft than they have previously – all in the name of reducing work volume. More hiving off can be expected as the acceptance of alternative response measures increases and as private and corporate security officials continue to come to the table with viable plans to take over some of the work. That said, there are, of course, limits to what police can stop doing and tasks that can be appropriately handled by others.

Another thing police departments can do, and have been doing, is find ways to operate in a more efficient manner. Some departments can and have done this by implementing new technologies (e.g. improved communication systems, automated ticketing systems, and intelligence software), changing shift schedules, re-jigging staff deployments, and introducing performance management systems. All of these things are important developments, and surely we should expect police departments to be doing more in terms of improving their efficiency in the future.

The irony for the present however is that while most police leaders are now on high alert about the need for greater efficiencies, some of the things they would want to do in terms of making improvements require a substantial investment and the money is simply not available.

The most significant thing police departments can do to ultimately reduce the cost of policing is improve their effectiveness in reducing crime. In our view, this is the single most influential and future reaching thing they can do to reduce the volume of work they would be required to deal with in the future. In fact, the lesson to be learned on this comes right from British Columbia and the efforts of police across the province with respect to Crime Reduction. Those efforts have been powerful enough that crime in the last five years in British Columbia has fallen faster and steeper than at any other time in the province's history. Significantly, while crime has fallen dramatically in the UK and in some US cities like New York and Los Angeles, to our knowledge there is no place on the planet where crime has fallen as quickly and as sharply as it has in those jurisdictions in BC where police have seriously followed a Crime Reduction approach. The five year decline in crime in BC (i.e. 25%) is far above the national average (i.e. 15%), and as this report will show, for many jurisdictions in the province, that decline has been over 40%. The comparison here is an important one because while crime has declined most everywhere in the world for a number of different reasons (e.g. technological advances, price of goods, and changing demographics) the difference in rate drops suggest that police, by their actions, were a driving force in the drop in BC. Notably, at the same time, police in British Columbia have also turned the corner on the long running decline in clearance rates – another sign of improving effectiveness.

The present and future impact of this remarkable achievement by police in British Columbia cannot be overstated. Beyond the benefit of enhanced and sustained public safety benefits, a declining volume of crime means police have less work central to their *raison d'être*. It also means there are fewer people needing to be dealt with by our courts and corrections system and reductions in hospital costs. Additionally, it opens the door for consideration of reduced insurance premiums for all taxpayers. Looking at it from a crime prevention point of view, it has been crime prevention at its best and that is particularly true when you consider, as we will do in this report, specific initiatives undertaken by police in BC under the umbrella of Crime Reduction.

There are some very specific things that police in British Columbia have done under the umbrella of Crime Reduction to improve their ability to tackle crime, and chief among them has been a shifting of focus from a re-active response to crimes per se to an intensive and pro-active focus on criminals – and particularly prolific and chronic offenders, and to the hotspot locations where they most commonly frequent. They have also invested heavily in their intelligence capacity to better facilitate their ability to take on this new focus. They have also sought to build mutually beneficial relationships with other stakeholders to leverage efforts with the primary goal of facilitating conditions such that offenders are better positioned than ever before to sustain crime free lives. Most importantly, to ensure the level of intensity and sustainability needed, police have committed human resources specifically to this new focus. In short, they ensured that they had the capacity to respond to the new focus.

In our assessment, the issue of police capacity to respond is at the heart of police effectiveness and what is needed to reduce the volume of crime, and ultimately the cost of policing. In fact, looking back to the days prior to the implementation of Crime Reduction, it wasn't simply that police in British Columbia needed to do things differently; they simply didn't have enough personnel to handle the crime volume effectively. Between then and now police have had the benefit of budget increases to add to their ranks, and thus increase their capacity to respond. However, those of us who have had the benefit of looking closely at police practices know that police are still not where they need to be in terms of sustaining a full capacity to respond. The reality that becomes apparent when you dissect what police really need, is that they are still not fully responding to crimes coming to their attention, nor are they focusing on anywhere near the full number of offenders they know are criminally active. Further, they are not maintaining the intensity in initiatives that they first had when Crime Reduction in British Columbia was first implemented and they continue to resource sections by borrowing from others. In sum, if you likened policing in British Columbia to an eight cylinder machine that was running on four cylinders prior to Crime Reduction, it is now running on six. Accordingly, they are still not able to be as pro-active as they need to be to continue reducing the volume of crime. Again, it is a sustained reduced volume which will enable police to be pro-active and thus achieve further reductions.

With the above in mind, this report, which has the Victoria Police Department as its focus, purposely has an orientation towards the issue of police capacity to respond. The report provides an assessment of the workload handled by the Department and an evaluation of its apparent ability to handle that workload, and then recommends changes the Department might consider to handle that workload in a more efficient and effective manner. In this assessment, and because the issue of equality in service has been raised by the City of Esquimalt, specific attention is given to the level of service provided to Esquimalt residents relative to that provided to residents of Victoria. Further, a very detailed evaluation of the Department's investigative services section was undertaken as there were good indications at the outset of the overall assessment that the section needed a more microscopic analysis. While the results of that assessment are summarized in this report, a more detailed report is available under separate cover.

Overall, the methodology employed in the assessment consisted of a review of the Victoria Police Department crime statistics, a comparison of those statistics to those of other jurisdictions, interviews with representatives from various sections within the Department, interviews with detectives and patrol officers, and a review of what police departments in other jurisdictions are doing that Victoria might consider doing. Finally, the methodology consisted of assessing the current level of resourcing in Victoria against a listing of factors Victoria needs to be attentive to in considering its capacity to respond. The report begins with a look at the level of crime in Victoria and Esquimalt.

## **Crime in Victoria and Esquimalt**

An important first thing that should be understood about the Victoria Police Department is that it generally deals with a substantially larger volume of Criminal Code offences per capita than most comparable cities in British Columbia. In fact, over the five year period from 2006 to 2010, Victoria had a per capita crime rate consistently 50% higher than the British Columbia average and generally twice the Canadian average (see Tables 1 and 2). Further, over that five year period, Victoria has had the highest crime rate among cities policed by municipal police departments, and in this regard, is surpassed only by two cities policed by the RCMP (Campbell River and Nanaimo). Moreover, Victoria has had a much higher per capita crime rate (120 offences per 1,000 population) when compared directly to other BC cities of roughly equal

population, such as Saanich and Kamloops (see Table 1). Also important to note, is the fact that the Victoria Police also deal with more serious offences than other cities in British Columbia, as illustrated by the city's high score of 144.4 on the crime severity index. As Table 3 shows, Victoria's crime severity index score is considerably higher than the British Columbia average, and as Table 4 shows, it is nearly double the Canadian average.

While crime rate statistics, such as the per capita crime rate, measure the volume of crime in a city, the crime severity index is a tool created by Statistics Canada that measures the seriousness of crime in a city. With per capita crime rates, each crime is counted as one offence, regardless of seriousness; for example, a minor theft and a first-degree murder would each count as one offence towards the crime rate. The crime severity index assigns a value, or weight, to each crime based on the sentences handed down for the offence. More serious offences with a respectively longer sentence receive a higher score on the index. This allows for a discussion of not only the volume of crime in a city, but also the seriousness of crime in a city.

**TABLE 1: CRIME RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION FOR SELECT CITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2006-2010**

	Crime Rate					% Change 2006 to 2010
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Abbotsford PD	97.7	94.5	87.4	69.2	64.1	-34.39%
Campbell River RCMP	177.9	158.7	134.5	129.6	122.3	-31.25%
Kamloops RCMP	159.1	153.4	118.2	111.9	112.0	-29.60%
Kelowna RCMP	136.5	129.6	123.1	120.9	112.2	-17.80%
Nanaimo RCMP	168.1	152.1	124.4	133.6	121.9	-27.48%
New Westmister PD	128.8	117.8	102.5	95.6	90.0	-30.12%
Saanich PD	56.5	52.8	51.3	51.3	50.8	-10.09%
Vancouver PD	107.5	95.6	89.9	82.2	76.9	-28.47%
Victoria PD	171.2	154.4	138.9	133.0	120.2	-29.79%
West Vancouver PD	58.4	53.6	49.4	48.7	39.7	-32.02%
British Columbia	111.8	104.6	95.8	89.9	84.0	-24.87%
Canada	72.4	68.9	66.2	64.4	61.5	-15.06%

**TABLE 2: CRIME RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION IN CANADIAN CITIES WITH MUNICIPAL POLICE, 2006-2010**

	Crime Rate					% Change 2006 to 2010
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Calgary PD	64.8	59.8	55.3	51.4	48.3	-25.46%
Edmonton PD	105.4	98.3	95.6	91.7	79.9	-24.19%
Kingston PD	73.6	64.5	63.9	57.8	57.9	-21.33%
Regina PD	130.9	124.3	116.5	111.2	102.2	-21.93%
Thunder Bay PD	89.5	88.0	87.6	93.9	88.7	-0.89%
Victoria PD	171.2	154.4	138.9	133.0	120.2	-29.79%
Winnipeg PD	117.5	102.9	86.8	97.3	90.2	-23.23%
British Columbia	111.8	104.6	95.8	89.9	84.0	-24.87%
Canada	72.4	68.9	66.2	64.4	61.5	-15.06%

**TABLE 3: CRIME SEVERITY INDEX FOR SELECT CITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2010**

	Crime Severity Index
Abbotsford PD	93.1
Campbell River RCMP	122.1
Kamloops RCMP	118.2
Kelowna RCMP	133.2
Nanaimo RCMP	124.2
New Westminster PD	118.6
Saanich PD	57.3
Vancouver PD	110.4
Victoria PD	144.4
West Vancouver PD	51.1
British Columbia	102.4



**TABLE 4: CRIME SEVERITY INDEX IN CANADIAN CITIES WITH MUNICIPAL POLICE, 2010**

	Crime Severity Index
Calgary PD	75.8
Edmonton PD	110.4
Kingston PD	70.9
Regina PD	137.8
Thunder Bay PD	113.2
Victoria PD	144.4
Winnipeg PD	132.1
Canada	82.7

Admittedly there are risks associated with comparing crime rates between cities, especially cities that are in different provinces. Incomplete or insufficient data and simplistic analyses can create misleading perceptions about the nature of crime in a city and can lead to damaging a city's reputation. Comparing crime rates between cities can also fail to take into account structural differences in a city's police force, such as whether a city is using the RCMP or a municipally run police force. Still, the difference in the volume and type of crime handled by the Victoria Police Department compared to other jurisdictions is large enough that it is certainly fair comment to say that the Department has relatively more to contend with on average than most other police departments in BC and Canada do. Further, a larger proportion of the crime is of a serious nature requiring significant investigative resources over a longer period of time. In any case, in an attempt to limit some of these potential risks, whenever possible, crime statistics used in this report were collected directly from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for cities in British Columbia, and from Statistics Canada for other Canadian cities.

Despite the nature and extent of crime in Victoria and Esquimalt however, as Table 5 shows, the cities have experienced significant year over year declines in crime to the point where the overall 2006 to 2010 Criminal Code rate drop amounts to essentially 30% - a drop which occurred over a period while the city's population increased by nearly 3%. In terms of actual numbers, the reduction in crime volume was substantial; from a high of 16,847 Criminal Code offences in 2006 to a low of 12,143 in 2010, resulting in a decrease of nearly 30% over this five year period.

Of note, Criminal Code property offences declined by over 35% between 2006 and 2010, from over 12,000 in 2006 to less than 8,000 offences in 2010. However, violent Criminal Code offences increased by 9.5% in Victoria and Esquimalt over this period, from just over 2,300 offences in 2006 to over 2,500 in 2010. There was also an increase in Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA) offences from 685 in 2006 to a high of 806 in 2010, which represented a 63% increase in drug offences per 1,000 population.

**TABLE 5: VICTORIA/ESQUIMALT WORKLOAD, 2006-2010**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2006 to 2010 % Change
<b>Population</b>	98,384	99,185	99,546	100,597	101,051	2.71%
<b>Total Criminal Code Offences</b>	16,847	15,312	13,823	13,375	12,143	-27.92%
<b>Crime Rate (CC Total per 1,000 Pop.)</b>	171	154	139	133	120	-29.73%
<b>Criminal Code Property Offences</b>	12,175	10,398	9,239	8,860	7,858	-35.46%
<b>Crime Rate (CC Property per 1,000 Pop.)</b>	124	105	93	88	78	-37.16%
<b>Criminal Code Persons Offences</b>	2,329	2,383	2,526	2,562	2,550	9.49%
<b>Crime Rate (CC Persons per 1,000 Pop.)</b>	24	24	25	25	25	6.60%
<b>Drug Offences</b>	685	782	823	738	806	17.66%
<b>Crime Rate (Drug Offences per 1,000 Pop.)</b>	41	51	60	55	66	63.25%

Again comparing Victoria and Esquimalt to other jurisdictions in British Columbia, as seen in Tables 1 and 2, the 30% drop in the crime rate in Victoria over the 2006 to 2010 period compares favorably to other jurisdictions considered in the province and is essentially twice the decrease in the case of Canadian jurisdictions overall. In short, while Victoria and Esquimalt have had to deal with a disproportionately higher volume of crime, and while that crime has been disproportionately more serious, the police have had greater success in reducing crime on average than police in other comparable jurisdictions have. We would have expected this, given that, as will be described later, the Victoria Police Department has embarked on a Crime Reduction approach to some degree.

## Police Strength

At first glance, it would appear that the Victoria Police Department has an above average number of police officers per capita (see Table 6). However, it is important to keep in mind the

aforementioned above average crime rate and crime severity when considering police strength in Victoria. With a crime rate among the highest in British Columbia, and nearly double the Canadian average, as well as a crime severity nearly twice the Canadian average, it is not surprising that Victoria and Esquimalt require a higher than average number of police officers.

**TABLE 6: POLICE STRENGTH FOR SELECT CITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2010**

	Population	Police Strength	Police Per 100,000 Population	CC Case Burden
Abbotsford PD	138,260	210	152	42
Campbell River RCMP	31,580	43	136	90
Kamloops RCMP	87,110	124	142	79
Kelowna RCMP	121,306	156	129	87
Nanaimo RCMP	85,811	135	157	78
New Westmister PD	66,892	108	161	56
Saanich PD	114,140	152	133	38
Vancouver PD	644,599	1,327	206	37
Victoria PD	101,051	243	240	50
West Vancouver PD	47,395	81	171	23
British Columbia	4,530,960	9,044	200	42
Canada	34,108,752	69,299	203	30

With 240 police officers per 100,000 population, Victoria is among the highest staffed police departments in British Columbia. Compared to cities of similar populations, such as Kamloops or Saanich, Victoria has a higher police strength by a fairly substantial margin. However, looking at the issue from the more meaningful matter of case burden, it is clear that on average, each police officer in Victoria has a larger volume of crime to deal with than the average police officer in British Columbia and Canada by some distance. Specifically, and as Table 7 shows, on average each police officer in Victoria deals with a case burden that is 19% higher than the British Columbia average (42 cases per officer) and 67% higher than the Canadian average (30 cases per officer). Finally, it isn't just that each police officer on average in Victoria has a relatively higher volume of crime to deal with; each also has on average, a volume of crime which contains more serious cases.

**TABLE 7: POLICE STRENGTH IN CANADIAN CITIES WITH MUNICIPAL POLICE, 2010**

	Population	Police Strength	Police Per 100,000 Population	CC Case Burden
Calgary PD	1,138,393	1,872	164	29
Edmonton PD	830,496	1,568	189	42
Halifax Regional PD	225,822	509	225	not available
Kingston PD	125,354	198	158	36
Regina PD	198,322	385	194	53
Thunder Bay PD	116,937	224	192	45
Victoria PD	101,051	243	240	50
Winnipeg PD	684,061	1,361	199	45
British Columbia	4,530,960	9,044	200	42
Canada	34,108,752	69,299	203	30

It should also be kept in mind that while Victoria has a higher than average police strength compared to other cities in Canada, many jurisdictions outside of Canada have far greater police strengths. Compared to world-class cities, such as London or Washington D.C., the police strength in Victoria hardly looks excessive (see Table 8). In fact, the police strength in Washington D.C. is more than double Victoria's.

**TABLE 8: POLICE STRENGTH IN SELECT CITIES OUTSIDE CANADA, 2010**

	Population	Police Strength	Police Per 100,000 Population
Boston, MA	624,222	2,177	349
London, England	7,825,000	32,441	430
Manchester, England	499,000	6,154	300
New York City, NY	8,175,133	35,071	417
Victoria, BC	101,051	243	240

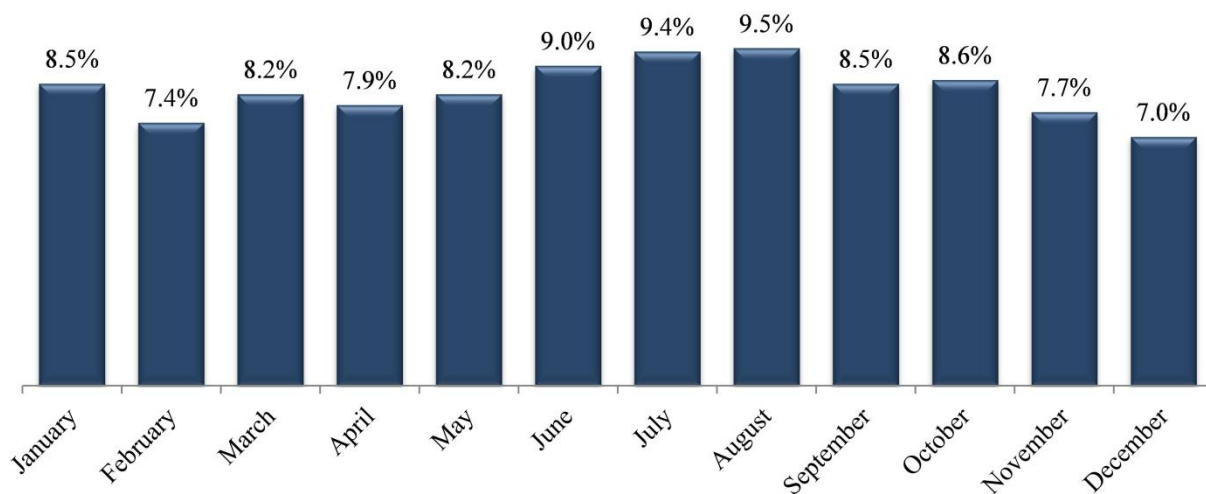
Finally, in considering that the Victoria Police Department has an above average police strength, it is necessary to keep in mind that it is a Department that is dealing with a core city phenomenon. That is as with other major centers, Victoria and Esquimalt have high ambient

populations because they are tourist destinations, major work locations, and places people go to for night life and major events.

## Service Delivery – Call Load

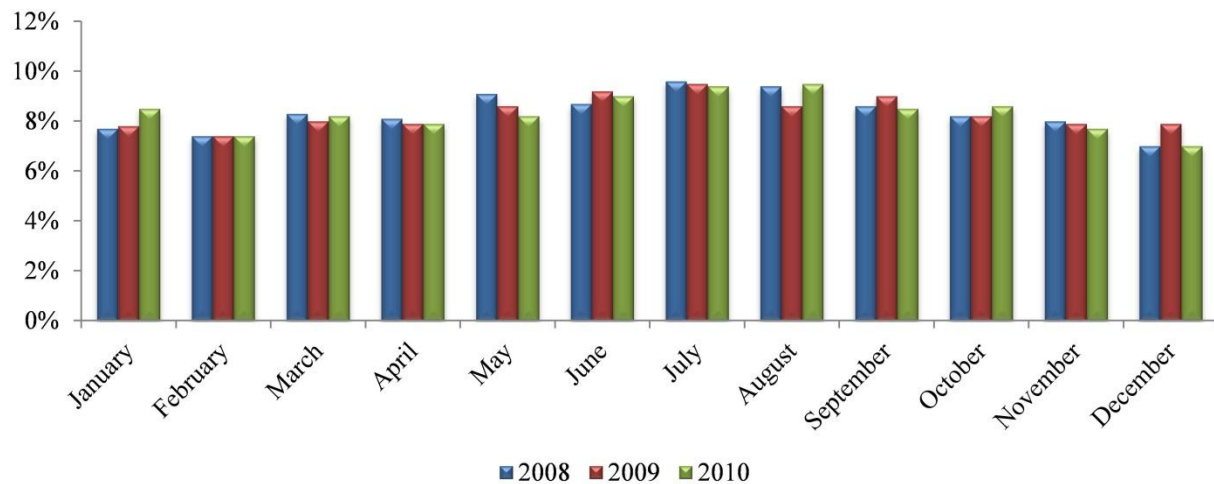
Between 2008 and 2010, the number of calls for service in Victoria and Esquimalt consistently dropped each year by about 2%. In 2008, the total number of calls for service was 57,718, in 2009; this number dropped to 54,217, and dropped again in 2010 to 51,503. In terms of the distribution of calls for service throughout the year, as demonstrated by Figure 1, there was virtually no variation by month in 2010.

**FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MONTH, 2010**



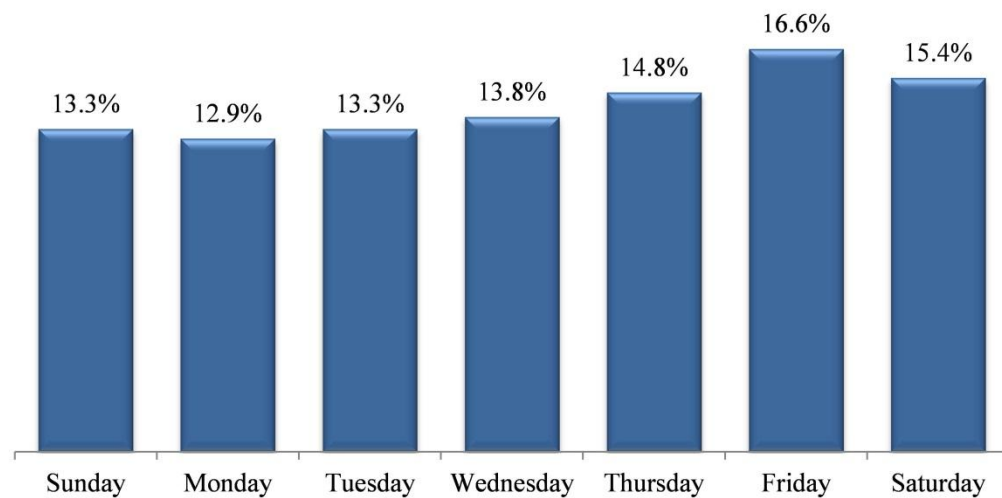
This pattern was extremely similar when considering the data from 2008 to 2010 (see Figure 2). With only some minor variations, the summer months (June, July, and August) had the highest call volume. This general pattern was very similar to the pattern of call volume in RCMP detachments in British Columbia.

**FIGURE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY YEAR AND MONTH, 2008-2010**



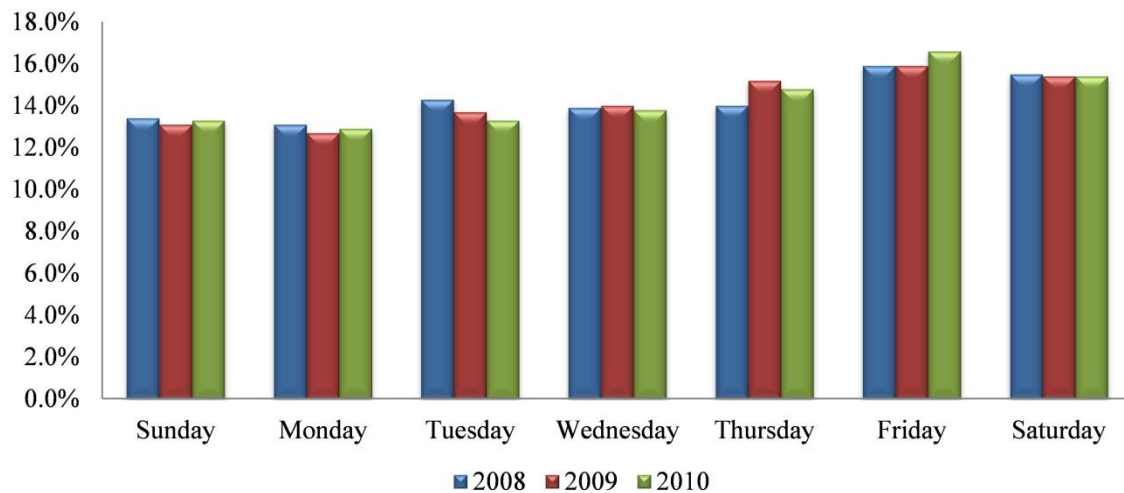
In terms of the days of the week, as demonstrated by Figure 3, calls for service in 2010 began to increase on Thursdays and continued to increase slightly on Friday and Saturday, while the proportion of calls were somewhat consistent on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

**FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY DAY OF THE WEEK, 2010**



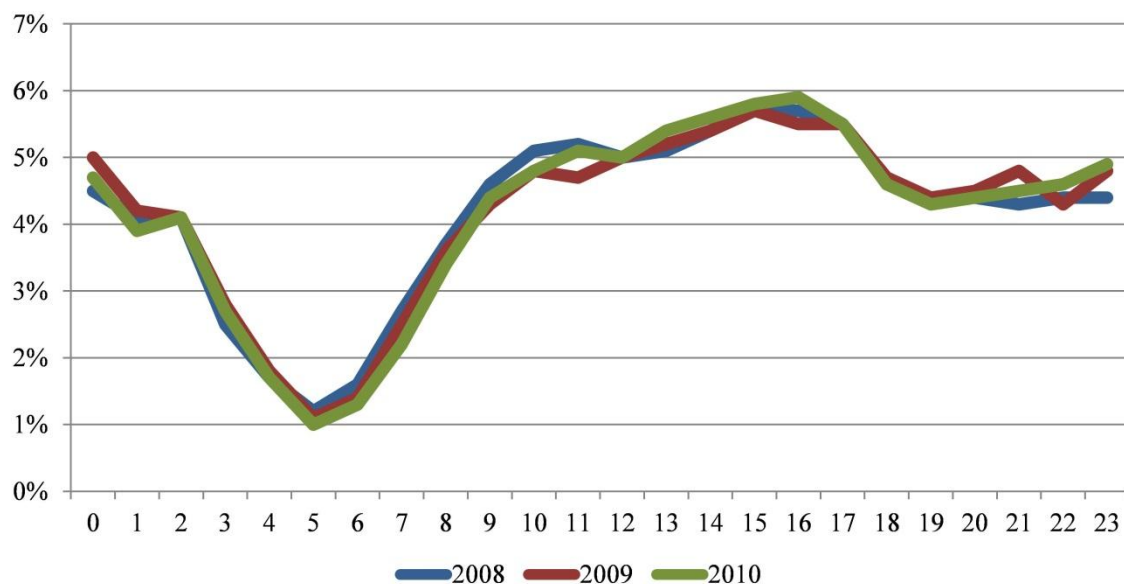
Again, when considering the data between 2008 and 2010, there was very little variation. In each of the three years, calls for service began to increase on Thursday and peaked on Friday, returning to lower levels on Sunday and generally holding steady through Wednesday (see Figure 4)

**FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY YEAR AND DAY OF THE WEEK, 2008-2010**



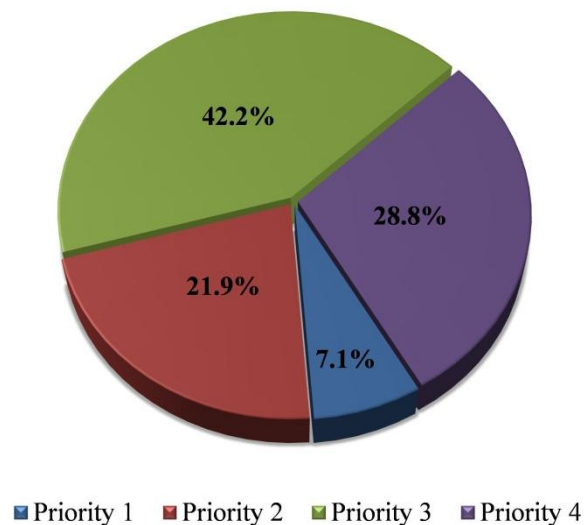
In a very commonly found pattern, the peak time in a day for calls for service was between 3pm and 6pm, with the lowest volume between 5am and 6am. This pattern, which has been found in several RCMP jurisdictions in British Columbia, was extremely consistent between 2008 and 2010 in Victoria (see Figure 5).

**FIGURE 5: DISTRIBUTIONS OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY YEAR AND TIME OF DAY, 2008-2010**



A key element in understanding the relationship between calls for service and resource allocation is the distribution of calls by priority level as greater resources are required to respond appropriately to priority 1 calls than priority 4 calls. In 2010, 7.1% of all calls for service in Victoria and Esquimalt were classified as priority 1, while nearly half were designated priority 3 calls.

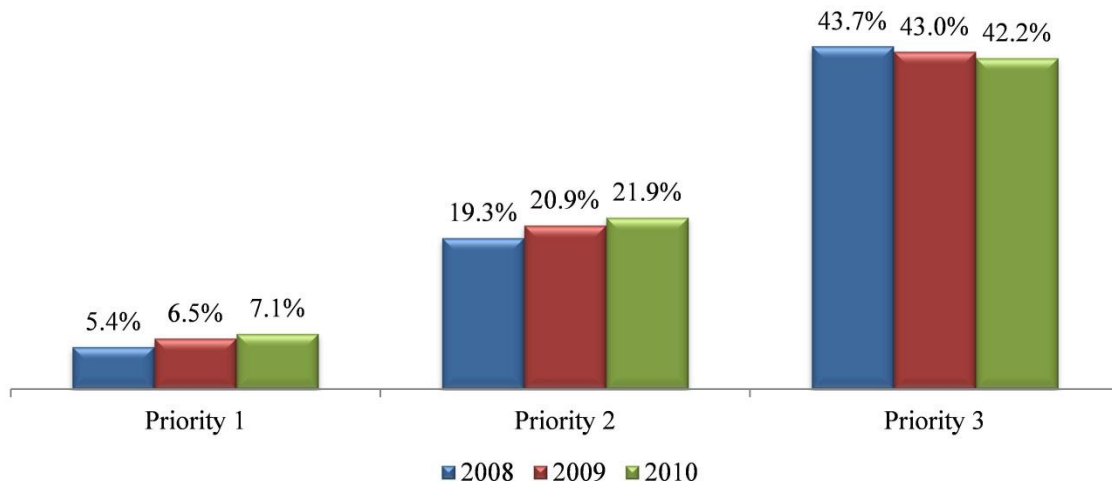
**FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY PRIORITY, 2010**



Importantly, the proportion of priority 1 and 2 calls was greater in 2010 than in 2008 or 2009 (see Figure 7). In effect, while the overall number of calls for service was decreasing over these 3 years, the overall seriousness of the calls was increasing, thus potentially not allowing the Victoria Police Department to enjoy the resource benefits associated with a general reduction in the overall yearly number of calls for service.

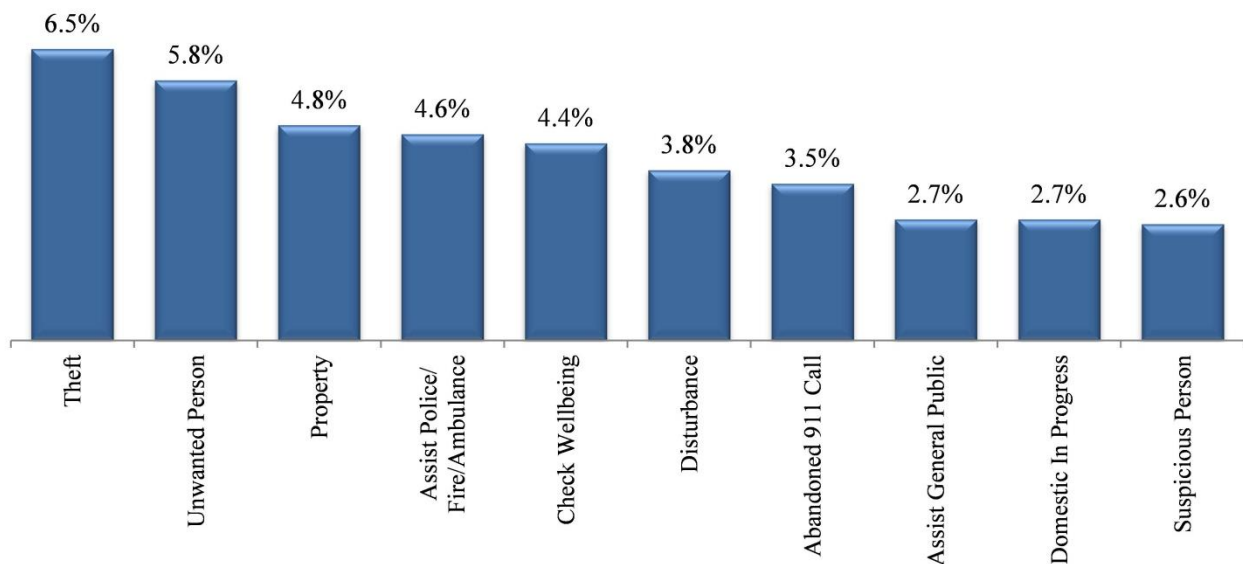


**FIGURE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY YEAR AND PRIORITY, 2008-2010**



Another important consideration is the specific nature of the calls for service. In 2010, the most common call for service received by the Victoria Police Department was for theft (6.5%) followed by an unwanted person (5.8%), property (4.8%), and assist police, fire, or ambulance (4.6%) (see Figure 8).

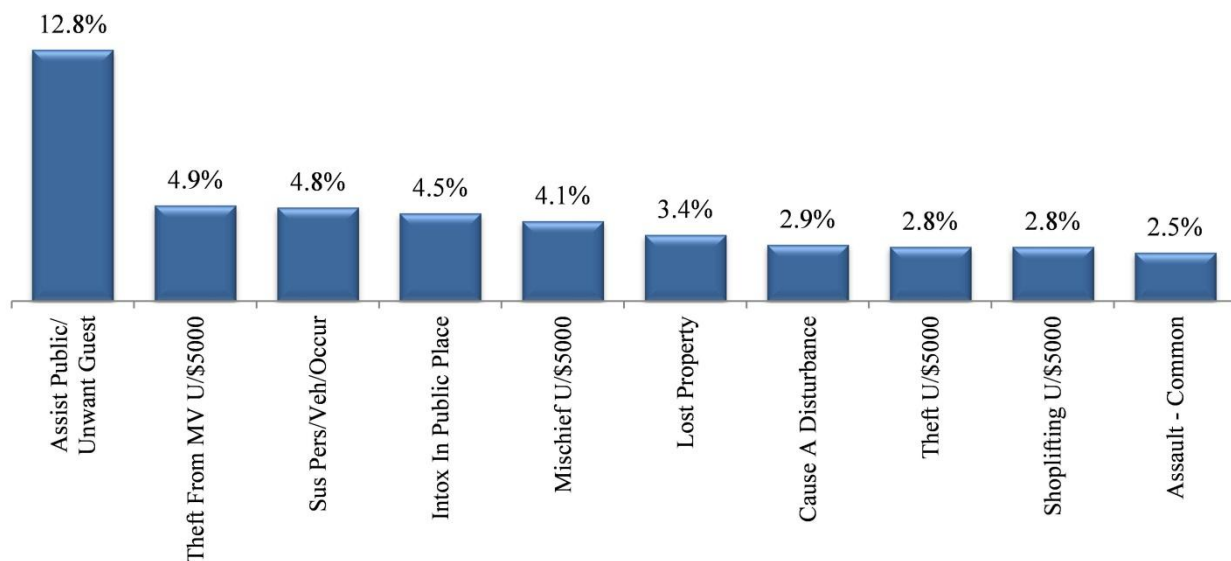
**FIGURE 8: MOST FREQUENT CALLS FOR SERVICE, 2010**



There was little relationship between the ten most common calls for service and the top ten types of files created by the Victoria Police Department. By some extent, the most common type of

file created was related to assist the public/unwanted guest (12.8%) followed by theft from motor vehicle under \$5,000 (4.9%) and suspicious person, vehicle, or occurrence (4.8%) (see Figure 9).

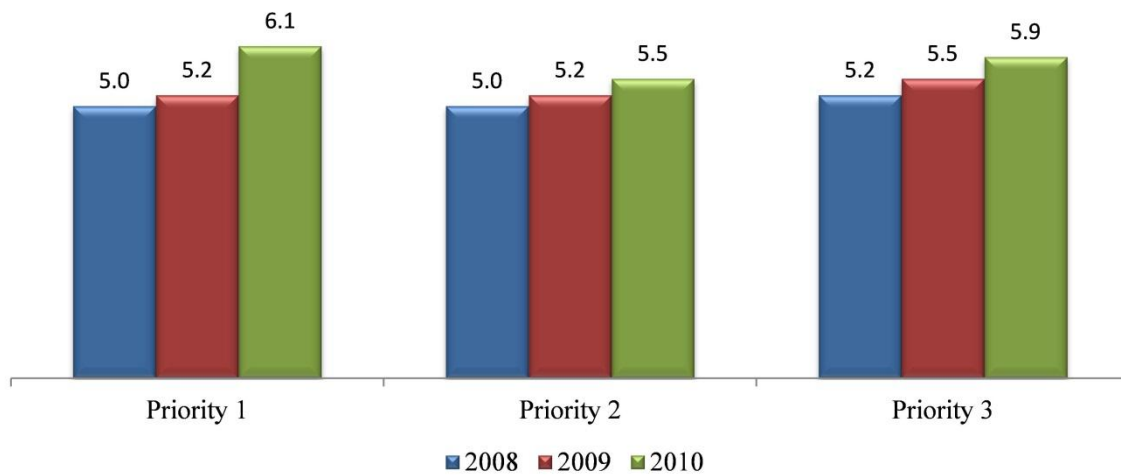
**FIGURE 9: MOST FREQUENT FILES CREATED, 2010**



## Service Delivery – Response Time

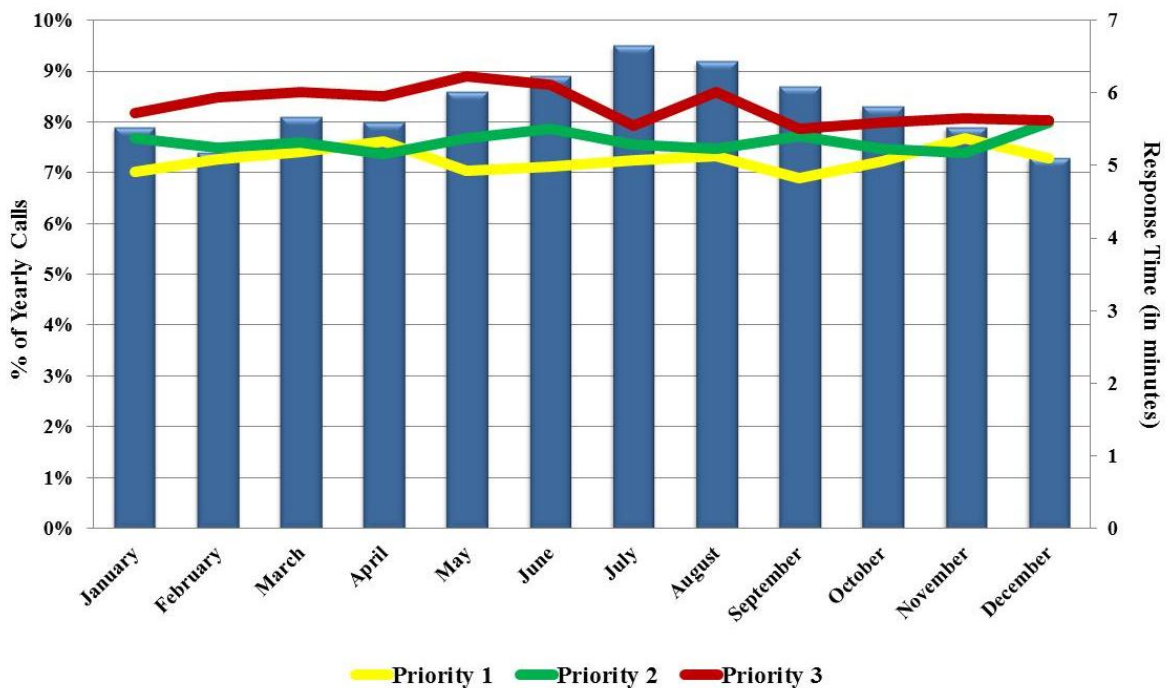
The Victoria Police Department's overall response times were extremely consistent between 2008 and 2010. For example, in 2008, the average amount of time it took to respond to a call for service was 5.6 minutes. This decreased to 5.1 minutes in 2009, and rose slightly to 5.4 minutes in 2010. As mentioned above, while the overall number of calls for service decreased in 2010 from 2008 and 2009, the proportion of priority 1 and 2 calls increased. This appeared to have some effect on the response times in 2010. Across all four priority levels, response times increased in 2010 from 2009, and increased for priority 1 and 2 calls from 2008 (see Figure 10). While the change between 2008 and 2010 may be explained by the 2010 priority call distribution, it remains unclear why, with the reduction in overall calls for service from 2009, response times in 2010 were slightly longer. It should be noted that these increases were very small. For example, in 2008, the Victoria Police Department responded, on average, to a priority 1 call in 5 minutes. This increased in 2010 to 5.2 minutes. In effect, this equates to roughly an increase of only 12 seconds.

**FIGURE 10: RESPONSE TIME (IN MINUTES) TO CALLS FOR SERVICE BY PRIORITY AND YEAR**



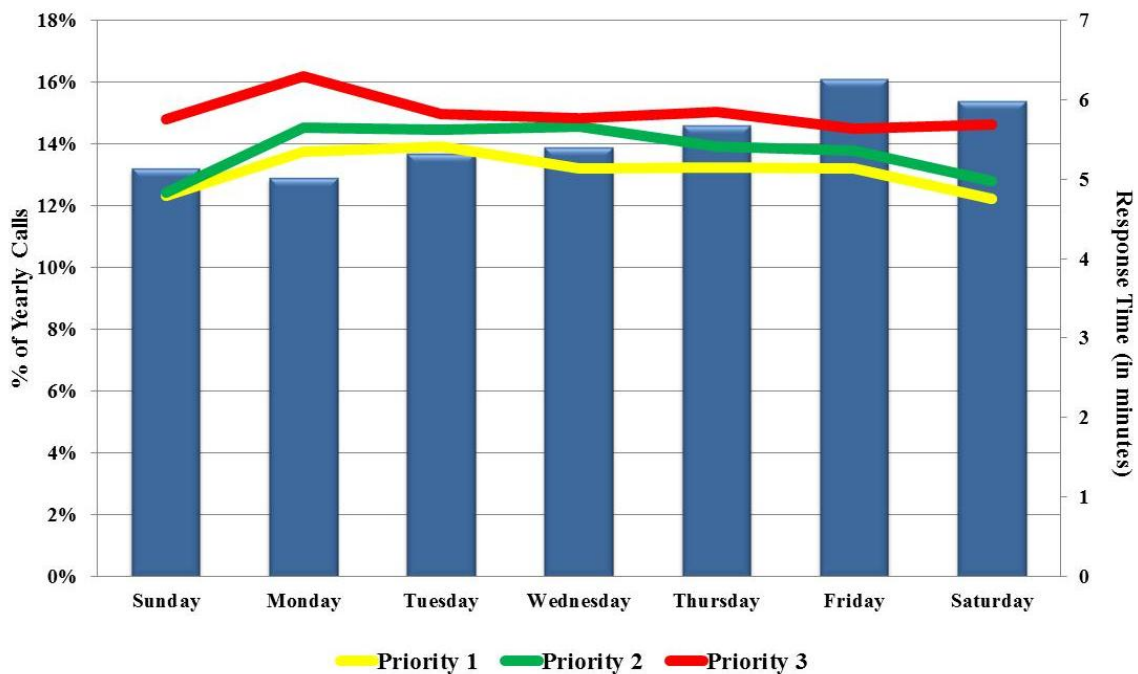
In considering the distribution of response time by the call's level of priority and month, it would appear that as expected, for the most part, the Victoria Police Department consistently responded to priority 1 calls faster than they did to priority 2 and 3 calls throughout the year (see Figure 11). Of note, this pattern remained consistent even in the summer months when the Victoria Police Department experiences their highest proportion of calls, and in the winter months when poor weather could affect response time.

**FIGURE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MONTH AND RESPONSE TIME BY PRIORITY, 2010**



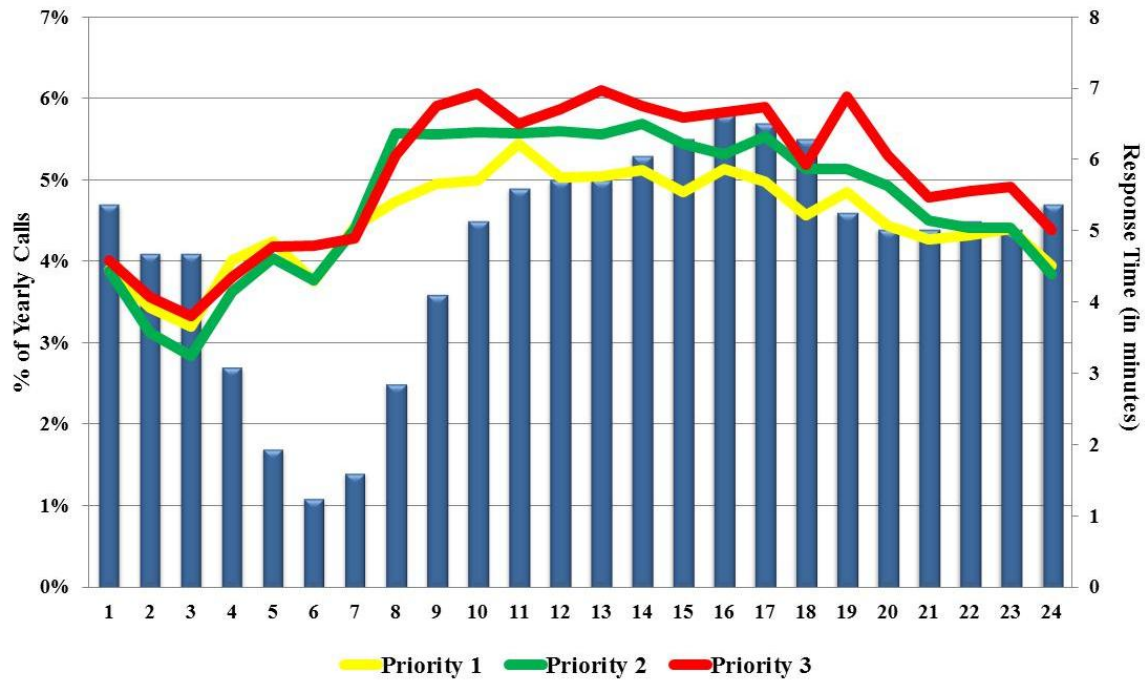
Interestingly, when considering the response time by priority and the days of the week, it appeared that as the distribution of calls for service increased on Friday and Saturday, the response times, regardless of call priority level decreased. In other words, with an increase in calls came a more swift response (see Figure 12). This is attributed to higher number of resources being scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights. On the flip side, response times, regardless of priority level, were consistently slowest on Mondays.

**FIGURE 12: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY DAY OF THE WEEK AND RESPONSE TIME BY PRIORITY, 2010**



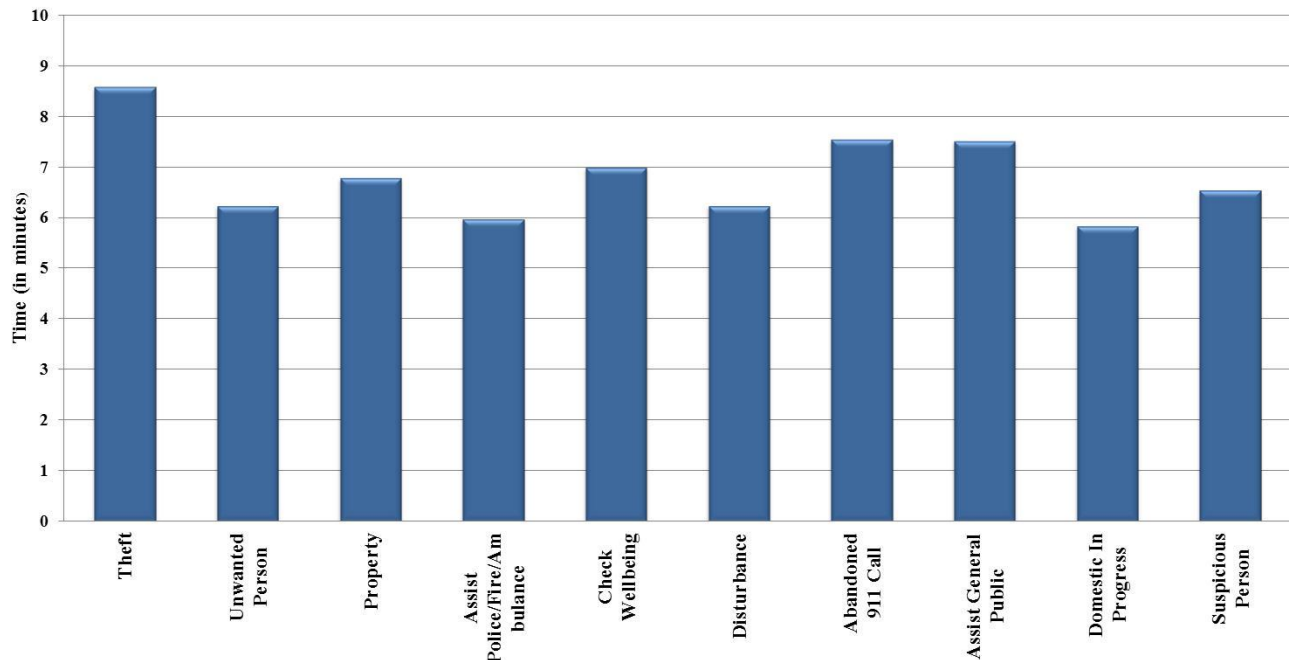
The pattern for response time by priority by the time of day was also fairly consistent and expected. As more drivers would likely be on the road between 7am and 8pm, traffic would increase, which should have some effect on response time. As demonstrated in Figure 13, this general trend occurred. Importantly, regardless of traffic patterns, the Victoria Police Department still responded faster to priority 1 calls for service than priority 2 or 3.

**FIGURE 13: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY TIME OF DAY AND RESPONSE TIME BY PRIORITY, 2010**



In considering the most common calls for service, again, there were only minor variations in the data for 2010 (see Figure 14). With the exception of theft, the range of response times was nearly six minutes for a domestic assault in progress to seven minutes for a check well-being. It is likely that the longer period of time to respond to a theft was that it is uncommon for a suspect to be at the scene, thus requiring an immediate police response.

**FIGURE 14: RESPONSE TIME FOR MOST FREQUENT CALLS FOR SERVICE, 2010**



In comparison to other municipal police agencies throughout British Columbia, the Victoria Police Department's average response times are slightly above the provincial averages (see Figure 15). However, the differences of about a minute or less are not substantial.

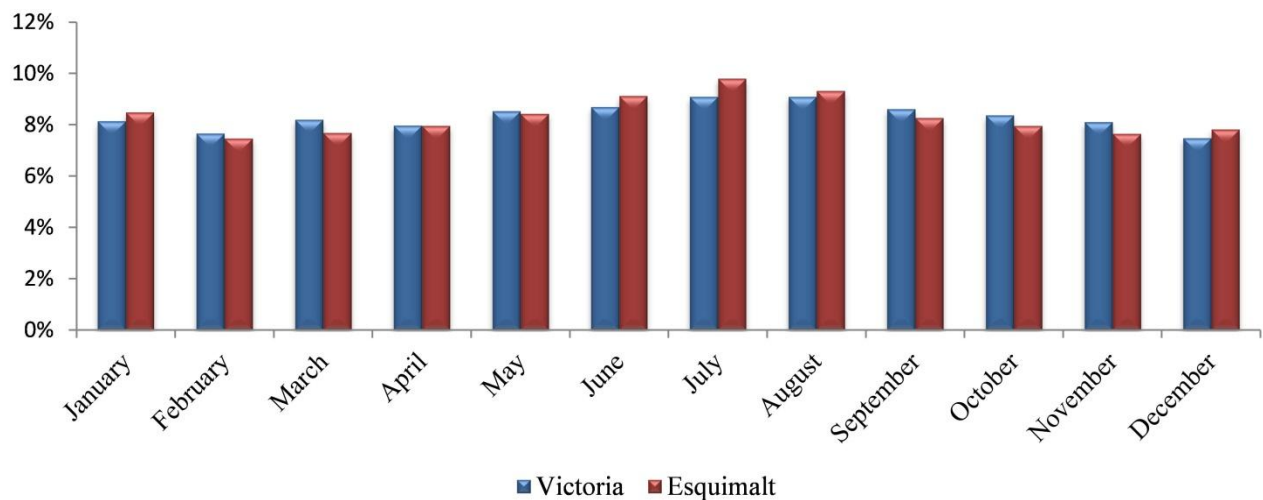
**FIGURE 15: AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA POLICE AGENCIES, 2010**

		RCMP Average	Municipal Average
Priority 1	Lower Mainland	5.75	5.13
	Island	5.76	5.48
	North	7.32	n/a
	Southeast	8.51	2.69
	AVERAGE	6.84	4.43
Priority 2	Lower Mainland	7.81	6.28
	Island	7.98	6.16
	North	8.19	n/a
	Southeast	11.46	2.67
	AVERAGE	8.86	5.04
Priority 3	Lower Mainland	8.71	6.30
	Island	9.60	7.60
	North	9.47	n/a
	Southeast	14.96	2.98
	AVERAGE	10.69	5.63

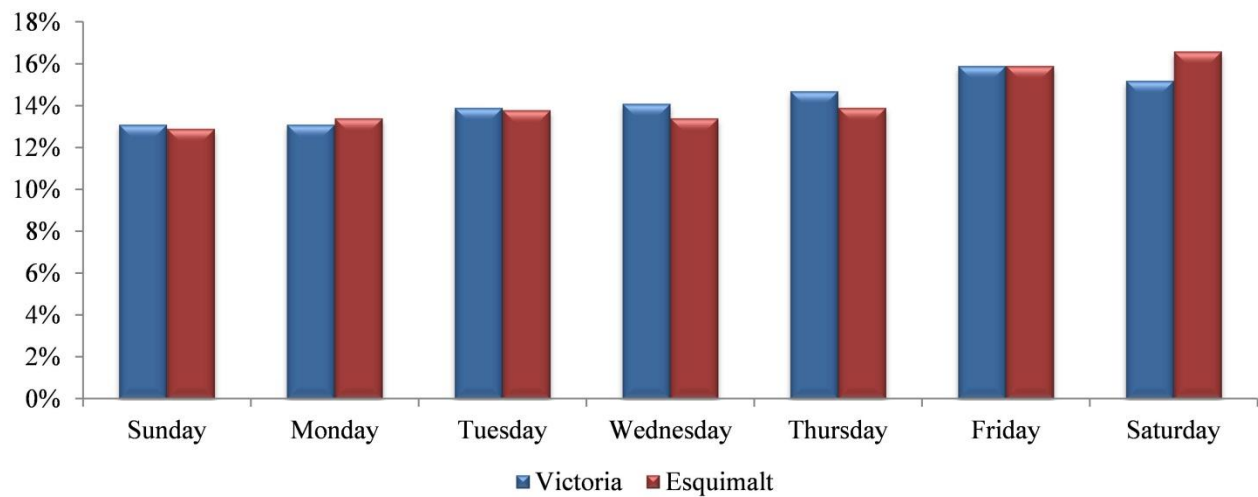
## Service Delivery – Comparisons Between Victoria and Esquimalt

Between 2008 and 2010, the proportion of calls for service between Victoria and Esquimalt was extremely consistent. For example, in 2008, 90.8% of calls for service were in Victoria, in 2009, 89.6% were in Victoria, and in 2010, 89.2% were in Victoria. As will be demonstrated in the Figures below, the distribution of calls for service by month (see Figure 16), by day of the week (see Figure 17), and by time of the day (see Figure 18) were extremely consistent, suggesting that the main difference, at this point in the analysis, was the proportion of calls between Victoria and Esquimalt, rather than how these calls were distributed by month, day, or time of day.

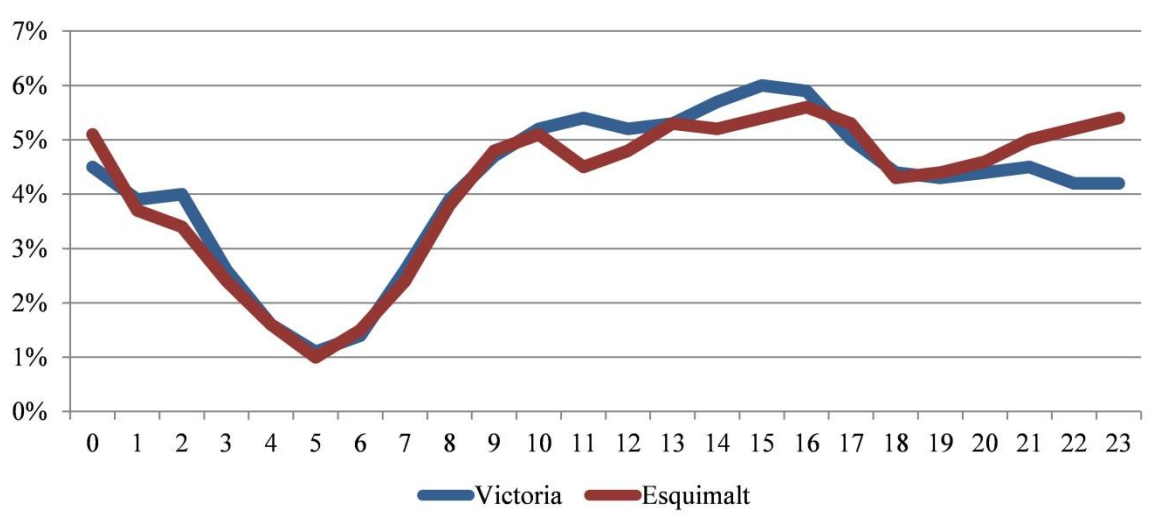
**FIGURE 16: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MUNICIPALITY AND MONTH, 2010**



**FIGURE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MUNICIPALITY AND DAY OF THE WEEK, 2010**



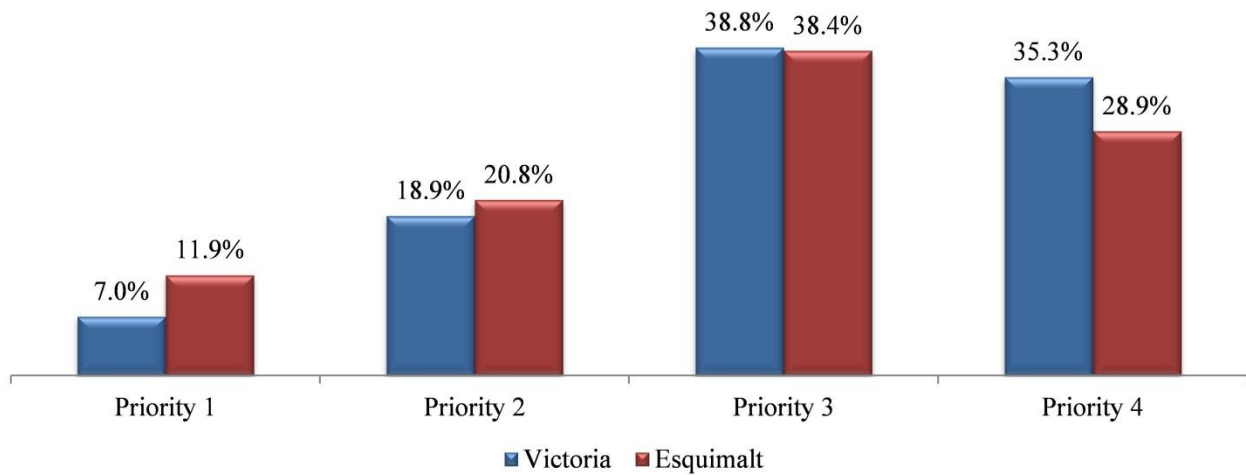
**FIGURE 18: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MUNICIPALITY AND HOUR, 2010**



Although there were no substantial differences in the distribution of calls for service, there does appear to be some difference in the nature and seriousness of the calls between Victoria and Esquimalt. Specifically, a slightly higher proportion of calls in Esquimalt compared to Victoria were priority 1 and 2 calls (see Figure 19). Moreover, while the proportion of priority 3 calls was virtually the same in these two municipalities, Victoria experienced a larger proportion of priority 4 calls.



**FIGURE 19: DISTRIBUTION OF CALLS FOR SERVICE BY MUNICIPALITY AND PRIORITY, 2010**



Another interesting difference is that response times, between 2008 and 2010, have consistently been shorter in Victoria. As demonstrated by Table 9, while Victoria's average times for priority 1 and 2 calls increased slightly from 2008 to 2010, and decreased for priority 3 calls in 2010, Esquimalt's response times had a different pattern; decreases in response time for priority 1 and 3 calls in 2010, but an increase in response time for priority 2 calls in 2010 from 2008. However, regardless of the between year trends, as mentioned above, Esquimalt's times were consistently longer than Victoria's each year and across all call priorities.

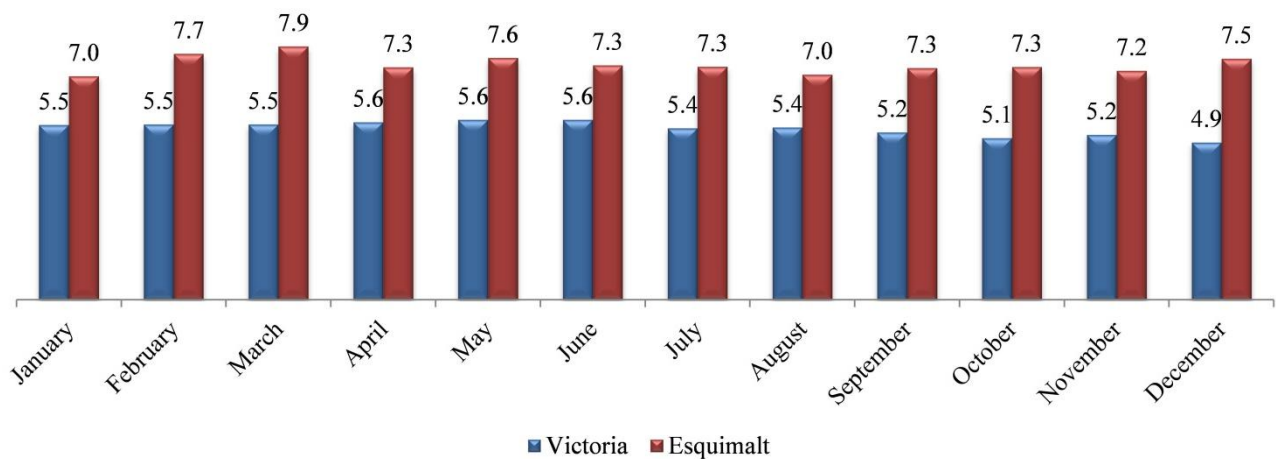
**TABLE 9: AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES IN MINUTES BY MUNICIPALITY BY PRIORITY AND YEAR, 2008-2010**

		2008	2009	2010
<b>Priority 1</b>	Victoria	4.8	4.8	5.0
	Esquimalt	6.9	6.9	6.4
<b>Priority 2</b>	Victoria	5.0	5.0	5.3
	Esquimalt	6.8	6.6	7.0
<b>Priority 3</b>	Victoria	6.3	5.6	5.8
	Esquimalt	8.4	7.6	8.0

The general trend that response times were longer in Esquimalt did not vary to any substantial degree when considering month, day of the week, or time of day. In effect, as indicated by the figures presented above, the distribution of calls for service over these variables between

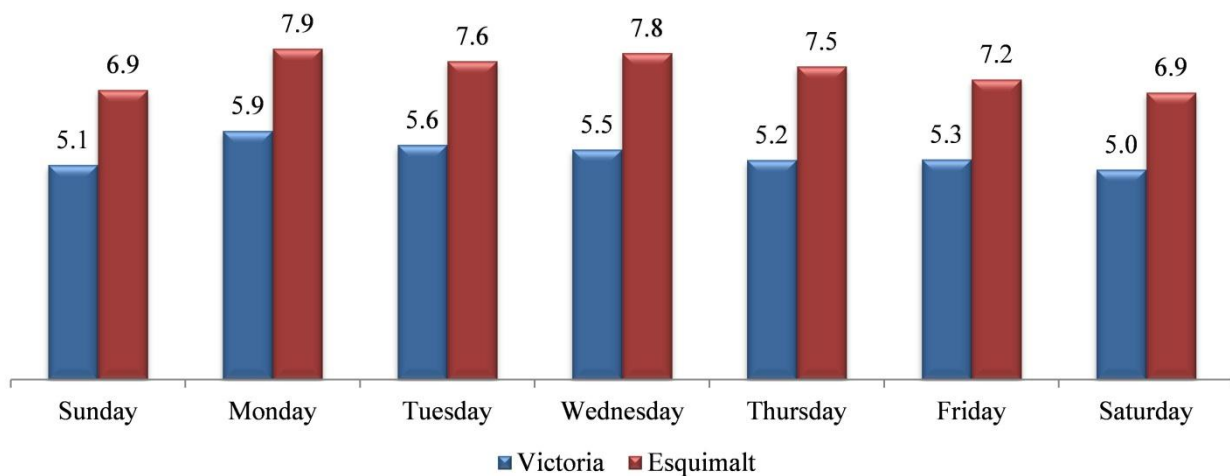
Victoria and Esquimalt was very similar, so any variations in response time associated to temporal variables would be evident. As demonstrated in Figure 20, there was virtually no change in the response time in Victoria or Esquimalt by month. For example, for Victoria, the month with the shortest response time was December (4.9 minutes) and the longest response times were in May and June (5.6 minutes), a difference of only approximately 42 seconds. By comparison, in Esquimalt, the month with the shortest response time was January (7.0 minutes) and the month with the longest response time was March with a response time of 7.9 minutes.

**FIGURE 20: RESPONSE TIME IN MINUTES BY MUNICIPALITY AND MONTH, 2010**



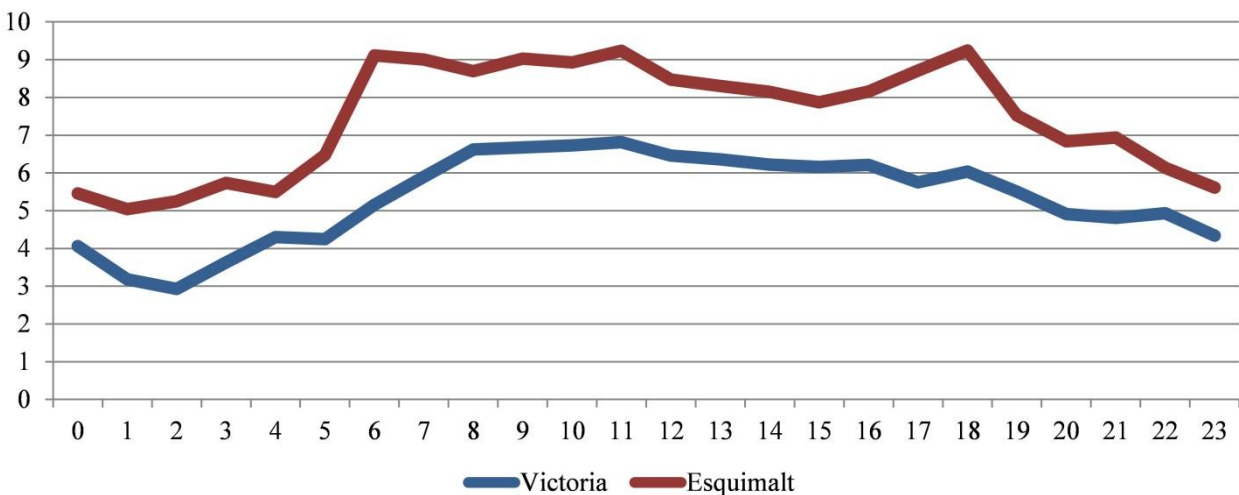
A very similar pattern was seen when considering the day of the week. Again, for both Victoria and Esquimalt, response times were longest on Monday, decreasing throughout the week with faster response times over the weekend (see Figure 21).

**FIGURE 21: RESPONSE TIME IN MINUTES BY MUNICIPALITY AND DAY OF THE WEEK, 2010**



Finally, in terms of response time over the 24-hour clock, the general pattern between Victoria and Esquimalt was extremely similar. Both municipalities took longer to respond to calls beginning around 5am and began to increase their response times around noon. There were two minor anomalies to this trend, as Esquimalt had a spike between 6am and 7am, where it took approximately 2½ minutes longer, on average, to respond to a call for service than the hour preceding it, and had another spike between 6pm and 7pm. It is possible that these spikes reflected shift changes.

**FIGURE 22: RESPONSE TIME IN MINUTES BY MUNICIPALITY AND HOUR OF DAY, 2010**



## Issues of Concern

Before discussing what the Victoria Police Department can do to improve its effectiveness in reducing crime, it will be helpful to first consider a number of issues which came to light as a result of the interviews conducted by the researchers as part of their assessment. These are issues which, more often than not, are related as much to improving the efficiency of the Department as they are to improving its effectiveness. While each of the issues could merit a report on its own, we have only included a summary of each. However, with respect to the issue of Investigative Services, as previously mentioned, there is a separate report available as the need for a detailed assessment was apparent. We are also very much aware that most of the issues we raise are not ones that the Department isn't already mindful of. Rather, we are only calling attention to these issues – and are doing so in the spirit of highlighting the need of the Department to address them with a greater sense of urgency than they have been able to do in the past.

### Officer Discretionary Time

There is no question that officers on patrol have a certain amount of discretionary time between responding to calls, and it is not clear that this time is being well used. In fact, in calculating the number of calls an officer responds to on an average shift and the average number of minutes it takes to respond to each call as the only indicators of police performance; it would seem that they have a significant amount of discretionary time on their hands. However, there are some issues which prevent us from knowing exactly what is going on here. The data available suggested (and our interviews confirmed) that officers are not signing on and off of calls, and signing on and off of back-up, in a manner that truly reflects the amount of time they are tied up with calls. That said, on the basis of what we learned through interviews, and on the bases of the amount of time we would normally expect an officer to spend responding to and handling calls, it would seem, at a cursory level, that officers have a significant amount of discretionary time. This is not to say that officers are not busy. In fact, one of the things we were struck by in our interviews was the number of officers who are very busy on a collectively long list of assignments and follow ups within and outside their patrol duties (i.e. wearing two or more hats). Clearly this activity is not being recorded in any consistent form of data capture that can be subsequently used to demonstrate those activities to a statistical certainty. Current Victoria

Police business rules are such that a significant amount of legitimate officer activity goes unreported. These activities must be captured more thoroughly in an era where the Department will be often challenged on resource requests in the face of perceptions that the nationally shrinking crime rate is the only indicator of police workload.

It must also be kept in mind that the so-called discretionary time in policing is not necessarily truly useable time because it is unpredictable and usually exists only in very short periods of time between calls. Additionally, it must also be kept in mind, that from time to time officers will need to decompress between calls and at any given time on any given shift, there needs to be a number of officers with a readiness to immediately respond to any eventuality. In other words, discretionary time, as it generally occurs in policing, is not actually free time for an officer. In any case, what is important is that the department examines ways to manage this discretionary time in an effort to be more efficient and productive. One way to do this would be to have one or two officers on each shift assigned to discretionary time. This would result in the remaining officers being more pushed to running from call to call, but doing so would help ensure that the Department is suffering less unproductive time.

### **Patrol Supervision**

Related to ensuring better use of patrol time is the issue of patrol supervisors. Firstly, it was apparent from our interviews that not all supervisors are discouraging officers from attending calls as back-up or leaving scenes as back-up to the extent that they could be. There is no doubt that part of the back-up issue results from an increasing concern officers have for each other's safety, but it is the job of supervisors to ensure that those safety concerns aren't exaggerated and that back-up is present in a measured way. Secondly, not all supervisors have an approach to patrol which would ensure that every officer is working as efficiently and productively as they could be. In short, based on membership interviews, some supervisors appear reluctant to set high expectations for efficiency and productivity with their officers. Importantly, there is research to show that the productivity of officers can be significantly enhanced when supervisors are more hands on, on the road, and are themselves deliberately responding to calls and also ensuring/insuring that members are working productively. All supervisors at the Victoria Police Department need to be mindful of the modeling impact supervisory practices can have on patrol

officers. Making this a challenge is the fact that supervisory responsibilities have increased substantially with the introduction of performance logs and performance appraisals for all officers and an increasing amount of time is spent on administrative tasks. A more balanced approach is recommended for supervisors.

### **Performance Management**

One of the most significant things the Victoria Police Department could do to ensure patrol officers, supervisors, and others in the Department are working to an appropriately errorless and otherwise satisfactory level of productivity, is to introduce an electronic data-based performance management system modeled after the one in place in Grand Rapids, Michigan or like the one that was just introduced in Raleigh, North Carolina. Such a system would facilitate supervision, evaluation, and accountability at all levels in the organization, and would provide easily accessible, timely, and on-going documentation of the contribution of all employees. To our knowledge, no police agency in Canada has such a system in place yet, but we are confident that at some point in the future, at least some kind of performance management system will be commonplace in police departments everywhere. Part of the complication for the present with the Victoria Police Department, as with all other police agencies in British Columbia, would of course be that the current police information system, PRIME, is not exactly conducive to the evaluation of any police activity, let alone, police performance.

### **Technological Improvements**

There are undoubtedly many technological advances in existence that the Victoria Police Department could consider adopting to improve both its efficiency and effectiveness, and in an ideal world, the Department would have someone on staff whose job it would be to assess the potential contribution new technologies could make as an investment in reducing costs. For example, one technology the Department should consider is move-up technology – which is designed to automatically ensure that patrol cars are geographically positioned during a shift so as to facilitate cars being ready for assignment to calls in the most efficient and pre-emptive manner possible. This is technology which has been employed with great success for fire departments across North America.

Another technology that Victoria has some access to through the RCMP is Automated License Plate Recognition (ALPR). This technology, which has been widely demonstrated to be helpful in facilitating the ability of police to identify motor vehicles and drivers who shouldn't be on the road, also facilitates the ability of police to identify individuals with outstanding warrants and other offenders. From our knowledge and testing of this technology, we see no reason why more use of this technology cannot be made. That said we are also aware that to have this technology implemented in Victoria would first require a re-thinking, provincially, of its control under the umbrella of the RCMP.

Yet another example of technology which should be explored for implementation in Victoria is voice recognition technology, which would facilitate officers' writing of reports and data entry requirements, especially while on patrol. Such technology not only has the potential to save officers a considerable amount of time (given the percentage of their time that is spent on their MDTs and on writing in general), it also has the potential to lessen the safety risks officers currently face with respect to their extensive multi-tasking while driving.

### **Two-Person Cars/Not Enough Cars**

The number of two-person cars was increased as a result of the safety concerns for officers having to work with radio dead spots while on patrol. As the radio coverage improves, there should be a shift to more one-person cars. During our interviews, some officers reported that they felt that a two-person car was more productive than sending two cars to a call, and no doubt that would be true in some cases where back-up was required, however; given that the majority of calls do not require back-up, or back-up where two officers need to be present for the entire duration of the call, it is difficult to understand how anything other than minimal use of two-person cars can be justified. At the same time, from our interviews, we learned that there is a shortage of patrol cars and that this is a contributing factor in officers being paired up in a single car. Clearly the situation with the lack of cars needs to be corrected – with consideration to purchasing more cars to switch to a less frequent use of two-person cars.

## Analytics

One of the best changes that has happened in law enforcement in recent years is the move to a more information-led and intelligence-led style of policing, and we know that the Victoria Police have joined this move. Still, in this regard, Victoria is like most police agencies in Canada in that they are far behind a number of jurisdictions in the world in terms of having the capacity to be truly information and intelligence led. To put the situation in British Columbia in perspective, collectively police agencies have less than 200 civilian employees working as intelligence and crime analysts, whereas in New Zealand, for example, where they have about the same number of police officers as we do here in British Columbia, there are over 800 of them. Further, most all of those working in British Columbia have only been brought on board within the last eight years along with the technology to facilitate the kind of work they do. Moreover, for most of the last eight years, most intelligence and crime analysts haven't been focused on doing the kind of work that they should be doing. Rather, they have been spending a significant amount of their time preparing reports for presentations and doing data entry – all of which is more clerical work instead of analytical and advising work. We could go on about the problems with the way in which analysts have been introduced to policing in British Columbia, but suffice it to say that they (and the technology they work with) have not been used to their full capacity or in a manner which respects the lead role they should have in reducing crime.

On the positive side, the situation with respect to crime and intelligence analysts has been changing significantly in the last few years, and this is certainly the case within the Victoria Police Department as well. Still, in our assessment, the Department needs to beef up this section with the addition of at least one more analyst. As well, the department needs to position the section such that the analysts play a major role in driving a police focus on prolific and chronic offenders and a problem-oriented approach to priority crime problems. This is critical – analysts need to be seen as having more than a support role. Finally, the Department should continue to develop their intelligence information system to model and connect to the Vancouver Police Department's intelligence network. There are significant advantages and best practices that Victoria can implement in pursuing this initiative.



## Downloading

One of the things which appear to be happening with the Victoria Police Department, as it is with departments everywhere, is that police officers are increasingly being expected to perform duties that were once done by individuals from other parts of the criminal justice system. In Victoria, a good example of this is where police officers are now delivering summons and subpoenas that were once handled by sheriffs. In addition all weekend bail hearing functions must be performed by the police, which was once the sole domain of the prosecutor and the court. Recently, Federal Crown Counsel have asked police drug experts to provide an opinion report on all Possession for the Purpose of Trafficking (PPT) charges before a charge is ever laid. In the past, this was accomplished by providing a brief written opinion in the original report, now it requires a detailed template to be completed. In addition, new Crown Counsel policies require police to provide them with significantly more detail than in the past which places additional burden on police resources. This is most prominent with persons who police want to hold in custody.

Another example of this is where police officers do critically important curfew checks on probationers, when arguably this should be a job for probation officers. Apparently, probation officers can't do these checks because it's too dangerous, but one has to wonder about the logic in this as the court has assumed that the person is not so much of a threat that they can't be placed in the community. In any case, wherever downloading is happening, there needs to be an assessment made by the downloader and the Department of the resource implications and the extent to which the tasks involved could be more inexpensively handled by someone other than police officers.

## School Liaison/Community Policing

Over the last three decades police departments all over the world have been touting community policing as an integral and necessary component of their policing philosophy and strategy. The notion of school liaison officers, community policing stations, and many volunteer/paid civilian intensive initiatives evolved out of this – the underlying belief being that community policing initiatives are important to bringing community involvement into the task of reducing crime and to building stronger community-police relations. Although there has been some benefit, the traditional community policing model has never made any particularly significant contribution to

reducing crime. The main reason for this is that community policing has focused on the wrong targets. School liaison officer programs are a good illustration of this. Specifically, school liaison officers are in schools interacting with students in general and in a so-called prevention role when in fact most youth don't need to interact with a police officer. Importantly, we also know that most youth, even those who engage in fairly frequent minor deviance, go into adulthood as law abiding citizens. What is needed instead are police officers operating directly in the community who can mobilize and work with other stakeholders towards an intense focus on youth at risk and situations which perpetuate the likelihood that youth will become at risk. On the other hand, Community Resource Officer (CRO) and the VICOT positions, as instituted by the Victoria Police Department provide a valuable resource to the community and operate on a problem oriented policing (POP) model.

Accordingly, we would strongly recommend refocusing positions currently devoted to community policing to a more targeted approach focused on the gathering of intelligence and problem solving for the sole purpose of Crime Reduction. This is a far more effective community policing model.

### **Communications Centre**

Given the volume of calls currently being handled by employees of the Communications Centre it is difficult to see how it needs its current staffing levels (i.e. seven dispatchers for the 12-hour day shift and six dispatchers for the 12-hour evening shift). We are also reminded that the call volume has dropped steadily over the last five years and to the extent that the Centre is in effect only handling approximately 70% of the work volume it had to deal with in previous years. Part of the problem here is that the Centre is required to abide by a minimum staffing policy which needs to be adjusted to reflect the lower call volume and changed such that the Centre is not expected to backfill absentee employees with individuals needing to be brought in on overtime. Beyond the immediate savings which could be achieved with a re-visiting of the minimum staffing policy, to capture economy of scale benefits, the Department should work with neighboring departments with a view to establishing a Victoria-based regional communication centre (i.e. following the lead of fire departments in the region). At the same time, with the concept of a regional communication centre in mind, the Department should move to

establishing a regional 311 number or a similar non-emergency number. This would save money as highly trained and costly dispatchers would not be spending their valuable time responding to priority 3 and 4 calls.

### **IT Department**

Currently the IT department is grossly understaffed and in effect is operating at half capacity. IT Sections in most organizations maintain an IT personnel to employee ratio to ensure adequate staffing levels are maintained (i.e. one IT person for every 50 employees). In comparisons with the City of Victoria and in review of their workload, it appears the IT Section is unable to meet the demands placed upon it. Specifically, the City of Victoria IT Section employs 17 staff compared to the police department which employs 5 staff. Even if the Victoria Police Department were able to add four new IT people, it still wouldn't really put them on par with the rest of the city in that the demands of IT within police agencies are greater given they require IT support 24/7 and, at times, must provide immediate assistance to support front-line officers. Failure to do so can jeopardize public safety. In any case, the need is so basic here; one would expect that it would be considered a priority within the department.

### **Forensic Identification Section**

The Forensic Identification Section within the Victoria Police Department is like the forensic identification section in police departments everywhere in that it needs not only highly skilled and extremely knowledgeable employees, but employees who have an on-going need for skills and knowledge up-grading to stay abreast of scientific advances and technological changes relating to forensic investigation. The problem is that the Victoria Police Department, like departments everywhere, has a workload within its forensic identification section that does not allow individual specialists the on-job time they truly need to stay at the cutting edge of their field. This is not to say that the forensic specialists within the Victoria Police Department are not at the cutting edge of their specialties – they are. But they are making this happen with great non-sustainable individual stress and sacrifice. In short, we should expect that unless forensic specialists within the Department are given more time than they currently have now to stay abreast of scientific advances and technological change they will be at risk of burning out. Our recommendation is that one additional specialist be considered for this section.

### Investigative Services Division

If there is one section within the Victoria Police Department which is most clearly under-resourced it is the Investigative Services Division. In fact, from our initial consideration of Departmental needs, the resourcing issue within the section was significant enough that we undertook to do a very detailed analysis of its workload. As noted in the introduction of this report a comprehensive report on this particular analysis is provided under separate cover. In summary though, and given what the section is expected to contend with in terms of its current workload demands, our assessment is that the section needs to increase its investigator strength by nine detectives. Specifically, the Department needs to acquire seven additional investigator positions to handle the volume of files assigned annually, and another two positions to investigate and process the backlog of files carried over annually.

That said, it is our assessment that this number could be (and should be) decreased by two by the hiring of at least two civilian staff to relieve investigators of increasing and important, but repetitive tasks within the disclosure process. Further, we would expect that if the Department ultimately moved to a consideration of hiring yet two more civilian staff members after an assessment period of the full impact on detectives non-investigative time, the needed additional number of detectives could be reduced to as low as six. To put the need for more detectives in perspective we need only consider where Victoria PD sits with respect to other police departments in this regard. Specifically, if you look at staffing levels of other municipal police and municipal RCMP detachments you will find that on average 19% of the force is made up of on-site detective investigators. Using this average would mean that the Victoria Police Department should have 45 detectives, not including seconded or regional positions. However, only 12% of the Victoria Police complement is comprised of on-site detective investigators (i.e. 30 persons). Adding nine detectives would still only bring Victoria's complement to 16%, which is still below the average. Moreover, that would be the case, despite the fact as already noted that the Victoria Police Department deals with relatively more serious cases on average than do other departments, resulting in more complex and significantly longer investigations.

## Improving Effectiveness

As suggested in the introduction, the single most powerful thing the Victoria Police Department can do to reduce costs moving forward is to improve its effectiveness in reducing the volume of crime it must deal with on any given day. Further, as also suggested in the introduction, reducing crime effectively is really an exercise in practicing good Crime Reduction – as has already been demonstrated with great success in a number of jurisdictions. To be sure, the Victoria Police Department has already shown some of its ability to capture some of this success through work of the Focused Enforcement Team, Community Resource Officers, Operations Council projects and weekly Patrol priorities, but there are opportunities to enhance this further, to a much higher level. Specifically, it needs to do five basic things, in a much sustained manner. These five things include:

### 1. Relentless focus on Prolific and Priority Offenders

Having such a focus respects the long established fact that a disproportionate and very large volume of crime is committed by a very small percentage of the criminal population. Getting one of these people off the street can prevent hundreds of crimes per year. Getting dozens of them off the street can prevent thousands of crimes per year. It is not complicated. It is a focus which first takes a tally on who these individuals are, and then lets them know in no uncertain terms that they have three choices – they can begin to turn their lives around (and the Department will go out of their way to help facilitate that), they can move out of town, or they can continue with their criminality. They are advised that if they choose the latter, the Department will move heaven and earth to make sure that they are pursued to successful prosecution and imprisonment. The first choice of course means that the Department needs to develop strong partnerships with other stakeholders (e.g. health authorities, drug and alcohol treatment facilities, schools, Crown Counsel, Social Services and Housing, and offender help groups) and anyone else who can play a role in assisting the offender to get past the conditions which are working against their leading a crime free lifestyle.

Admittedly, developing the kind of partnerships which are necessary to build a broadly-based intervention style, root cause, and case management approach to offenders is not easy. In fact, it's probably fair to say that most stakeholders in most parts of the province, for one reason or

another (and ironically), have not been able to hold up their end in terms of getting fully on board with police. Still there are numerous examples of where police (e.g. Kamloops RCMP and Abbotsford Police) have had great success in moving offenders away from drugs/alcohol and criminal lifestyles. The second choice of moving away will be made by a certain percentage of offenders, if not right away, shortly after it becomes apparent that police are constantly in their face and in the face of their associates. In this regard, “in your face policing” consists of doing curfew checks, other court condition checks, countless street checks, and otherwise seizing every reasonable opportunity to be where the offender is and where possible, holding them accountable for the slightest of Criminal Code or by-law violations (e.g. see broken windows theory). The New York Police Department did this extremely well, but closer to home here we can look to the Abbotsford Police, for example, who had great success with this as part of their gang suppression initiative. In any case, with an “in your face” approach, the Department can assume that a significant percentage of criminals will move away.

Because most of the offenders identified as prolific and priority offenders have no desire to move and will initially take the third choice, it would require that the Department take action (helped by analytics and including covert action) to catch them in their criminal activity. However, an equally significant part of the Crime Reduction approach is working with Crown to ensure that these offenders, once caught, are held accountable for their crimes and given sentences which truly reflect the problem they represent to the community. Kamloops is a place to look to as an example where the police-Crown relationship has been extremely helpful in seeing that offenders are dealt with appropriately and in a manner encouraging offenders to move away from criminality.

## **2. A Relentless Problem Focused Approach**

There are really two aspects to the notion of a problem focused approach. The first is the assumption that most crime is clustered across a very small percentage of locations in any community (i.e. hotspots), and that most of that crime can be dramatically reduced by having an intense and sustained pro-active police presence at each of them (i.e. cops on dots as researched by the University of Cambridge researcher, Lawrence Sherman). Again, New York City Police who have had spectacular success in reducing crime, adopted this approach to the extent, for

example, that they would flood drug-infested high-rise housing complexes with police officers with such a prolonged intensity that (as they put it) no right minded drug dealer would ever want to set foot there again. They employed the same strategy on their subway system, ultimately reducing crime there by 85%. This type of return on investment for community safety cannot even be contemplated with a crime prevention or a social service style approach.

The second aspect of a problem focused approach is having the police take a problem-oriented approach to crime issues and hotspots. This requires looking at crime problems with the goal of doing whatever it takes to make it difficult and otherwise discourage offenders from committing crimes at the location in question. It also means strategizing with stakeholders to change by-laws, target harden, and address environmental design issues. In any case, the key here is to ensure that someone in the department is responsible for developing and leading an action plan to deal with every significant crime problem in the city. And again, New York is a place where this is central to what police there do, and under their COMPSTAT model, results in this regard are expected every time.

In the case of Victoria, it is obvious that there is a problem in the downtown core for example, and this problem is so chronic it is hard not to think of the movie “Groundhog Day” – in this case police doing the same thing every morning and every night with the same individuals. In New York they would say, make it go away, and if you can’t, provide a listing of the reasons why you as the assigned officer in charge are not able to make it go away... so we can get someone else to make it go away because it is negatively impacting on the economic viability of the city. That said, it was always easier in New York because city officials from all departments are expected to do everything in their power to be helpful to police crime reduction efforts.

### **3. An Intelligence-Led Approach**

Being intelligence-led is critical to reducing crime. The Victoria Police Department needs to know who makes up the criminal population, who associates with whom, the location of associations, and who is active – all in the name of developing sources, causing offenders to know that the police know an enormous amount of detail about their activities and associations, and providing information to police officers so that they can work in a more information-led way

in their pursuit of criminals. To use the example of the Kamloops RCMP again, the Detachment's Street Crew which has its focus on keeping tabs on prolific and priority offenders, will tell you that they take their direction from (or as they put it, work for) the Detachment's Intelligence Analyst. To put the powerful nature of an intelligence-led approach in perspective, we need only look at the influence it has in reducing gang violence in the province. You know how sophisticated it can become when police in the province are able to publicly announce that one individual or another has a hit out on them. The bonus to an intelligence-led approach is that the longer the associated databases are in place, the richer the intelligence data becomes and the easier it becomes to develop sources.

#### **4. A Pre-emptive Approach**

Being pre-emptive is also critical to reducing crime. It has long been established that police are largely reactive as opposed to being pro-active. Part of the reason for this of course is that they spend most of their time responding to calls, as opposed to having resources focused on strategies such that they won't have to respond in the future. To make the point about what police need to do we can look once more at Kamloops where they have an officer (gang coordinator) whose job it is to deal with gangs, despite the fact that there are no gangs in Kamloops. The Detachment however takes the view that this is precisely why there are no gangs in Kamloops. The gang coordinator has the job of making sure no gang ever has the ability to get established in the City. If at any time a gang member is in the City looking to recruit locals, the coordinator is all over them and anyone they might have contact with to let them know that they should expect an all out police attack on any would be gang activity. Perhaps though, no police agency goes further to employ a pre-emptive approach than the West Vancouver Police Department through what it calls "extra mile policing". This is a Department that has a target team that goes after any identified active offender found in their community even if that means following the individual into other jurisdictions. Moreover, the Department will pay follow up visits to known offenders visiting West Vancouver even if that means travelling two hundred kilometers to do it. Those visits are to let the offender know that if they are ever in West Vancouver again they can expect that the Department will be watching out for them and will go far out of its way to track them down if they are ever suspected of committing a crime there. The Department also visits selected offenders upon their release from prison, again to get the



message across that they will be paying close attention to their activities upon release. All of this contributes to the City developing a reputation among criminals that it is a place where you are highly likely to be watched as a criminal, highly likely to get caught, and most certainly prosecuted if caught. Importantly, in places like Kamloops, Abbotsford, and West Vancouver where police are very pre-emptive, it is the criminal population who will be the first to tell you that their behavior has been significantly influenced by police.

## **5. An Intense and Sustained Approach**

This consideration works from the premise that virtually every time police commit significant resources to an issue in an intense and sustained way, they get lasting results. There are plenty of examples of this, but some close to home include the Vancouver Police Department's approach to gangs, the approach to grow operations in selected jurisdictions, and in a much broader fashion, those jurisdictions in the province who have been able to take the most intensive and sustained approach to Crime Reduction. The problem of course is that while most police agencies will be successful in solving a crime problem temporarily (e.g. shutting down a crack house, moving prostitutes out of an area, stopping drug dealing on a street corner, reducing speeding on road stretch), they are quick to pull the resources to next week's problem the minute they see signs of success. Worse, there is temporariness to it up front because almost always they are using borrowed resources from elsewhere in the department and soon need them back or somewhere else. In fact, if you look at the difference between jurisdictions which have been very successful in implementing a Crime Reduction approach in British Columbia and those that have been less successful, you will find that a significant difference between them is the extent to which they have committed resources in the first instance and the extent to which they have held to that resource commitment. You will also notice that even in jurisdictions where they have been somewhat successful, that success is beginning to wane away as they begin to claw back on resources focused on Crime Reduction. In other jurisdictions they never committed enough resources in the first instance to ensure that a Crime Reduction approach had any chance of success. In this regard, for example, there are some general rule of thumb calculations to be applied to just how many prolific offenders any one officer working in a prolific offender unit can be expected to successfully interface with at any one time, and if the ratio is too high, it just won't work.

The importance of understanding what can be achieved by having enough resources in place in the first instance and sustaining that resource commitment cannot be overstated. The Abbotsford Police Department for example, has a domestic violence team that has shown to be 100% successful in getting domestic violence cases before the courts. This success, however, only relates to cases handled by that specially resourced team. Other cases within Abbotsford are handled as they always have been, and the far lesser rate of success is always as it has been. The Abbotsford Police Department knows, however, that it could change that situation with those other cases by adding more teams, but then again, it would need the resources to do it. In the case of Victoria, we know that the uniform Beat and Bike patrol, for example, has had some success in reducing crime in the downtown core, but we also know that this unit could use additional staff to move from being re-active to pro-active, as it should be to produce a long-lasting impact on crime.

In terms of long-lasting impact it is probably fair to say that no police agency has done that better than the New York Police Department. It has taken nearly two decades, but they have done such a good job of reducing crime they have been credited with improving the economic viability of the city. They have made New York one of the most desired and safe places to live in the United States. The likelihood of being a victim of a crime today on New York's five million rider subway system is literally one in a million. Gone are the days of graffiti everywhere, street level drug dealers, drunks in alleyways, street violence, and trash littered streets. Both visitors and residents alike actually feel safe there. To be sure, the New York Police Department did many things to make it all happen, but one of the most basic things it did was ensure that it had the capacity to deal effectively with crime in the city and that meant first ensuring that they had enough officers in place to attack crime in a sustained way. Not surprisingly, it has always had, and still has, one of the best police to population ratios in the world (e.g. 70% better than Victoria's).

## Conclusion

In our assessment, and particularly as the service delivery section of this report shows, there is no question that the residents of both Victoria and Esquimalt are getting good service from the

Victoria Police Department – and that certainly seems to be the case when we look at how the Department compares to policing services provided elsewhere. We also know from our interviews with employees of the Department that there is a dedication to their work and to public safety in general that should give residents of Victoria and Esquimalt, if they had the opportunity to hear it first hand, a great sense of pride and appreciation for their local police. That said, it is not a sense of pride and appreciation that comes cheap – relatively speaking, for each Victoria and Esquimalt taxpayer, the cost of policing is more expensive than it is anywhere else in this province. We would appreciate then why the last thing any taxpayer wishes to hear is that this expense should get any greater – especially at a time when so many taxpayers and all governments are in the middle of grappling with tough financial times.

At the same time though, we should not forget why policing costs more in Victoria and Esquimalt. It is not because the Victoria Police Department is operating with more police officers and civilians than it requires to do the job, in fact it is operating with less. Specifically, as we have determined through our analysis, conservatively speaking, the Department is in need of six more detectives, one analyst, one identification specialist, and four IT specialists. Accordingly, after re-assignments it would still need to hire additional people to meet its current workload demands.

The primary reason taxpayers in Victoria and Esquimalt are paying more for policing services than their fellow taxpayers in other jurisdictions, is that the volume of crime and the seriousness of that crime is such that relatively more officers are needed to police Victoria than is the case for other jurisdictions. In this regard, as we have pointed out in this report, it is important to keep in mind that the case burden per officer in the Victoria Police Department is 67% higher than the Canadian average – and this situation will not change until the volume of crime is reduced. The good news is that volume reductions have already been happening and we should expect that even if the police do nothing new, like everywhere else in the world, for many reasons the crime volume, at least on the property front, will continue to drop somewhat over the foreseeable future. However, we can also expect that there will be ever increasing complexity and accountability that will impact the duration and amount of resources required to respond and investigate these incidents.

Taxpayers need to also have in mind however that there is the potential to speed that crime decline up, as a number of jurisdictions have already done successfully, by having, as we recommend in this report, police adopt the principles and practices of a Crime Reduction approach. However this cannot happen, as we point out, so long as police do not have a full and sustained capacity to respond. Such is presently the case with the Victoria Police Department with its current assignment and allotment of employees relative to its current workload. Simply, the Department needs the right amount of resources in place, and the right arrangement of resources, to get the job done.

In terms of moving forward, we are confident that the Department is more than aware of the details of what it needs to do to capture the essence of Crime Reduction. But again, we should not expect it to be able to fully capture that essence without a sufficient budget increase. Remember, this increase would come from the need to hire additional officers and the need to increase the fleet to allow for more one-person deployments. Importantly, this increase should be seen as an investment in lowering crime rates to the point where the stage becomes set for cutting the police budget at the point police are able to show they are able to keep crime rates rolling down on the basis of a measured degree of pro-active activity. Such has been the case with respect to New York City – a city which has been comfortably decreasing its police strength in recent years, but only after it positioned itself to be more pro-active than re-active. That said, there is always the risk that governments will cut too quickly, as is currently the case around the globe, and move police back to their old re-active mode. The tragedy in that is that taxpayers will ultimately lose their opportunity to acquire further saving on police costs down the road.

Finally, even if crime declines generally around the world, so long as Victoria and Esquimalt don't do something significant to actively drive down crime, they will remain as jurisdictions with relatively high crime rates and places with more violent crime as compared to other jurisdictions. The Canadian Crime Severity Index currently bears witness to this phenomenon in Victoria and Esquimalt. Cost benefits aside, the Cities should be anxious to lose this reputation.

All of that said we would be remiss if we didn't mention the matter of regionalization. Specifically, and although we were not asked to consider this issue, the reality is that Victoria and Esquimalt and their neighboring communities could achieve some significant economies of

scale with great long term savings to taxpayers if they were to amalgamate local police departments into a single regional force. Some obvious financial savings of course would come through shared communication, equipment, and administrative support and leadership/supervisory functions. However, we should also expect efficiency and capacity to respond gains with respect to analytics, investigative services, and patrol. In mentioning regionalization, we are reminded that the collective geography of Victoria and its neighboring communities is such that as a combined area it would still amount to a relatively small and well defined policing jurisdiction. From our perspective, regionalization for the area is a “no brainer”, and the question for all jurisdictions concerned should be “Is there any good reason for regionalization not to occur”? In this regard, the most commonly raised concern about regionalization is that outlying areas of a regionalized police jurisdiction will be at risk of suffering a lesser quality of service. Our own research on police service delivery strongly confirms for us at least that this should not be expected to occur with zone/district/area staffing of patrol watches. Further, there is move-up efficiency enhancing technology currently available to audit and ensure that there is an equality of service at all times no matter where a call for service comes from within a jurisdiction. In any case, we can’t emphasize enough the cost saving importance of Victoria and Esquimalt looking first to a regional model over the current relatively small and single jurisdiction policing model which most observers of policing would agree is simply not financially sustainable in the long term anyway.

Failing a move to regionalization, Victoria and Esquimalt will most certainly need to increase the police budget if they wish to address the shortcomings in “the need to have” staffing levels identified in this report. If however, meeting a budget increase to the extent needed is not an option, then the Victoria Police Department must quickly get really hard-nosed in its realignment of resources such that they are fully pointed towards a crime reduction approach.