



BRITISH COLUMBIA

VIA EMAIL

Ref. 665147

April 23, 2024

All Mayors of Municipalities RCMP Contract Municipalities

Dear Mayors:

I am writing you today to outline further steps being taken to advance Surrey's police model transition which will see the Surrey Police Service (SPS) as the City's police agency of jurisdiction.

You may recall that in order to ensure that adequate and effective policing would be maintained, in July 2023, I directed that the City of Surrey must continue its police model transition to its own municipal police department, the SPS. I took this action due to the failure of the City to meet the mandatory and binding conditions set out for the City to return to the RCMP. In October 2023, the Province enacted the *Police Amendment Act, 2023* which, among other things, requires the City of Surrey to provide its policing and law enforcement by means of a municipal police department.

Please be advised that I have set the date of November 29th, 2024, for the SPS to become Surrey's police agency of jurisdiction and assume policing and law enforcement in the City of Surrey in accordance with s.7(2) of the *Police Amendment Act, 2023*. Once the SPS becomes police of jurisdiction, the BC RCMP will continue to operate in Surrey, providing transitional supports to the SPS up until the remainder of transition period is completed. During this time the two police agencies will work under a collaborative arrangement.

I can confirm that provincial and federal officials have agreed to the pathway whereby transitional supports will be provided by the BC RCMP to the SPS during the period after the SPS becomes the City's police service of jurisdiction but before the full transition is complete. Agreement of this pathway was confirmed in writing through letters exchanged by provincial and federal officials. I am pleased to advise that on April 18, 2024, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, federal Minister of Public Safety, also wrote to me confirming Canada's agreement to this approach.

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Work is now underway by provincial and federal officials and staff to operationalize this pathway and ensure the development of the required instrument(s), with engagement of the SPS and the RCMP, for these RCMP transitional supports. To clarify, neither provincial nor federal legislative processes or amendments are required to support this pathway. Consistent with the existing legislative framework, the pathway will not require the RCMP to delegate their authorities or be under the command of another police agency. Rather, the two police agencies will have a collaborative arrangement between them. I can further confirm that on Friday April 19th, 2024, I spoke with Commissioner Duheme during which the Commissioner assured me that he and the RCMP will support this transition and their participation in the development of the required instruments.

Setting this date is a milestone step in completing the SPS transition in Surrey. I have identified this date for the SPS becoming police of jurisdiction having consideration for public safety, the work completed to date, and the work underway to complete the transition. The SPS has made significant progress towards completing the practical and statutory requirements necessary to become the City's police of jurisdiction. Progress is continuing despite the current challenges. The SPS has hired almost 430 police officers and staff, and projects hiring an additional 180 officers by the end of 2024. The Surrey RCMP's authorized strength has also been reduced by 170 member positions. I am further advised that the SPS has substantially completed their IM/IT service structure with minimal outstanding installations required, and the vast majority of their policies and procedures are now in place. The SPS has also established various other capabilities such as recruitment and training, professional standards, and incident management. My staff will continue to work closely with the SPS to ensure that it meets the necessary requirements to become police of jurisdiction in Surrey, including completing an assessment of the SPS to ensure it is ready to assume that role on the date.

In respect to both the SPS and the Surrey RCMP, I want to acknowledge that this has been a difficult and complex transition that undoubtedly has been hard on the officers and staff from both police agencies. I am grateful to them for their dedication to policing in Surrey and for their continued service to Surrey's communities and citizens.

For the citizens of Surrey and for the common goal of public safety across BC, I look forward to moving positively and working with transition parties in taking all steps necessary for a successful transition to the SPS as police of jurisdiction on November 29, 2024.

Please note that, in addition to my letter to you, I have also similarly notified the transition parties, including the City of Surrey, the federal government, and the Commanding Officer of the BC RCMP, as well as Semiahmoo First Nation, and police leadership and governance forums such as the British Columbia Association of Chiefs of Police (BCACP), the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

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Thank you for your ongoing contributions and commitment to public safety in the province.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Farnworth". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
and Deputy Premier

pc: Douglas Scott, Deputy Solicitor General
Glen Lewis, Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Police Services