Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee

2013-2014 Report to Area Chiefs
History of the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee

The historical need to form a regional police diversity advisory committee was identified and supported by two documents: (1) Needs Assessment Report on the Diversity Unit of the Victoria Police Department (2000) and (2) Making Peace – the Maturing Partnership of Capital Region’s Minorities and their Police (1998). The latter of these reports was commissioned by the Capital Region Race Relations Association.

In 2002, the Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee (GVPDAC) was established. It was the first committee of its kind to bring together representatives from the region’s municipal police departments (Victoria, Saanich, Central Saanich, Esquimalt and Oak Bay) and RCMP detachments (Sidney/North Saanich and West Shore) with representatives from a broad base of community agencies.

From 2002 through 2010, the GVPDAC was chaired by a succession of Victoria Police representatives, beginning with Sgt. Derek Chow. From 2011 until his retirement in mid-2013, S/Sgt. Doug Newman of Saanich Police served as the GVPDAC Chair. From September of 2013 to the present, the GVPDAC Chair has been S/Sgt. Scott Treble of Saanich Police.

GVPDAC Membership

Police representatives on the GVPDAC, effective September 2014, are the following;

Victoria Police Department - Sergeant Gary Jones
Saanich Police Department - Staff Sergeant Scott Treble (Chair)
                          - Constable Kim Basi
West Shore RCMP Detachment - Constable Cole Brewer
Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Detachment - Constable George Phipps
Central Saanich Police Service - Deputy Chief Constable Les Sylven
Oak Bay Police Department - Constable Rick Anthony
Victoria PD Reserves - Reserve Sergeant Danielle Little
Saanich PD Reserves - Reserve Sergeant Brent Bickerton
Community representatives on the GVPDAC, effective September 2014, are the following:

Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) - Steven Baileys
Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Society (VIRCS) - Haixia Liu
India Canada Cultural Association (ICCA) - Gordy Dodd
African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island (AHAVI) - Dr. Lisa Gunderson
Victoria Pride Society - Terry Froud
Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) - Gina Robertson
Ismaili Muslim Community - Taheera Ferguson
Equity & Human Rights Office, University of Victoria (UVic) - Moussa Magassa
Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD)* - Praven Pather (co-Chair)

*Mr. Pather was the Settlement Worker in Schools with School District No. 61, until June 2014

The GVPDAC Charter states that the Chair shall be from one of the area police agencies, and that the co-Chair will be a representative from one of the civilian community groups.

The GVPDAC Charter defines diversity as follows:

“Diversity includes but is not limited to characteristics of age, gender, ethnic heritage, culture, sexual orientation, religion, and abilities. Diversity is also the sum total of potential to be found in any group of people.”
Purpose

To bring together members of the diverse community and the municipal police departments and the RCMP detachments, for the purpose of providing a continuing dialogue to discuss issues of mutual concern, to problem solve, and to establish close cooperation thereby establishing positive relationships. To broaden our collective knowledge of issues in our diverse communities and in policing services.

Mission Statement

The Greater Victoria Police Diversity Advisory Committee mission is to serve as a voice between our diverse community and the police and to work towards maintaining and building positive relations.

Mandate

- To help the Police better understand the ethnic culture, value systems, and religious sensitivities of all the minority groups they serve in our diverse society
- To act as a consultative and advisory body to Chiefs of Police of the Municipal Departments and Officers in Charge of the RCMP Detachments

GVPDAC Priorities for 2013-2014

In late 2013, GVPDAC members collaborated on short-term and long-term objectives. In non-numerical order, the following were determined to be committee priorities:

1. Attend at least twelve (12) major diversity events, to achieve community visibility and engagement.
2. Expand membership to fill key vacancies including First Nations, LGBTQ, Indo-Canadian & AHAVI.
3. Increase participation of municipal Reserve Constables and RCMP Auxiliary Constables at events.
4. Submit new Area Chiefs budget proposal, to obtain funding and re-establish financial footing.
5. Host meetings at alternating facilities, rather than only hosting them at the Saanich Police building.
6. Bring all of the Greater Victoria police agencies together to participate in the Victoria Pride Parade.
7. Create diversity education and awareness through the invitation of guest speakers to meetings.
8. Create a communication & dissemination of information plan, including a website & social media.
9. Explore and re-establish bursary, scholarship or youth leadership award options.
10. Participate in more diversity events located outside the core municipalities of Victoria and Saanich.

The first seven of these priorities were achieved, with initial work on the final three priorities still pending.
Significant Accomplishments in 2013–2014

Expanded GVPDAC Membership:

We welcomed new GVPDAC members from several important diverse communities. This included Umeeda Switlo from the Ismaili Muslim Community, Terry Froud from Victoria Pride Society, Gina Robertson from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) and Gordy Dodd from the India Canada Cultural Association (ICCA). In September we will be joined by Dr. Lisa Gunderson from the African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island (AHAVI) and Taheera Ferguson, a replacement representative from the Ismaili Muslim Community. Fall 2014 plans are to welcome new GVPDAC members from the Jewish Federation of Victoria & Vancouver Island and from the Chinese-Canadian community.

Police membership over the past year has seen some fluctuation, as expected. Human resource challenges resulted in two positions remaining vacant, for Oak Bay Police Department and Sidney/North Saanich RCMP Detachment. New members have been identified to fill these roles, beginning in September of 2014, along with a replacement member from West Shore RCMP Detachment. A supervisor from Saanich Police Reserves recently joined the GVPDAC, complementing the supervisory representative from Victoria Police Reserves.
Presentation to Area Chiefs / 2014 Budget Approval:

In June of 2014, GVPDAC presented a May-to-December 2014 budget proposal totaling $5,600, which was approved by the Area Chiefs. The eight-month 2014 budget allocation was cost-shared as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Saanich</td>
<td>4.34%</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Bay</td>
<td>4.92%</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saanich</td>
<td>28.27%</td>
<td>1,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>36.61%</td>
<td>2,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Shore</td>
<td>15.60%</td>
<td>874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Saanich</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney</td>
<td>3.46%</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sooke</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,600</strong></td>
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2015 Budget Proposal:

At the Area Chiefs Meeting on September 11th, 2014, a January-to-December 2015 budget proposal totaling $8,150 is being submitted for consideration.

Social Media Communications:

Although the GVPDAC does not have a social media presence yet, a number of police Twitter accounts including Saanich Police, Victoria Police and Island District RCMP have been effective in communicating GVPDAC activities in the community, through the frequent sharing of explanatory “tweets” & photographs. Social media activity was especially active at this summer’s Victoria Pride Parade and India Fest (Mela).

AMSSA Award:

In September of 2013, recently-retired GVPDAC Chair S/Sgt. Newman of Saanich Police received provincial recognition from the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA), achieving the Service Recognition Volunteer Award.
**GVPDAC Tent:**

A 10’ x 10’ pop-up tent was purchased for Greater Victoria community engagement purposes. The tent was used at the India Fest (Mela) event at Centennial Square on August 9th & 10th. Victoria PD Reserves and Saanich PD Reserves staffed a table under the tent, assisted by GVPDAC representatives from our partner agencies. Police recruiting brochures were distributed. GVPDAC plans to utilize this tent at numerous community events during 2015. All GVPDAC agencies are welcome to borrow it for their events.

![New GVPDAC tent acquisition - August 2014](image)

**GVPDAC Banner:**

A new GVPDAC banner was purchased, with the crests of all five police agency crests now up-to-date. GVPDAC members and reserve officers have already carried the banner at a number of high-profile events including AfriCaFest, the World Partnership Walk, the Victoria Pride Parade and the Guru Nanak Walk for Peace. As with the tent, all GVPDAC agencies are more than welcome to borrow it.

![New GVPDAC banner acquisition – July 2014](image)
“Police and Community” Diversity Theatre – Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA):

An innovative theatre project was produced and delivered in late 2013 and early 2014. Although not a GVPDAC initiative, this was a collaboration between two of our member agencies, the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) and Saanich Police. Transformational theatre techniques were used to explore the relationship between new immigrants and the police. Funding was provided to ICA from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia. As described by the ICA,

Transformational theatre is the integration of several techniques such as image theatre, forum theatre, playback and non-blocking improvisation. In these presentations, actors present images and perform short scenes based on real stories provided by the police and new immigrants that show incidents of conflict and moments of cultural insensitivity.

The audience is then invited to intervene and enact solutions in real time to the problems presented. The consequences of different solutions are then discussed and the audience guided to explore and find the most appropriate and workable solutions. In this way, different points of view are played out, leading to strategies sensitive to and reflecting cultural differences. The learning is experiential, fun, and positive.

The objectives were to build mutual trust and to reduce the likelihood of discrimination. This interactive project was delivered to police officers and communications centre staff during Saanich Police training days, and to a large audience of community agencies at one of the CPN (Community Partnership Network) Diversity Summit events, which was held in Sidney. Feedback from audience members was very positive.

Theatre actors (L-R) Naveed Aziz, David Mutuku, Reserve Constable Hailie Masters, Staff Sergeant Doug Newman
**Victoria Pride Parade:**

For the first time in the history of the Victoria Pride Parade, the GVPDAC initiated and coordinated the participation of every Greater Victoria police agency, including the Military Police Unit Esquimalt. GVPDAC member Terry Froud of the Victoria Pride Society helped make this a highly successful event. Reserve and Auxiliary officers from Victoria Police, Saanich Police and both Sidney/North Saanich and North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP participated, along with regular & civilian members and full representation from senior & executive officers from the Area Chiefs group. The Area Chiefs’ support was greatly appreciated.
India Fest (Mela):

GVPDAC agencies were well-represented at this major regional diversity event. Deputy Chief Manak, Chief Superintendent Bernoties and Chief Constable Downie were among the dignitary speakers at the Opening Ceremonies. Reserve Constables from Vic PD and Saanich Police staffed the GVPDAC tent and RCMP Auxiliary Constables will be invited to join them next year. For the 2015 India Mela, all of the GVPDAC police agencies will all be invited to have recruiting personnel and materials present, if they wish.

![Police and community together at India Mela with ICCA president /GVPDAC member Gordy Dodd (2nd from L)](image)

Expanded Greater Victoria Police Membership in the CPN (Community Partnership Network):

The CPN is a group of nearly 150 local agencies, businesses and institutions, “…committed to building diverse, welcoming and inclusive communities in Greater Victoria.” The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA), a member of the GVPDAC, serves as the lead agency for the CPN. The GVPDAC has recently helped facilitate the addition of three more police agencies to join the CPN: Sidney/North Saanich RCMP, Oak Bay Police Department and Sooke RCMP. Every municipal police and RCMP agency in Greater Victoria now has a membership in the CPN. Member agencies will receive invitations several times a year to send representatives to attend free CPN diversity training seminars. The three most recent CPN seminars were, “Retaining Newcomer and Multicultural Employees and Volunteers”, “Community Engagement Using the Arts” and “Building Relationships with Local First Nations Communities.”
Monthly Meetings: Guest Speakers and Alternating Locations:

Some of our GVPDAC meeting guest speakers and presentations included Chief Constable Jamie Graham of Victoria Police, Kade Hardy representing the African Eloquence Celebration (held at the University of Victoria), William Goldiet of the African Heritage Association of Vancouver Island (AHAVI), GVPDAC member Umeeda Switlo of the Ismaili Muslim Community and Mark Wilson of CAP-D, the Community Action Plan on Discrimination.

Fall 2014 guest speakers will include Chief Constable Frank Elsner of Victoria Police, Jason Austin of Greater Victoria Police Victim Services (GVPVS) and Chief Constable Bob Downie of Saanich Police.

One of our 2014 objectives was to move away from holding every GVPDAC meeting at the Saanich Police headquarters. May and June meetings were held at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) and the Songhees Wellness Centre. Varied fall locations include the Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS), the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) and the Victoria Police Department.

Looking to the Future…

Sharing upcoming community event information among GVPDAC representatives has historically been done at our monthly meetings, through disseminated minutes from the meetings, and through additional e-mail communication and sharing of event posters. Individual police and community representatives have then been responsible for sharing relevant event information and other community engagement opportunities within their own organizations.

With more interest than ever from Area Chiefs representatives to become involved in some of these larger events, the GVPDAC will be exploring some improved communication options, to provide better notice and enable more effective long-term planning. While some events come to the attention of GVPDAC on short notice, others are known well in advance. We will continue to bring municipal police departments and RCMP detachments together at some of the larger events, including our Reserve and Auxiliary members.

A strategic planning and priority-setting meeting will take place during late 2014. We will continue to work on some of our 2013-2014 priorities, and will create a number of new and innovative ones. Anticipated areas of focus for 2015 include re-establishing a Youth Diversity Award, organizing and sponsoring a Police and Diverse Youth Forum, website creation and maintenance and organizing and hosting a series of four (4) Police-Community Open Houses beginning with our Chinese-Canadian, Indo-Canadian, First Nations and Afro-Caribbean communities.

Our 2015 budget proposal to the Area Chiefs includes funding requests to help support some of these ongoing and new initiatives. The GVPDAC wishes to thank the Area Chiefs for both their continued financial support and for their personal participation at many regional diversity events during 2013-2014.

Staff Sergeant Scott Treble, GVPDAC Chair
September 8th, 2014