

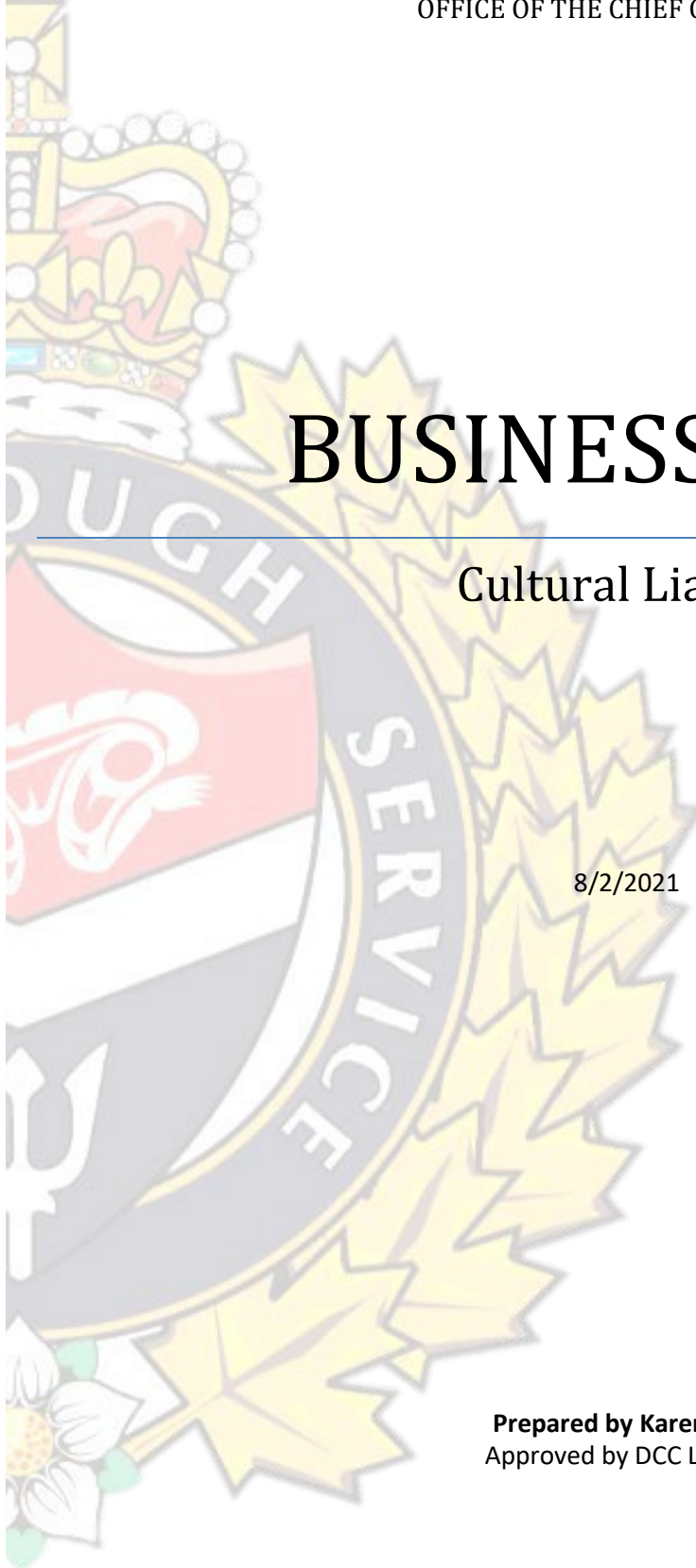
# BUSINESS CASE

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## Cultural Liaison

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# The Strategic Context

## Problem Statement

Over the past several years, an increase in Calls for Service (CFS) related to businesses and supportive housing sites and sheltering spaces have required Victoria Police Department (VicPD) Community Resource Officers (CROs) to focus time and resources on persistent CFS related to these sites. As a result, CROs have been unable to fulfill their broader mandate or dedicate consistent time and resources to support, engage with, LGBTQ+ individuals and groups and strengthen trust and understanding with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities and religious and cultural organizations.

## Business Need Summary

To hire an additional Community Resource Officer (CRO), to act as a shared resource between Victoria and Esquimalt, with a primary mandate of acting as a diversity and inclusion liaison to BIPOC individuals and groups and cultural and religious organizations, with a secondary mandate of supporting the existing five CROs in their primary responsibilities.

## Background

Community Resource Officers (CROs) play a key role in preventing Calls for Service (CFS) via relationship building with the public and community organizations and engaging in preventative action and problem-solving to respond to challenges before they result in a CFS. This is accomplished through education and awareness; strengthening relationships with individuals, community organizations, service providers; and increasing efficiencies to ensure an effective and coordinated response. Without the work of the CROs, CFS would be significantly higher and interactions would have a higher likelihood of resulting in negative outcomes. These negative interactions not only pose a risk to the health and safety of officers and the public, but also to the reputational risk of the organization in a time when community relationship building is paramount.

## Current State

There are currently five Community Resource Officers (CROs), three dedicated to the Community Services Division and two dedicated to the Esquimalt Division (as per the Framework Agreement). The primary function of the CROs varies slightly for the two jurisdictions. For CSD, primary CRO responsibilities include:

- Acting as an ambassador for VicPD;
- Prioritizing and analyzing concerns identified by police and community members;
- Examining underlying conditions that have led to community problems;
- Proactively seeking new and alternative response;
- Engaging with public agencies, community organizations, and the public;
- Acting as a liaison to businesses;
- Thinking proactively to engage in preventative action; and
- Leading, coordinating, and delegating tasks to members of CSD and the Patrol Division where an integrated team response is appropriate or required.

# Drivers for Business Need

## Increase in Supportive Housing Sites

The City of Victoria Council and the Provincial Government have made housing those experiencing homelessness a priority. The City of Victoria has the highest number of shelter spaces and supportive housing beds in the region by a significant margin, and as the statistics demonstrate, there is an associated public safety cost. As per BC Housing, the number of supportive housing sites is expected to grow even further.

Since the onset of COVID 19 in Victoria in March of 2020, eight supportive housing sites have been implemented in the City of Victoria. While some of these shelter sites are temporary, BC Housing announced four new permanent locations in the City of Victoria in March 2021 that will house 192 people. It is important to note this does not reflect the places used as sheltering sites at the various parks across the region that include Beacon Hill Park, Cecelia Ravine, RAP, Topaz Park, Vic West, Bamfield Park, Irving Park etc.

## Call for Service (CFS) Volume

According to data provided by the Intelligence and Analysis Section (AIS), violent crime and property crime incidents related to supportive housing sites have increased in the last three years (2018-2021). For example, for the Burnside Gorge, these years represent the highest years for both property and violent crime incidents. Since the population in this area has not increased significantly over this period, it is likely that the introduction of various shelters into the area since 2017 has played a contributing role. Significant increases can also be seen at supportive housing sites such as Paul's Motor Inn (253% increase in CFS), the Comfort Inn (144% increase in CFS), and the Travelodge (55% increase in CFS) within the past year.

## Insufficient Resources to Meet CRO Mandate

The increase in CRO resources required to respond to the increase in CFS volume as a result of supportive housing sites and other outdoor sites used for sheltering has resulted in an inability to meet essential preventative and relationship building components of the CRO mandate, including:

- Conducting intervention relating to high call generators;
- Engaging in community centre outreach to establish relationships with newcomers to Canada and others who may be uncomfortable or hesitant to engage with police;
- Conducting outreach with businesses in neighboring communities;
- Participating in regular meetings with preexisting service providers such as Mustard Seed, Queens Manor, and Our Place;
- Working with Block Watch;
- RESPOND – coordinated responses to derelict buildings;
- Strengthening VicPD's relationship with PEERS;
- Participating in more focused projects with other CSD partners to coordinate efforts on problem buildings, drug trafficking, and human trafficking identified through community contacts or online reporting;
- Expanding community partnerships outside of businesses, supportive housing, and faith-based groups to include MCFD, VIHA, and other youth organizations to provide education and raise awareness on specific topics;
- Building proactive relationships with the Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) and

other businesses including the three shopping malls in VicPD’s area by participating in regular meetings with security firms; and

- Supporting the Late Night Task Force, Bar Watch, and Restaurant Watch as COVID restrictions lift.

**Inclusive Service Provision via Cultural Liaison Position**

VicPD seeks to expand the CRO mandate to include a CRO position that is dedicated to activities related to supporting, engaging with, and building trust and understanding with BIPOC individuals and communities and cultural and religious organizations, including:

- Actively involving self and others in committee work that furthers departmental and community interests, including activities of the Diversity Advisory Committee (DAC);
- Collaborating with DAC to provide education and training to the community on a one-to-one basis and in a group setting;
- Collaborating with the Human Resources Training Sergeant, DAC, and other community partners to facilitate coaching and training to VicPD members to educate and promote understanding amongst police and community groups to improve job performance and to build relationships with diverse communities;
- Committing to a community-based policing model that looks beyond immediate issues and searches for realistic sustainable answers to complex community challenges. This includes public participation and providing a police officer’s perspective in community planning;
- Respond to citizens with cultural sensitivity;
- Proactively analyzing and developing appropriate solutions to problems by evaluating a course of action in collaboration with affected groups and individuals;
- Collaborating with DAC to act as a consistent point of contact for diverse communities to bridge gaps with police and strengthen trust;
- Collaborating with Ops Planning and Intel to monitor social and conventional media sites to identify and address potential issues or threats to community groups;
- Liaising with the Hate Crimes Coordinator to provide support to individuals and community organizations when needed; and
- Facilitating or being willing to participate in various community and cultural events.

## **Recommendation and Resource Requirements**

### **Resource Request**

Hire one additional Community Resource Officer (CRO) to act as a shared resource between Victoria and Esquimalt.

### **Resource Requirements**

One Community Resource Officer (CRO), excluding vehicle purchase:

Estimated Date	2022 Impact				Full Year Impact (2023 On)	
	One-Time <sup>1</sup>	Ongoing (prorated)	Total	% Impact on Budget	Ongoing	% Impact on Budget
May-22	0	98,745	98,745	0.17%	148,117	0.25%