

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project of this nature would not be made possible without the assistance and commitment of both the Aboriginal community and Vancouver Police Department.

I would like to thank all of the individuals who participated in the focus groups and for taking the time to express their ideas and genuine concerns about the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre.

I would like to thank the following facilitators: Blair Harvey, Sarah John, Dan Jorgensen, Sarah Lavalle, Susan Tatoosh, Richard Vedan, and Stephanie Ward, for their involvement and commitment to this project.

I would also like to thank June Clearsky for the numerous hours spent transcribing the focus group tapes.

Thank you also to the Aboriginal representatives and members of the Vancouver Police Department who committed their time to the Aboriginal Community Police Centre-Steering Committee. Your guidance and expertise was a valuable asset to this initiative.

Thank you as well to Christine Taulu and Michelle Ziebart of the Community Police Centres for your assistance and input.

I would like to specially thank Inspector John Dehaas of the VPD for his support and Preston Guno of the Child and Youth Office for his leadership and long time commitment of strengthening the relationship between the Aboriginal community and the VPD.

Thank you to the executive of the VPD, particularly Deputy Chief Bob Rich and Deputy Chief Max Chalmers for your presence at the ACPC Advisory Committee meetings as well as for providing the Aboriginal community with the resources and decision-making authority to lead this initiative.

Thank you to the City of Vancouver for to its financial commitment to this initiative.

And finally, to Lynda and Chris thank you for your guidance throughout this initiative.

Report written by Melanie Mark

Editing by Lynda Gray

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to identify the Aboriginal community's support and/or resistance of developing an Aboriginal Community Police Centre (ACPC) and to capture recommendations for its location, staffing criteria, its method of governance, sustainability options and service delivery. Through a series of five focus groups, 33 Aboriginal people and 6 individuals representing the Vancouver Police Department and Community Police Centre's took part in discussions about the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre. In addition to the focus groups a separate meeting was held with six Aboriginal members of the Vancouver Aboriginal Community/ Vancouver Police Department Advisory Committee. Together these individuals expressed their support, concerns, ideas and recommendations for such a centre. While opinions and experiences did vary in each group, there was a general consensus by all participants that an ACPC could benefit the Aboriginal community. For the most part, participants from all cohorts appeared appreciative to have had the opportunity to share their insight, experience, thoughts and ideas and look forward to more discussions and updates about its progress. The following key recommendations summarize the reoccurring themes that emerged in all groups:

### Key recommendations

1. The ACPC should be located in a central location, preferably in the Commercial Drive area, specifically Commercial & Hastings
2. Develop a robust awareness plan about the ACPC- i.e. distribute fridge magnets throughout the Eastside neighbourhood identifying important phone numbers, hours of operation and services offered
3. Cultural sensitivity training should be a mandatory requirement for all ACPC staff and should be facilitated by an Aboriginal person
4. Offer a variety of workshops to address community safety

5. Adopt flexible hours of operation for the ACPC, including evening and weekend service
6. Ensure the ACPC is a safe, accessible and inviting environment for all ages groups
7. Ensure ACPC staff, VPD members, community partners and volunteers have a clear understanding of their roles & responsibilities
8. Ensure the physical space of the ACPC is large enough to host a variety of services and is culturally inviting in its interior and exterior
9. Develop strong and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers, including those who may help to reduce recidivism rates for persons involved with the VPD or criminal justice system
10. Have an open door policy for the communities most marginalized individuals i.e. sex trade workers and homeless persons
11. Implement a strong confidentiality policy within the ACPC
12. Ensure staff, VPD members, volunteers, and board members lead healthy and positive lifestyles
13. Ensure ACPC staff are professional personable and empathetic
14. Promote empowerment vs. enabling programs within the ACPC
15. Gradually develop and implement programs (quality vs. quantity)
16. Promote relationships that are reciprocal in nature, thus treat all individuals in contact with the ACPC with respect and integrity
17. Recruit highly qualified and friendly individuals to work within the ACPC, preferably Aboriginal people
18. Adopt a consensus based governance model
19. The ACPC needs to be owned and operated by the Aboriginal community
20. Have at least two, but preferably three VPD members working in the ACPC (aim for gender balance)

## Background

In 2004 a series of parallel initiatives were led by Aboriginal youth advocates and members of the Vancouver Police Department to address issues regarding Aboriginal youth in contact with the Vancouver Police Department. Through a number of deliberations two committees were later established to improve better relationships between the Aboriginal community and Vancouver Police Department, the first is the Aboriginal Youth Justice Working Group, the second, the Vancouver Aboriginal Community and Vancouver Police Department Advisory Committee (VAC/VPD Advisory Committee). The latter is representative of the following individuals:

1. Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Advocates, Kelly L'Hirondelle & Curtis Clearsky
2. BC Child and Youth Office, Preston Guno
3. Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Willie Blackwater
4. Urban Native Youth Association, Dena Klashinsky, Jerry Adams  
Melanie Mark
5. Vancouver Aboriginal Council, Blair Harvey & Chief Bob Joseph Senior
6. Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Society, Deana Michel & Jason Burnstick
7. Vancouver Native Health, Lou Demerais
8. VPD, Dave Dickson
9. VPD, Deputy Chief Bob Rich
10. VPD, Deputy Chief Max Chalmers
11. VPD, Inspector John de Haas (Youth Services)
12. VPD, Mike Matheson (Aboriginal Liaison Officer)
13. VPD, Sergeant Malcolm Cox (Neighbourhood Police Team)

The VAC/VPD Advisory Committee developed an agreed upon Terms of Reference with a mandate to establish and strengthen mutual trust and respect between both parties. While the process of developing this Advisory Committee is

simplified, its existence demonstrates an acknowledgment by both parties that former relations have been inadequate and need improvement. The four goals of the VAC/VPD Advisory Committee are:

1. Reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal people in at-risk and criminal circumstances, especially women and youth.
2. Build community support and participation for community policing issues.
3. Establish culturally appropriate preventative measures and diversion programs.
4. Enhance related community services and resources.

Of importance to the VAC/VPD Advisory Committee was the closure of the former Vancouver Police Native Liaison Society. This Society was in operation from the early 1980's to 2003 and provided a variety of services to victims and witnesses of crime, including providing information and assistance regarding Criminal Injury Compensation Claims, crime prevention techniques and court accompaniment as well as referrals to community services. The Society also worked to improve communication between the police, Aboriginal people and downtown community groups. The closure of the Society is not the focus of this paper, however illustrates the current gap in service delivery and explains the impetus for this initiative.

## Community Police Centres

At the September 15, 2004, Vancouver Police Board meeting, Deputy Chief Constable Bob Rich stated, "Community Policing is not a program, but a philosophy and attitude. All officers should consider themselves community policing officers and demonstrate this approach to their work..."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Regular Vancouver Police Board Meeting, September 15, 2004.*

Currently eight Community Police Centres exist in the City of Vancouver and are funded by City Council in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department. These Community Police Centres are unique for two reasons, first because they are independent and registered societies under the *Society Act*, and secondly because the City of Vancouver funds eligible CPC's up to one hundred thousand dollars per year (\$100,000) to cover salary, rent and operating costs; this agreement is up for renewal in 2008.

As Sergeant Jim Patenaude of the Vancouver City Police explains, "Vancouver's Community Policing Centres provide a broad array of services and assistance both to the general public and to the Department. Besides offering crime prevention information, community forums and neighbourhood patrols, the Centres allow police members to interact with the community in an informal environment. The public can report concerns or issues to the police members who are assigned to the Centres (one constable at each Centre), or who happen to be passing through and to discuss problems or crimes in the area. Moreover, members use the Centres around the clock, to write reports or take meal breaks, thus keeping them closer to their beats and better able to respond to calls for service."<sup>2</sup>

## Development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre

In his report to City Council, Sergeant Jim Patenaude of the VPD explains "The Police Department believes strongly that many of the needs and concerns of the Aboriginal community, in terms of crime prevention and community safety, can best be met through the creation of a full-service Aboriginal Community Policing Centre

(ACPC). The Aboriginal Community has deep reservations about a 'community office' being imposed on them. The clear message is that they have yet to be invited to a proper dialogue on the concept, or the benefits and possible structure, location and activities that might be involved. Another clear message from the community is that they view the relationship with the Department as needing significant improvement."

That being said, the VPD sought resources from the City of Vancouver on March 3, 2005 to fund the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre. This included a request of \$30,000 for start-up funding for the development of an ACPC and a commitment that the same funding available to each of the eight Community Police Centres, which is up to \$100,000, be available for the ACPC. Vancouver City Council accepted this request.

To that end the City of Vancouver on behalf of the Vancouver Police Department distributed an Expression of Interest to the Aboriginal community for the preliminary community consultation and planning phase necessary for the eventual implementation of an operating ACPC. The VAC/VPD Advisory Committee established the ACPC Steering Committee representative of both VPD and Aboriginal representatives to guide this initiative. Cedar Consulting was then contracted to conduct three distinct but inter-related pre-development tasks:

- 1) Research and Literature Review
- 2) Conduct Community Consultations
- 3) Develop a Business Plan

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[www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/police/policeboard](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/police/policeboard)

<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets Report from: Chief Constable Subject: Community Policing Initiatives & Funding Meeting date: March 3, 2005  
<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20050303/cs4.htm>

## Objective

The objective of this component of the overall initiative was to consult the Vancouver Aboriginal community about the development of an *Aboriginal Community Police Centre* (ACPC). The resulting feedback is being used to inform the accompanying Research and Business Plan included in this document.

## Methodology

The most appropriate method to facilitate dialogue about the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre was through a series of focus groups- “a small group selected from a wider population and queried, as by open discussion, for its members' opinions about or emotional response to a particular subject or area...”<sup>3</sup> Eight Aboriginal facilitators (four senior and four youth co-facilitators) were recruited by the ACPC- Community Consultations Coordinator to facilitate four focus groups (please see Appendix A for their biographies). These eight individuals (three males: five females) were contracted based upon their post-secondary experience and knowledge of working with the following groups: Service Providers, General Aboriginal Community, Youth and Elders. The additional VPD/CPC focus group was facilitated by the Community Consultations Coordinator. The senior facilitator's primary role was to lead the discussions about the development of an ACPC. The primary responsibilities of the youth co-facilitators were to distribute questionnaires to focus group participants, take notes on the available flipchart and facilitate the focus group discussions. At the direction of the VAC/VPD Advisory Committee Aboriginal youth were given the opportunity to co-facilitate the focus groups as it was believed it could build their capacity, develop mentoring relationships with the senior facilitators and could strengthen relationships between Aboriginal youth and Aboriginal professionals working to address common issues in the community.

<sup>3</sup> [www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/ss\\_gloss.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/ss_gloss.html)

Prior to conducting the focus groups, all of the facilitators gathered to discuss the goals and objectives of the consultations and were informed about the process for which the focus groups would be conducted. Senior and co-facilitators were teamed up based upon their expertise and where possible with gender balance. Once all of the focus groups were complete a debriefing meeting was scheduled to allow the facilitators an opportunity to share their general observations about their specific group. Their feedback is incorporated into this report.

The information collected from these consultations is both qualitative and quantitative, drawing upon feedback provided from the focus groups and a questionnaire that was completed exclusively by Aboriginal focus group participants (see following section for questionnaire feedback).

The following four focus groups were scheduled with the Aboriginal community:

- 1) **Service providers** (Aboriginal service providing organizations)
- 2) **General Aboriginal Community** (individuals that do not fall within youth, elders, or service provider categories)
- 3) **Youth** (Aboriginal youth between the ages of 14-24)
- 4) **Elders** (Aboriginal people 50 years or older)

At the direction of the VAC/VPD- ACPC Steering Committee an additional focus group with members of the **Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and representatives from the existing Community Police Centres (CPC's)** was also scheduled. The rationale for this decision was two-fold:

- 1) A variety of input and expertise is essential for the success of the ACPC.
- 2) It is not adequate to gain insight from the Aboriginal community in

the absence of the VPD and CPC's when all three groups will naturally form working relationships.

These five focus groups were scheduled consecutively from October 31- November 4, 2005. The targeted number of participants was sixty however only thirty-nine individuals (65%) took part. The following outlines the number of participants who attended each group:

- 1) Service Providers 10/10
- 2) General Aboriginal Community 8/20
- 3) Youth 6/10
- 4) Elders 10/10
- 5) VPD/CPC's 5/10 \*A Community Police Centre coordinator was unable to participate in the focus group however submitted feedback in writing to the Consultations Coordinator

The following seven open-ended questions were discussed in each group.

- 1) Do you think that an Aboriginal Community Policing Office could strengthen the relationship between the Vancouver Police Department and Aboriginal community? How and Why?
- 2) 8 CPC's already exist what would/could be unique about the ACPC?
- 3) Does the Aboriginal community support the idea of having an ACPC? Why or why not?
- 4) Would you want this centre to be run by Aboriginal staff only or does it matter? What would make this centre more culturally friendly? What ideas do you have about making the ACPC accessible?
- 5) \$100,000 is secured in the annual budget for an Aboriginal CPC. Yet many non-profit organizations and societies struggle to access funds to operate and provide services. What ideas do you have about funding for the ACPC?

- 6) What role do you see the Vancouver City Police Department playing in the ACPC?
- 7) What suggestions do you have about governance models for the ACPC?

These questions were designed by the Community Consultations Coordinator, with input from the VAC/VPD-ACPC Steering Committee and were developed to address the four areas of exploration identified in the Expression of Interest which states:

- 1) Is the Aboriginal Community Police Centre a challenge and an opportunity that we- the community- want to accept?
- 2) If so, where should it be located?
- 3) How should it be governed?
- 4) What could we do in our "Aboriginal Community Policing Centre" that might make it different, more effective and more appropriate than other similar centres?

Each of the focus groups was tape recorded and later transcribed. This was to ensure that the information provided could be reported accurately and is reflective of each participant's opinions. For reporting purposes and to address any questions or concerns, the Aboriginal Community Consultations Coordinator was present at each group. A warm meal was provided for each focus group. Participants in the General Aboriginal Community focus group were given bus tickets, while youth and elders were given a twenty-dollar honorarium. All participants were given a two-page information sheet outlining some background information about the existing Community Police Centres and former Vancouver Native Liaison Police Society. Participants were also asked to sign a consent form and were informed that this was a voluntary process for which they could remove themselves from the focus group discussions at any time. The length of each focus group was approximately two hours, totalling 37 pages of transcribed dialogue.

Over the course of two weeks the Community Consultations Coordinator actively recruited participants for each of the focus groups. To ensure the groups were reasonable in size, spaces were limited to ten participants. The General Aboriginal Community focus group aimed to target twenty participants because unlike the other groups this group was anticipated to be the most disconnected from Aboriginal services, therefore to most difficult to ensure confirmed participation. To ensure a variety of perspectives and experiences could be represented, the proceeding information details the process for which individuals were recruited by the Aboriginal Community Consultations Coordinator.

#### **Service Providers-**

A list of potential service providers representing various frontline Aboriginal service providing agencies was drafted with the input of the VAC/VPD- ACPC Steering Committee. Ten individuals were then personally invited to attend the focus group either through telephone correspondence or personal visits to their place of employment. Posters were also developed and delivered in person or via email to inform participants of the location, date and time of the focus group.

#### **General Aboriginal Community-**

A volunteer distributed a small poster to Aboriginal people in the Downtown Eastside and to individuals who frequent Carnegie Centre, the Women's Centre, and Sheway. Individuals were informed about the purpose of the meeting, the location, date and time.

#### **Youth-**

A poster detailing the purpose of the focus group as well as location, date and time was distributed to youth workers who had existing relationships with Aboriginal youth. This poster was not publicly displayed in the community instead Aboriginal youth were personally invited by youth workers from the following three organizations: Broadway Youth Resource

Centre (BYRC), Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association (KAYA) and Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA).

#### **Elders-**

The Elders Coordinator at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre was asked to host the focus group due to the central location of the centre and also because an elders group was already established. The Elders Coordinator volunteered to invite elders to participate in the focus group and developed a sign-up sheet. The first ten individuals interested in participating were given a poster detailing the time, date and purpose of the focus group.

#### **Vancouver Police Department & Community Police Centres-**

With the assistance of the VPD members of the VAC/VPD Advisory Committee a list of participants was developed to identify individuals who could speak on behalf of and about the existing Community Police Centre's. Because of the existing partnership between the VPD and CPC's it was important to balance the representation of each group. For this reason five spaces were available to each. A poster was not developed for public distribution as this focus group was organized largely through telephone conversations and email. Assistance was also provided by a CPC coordinator who volunteered to recruit participants to represent the CPC's. Participants were later emailed a poster which stated the purpose of the group, location, date and time.

Note- The most under-represented group was that of the General Aboriginal Community which was originally targeted to represent the DTES and those that do not fall within the other four categories, namely those over 24 and under 50 years old. An explanation for the low level of participation is addressed in the following section.

## Community Consultation Challenges

The challenge for the Community Consultations Coordinator was first to coordinate a very robust list of activities, and second to condense the information collected from both the questionnaire and focus groups, while equally representing both the supportive and dissenting ideas about the development of an ACPC. There is much to consider in its development given that strong but friendly debates occurred in all groups about the ACPC's location, services, staffing policies, role of the VPD, etc.

The following points list some of the key challenges experienced throughout this process.

- As a result of literacy challenges, some participants in the General Aboriginal Community group were unable to complete their questionnaires without the assistance of other participants or co-facilitators. This delayed focus group discussions and evidently caused gaps in the collected data.
- Some participants in the General Aboriginal Community group had difficulty staying focused for the duration of the group which evidently limited the representation of this group as discussions were frequently off topic.
- Participants and facilitators in almost all of the groups expressed the need for more time to address and express their opinions about the development of this initiative.
- Some individuals from the DTES did not have the resources, bus tickets or transportation to travel to the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre where the General Aboriginal Community focus group was held. This barrier subsequently limited the representation of Aboriginal people in the DTES.

- Two elders in the elder's focus group experienced difficulties hearing the questions being asked of them which limited their participation in the discussion.
- Some individuals, particularly those working for Aboriginal service providing agencies felt excluded for not being invited or informed about the focus groups and community consultation process and were reasonably concerned that their specific issues and needs would not be reflected.

## Lessons Learned

Despite a few setbacks, a wealth of information was graciously provided by the Aboriginal community, members of the VPD and Community Police Centres. To minimize some of these challenges with regards to projects of this nature, the following suggestions have been:

1. Inform the community well in advance when conducting community consultations as this will alleviate any concerns about representation and participation.
2. To ensure information is collected and recorded accurately when requesting questionnaire feedback, hire individuals to administer the questionnaire as this will address any literacy gaps and penmanship legibility.
3. When consulting the community about such topics, host a community forum in addition to the separate focus groups.
4. If honorariums are to be provided to participants, it should be made available to all groups. This is not only fair but will also avoid ageism.
5. Ensure facilitators have the capacity to keep participants focused as participants can easily be sidetracked on such important topics.

## Questionnaire Feedback

Focus group participants were asked to complete a twenty point questionnaire to supplement the information collected from the focus groups. The questionnaire was distributed to participants and collected by the co-facilitators prior to the focus group discussion. Participants for the VPD/CPC focus group did not complete the questionnaire as the questions were designed to gain feedback from the Aboriginal community. The following quantitative information is used to complement the focus group feedback and will be considered in the ACPC Business Plan.

- 50 Aboriginal people were originally targeted to participate in the focus groups however only 33 took part (66%).
- Questionnaires were not completed fully by participants.
- Not all questionnaires were returned to the co-facilitators
- N= number of respondents that answered each question

TABLE 1

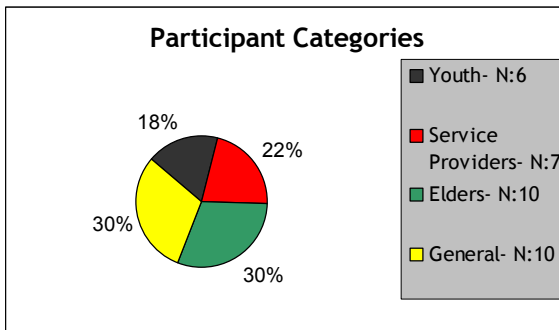


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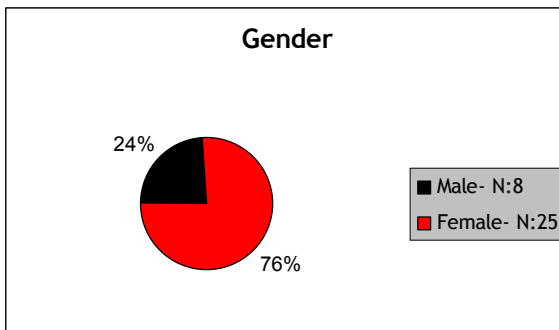
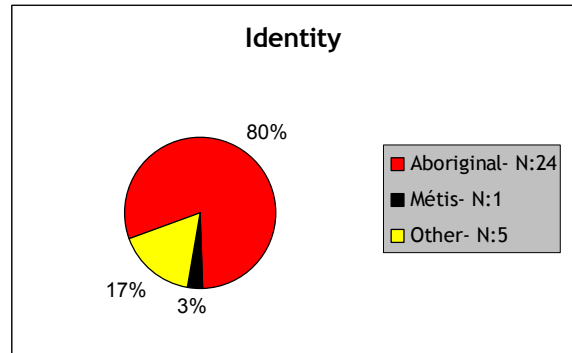


TABLE 3



### Age:

- Youngest participant: 16 years
- Oldest participant: 71 years
- Average age overall: 45 years
- Youth: average age 19 years
- Elder: average age 61 years
- Service Providers: average age 39 years
- General Aboriginal Community: average age 47 years

TABLE 4

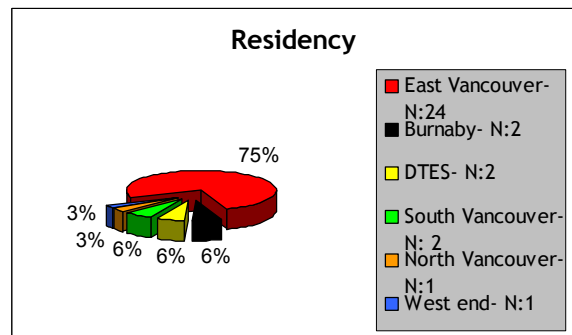
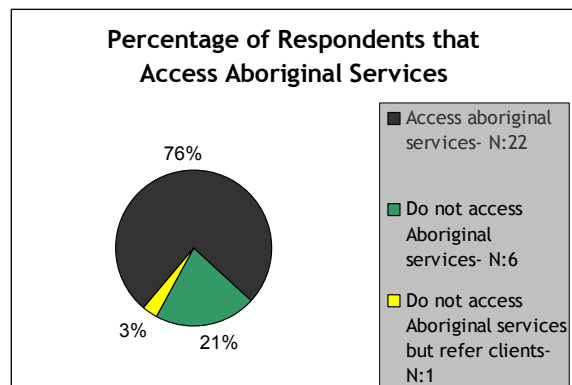
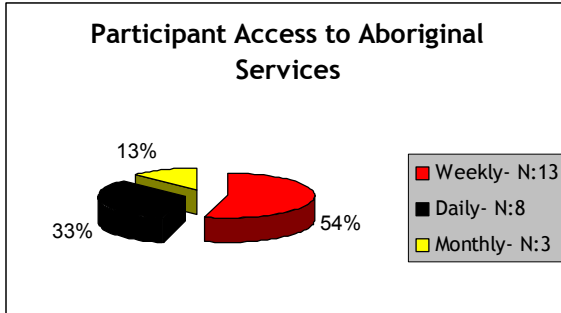


TABLE 5



**TABLE 6**



**Youth-**

The majority of this cohort access youth and social services.

**Elders-**

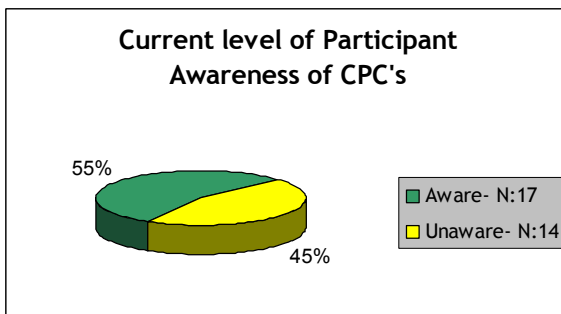
The majority of this cohort access elder and social services.

**General-**

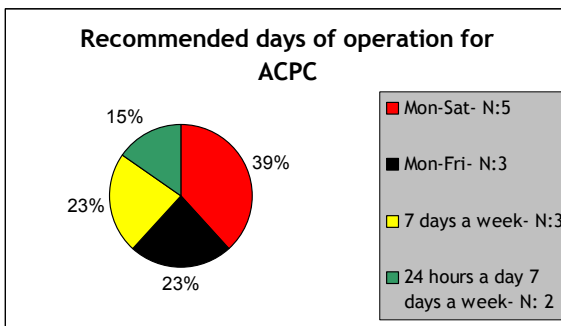
The majority of this cohort access Alcohol and Drug programs, social services as well as Counseling and programs at the Women's Centre.

**Service Providers-** The majority of this cohort access criminal justice and social services as well as spiritual support.

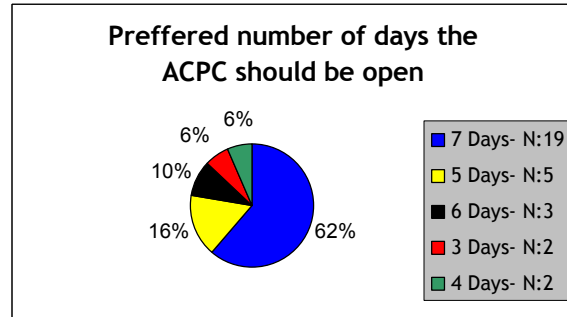
**TABLE 7**



**TABLE 8**

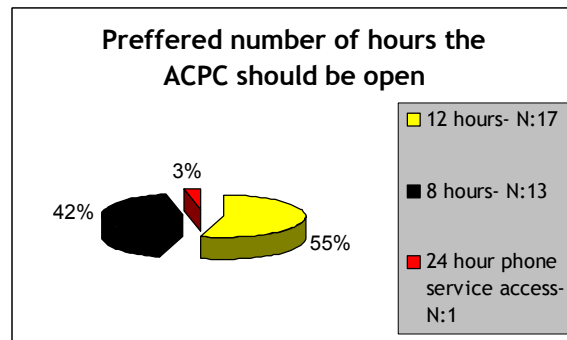


**TABLE 9**

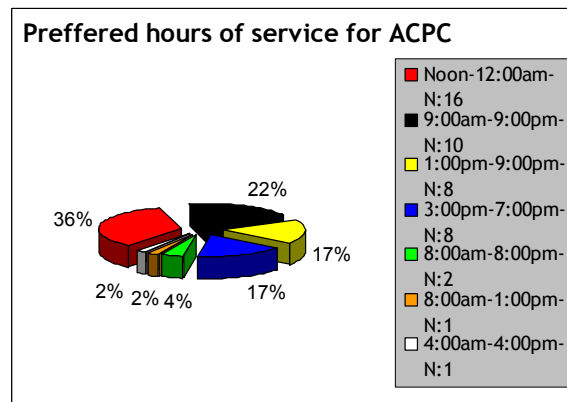


- Service Providers and the General Aboriginal community believe that the ACPC should be open at least 5 days a week.
- The General Aboriginal community suggested that the ACPC should offer 24 hour phone service, with evening, weekend and after-hour service.
- Youth believe the ACPC should be open at the least 3 days per week, and suggested it be open on weekends.

**TABLE 10**



**TABLE 11**



## Recommended services for ACPC

The following shows the similarities and differences between all of the groups as well as the unique needs of particular groups with regards to services participants would like to see provided within the ACPC.

### Service Providers and General

- Advocacy
- Outreach
- Victim assistance
- Drug and alcohol counseling and referrals
- Liaison i.e. sex worker, relationship
- Youth intervention and mediation between families

### Youth

- Public telephone
- Public washroom

### Elders and Service Providers

- Justice
- Resources and information

### Service Providers and Youth

- Complaints department

### Youth and Elders

- Cross cultural, First Nations training

### Youth, Elders, Service providers

- Crime prevention
- Block watch
- Street patrol

## Service Providers

- Resources √ √ √ √
- Counseling √ √
- Support √ √
- Youth Interventions
- Outreach
- Complaints dept.
- Advocacy
- Education/crime prevention activities
- Harm reduction- Drug & Alcohol referrals & counselors
- Justice
- Victim assistance
- On-going community consultations
- Supports for homeless people (food)
- Sex worker liaison
- Relationship liaison

### General

- Mediation between youth & family √ √
- Cultural
- Liaison
- 24 hr phone line for our people in distress
- Evening/after hours- police car, midnight- 8am
- Advocates
- Drug & Alcohol counseling
- Victim services
- Volunteer/paid outreach workers of all ages
- Supports for victims i.e. police & Native courtworkers
- Referral centre for people new to the city
- Political protest

### Youth

- Public telephone √ √ √
- Public washroom √ √ √
- Info about making/placing a discreet/confidential complaint
- Workshops from the Native community for the police
- Street Patrol
- Referrals to treatment centres

### Elders

- Information
- Cross cultural training
- Security for seniors
- Public relations
- Justice workshops
- Medical history database to do interventions for Native people
- More block watch

√= repeat suggestions

**LOCATION DEBATE:**

Participants were asked to identify the best and worst location for the ACPC.

**Best Location:**

There was consensus that the ACPC must be in the Eastside, central to the greatest concentration of Aboriginal people. The following shows similarities and differences between each of the groups:

- Elders, Service Providers, and Youth agreed on the **Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre**
- General Aboriginal Community, Service Providers, and Youth agreed on **Hastings and Commercial**
- Elders, General Aboriginal Community, Service Providers agreed on the **Downtown Eastside**
- Youth preferred **Broadway and Commercial**
- The General Aboriginal Community cohort preferred **Main and Hastings**.

**Worst Location:**

There was consensus in all cohorts that the ACPC can not be located in the British Properties, West End, West Vancouver, or where there is no bus route i.e. Victoria Drive. The following shows similarities and differences amongst groups:

- Elders, the General Aboriginal Community, and Service Providers identified **Main and Hastings**.
- Youth identified the **Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre**.

BEST LOCATION	WORST LOCATION
<p><u>Service Providers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aboriginal Friendship Centre</li> <li>○ Main/Terminal near Skytrain</li> <li>○ Hastings and Commercial</li> <li>○ DTES</li> <li>○ Commercial Drive/Britannia</li> <li>○ Hastings &amp; Clark or Commercial</li> <li>○ Commercial Drive</li> </ul>	<p><u>Service Providers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Uptown Vancouver</li> <li>○ The heart of the city</li> <li>○ Main &amp; Hastings</li> <li>○ High end communities</li> <li>○ Somewhere that is not accessible or on a bus route</li> <li>○ Westside/Main</li> <li>○ DTES</li> </ul>
<p><u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commercial &amp; Hastings √ √</li> <li>○ Main &amp; Hastings √ √</li> <li>○ Downtown</li> <li>○ Where Indians live</li> <li>○ Midtown centre area</li> </ul>	<p><u>General</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Main &amp; Hastings √ √</li> <li>○ Where there aren't too many Aboriginals i.e. West-van British Properties/ Suburbs</li> <li>○ DTES</li> <li>○ Where its not easily accessible/confidential/friendly/ or attracts -negative media attention</li> <li>○ Outside districts</li> </ul>
<p><u>Youth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Broadway Station √ √</li> <li>○ Hastings &amp; Commercial</li> <li>○ Aboriginal Friendship Centre</li> <li>○ Hastings &amp; Pender</li> </ul>	<p><u>Youth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aboriginal Friendship Centre</li> <li>○ West-end</li> <li>○ Victoria Drive/ West Van</li> </ul>
<p><u>Elders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Eastside √ √ √</li> <li>○ Aboriginal Friendship Centre</li> <li>○ Near the courts</li> <li>○ Easy access, where most Native people live</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elders</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Government Building</li> <li>○ All over</li> <li>○ Van East</li> <li>○ British Properties</li> <li>○ No bus access &amp; 24 phone access</li> <li>○ DTES</li> </ul>

## Questionnaire Highlights

33 Aboriginal participants completed the questionnaires
Gender representation- 76% Female: 24% Male
75% of participants are residence of Vancouver's Eastside
54% of participants access Aboriginal services on a weekly basis
The preferred number of days the ACPC should be open is 7 days a week
The preferred days of operation for the ACPC is Monday- Saturday
Participants prefer the ACPC to be open 12 hours a day vs. 8 hours a day
The preferred hours of operation for the ACPC is 12:00pm-12:00am
The preferred location for the ACPC is Broadway & Commercial or Hastings & Commercial. Participants identified the Friendship Centre and the Downtown eastside as both the best and worst locations for the ACPC; therefore these locations are not listed because consensus was not reached.
Participants suggested the following service to be offered within the ACPC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Advocacy</li><li>➤ Blockwatch</li><li>➤ Complaints department</li><li>➤ Cross cultural-First Nations training</li><li>➤ Drug and Alcohol counselling</li><li>➤ Information and Referrals</li><li>➤ Justice services</li><li>➤ Outreach</li><li>➤ Public telephone &amp; washroom</li><li>➤ Sex worker/ relationship liaison</li><li>➤ Street Patrol</li><li>➤ Victim Assistance</li></ul>
83% of participants ranked the development of an ACPC as very important
Participants unanimously agreed that an ACPC could increase safety for Aboriginal people

## Focus Group Feedback

The objective of this initiative was to consult with the Aboriginal community about the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre. The proceeding qualitative data will support the overall findings of the community consultations and will complement the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires. The following information is presented to reflect the robust conversations that occurred in each of the five focus groups. Before asking the following seven questions, facilitators provided participants with some background information about this initiative, the purpose of the focus group and the reasons for which they were invited to participate. Bullets are listed below each question to summarize key points, followed with direct quotes from participants highlighted in text boxes. These quotes inform the reader of the source for each comment and the context for which particular comments were made. The following points do not reflect all of the comments made by participants, it does nevertheless capture the primary issues, concerns and innovative ideas participants had about the development of an ACPC.

## QUESTION #1

*Do you think that an Aboriginal Community Policing Centre could strengthen the relationship between the Vancouver Police Department and Aboriginal community? How and Why?*

### Summary:

#### **The ACPC could provide opportunities and is supported because:**

- It could improve cultural awareness for both the VPD and Aboriginal community
- It could improve trust
- It could provide empowerment and greater decision making for Aboriginal people working to address law enforcement issues
- It could be a culturally safe place to make a complaint
- It could be a safe place to connect with “good” police officers and to deal effectively with “bad” officers
- It could be a place of education
- It could be a place for ongoing advocacy for improved and expanded policing service and involvement of the Aboriginal community
- It could provide opportunities to build new and improved relationships with the VPD and individual officers
- It could offer better access and improved liaison with Aboriginal sex trade workers

#### **Suggestions for an effective ACPC:**

- Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working within the centre must have some history of Aboriginal culture
- Special attention must be made to Aboriginal youth issues
- Provide some form of 24-hour service to the Aboriginal community (i.e. after-hours crisis line)
- Encourage non-Aboriginal people to be involved in the Centre

- The VPD should take the time to understand Aboriginal community members and their needs
- There needs to be a focus on prevention and conflict resolution
- The ACPC's focus should be on proactive and positive interactions with the police rather than only reactive policing
- The VPD needs to be visible in the Aboriginal community by doing outreach
- The ACPC should offer cultural awareness training to the police
- VPD members working in the ACPC should work first work in their plain clothes then gradually in their uniforms
- Aboriginal people must work within the ACPC
- Develop accountability measures for both the VPD and Aboriginal community
- Raise awareness to Aboriginal children and youth about the roles and responsibilities of the police, this will avoid negative stereotyping of and fear about the police
- Provide opportunities for people who have been through tough times and have turned their life around to be involved in the ACPC- i.e. through walk about in the DTES, volunteer work
- Consult with Aboriginal people about protocol and cultural traditions
- The ACPC needs to be significant in size to provide a variety of service

**Reasons for which participants think the ACPC would not strengthen the relationship with the VPD:**

- Some participants lack trust and respect for the police
- There are concerns that the development of an ACPC could further segregate Aboriginal people by preventing them access to other services
- Some participants believe it is too difficult to change the subculture of

the police as well as issues of bigotry, racism and ignorance

- There are not enough VPD members with Dave Dickson's style of policing

**Concerns:**

- Participants do not want the ACPC to just be a referral centre where clients are passed off to other services
- The ACPC is only a part of the answer, it can't be expected to fix all of the justice related issues in the Aboriginal community
- Complaints about the police are not taken seriously how will the ACPC change this?
- Aboriginal people, young and old, are being 'beat up' by the police and there is a widespread perception that the VPD racially profiles Aboriginal people, especially youth, how will the ACPC address this?

**Responses to Question #1**

It would probably help because it would give the non-Aboriginals a better insight to understand our people. (General)

...There needs to be some sort of reconciliation process with the police... (Service Providers)

It will give the Aboriginal community the power... a sense of power back, just like the Chinese people. (General)

To me the Policing Centre is a non-threatening environment that invites people that do not feel like they have a chance go anywhere. (VPD/CPC)

I think the best thing would be if these police came in without their uniforms on, so you could see them differently. It would probably be better if you saw a police officer as a human being... (Youth)

It depends on who is organizing and running the centre, the VPD, the volunteers and whoever is working in this Centre, it is all about how they portray their image and put their message out there. (Youth)

What are the VPD's intentions? Are they coming to take over, or are they going to actually start working on their relationship with this community. Are they [the VPD] going to be sensitive and take the time to learn about the issues within our community? (Youth)

When I would go out, my mom would tell me to watch out for the bad guy, and she would tell me watch out for the police. I would always get racially profiled every single time. I think that is why we are speaking out against racial profiling. Especially here in East Van, I walk down the street and the police are following me, the Johns are following me, this is what I deal with on a daily basis. That is our struggle. Then the police follow up by saying 'where are the parents.' (Youth)

I would say no because I haven't accessed the Grandview Woodland [CPC], I have not seen them in the community and I have not even wanted to go into that office, how would the Aboriginal one be better? I do not see it doing anything. Why would I go there if I did not know what they had to offer me? (Youth)

I think it would strengthen it, but I would like to see the VPD take cross cultural awareness training... (Elders)

I think it is a start and a beginning...We got this far we can make some progress... (Service Provider)

I see the ACPC as somewhere where one can go and make a complaint cause right now when you go to the VPD and you are Aboriginal you are discriminated against, and most of the time your complaint is probably put in the paper shredder...(Service Provider)

We know racism exists in the police force a lot of our kids go through that and a lot of our kids know their rights, even some younger people. I think that this place could be a place of education, teach them what it is they can do or say when something does happen, how to handle a situation correctly... or what it looks like when things actually go through the court process...what their options are and possibilities. (Service Providers)

...it would strengthen it providing that there are First Nations people working in the Centre. (Elders)

I grew up where we did not trust the police. I still do not trust them. I think the ACPC would increase my trust in them. (Elders)

Definitely improve relationships, if not for the high native population who are addicted and who are in our area, and others who are not well. The ACPC should reflect that there is advocacy... (Elders)

## QUESTION 2- Uniqueness of ACPC

*8 Community Police Centres already exist what would or could be unique about the ACPC?*

Participants were shown a map outlining the location of each of the Community Police Centres spread throughout the City of Vancouver:

1. Chinese
2. Collingwood
3. Grandview-Woodland
4. Granville-Downtown South
5. Hastings North
6. Kerrisdale Oakridge Marpole
7. South Vancouver
8. West End- Coal Harbour

### Summary:

- The ACPC would be the only CPC designed to serve the Aboriginal community
- The ACPC would be staffed predominantly by Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal culture should always be present i.e. smudging
- Have lawyers, counselors and health professionals onsite
- The ACPC should offer workshops to build the capacity of the community so that individuals are equipped with problem solving skills, etc
- The interior and exterior design of the ACPC should reflect Aboriginal culture
- Have strong involvement of elders
- Have strong involvement of youth
- The ACPC could be a place of contact for urban Aboriginal people, perhaps provide a message board
- It will be a stable and reliable place for Aboriginal people to turn to for justice related issues
- A recommendation box should be available to clients so that programs and services offered within the ACPC are effective and relevant and meet the communities needs

## Responses to Question #2

...offer a conflict resolution type of service. (Elder)

...We need to ensure that we are at the centre providing services...ensuring [clients] get appropriate service... (Service Provider)

...Police officers in most cases have to do a certain amount of volunteer work and this place certainly would be the place where they could do their volunteer work... (Service Provider)

Set up some sort of junior program for some of the younger children so that they become more aware of what policing is about, not only as possible career choice but also for their own knowledge. Because when I grew up we grew up scared of the police and if we saw a police officer we were out of there. Had a police officer said to me come to the police station and I will show you some radios or something like that, maybe I would have went. (Service Provider)

The name of the ACPC should emphasize building stronger relations between the police and Aboriginal community and not just police issues. (Youth)

I think the architectural design of the place and how it looks will bring more involvement. (Youth)

I am hoping this place could help victims who do not know what to do and cannot fill out all the papers. [The ACPC] could help people fill out those papers and give them information on what they can and cannot do. (Youth)

It is the cultural part of it. There is already a Chinese CPC therefore a precedent already exists for an ethnic based community policing centre. Clearly the Aboriginal community is under represented in most of our governmental agencies and things like that. So I think it is high time that we do this. (VPD/CPC)

...this is sadly missing right now... because there is nothing out there for 35-50 year olds... (VPD/CPC)

...the ACPC could provide the spiritual & cultural programs and address issues or problems that other CPC'S I doubt would because it would not be in their mandate to do so. (VPD/CPC)

I envision a lot of referral services, because you never want to turn anyone down at the door. (VPD/CPC)

Focus on awareness for youth, seniors, and families. (VPD/CPC)

The physical and geographical space is a very important component. How much space you have will determine how much you could offer. If you have meeting rooms and tons of space you can offer more, but if you have a little store front with one little room in the back, you're obviously going to be more limited. (VPD/CPC)

It is fantastic we are getting an Aboriginal one. (VPD/CPC)

Partnerships are vital. (VPD/CPC)

It cannot have just one or two officers. (General)

I would like to emphasize that we need 24 hour service (Elders)

This [ACPC] has to be owned and operated by the Aboriginal community. The VPD is there to support it... (VPD/CPC)

Objectivity is important, try not to take sides... 85% has nothing to do with the boys [VPD] its bylaws, noise, etc. In the beginning everyone wants everything, with the CPC you need to work within the budget and work with others. The community wants a lot of things. What the community wants is for you to solve their problems. And you're going to have to tell them, I can't solve your problem, I can assist and direct your problem, but you're going to have to help me solve this problem. (VPD/CPC)

It will need a confidential room and confidentiality in general. (VPD/CPC)

Have workshops on family violence, culture, smudging and encouraging youth to connect with elders. (General)

Host a community play with role reversals between the VPD and Aboriginal people. This will help raise awareness. (General)

### QUESTION 3- Support or resistance for an ACPC

*Does the Aboriginal community support the idea of having an ACPC? Why or why not?*

The majority of respondents said yes to this question. As shown below there is ample support as well as some reluctance about the development of an ACPC.

#### Summary:

- This initiative is perceived as “long overdue”
- Yes because it will bring culture and traditions into its activities
- Yes, but it will take time to build trust in the VPD and for Aboriginal people to access the ACPC
- Yes however programs and services should be developed pragmatically with the needs of the community in mind
- Yes however it is imperative that a significant amount of time be spent building awareness in the community about the ACPC
- Yes because it will improve access to police services
- Yes because it will diminish discrimination in dealing with complaints
- Yes because it will build better relations between the police and Aboriginal community

#### Concerns for the development of an ACPC:

- The issue over independence was raised as some participants thought that the Aboriginal community will be monitored too closely by the VPD
- Who will be running and operating the ACPC?
- How will the power and authority over the ACPC be distributed?

### Responses to Question #3

We would support such a CPC if it provides full service and accepts referrals from other CPC's or agencies. Providing service to the geographic area it is located within would be helpful. The drawback I see would be to further segregate people living together in the city of Vancouver. Our services are available to all people and we would like to see all residents access those services. (VPD/CPC)

Once this is open I am sure the community will come together and support the Centre. (General)

This is long overdue and crucial. (General)

When the Aboriginal community drops in, I know that they will get help and will pull together. It will be solid and stable. (General)

Yes, we all support it. (VPD/CPC)

Yes and No. I think we must have it, but no because maybe we are being watched a little too closely. (Service Provider)

I think it will help, but as long as it is done in a proper way and they take everybody's opinions into account. Not just from the Aboriginals, but everyone. (Youth)

Yes, I would support it but the people that I know would not support it. Right now it is not going to happen. (Youth)

I am afraid of taking funding from someplace else. (Elders)

## QUESTION 4a) Staff

*Would you want this centre to be run by Aboriginal staff only or does it matter?*

### Summary:

- Programs, services and recruitment policies should be based upon the medicine wheel, inclusive of the red, black, white and yellow people
- Priority must be given to individuals that have the greatest capacity, knowledge and sensitivity to work within the ACPC
- Many participants believe the key staff person should be Aboriginal
- Participants believe the community needs to overcome barriers by minimizing race-based barriers
- Staff (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) need to be healthy, proactive, involved, friendly and approachable
- The key staff person should be known in the Aboriginal community
- Participants believe life experience to be just as valuable as formal education
- Aboriginal staff will help to build trust, the goal should be to have all Aboriginal staff
- There should be a list of volunteers with specific roles
- Equal representation of men and women is very important

### Responses to Question #4a)

It should be Aboriginal staff if it's an Aboriginal Police Centre...you cannot get trust if you do not have an Aboriginal person standing there. It does not matter how great the individual is even if it were Dave Dickson standing there in the doorway. Aboriginals will keep on walking by... (Service Provider)

You want someone who is skilled and educated to work in the Centre. (Service Provider)

We can't leave out great people that will help us. Some of our biggest supporters are non-Aboriginal. (Service Provider)

Being past white I have experienced racism in my own community... I know that sometimes it is difficult to trust past white people because some of the things that have happened. We have to educate ourselves and our non-Aboriginal community. (Service Provider)

I would like to see healthy Aboriginal staff with their own healing plan... (Elders)

Sometimes I feel white people know more about the Aboriginal traditions than I do. (General)

Role models, people who have been there. (General)

Strictly Aboriginal staff working there. (General)

## QUESTION 4b) Culture

*What would make this centre more culturally friendly?*

### Summary:

- The physical space should have a relaxed atmosphere
- The ACPC should be Aboriginal in appearance with Westcoast blankets hung on the walls and art representing the Métis, First Nations and Inuit, as well as a totem pole at the entrance with crests representing justice, Aboriginal people and the VPD
- Proud and welcoming Aboriginal staff

- Because food has a way of bringing people together, the ACPC should have kitchen space to prepare food for feasts, meetings and fundraising activities
- Respect all nationalities
- The ACPC should be child and family friendly
- The ACPC should have a multipurpose and lounge area

#### Responses to Question #4b)

Hang a Westcoast blanket. (Youth)

Make sure to have plenty of coffee and a smudge bowl. (General)

Changing the name would be good. Something in the Squamish language, or use a different word for police. (Youth)

#### QUESTION 4c) Accessibility

*What ideas do you have about making the ACPC accessible?*

##### Summary:

- Confidential and discreet space
- Close to transit
- Central to the greatest population of Aboriginal people- Eastside
- Easy wheelchair and stroller access
- Accessible and free parking
- Hours of operation must be beyond traditional 9-5 services, needs after-hour service
- Programs and services must be flexible to meet the varying needs of the Aboriginal community. Targeting those most disconnected from the Aboriginal community such as those involved in the sex trade, homeless or people living in the DTES
- It should be accessible to all ages' not just youth, elders, families and adults, but everyone

- People in the DTES may not leave their area, there needs to be outreach to the DTES
- It should be in a neutral space

#### Responses to Question #4c)

If you put all the Aboriginals in one spot you ghettoize it. I hate everyone being forced to move into one spot, like the DTES. I would like to see it accessible to everyone, with the kind of slogan, you can live anywhere you want to live, and you do not have to go to the DTES. (CPC/VPD)

...Have a place where you could get information or fill out papers. Have a common-room with a little TV, so that parents can do their paper work. (Youth)

This centre needs a needle exchange and programs that relate to the women in the sex trade. We can't get rid of it, but there should be a safe place where sex workers can go and have a coffee. We can't shut them out of our community. They are our brothers and sisters... it should have counseling programs and things like that. (Youth)

Counseling is really important, people have problems big and small, just being able to talk to someone who cares about what you are saying, or is able to refer you to somewhere. (Youth)

If you get handed a pamphlet you feel like you've been shut down... (Youth)

Do not limit our resources from the VPD because it should not be 9 -5, it should be 24/7. Some people just need a place to go and sit and have a cup of coffee. Staff need to be available when an emergency like family violence happens, and a person needs to talk to a councillor or find a safe place to go...or leave and get messages. (Service Provider)

Put up a totem pole, if it looks Aboriginal then people will go in... (Service Provider)

It needs to be child and wheelchair friendly, with a play area for the children... (Service Provider)

You need private office space for service providers partnering with the ACPC and offering services. (Service Provider)

Confidential space and confidentiality in general. (VPD/CPC)

The physical, geographical space will depend on how many services will be offered. If you have meeting rooms, you can offer more, but if you have a little store front with one little room in the back, services will be limited as to what can be done at the office. Physical space is a very important component of that. (VPD/CPC)

Need security- buzz to get in. (Elders)

Access after hours, mostly for victims of crime, weekends and evenings. (Elders)

Close to other services. (Service Provider)

## Focus Group ideas about the location of the ACPC:

Broadway and Commercial. (Youth)

Hastings and Pender. (Youth)

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (Youth)  
1<sup>st</sup> and Commercial is in the middle of everything. (Youth)

Commercial and Hastings because of all the Native and low income housing in the area. (Youth)

I would disagree with having it inside the Friendship Centre, we have to have our own space and have been oppressed for like 500 years. To have them in our space, I do not feel comfortable with that, no matter how they are trying to support us and bridge gaps and stuff. I still don't feel comfortable around them. (Youth)

...We are not speaking for ourselves personally here. We are speaking for those people who need help. This should be a friendly place, that maybe you know someone that works there. And they won't make you feel like a victim, they will talk to you like a friend. Hastings and Commercial is a really good neighbourhood for this Centre, because you can hear it at night, people needing help. (Youth)

Clark and Hastings. (Service Provider)

Main Street Skytrain station. (Service Provider)

Located where those individuals who have “no go” orders can still access it. (Service Provider)

Broadway and Commercial close to the Skytrain. (VPD/CPC)

I am not happy about Commercial and Broadway, there’s too much garbage happening around there. (VPD/CPC)

Between Clark and Commercial on Hastings. (VPD/CPC)

I would like to see it located next to the Friendship Centre because of the possibility to pay less rent... (VPD/CPC)

The VAFCS is an Aboriginal place and virtually everybody knows it. The average non-Aboriginal person may have a problem with the police coming into the centre. (VPD/CPC)

The Aboriginal community is not going to be overly thrilled with the VPD walking into the Friendship Centre anytime, day or night. It is a sanctuary for Aboriginal people. I have walked in there and the look I received was not the look of love. (VPD/CPC)

## QUESTION 5- Sustainability and funding

*\$100,000 is secured in the annual budget for an Aboriginal CPC. Yet many non-profit organizations and societies struggle to access funds to operate and provide services. What ideas do you have about funding for the ACPC?*

### Summary:

- Build strong partnerships with existing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providing organizations, i.e. UBC law students
- Access ICBC loss prevention funds
- Access BC Crime prevention funds- Community Mobilization
- Access government funding
- Access funding from the National Elders Abuse Organization
- Access funding from the BC Association for Aboriginal Sport
- Access federal and provincial government grants
- Access gaming funds
- Fundraise through bake sales, yard sales, raffles, auctions, car washes, theatre performances
- Ask Tamara Bell, host of the Creative Native- a popular show aired on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, to renovate the ACPC space for one of her shows
- Hire a fundraiser and public relations person to raise additional funds
- Make a request that the preferred ACPC location be donated by the City of Vancouver
- Be innovative, but ethical- i.e. no illegal bingos
- Recruit volunteers and provide them with valuable training opportunities
- Practicum students could offer staffing alternatives
- Provide cultural training opportunities to the community and service providers as a source of revenue

## Responses to Question #5

Partner with other organizations. (Service Provider)

Elders are awesome when it comes to fundraising. (Service Provider)

This could be a good place for practicum placements... (Service Provider)

Right now there are no National Aboriginal Crime Prevention groups in Canada. They are looking for someone to take on that initiative... (Service Provider)

Stick to the idea of the medicine wheel, this way we are always strengthening our circle. This means partnering with all of the organizations, not making it exclusive. (Service Provider)

Lots of volunteer and maybe give them a few dollars for some bus tickets. (Elders)

We could call upon our home reserves, or the First Nations Summit or something like this to get support for this Centre. (Elders)

We took two students from the Native Education Centre and two constables worked with them, it worked out very well. (VPD/CPC)

Have auctions and raffles, family dances, and socials. Get the ladies together to make baskets to sell. (General)

Approach the private sector such as Telus. (General)

Get carvers involved so they can donate some pieces of their artwork that can be sold. (General)

Ask Tamara Bell from the Creative Native to do a renovation show. I think she can help. (Youth)

We do no other fundraising as it is too time consuming. (VPD/CPC)

## QUESTION 6 - Role of the VPD

*What role do you see the Vancouver City Police Department playing in the ACPC?*

### Summary:

- VPD members should be approachable when working within the ACPC or this will deter Aboriginal people from accessing the centre
- Programs should be in place for VPD members to educate and raise awareness about their roles, responsibilities and capacity to assist victims of crime going through the criminal justice process
- VPD members should address racial discrimination by charging individuals equally for crimes and not because of race
- VPD members should treat Aboriginal people fairly
- VPD members should assist with paper work and help victims of crime
- VPD members should cooperate and have clear lines of communication with ACPC staff
- The VPD and Aboriginal community must have the same goals and agree on the mandate for the ACPC
- The VPD should be visible in the community, through community outreach
- There should be a daily relationship so that passing officers stop in to say hello
- The VPD should be open to learning from the Aboriginal community, this will counter bigotry
- Current standards of cultural awareness and sensitivity training is inadequate and needs improvement for both the VPD and RCMP

## Responses to Question #6

Police should attend pow wows. (Service Provider)

The [VPD] will need support from the Aboriginal community. (General)

When police officers are walking the beat they should stop in the ACPC on a daily basis. This goes back to protocol. By showing up they are going to get the respect they need. By walking by they show disrespect and lose trust. The VPD should be involved on a daily basis. Not just the ones working in the centre but also the ones who are in the area. (Service Provider)

Dave Dickson is approachable and that is what we need for this ACPC, people in there who are down to earth... (Youth)

If they are going to be involved in the community I believe they should learn First Nations culture... (Elders)

If the police show up at family night at the Friendship Centre, Aboriginal people might say 'what the heck are they doing here.' But when people begin to see them more often that is how relationships start to build. (Youth)

Offer specialized cultural sensitivity training to them... (Elders)

Have them involved with canoe journeys, sweats and different activities. I did not like the police before, but after we did that Pulling Together canoe trip I felt different about them. (Youth)

They should come in once or twice a week in their plain clothes and eventually in their uniforms so that people can get used to the person without their uniform on. (Youth)

How about 4 officers, two in and two out in the community doing outreach, that way people can get to know 4 rather than 2 officers. (Youth)

[The ACPC needs a] policeman that's knowledgeable within the community. That person has to be comfortable, approachable and accepted within the community... (VPD/CPC)

They should have about 10 police officers and not start off with one or two...Do not limit the staffing...I do not think it will be difficult to get Aboriginal Police officers to work in this centre as long as they are not ostracized... (Service Provider)

We have one Constable who works 4 days per week out of the office. There is no coverage for holidays or courses. This is an ongoing problem. We are mostly a self-run office and rely on our staff and volunteers to provide service to the community. (VPD/CPC)

We took two students from the Native Education Centre, two Constables worked with them, it worked out very good. (VPD/CPC)

The department [VPD] executive has not been this accommodating, I have never seen such good leadership...you have got to strike while the iron is hot! (VPD/CPC)

## QUESTION 7- Governance

*What suggestions do you have about governance models for the ACPC?*

### Summary:

- Adopt a consensus based model
- Ensure the Board is healthy
- Conduct criminal record checks for i.e. domestic or sexual abuse
- Recruit Board members with fresh ideas and individuals who are not involved with a number of Boards already
- The ACPC will need strong Board members who are committed and reliable to the development of the ACPC
- The Board should be exclusively Aboriginal
- The Board must be accountable to the community
- The societies Constitution and By-laws should clearly state membership criteria, roles and responsibilities of the Board, with a clear mandate for the ACPC
- Develop a policies and procedures manual for the ACPC
- Develop an organizational chart showing the relationship between the VPD and ACPC
- The governing group should represent the general population of the area (youth, elders, men and women)

### **Responses to Question #7**

If we are open to other cultures it will work better for the community. (General)

Strictly Aboriginal... (General)

A consensus based model helps build a really good organization (General)

It would be nice to see some youth on the Board and not just token youth neither. (Service Provider)

Board members need some form of counseling under their belt and should be clean and sober (Service Provider)

This centre should not have the same group of people that sit on boards already. We need people with fresh ideas, who have never been on boards.... It should include people from many First Nations. These people need to be on a healing journey, drug and alcohol free, with a mix of men and women. (Elders)

Board members must get criminal record checks for sexual and domestic abuse... (Elders)

Screen the Board of Directors. (Elders)

Board members must be financially accountable... (Elders)

It should be exclusive to Aboriginals. How many years have people been telling us how we should be, how we should act, how we should govern ourselves. We need to step towards self-determination. We know our struggles...they do not know our stories and they do not know our history the way we do through our ancestors. I think it should be governed by consensus. If you get consensus then people can compromise, then it is effective. (Youth)

Our CPC requires that all potential Board members must have volunteered for the CPC for a minimum of three months before joining the Board: I believe our CPC is unique in this model. This ensures Board members have hands-on experience in the day-to-day running of the organization. This model may not work for other CPC's, though. (VPD/CPC)

## General Focus Group Comments and Feedback

In the beginning everyone wants everything, with the CPC you need to work within its budget as well as work and cooperate with others. (VPD/CPC)

Start little, become strong then slowly work your way up. The last thing you need to do is bite off more than you can chew. (VPD/CPC)

Elders fear standing alone at the bus stop, fear crossing the cross walk at night, and fear of going to the ATM. Those are the kinds of things that we are afraid of now. Meetings at night, it was nothing back then. Now, I ask someone to walk me to my car. I do not feel safe anymore, for my age group. But, also younger children are afraid. (Elders)

I enjoyed this and thought this was really great, our First Nations helping solve a problem with all of the community young and old. (Elders)

I really enjoyed this session but I wish this would have happened along time ago. (Elders)

I really enjoyed this and hope this will be a place where our First Nations will go. I hope that we can break that fear of the police...It starts with us, by teaching our children and our grandchildren. We can learn to trust the police even though it is very difficult. (Elders)

I appreciate everyone's calling for this. (Elders)

Keep going and manage it very well. The natives and whites have to work together. (Elders)

I would like to see the centre open and like the fact that it is unique. We are living in an area where the crime rate high. We have a right to correct the wrong feeling. It has to come from us. (Elders)

This is a good step that they are taking and I am happy we are here speaking our minds! Eventually this will be a good thing. We really got somewhere with this. It is a good idea that they are trying to do something about it finally. I am excited to see what will happen and I will believe it when I see it. (Youth)

## **Focus Group Summary:**

Participants were quick to share information about the trials and tribulations they have experienced and were more than willing to share their insight about the potential challenges the ACPC may face.

Most Aboriginal participants spoke passionately about their involvement with or perception of the Vancouver Police Department, including their personal and professional frustrations. Like all processes, it took some time for participants to appreciate why in fact they had been selected or invited to discuss the development of an Aboriginal Community Police Centre. As participants became more comfortable in their surroundings, they revealed a sense of hope and humour, and appeared to view their individual role as one of responsibility. Participants gradually began to speak much less about themselves and became more mindful to make suggestions for those that would need the centre most. All participants appeared to value the opportunity to be a part of the dialogue and solution. As discussions moved forward participants began to refer to the ACPC as a place that they would visit and/ or refer their friends, family and clients. Participants representing the VPD and CPC's are optimistic about the development of an ACPC and view their role as cooperative and complementary to the goals and objectives of the Aboriginal community.

## **Vision- Aboriginal representatives of VPD/VAC Advisory Committee**

In addition to the five formal focus groups a meeting was held November 22, 2005 with six individuals all of which represent the Vancouver Aboriginal Council, Urban Native Youth Association, Knowledgeable Aboriginal Youth Association, Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Society, the Office of the BC Child and Youth Office and Broadway Youth Resource Centre. These individuals are representative of the six Aboriginal organizations who are a part of the VAC/VPD Advisory Committee and have been actively involved with this overall process. The purpose of the meeting was to provide this group an opportunity to discuss their vision for which they perceive the Aboriginal Community Police Centre. Because participation for each of the five focus groups was limited there was no other venue for this group to provide its input through the community consultations process. Most of the feedback from this meeting runs parallel to that of the focus groups, but also emphasizes the areas of dissent amongst the Aboriginal community. The following summarizes their discussion.

### **Objective of the ACPC**

Participants view the main objective of the ACPC, its board and staff to act as a liaison and link to the city and VPD in order to improve understanding and relationships. One of its functions will be to provide education and build capacity amongst the Aboriginal community to address issues of crime and safety. This group suggested programs and services be delivered proactively, adopting a restorative justice model for mediation which will allow greater accountability by the Aboriginal community. The ACPC needs to have an open door policy, where everybody is accepted and as one participant explained, “there is a need to reach out to the transgendered and sexually exploited males in Boystown as they are often forgotten about and most disconnected

from Aboriginal services.” Participants also recognize that the ACPC will be run primarily by volunteers. It is important in their view to acknowledge volunteers through feasts, honouring ceremonies and by offering free and valuable training. In all areas make attempts to build trust in the police as there is such a lack of trust by the Aboriginal community.

### **Relationships between the Vancouver Aboriginal Community and Vancouver Police Department**

This group would like to see the VPD “plugged into the Aboriginal Community,” by being community driven, attending events such as Westcoast Night and proactively taking initiative to be more involved with the community. For example one participant would like to see the relationship move beyond the annual Pulling Together Canoe Journey. Furthermore, participants would like to see the VPD as liaisons in the community actively involved with a variety of community groups and committees, with a formal process for which issues and concerns of the community could be communicated to the VPD. Finally, participants would like to see the VPD and Vancouver Aboriginal Community adopt cooperative models when developing initiatives to address issues in the Aboriginal community.

### **ACPC space**

Participants would like the space to be accessible and inviting, with a relaxed atmosphere that is both confidential and discreet. The ACPC should be an open and big space as the other CPC’s are too small. The ACPC cannot be a tiny storefront as there needs to be space for a common room, as well as spiritual space. Participants believe there is a need to develop a space that can be utilized by the community i.e. VAC/VPD Advisory Committee and related initiatives such as the Youth Justice Working Group. This will help improve and build relationships, as the Aboriginal community will witness the VPD accessing the centre and working

together. The ACPC should have flexible hours and be open late. Participants also have a preference for 24 hour service. The physical space must be accessible to people with strollers or physical disabilities. This group also believes it is important that staff make a good first impression, especially for those most vulnerable, sceptical, or untrusting, as they will not return to the ACPC if they are not welcomed, treated poorly, or feel that they were not heard or assisted.

### **ACPC location**

Most participants preferred Broadway and Commercial as the location for the ACPC because of its proximity to transit, its accessibility and centrality to a huge Aboriginal population, also because not all Aboriginal people feel safe going to the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (VAFC). Other participants preferred Commercial and Hastings, with a separate entrance at the VAFC because as one participant explained, "Aboriginal people are leery about leaving their communities i.e. the DTES." Some participants preferred the VAFC mostly because it is centrally located between the DTES and Broadway & Commercial. One participant thought the VAFC was the worst location, while another stated that there are misconceptions about safety at the Friendship Centre which is why some parents won't allow their kids there. Participants suggested the following additional locations: Broadway and Fraser, within the new Native Youth Centre, Commercial and Venables or perhaps it will be necessary to build two ACPC's.

### **ACPC services**

- Educational- cultural awareness
- Information clinics in partnership with organizations such as the Native Courtworkers, or organizations that can provide assistance with Drugs & Alcohol support, Victim services, MCFD and child apprehension
- Youth programs such as DART to promote tagging, perhaps have a

graffiti wall outside/inside the ACPC

- Offer educational sessions from VPD- 1) arrest procedures 2) powers of arrest
- Provide a variety of workshops to inform the community about 1) their rights 2) where they can make a complaint about the VPD
- Utilize the Medicine Wheel for programming
- Secure partnerships with many Aboriginal groups
- Document everything- review service delivery, evaluate programs, host an annual community forum updating the community about the ACPC
- Implement an ACPC hotline, staffed by volunteers
- Provide a library resource centre- catalogue Aboriginal services
- Provide a recommendation/suggestion box allowing for accountability to the Aboriginal community
- The ACPC needs to be a comprehensive service delivery model

### **Staffing**

Participants believe the frontline staff should be exclusively Aboriginal, with a spiritual advisor on site as well as elder presence. Participants envision the ACPC Coordinator developing a large volunteer base of post-secondary students with a program in place to recruit practicum students. The preferred number of VPD members working within the ACPC is at minimum three. This will ensure that a member is out in the community, working in the centre and available at all times, especially when VPD members are on vacation, accessing training, or on sick leave. Without delay, participants would like to see the active recruitment and selection of Aboriginal VPD members as it is imperative that the police officer selected for the ACPC position should be working with the grassroots Aboriginal organizations today. Respondents deem it

necessary that all ACPC staff be completely healthy and walking the red road, which means leading by example, being of good moral character and essentially refraining from an excessive lifestyle (i.e. alcohol consumption, gambling, etc). The rationale for this was because clients seeking support will know and sense when they are being contradicted or assisted by hypocrites. The ACPC staff will have to build trust especially with those who have been victimized. There needs to be balanced age and gender representation within the ACPC and all staff, including volunteers need to be knowledgeable when making referrals. ACPC staff also need to be visible, outgoing, and act as a liaison between all parties especially with youth. All frontline staff and volunteers working for the ACPC must be comfortable talking and meeting with diverse members of the community including those working in the sex trade, those with addiction issues, individuals with literacy issues, young parents, elders, etc. Participants unanimously agreed that the Coordinator for the ACPC should be hired in January 2006 to ensure there is enough time to develop programs before opening the doors to the community.

### **Governance**

The Board of Directors must be representative of youth, elders, men and women. In all areas it is important to foster positive working relationships between the VPD and the Aboriginal community. The Board's primary responsibility will be to assert and represent the interests of the various Aboriginal groups. Three members suggested the possibility of partnering with another justice focused Aboriginal organization to save operating costs, and draw upon their expertise.

## Conclusion

While some participants first rejected the idea of developing an Aboriginal Community Police Centre, they later realized the potential in strengthening the current relationship between the Aboriginal community and Vancouver Police Department. Collectively the Aboriginal community (representing various age groups, life experience and capacity), as well as members of the VPD and representatives of the Community Police Centres expressed their support for the development of this centre and look forward to accessing or making referrals to it soon. Nonetheless, there are many variables to consider about the centres service delivery, staffing polices, location, hours of operation, etc, however as one participant wisely suggested, “it is important that whoever is involved in the centre does not bite off more than they can chew.”

This community consultation developed the foundation from which this centre can be built upon not only because Aboriginal people were involved in all areas but also because this initiative was developed in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department. The ACPC Steering Committee was also instrumental in providing direction and support throughout this process, with equal representation of both the Aboriginal community and Vancouver Police Department. In many ways this initiative exceeded its original objective in part because it strengthened the relationship between the Aboriginal community and members of the VPD by affording both groups the opportunity to dialogue with one another, and demonstrates the commitment and willingness of both groups to address safety and police related issues.

## APPENDIX A

### Community Consultations Project Team

**Author & Coordinator- Melanie Mark** is Nisga'a, Gitksan, Cree and Ojibway. She is 30 years old and a mother to her beautiful daughter Maya. She is a recent graduate from Simon Fraser University where she majored in Political Science and minored in Sociology. Melanie is currently the President of the Urban Native Youth Association and works on a part-time basis at Covenant House Vancouver. She is passionate about Aboriginal youth issues and is an advocate for sexually exploited youth.

#### Service Providers focus group:

**Senior Facilitator- Blair Harvey** is Métis and has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Manitoba where he completed his graduate studies in Sociology. Blair is currently the Executive Director of the Vancouver Aboriginal Council and has formally been amongst other titles a Social Worker, Community Development officer, Band Management trainer and Friendship Centre Executive Director.

**Co-facilitator- Sarah John** is 21 years old and is currently in her fourth year of study at Simon Fraser University, majoring in Sociology. She is a Yinka Dene woman of the Carrier Nation belonging to the Lusilyoo (Frog) clan. She is strongly influenced and determined to carry on the teachings of her late grandmother and grandfather. She is very proud of her heritage and culture. She is passionate for First Nations women contemporary roles and also policies structured around First Nations issues.

#### General Aboriginal Community focus group:

**Senior Facilitator- Dr. Richard Vedan**, Shuswap Nation, Director of the First Nation House of Learning has been an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work since 1995. Active with professional bodies and Aboriginal agencies, he has served on the Boards of the Vancouver Friendship Centre, the Native Education Centre, and the Native Liaison Police Society. In most recent research he examined multi-generational traumatic stress disorder, violent behaviour in First Nations men and youth, and benefits of traditional healing practices.

**Co-facilitator- Stephanie Ward**, Spuxta' is twenty-five years old and has lived in Vancouver all her life, though her family is from Bella Coola, BC. She has two children, Chanel and Jaden. She has volunteered for youth organizations for the last five years for organizations such as the Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Healing or Spirit, the Urban Native Youth Association, Warriors Against Violence and Youth Co. She is on the Board of Directors for Healing our Spirit and Youth Co. She loves volunteering for youth because they are our future. Her dream is for many strong Aboriginal leaders in our community.

#### Elder's focus group

**Senior Facilitator- Susan Tatoosh** is a member of the Hupacaseth First Nation of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Territory. She is an elder and has been actively involved in community volunteer work for the past 35 years both in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Most recently, she received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for her volunteer contributions. She is presently retired from the Federal Public Service and is a proud mother of three children, Charles, Teresa and John Rush, and four grandchildren.

***Co-facilitator- Dan Jorgensen*** is 28 years old and from the Nisga'a Nation. He is a recent graduate from Capilano College where he obtained a BBA- Bachelor of Business Administration. Dan is currently on the Board of Directors for the Urban Native Youth Association and is the Assistant Director for the popular APTN series *Creative Native*.

#### **Youth focus group**

***Senior Facilitator- Karen Osachoff, Obey-Piapot*** is 26 years old and is Cree, Sioux and Salteaux from Saskatchewan. She moved to Vancouver to pursue her education. She began her studies at the Native Education Centre in the Criminal Justice program and received a Criminology diploma and Associate of Arts degree from Douglas College in 2003. She graduated from Simon Fraser University in 2005 with a BA in Criminology and First Nations Studies. Her future goals are to attend UBC law school in the fall of 2006.

***Co-facilitator- Sarah Lavalle*** is 18 years old and is actively involved with the Broadway Youth Resource Centre youth group as well as the Urban Native Youth Association.

#### **Focus group transcriber**

***Transcriber- June Clearsky*** is Anishinabe from Manitoba and has lived in BC for the past twenty years. She has two children, Elissa and Theo and one grandson. She graduated with an Associate of Arts Degree from the Institute of indigenous Governance in 2000 and currently works as the Assistant Project Manager for the Greater Vancouver Urban Aboriginal Strategy. June is currently the President of the Board of Directors for the Aboriginal Mother's Centre.

**APPENDIX B**  
**FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

	<b>Service Providers</b>	<b>General Aboriginal Community</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Elders</b>	<b>VPD &amp; CPC's</b>
<b>1</b>	Arthur Paul, Native Courtworkers	Abbie Eagle Speaker	Jerilynn Webster	Bernice Touchie	Christina Taula, CPC
<b>2</b>	Flo Ranville, Helping Spirit Lodge Society	Darlene Obichon	Jo-anne C. Davis	Edith Anderson	Cst. Dave Dickson, VPD
<b>3</b>	Julie M. Green, Board of Directors- Ray Cam Community Centre	Debbie Lincoln	Jolene Sampare	Gwen Nelson	Sgt. Jim Patenaude, VPD
<b>4</b>	Danièle Hurley, Prostitution Education Empowerment Resource Society (PEERS)	Janette Price	Nicole Ermineskin	John Alden	Michelle Ziebart, CPC
<b>5</b>	Dixie Lee Vance, Young Bears, Urban Native Youth Association & Carnegie Centre	Jerry Adams	Rebecca B. Palmer	Peter Jaenicke	Cst. Mike Matheson, VPD
<b>6</b>	Jason Burnstick, Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Society	Lola Eagle Speaker	Samantha Davis	Sally Holland	Ronald Ransom, CPC
<b>7</b>	Lou Démerais, Vancouver Aboriginal Council & Vancouver Native Health	Pearl Bequette		Sunni Hunt	
<b>8</b>	Aileen LaFlam, Aboriginal Front Door Society	Telisha Price		Ted Cooper	
<b>9</b>		Thomas Murdock			
<b>10</b>		Yvonne Mark			

**\*Not all participants' names are listed  
for confidentiality purposes or because consent forms were not signed**

## APPENDIX C

### Aboriginal Community Police Centre- Community Consultation Questionnaire

Consultation: Youth  Elders  Service providers  General

1. Gender: Male  Female  Two-Spirited
2. Do you identify as being Aboriginal  Métis  Inuit  Other
- 2b. To which nation do you belong? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What area of Vancouver do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you access Aboriginal services in Vancouver? YES  NO
- 5b. If YES, what types of services?
  - A) Social service
  - B) Criminal Justice
  - C) Age specific (child, youth, adult, elder)
  - D) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  - E) Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5c. If YES, how often? Daily  weekly  monthly
6. Are you aware of the Vancouver City Police Departments Community Policing Centres?  
YES  NO
- 6b. If YES, have you ever accessed one and what services did you use?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Please rate the importance of the Aboriginal community developing an Aboriginal Community Police Centre?  
  
Not important 1  2  3  4  5  Very important
8. What services would you like to see provided in an Aboriginal Community Police Centre?
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Please rank in order of 1, 2, and 3, which statements apply to you the most.  
*If an Aboriginal Community Police Centre existed...*

- I would use it to refer family members and loved ones.
- I would use it to refer my friends.
- I would use it to refer my clients.

10. In your opinion where is the best location for an Aboriginal Community Police Centre?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. In your opinion where is the worst location for an Aboriginal Community Police Centre?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. In your opinion how many days of the week would you like to see the Aboriginal Community Policing Centre open? *Please select only one.*

- 1     2     3     4     5     6     7

13. In your opinion what days of the week would you like to see the Aboriginal Community Policing Centre open?

\_\_\_\_\_

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14. What hours of operation would you like to see the Aboriginal Community Police Centre open? *Please select only one.*

- A. 4 hours a day
- B. 8 hours a day
- C. 12 hours a day

14b). Please choose your preference for the following 3 options:

A) 10:00am-2:00pm     OR    B) 3:00pm-7:00pm

A) 8:00am-4:00pm  OR    B) 1:00pm- 9:00pm

A) 9:00am-9:00pm  OR    B) 12:00pm-midnight

15. Overall do you think that an Aboriginal Community Police Centre could increase the safety of Aboriginal people? YES  NO

Comments/ suggestions:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Initials or Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_