



SWOT / Community Focus Group

Taber Police Service

2017

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INTRODUCTION

On November 6th and 7th, 2017 the Taber Police Service hosted a 2 day Community Focus Group. The purpose of this focus group was to provide a safe and secure platform to allow for members of Taber's groups of diversity to share their opinions concerning policing service provided to their particular community from the Taber Police Service. Those who were invited to participate in these first focus groups were members of Taber's Equality Alliance, the Filipino Society of Taber, the Low German speaking community and members of Taber's FNMI community.

FOCUS GROUP

Day 1:

The focus group attendees were involved in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threats) analysis with the following question in mind:

How can the Taber Police Service better serve within your community?

The attendees conducted the SWOT analysis with members of their own identified community. These groups participated in conversations about the above question and scribed their responses. Following the brainstorming sessions, the groups reconvened and the scribes presented their group's responses to all of those in attendance. These responses were then discussed to ensure that the context of the responses were accurately described by the scribes.

The responses collected from the groups were categorized and summarized into separate themes. These summarized responses from the SWOT analysis were placed into a PowerPoint that was later presented to the attendees on Day 2.

Day 2:

The SWOT responses were presented back to the attendees in a summarized PowerPoint. The responses were discussed in detail seeking validation from the group. During these conversations, where applicable, an explanation of TPS policies and practices were shared to clarify any policing shortcomings that were not known to the group as being inaccurate.

The communication in the room was candid and respectful. The groups in attendance voiced their responses in a thoughtful and effective manner that resulted in calm and careful approach to the sensitive topics that were being discussed. The attendees welcomed, and encouraged, the perspectives, opinions and personal experiences of others in attendance.

RESPONSES

The responses provided by the groups were analyzed and compiled into thematic categories. The responses were broken down to determine if they were general policing concerns, or specific concerns concerning the Taber Police Service. The purpose of the evaluation was not to minimize or downplay the concerns that were identified, but instead the purpose was to ensure that the answers to be considered were on topic concerning the question posed to the group, and specific to the Taber Police Service.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths: These are attributes that the Taber Police Service possess that are helpful in achieving our mission statement.

Group Responses for Strengths:

- Visible Presence within the community.
- Members attend and participate in community events.
- Members treat people with respect and fairness regardless of background.
- Proactive in breaking down barriers.
- Welcoming regarding concerns of community.
- Willingness to understand diverse community groups.
- Members desire to do what's right.
- Members show kindness and compassion to all.

Based on these responses, they believe that the Taber Police Service, overall, is involved and visible within the community. They also believe that the police treat all citizens with respect, compassion, kindness, and fairness regardless of what community groups they are a part of.

Weaknesses: These are attributes that the Taber Police Service have that are considered weaknesses in achieving our mission statement.

Group Responses for Weaknesses:

- Members are not present within community diversity group events or churches.
- Lacking of current and ongoing police training concerning; personal bias and stereotyping, cultural sensitivity, and diversity awareness.
- Lack of taking a stance to break down Taber's community reputation to diversity groups.

- Lack of public knowledge regarding police training regarding diversity issues.
- Lack of collaborative work involving the hierarchy of the various diversity groups.
- Lack of capacity to deal with larger public issues involving sensitive issues of diversity.
- Lack of visible diversity.

Based on these responses, the overall belief is that the Taber Police Service could do more to support diversity groups. They pointed out that the police service lacks visible diversity and up-to-date training in the areas of personal biases, stereotyping, cultural diversity sensitivity and diversity awareness. These groups were concerned that the police may carry the weight of the majority population's view of diversity groups.

Opportunities: These are the internal or external opportunities that may be helpful to the Taber Police Service in being able to achieve their mission statement.

Group Responses for Opportunities:

- Mandatory cultural diversity training that is up to date and current and focuses on the various groups of Taber.
- Mandatory training concerning anti-bias, anti-oppression and anti-discrimination.
- Build alliances with diversity groups to promote inclusion.
- Ensure that policy concerning discrimination is up-to-date regarding various diversity groups.

- Create partnerships with Taber's various diversity groups and meet regularly with these groups to share specific community group concerns.
- Increase social network presence.
- Create up-to-date forms that contain current terminology (They/Them/Him/Her/Other).
- Increased SRO involvement with diversity groups within the schools.

Based on these responses, they believe that the Taber Police Service has the opportunity to address shortcomings by implementing modernized training in the areas of cultural diversity, anti-discrimination, and biased free policing. They also believe that ensuring TPS policies and forms reflect current terminology and practices is a must. They identified that TPS has the chance to grasp the opportunity to become more involved in diversity community groups and events to show our interest in supporting these often invisible groups.

Threats: These are external circumstances/threats that could negatively reflect on the service that we strive to achieve in our mission statement.

Group Responses for Threats:

- Increasing cost of policing and cuts in government funding.
- Staffing concerns (unable to maintain service strength and numbers).
- Poor perception and lack of trust of police by diversity groups.
- Increasing public demands of police including accountability.
- Lack of an awareness of diversity group concerns.
- Lack of public apathy towards diversity groups.

- Taber's population increasing right-wing views and pressure on police to appease and represent these majority views of community.
- Resistant to change.

Based on the responses provided by the diversity groups in attendance, they believe that the Taber Police Service currently faces threats regarding the ever increasing cost of policing at the level that it is currently demanded by the public. Their belief is that this factors will negatively impact Taber Police Service's ability to provide a progressive and effective police service that is able to keep up with the public demands of police. They identified that the lack of diversity observed within the Taber Police Service negatively impacts our ability to breakdown the negative public perception of police in the eyes of the public. These groups identified that the right-wing views shared by the majority of the population of Taber concerning diversity groups is an increasing threat to the police to address issues concerning diversity issues.

SUMMARY

In summary, this community focus group was well received by the attendees. Those in attendance were appreciative to have had an opportunity to voice their opinions openly and freely, in a safe environment, where they were encouraged to be honest and candid on behalf of their community's ideas and concerns. The information that was provided will assist us in identifying areas that may require attention to ensure that we are providing a service that is progressive and on the pulse of our community. The collection of the information obtained by these groups allows us to reflect and evaluate our

direction, and service delivery, to ensure that we are performing at a level that fairly and effectively meets the needs and rights of all Taber citizens regardless of their background.

ACTION ITEMS

After considering the SWOT analysis responses provided during the focus groups, the following recommendations are made to address the expressed concerns:

- 1) To address the concern of TPS members lacking in areas of diversity training and awareness, as well as TPS members' involvement with the various diversity groups of Taber, I suggest that every TPS member obtain up-to-date training in these areas.
- 2) Appointing a TPS member as a specified Diversity Officer would be consistent with similar appointments in other Alberta police agencies. The Diversity Officer will be selected based on their interest and actions displayed in areas of compassion and willingness to inform and educate themselves regarding the various cultural communities of Taber. The chosen officer for this role will receive specialized diversity and biased-free policing training to ensure that they will possess the knowledge and skillset to complement this position. The Diversity Officer's responsibilities will include, but not be limited to: building and fostering relationships with members of all Taber community groups including groups of diversity beyond that of regular interactions by other TPS members, act as the face of diversity awareness within TPS, act as an informed reference guide for the other TPS members to be used concerning sensitive diversity issues where required.

- 3) An evaluation should be conducted of TPS policies and procedures to ensure that they are up to date and current in the areas of gender and cultural diversity as well as biased-free policing. If areas of TPS policy and procedure are identified as lacking in these areas, corrections should be made immediately to ensure that the community of Taber, and its groups of diversity, are treated in a fair and equitable manner.
- 4) A review should be conducted of the complete library of TPS forms and documents to ensure that they reflect proper gender and sexual references that relate to all individuals.
- 5) TPS will continue to participate in community activities and interact with all of the community groups of Taber including groups of diversity. We are proud that the Town of Taber is home to several different groups of diversity, and this should be celebrated at every opportunity. TPS involvement with all community groups will be increasingly shared through social media to allow for the community to be informed of these efforts.

COSTS OF PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATIONS

Implementing these proposed actions will required time and a budget. The following is the estimated breakdown of the costs associated to the above recommendations. It is believed that these recommendations can be implemented between 2018 - 2020. These recommendations would address the current public demands and concerns expressed during the community focus groups.

General Member Training:

- Basic training that will be provided to every TPS member will be supplied by the Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) and the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN).
 - The training provided by LPS is free of costs. LPS training will address areas of diversity policing as they relate to the LGBTQ community as well as the Indigenous communities of Southern Alberta.
 - The training supplied by CPKN is an online-based training that will encompass two separate courses:
 - Aboriginal and First Nations Awareness (\$25/member);
 - LGBT Issues (\$25/member).

Diversity Officer Implementation and Specialized Training:

- Assigning a member the role of the TPS Diversity Officer will require specialized, in-depth training in the areas of diversity and policing without biases. Calgary Police Service (CPS) offers in-depth diversity training including the following courses:
 - CPS Diversity Level II Course (estimated cost \$500);
 - CPS Hate Hurts Course (estimated cost \$300);
 - Travel and accommodations for this training (\$2000).

TPS Policy Review:

- The TPS Executive Officer will conduct an evaluation of TPS policy to ensure that the policies and procedures reflect up-to-date policing policies in the areas diversity and policing without biases. This evaluation will require no costs.

Review of the TPS forms and Library:

- The TPS Executive Officer will conduct a review, and replacing TPS forms and documents that do not reflect up-to-date gender and sexual identity references. This task will require no additional costs beyond that of the annual allotted TPS stationary budget.

Total costs to implement these strategies:

- Basic training costs for 15 TPS members to receive LPS and CPKN online training is \$750 (15 members x \$50). This is a one-time fee for each member.
- Specialized training costs for the Diversity Officer is estimated to be \$3,000. This course is a one-time fee for each member assigned as the TPS Diversity Officer.