



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Use of Body Worn Cameras by Law Enforcement Agencies:
Community Consultation

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Service Board

Report Date: 2025-04-08

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board receive this report for information and direct the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) to implement the Body-Worn Cameras Program as part of the 2026 Capital and Operating budget.

Key Facts

- On January 23, 2025, the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) presented to the Police Service Board an update on the use of Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) by police services in Ontario and in Canada.
- The Police Service Board approved and directed the NRPS to undertake community consultation to inform the public and NRPS' members about the proposed BWC program and collect feedback on their opinions about the proposal.
- A community consultation was conducted from March 7 to April 4, 2025, inclusive of multiple locations and reaching groups and representatives of groups across the Niagara Region.
- The community consultation reached a total of 2,780 participants across the Niagara Region, inclusive of NRPS' members.

Financial Considerations

Should the Board approve the recommendation, then the Service will include the capital and operating costs in 2026. Preliminary costs associated with capital infrastructure are estimated at \$1,200,000.00 and for operating costs estimated to be \$2,284,187.00 per annum.

The costs for both capital and operating will be evaluated during the budget process and adjusted accordingly.

Analysis

On January 23, 2025, the NRPS presented to the Police Service Board an update on the use of BWC by police services in Ontario and in Canada. The report included an extensive analysis of pilot projects, evaluations of BWC implementations by other police

services, and peer-reviewed literature and a proposal to undertake a community consultation, inclusive of NRPS' members, to inform the public about the proposed program and identify the community sentiments, gather feedback on the proposal, and understand potential challenges and opportunities that could inform a future implementation of the program. The recommended proposal to conduct a community consultation was discussed and approved. The PSB resolution was: *"That the Niagara Regional Police Service Board approve the recommendations as set out in the report for consideration of the implementation and deployment of Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) in 2026."*

As a result, the NRPS in collaboration with the Police Service Board designed and conducted an extensive community consultation to gather information about community sentiments, inclusive of NRPS staff members on the proposed BWC Program. The consultation was conducted from March 7 to April 4, 2025. For this consultation, the Service engaged with multiple partners, such as academics, community members, staff members, technology vendors, and other police services across the Province and Canada to inform and develop the consultation.

The objective of the community consultation was to inform the public about the proposed program and identify the community sentiments, gather feedback on the proposal, and understand potential challenges and opportunities that could inform a future implementation of the program

Methodology

The community consultation was developed and informed by similar community consultations, such as the one conducted by the RCMP and NRPS engaged with academics to learn from best practices to engage and reach the maximum possible number of participants.

The community consultation involved two presentations with community members, six in-person events with two sessions each (i.e., morning and evening) in different locations across the Niagara Region, a dedicated email address, (bodyworncameras@niagarapolice.ca), and a website (<https://www.niagarapolice.ca/en/community/body-worn-cameras.aspx>), including information about the open and public sessions of the community engagement, evidence-based facts and frequently asked questions.

Based on relevant research and common questions reported by other police services we developed four key themes (i.e., stations) for people to read, including key facts and additional information. These key themes were: 1. Transparency and Accountability; 2. Community Trust and Engagement; 3. Privacy and Data Protection; and 4. Public and Officer Safety.

A table presenting the total number of participants by event is presented below:

Table 1. Participants community consultation

Activity	Participants	Dates
Chief of Police Inclusion Council (Presentation)	21	Monday, February 24, 2025
World Café with Community Leaders (Facilitated session)	26	Monday, March 24, 2025
Pen Centre, 221 Glendale Avenue, St. Catharines (Open House)	286	Tuesday, March 18, 2025
Seaway Mall, 800 Niagara Street, Welland (Open House)	178	Friday, March 21, 2025
Gale Centre Arena, 5152 Thorold Stone Road, Niagara Falls (Open House)	137	Friday, March 28, 2025
Vale Health and Wellness Centre, 550 Elizabeth Street, Port Colborne (Open House)	347	Monday, March 31, 2025
Fleming Centre, 5020 Serena Drive, Beamsville (Open House)	176	Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Leisureplex Atrium: 3 Municipal Centre Drive, Fort Erie (Open House)	110	Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Total	1,281	

In addition, from March 7 to April 4, 2025, we conducted two online surveys (i.e., one for community and one for NRPS' members). A total of 1,499 participants accessed the survey and 1,329 participants completed the entire survey, that is an 89% completion rate. A total of 1,188 thoughts (e.g., ideas, suggestions, concerns, opportunities) were shared by participants. Participants had the opportunity to learn about other participants' thoughts and ideas, and were able to rate them using a scale from 1 to 5 stars, where one meant less agreement and 5 meant higher agreement with the thought or idea shared by other participant, a total of 22,195 rates were produced by participants.

A detailed description of the results of the community consultation sessions (i.e., in person) and online survey is presented in the results sections of this report.

Table 2. Online Survey Participants

Survey	Total participants	Total surveys completed	Thoughts shared by participants	Completion rate
NRPS Members	334	289	290	87%
General public	1165	1040	898	89%
Totals	1499	1329	1188	89%

Instruments

The NRPS' members survey was organized into three main sections—demographic questions, general impressions and expectations, and implementation and training needs—with the objective of informing the strategic direction of the BWC program through the candid input of NRPS members.

As well, the Community survey was divided into three sections: the first gathered demographic information, including participants' age, gender, ethnicity, and other background details; the second explored participants' perceptions of body-worn cameras, focusing on trust, accountability, safety, and privacy concerns; and the third sought opinions on the police, specifically regarding their performance, responsiveness, and the community's comfort with police interactions.

In both cases, prior to starting the survey, participants were informed about the privacy of their responses and the use of their information, and they began the survey only after reading and agreeing to the consent statement.

Participant Profile

• NRPS – Members

The participant profile summary reveals that most respondents were frontline officers (66%), followed by civilian staff (16%), and senior police officers (4%), with 14% identifying as "other", including specialty units. In terms of years of employment, 41% had been with the Service for more than 15 years, while 24% had 1–5 years of service. The largest group by department or unit was from Police District Operations (58%), with smaller percentages from Police Operational Support (20%), and other departments. Additionally, responses to grouped categories, such as expectations regarding body-worn cameras, primary concerns, and training needs, showed significant variation, with "other" responses reflecting 11%, 15%, and 5% respectively. It's important to note that participants had the option to skip questions, which may explain slight variations in the total counts.

Table 3. Participant Profile - NRPS' members survey

Category	Option	Count	Percentage
Role	Frontline Officer	182	66%
	Civilian Staff	43	16%

	Senior Police Officer (e.g., Inspector and above)	11	4%
	Other (e.g., administrative support, specialized units, training)	40	14%
Years of employment	More than 15 years	119	41%
	1–5 years	68	24%
	6–10 years	49	17%
	11–15 years	41	14%
	Less than 1 year	12	4%
Department or unit	Police District Operations	150	58%
	Police Operational Support	52	20%
	Police Emergency Investigative Services	16	6%
	Police Executive Services	10	4%
	Senior Executive Group	8	3%
	Corporate Services	3	1%
	Police Technology Services	2	1%
	Other	17	7%

• Community Members

The participant profile for this survey reveals diverse demographics. Most respondents identified as White (81%), with smaller percentages representing South Asian (3%), Black (3%), and other ethnic groups.¹ A significant portion (87%) identified as not part of the Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and all other sexual orientations and genders (2SLGBTQQA+) community.

In terms of geography, St. Catharines had the highest participation rate (34%), followed by Niagara Falls (24%) and Welland (20%). Most participants were female (56%), with a substantial portion also identifying as male (40%). The age distribution was even, with 23% aged 25–34 years, and 15% in the 55–64 years range. English was the predominant language spoken at home (96%), with small percentages speaking other languages such as Spanish and French.

Regarding participants who self-identified as having a disability, 83% of participants reported no disabilities, while 13% indicated they had one. The data highlights a broad range of identities, roles, and backgrounds, reflecting the diversity within the community participants.

¹ Our survey results were inclusive and closely aligned with the ethnic composition of the Niagara Region, as reported in the 2021 Census. The distribution of respondents generally reflected the region's population, demonstrating strong representativeness. For example, 81% of our survey respondents identified as White, compared to 83.74% in the census. South Asian (3%), Middle Eastern (1%), Latin American (2%), and Black (3%) communities were represented in proportions that closely matched or slightly exceeded their census figures of 2.95%, 0.98%, 1.5%, and 2.83%, respectively. Notably, Indigenous respondents made up 5% of our sample, compared to 3% in the census, indicating a higher level of participation from this group. Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released November 15, 2023. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>.

Table 4. Participant Profile - Community members survey

Category	Option	Count	Percentage
Race and ethnicity	White	784	81%
	Prefer not to answer	45	5%
	South Asian	33	3%
	Other (e.g., mixed or multiple ethnicities; Caribbean, Central Asian)	33	3%
	Black	32	3%
	Latin American	23	2%
	First Nations (status)	18	2%
	First Nations (non-status)	18	2%
	Métis	16	2%
	Arab	14	1%
	Indigenous (group unknown)	12	1%
	Southeast Asian	12	1%
	Filipino	10	1%
	West Asian	8	1%
	Unknown or unable to self-identify	7	1%
	Chinese	5	1%
	Japanese	4	0%
	Korean	4	0%
	Inuit	3	0%
2SLGBTQQIA+ Community Identification	No	850	87%
	Yes	84	9%
	Prefer not to answer	41	4%
Municipality	St. Catharines	331	34%
	Niagara Falls	239	24%
	Welland	197	20%
	Port Colborne	117	12%
	Fort Erie	102	10%
	Lincoln	88	9%
	Thorold	88	9%
	Pelham	63	6%
	Niagara-on-the-Lake	49	5%
	Grimsby	46	5%
	West Lincoln	34	3%
	Wainfleet	25	3%

	Other (e.g., smaller towns or rural areas within the region or municipalities outside the Region)	19	2%
	Prefer not to answer	16	2%
Gender	Female	553	56%
	Male	397	40%
	Prefer not to answer	28	3%
	Other	3	0%
Age group	25 - 34 years	228	23%
	35 - 44 years	173	18%
	55 - 64 years	145	15%
	65 - 74 years	124	13%
	45 - 54 years	116	12%
	15 to 24 years	115	12%
	75 years and over	54	6%
	Prefer not to answer	21	2%
Language spoken at home	English	942	96%
	Other (e.g., Spanish, German, Italian, Punjabi)	18	2%
	French	10	1%
	Prefer not to answer	9	1%
Disability identification	No	805	83%
	Yes	127	13%
	Prefer not to answer	31	3%
	Don't know	11	1%

Key Themes and Findings

1) Community consultation with leaders - World Café with Community Leaders (Facilitated session), held on March 24, 2025, 09:00 - 10:30 am

As part of the community consultation on the proposed BWC program, community leaders were consulted to gather input on potential challenges, opportunities, and solutions. Overall, there was support for the implementation of BWC, contingent on a transparent, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approach. Key concerns included privacy, community mistrust, costs, and inconsistent usage policies. Opportunities identified included enhanced transparency, improved safety, stronger community relations, and increased operational efficiency. Community leaders emphasized the importance of involving diverse stakeholders in policy development, providing robust training and communication strategies, and considering a phased or pilot-based rollout. If the proposal is approved by the PSB, the Community consultation with leaders' input

(Appendix 1) will be instrumental in shaping a BWC implementation strategy that reflects community needs and values.

2) Survey results

• NRPS – Members

As reported in table 5, the survey results reflect a generally positive and thoughtful outlook toward the use of body-worn cameras among members of the NRPS. Most respondents recognize the value of these devices, particularly in enhancing evidence collection (72%) and promoting transparency and accountability (58%). There is also strong agreement that body-worn cameras could influence officer discretion (68% agree or strongly agree) and support daily policing duties (42% agree or strongly agree). While some concerns were raised—particularly regarding privacy, potential discipline, and workload, these are balanced by a clear interest in proper implementation, as evidenced by the high demand for legal, technical, and scenario-based training (over 80% in most categories). Overall, the findings suggest a readiness to adopt body-worn cameras, with a focus on ensuring proper support, training, and policy development to maximize their positive impact on policing and community trust.

Table 5. Attitudes and Perceptions of Body-Worn Cameras

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I support the introduction of body-worn cameras in our police service	56 (19%)	43 (15%)	40 (14%)	101 (34%)	55 (19%)
I believe body-worn cameras will be easy to use	50 (17%)	59 (20%)	69 (23%)	86 (29%)	31 (11%)
I believe body-worn cameras will have a positive impact on my daily policing duties	54 (18%)	56 (19%)	60 (20%)	89 (30%)	36 (12%)
I believe body-worn cameras will enhance my ability to gather evidence for investigations	30 (10%)	29 (10%)	51 (17%)	126 (43%)	59 (20%)
I believe body-worn cameras will influence officer discretion in handling situations	27 (9%)	29 (10%)	40 (14%)	117 (40%)	82 (28%)

I am confident that policies and procedures around body-worn cameras will be clear and practical	74 (25%)	69 (23%)	74 (25%)	64 (22%)	14 (5%)
I believe the presence of body-worn cameras will positively affect how the public interacts with officers	61 (21%)	75 (25%)	48 (16%)	79 (27%)	32 (11%)

As reported in table 6, when it comes to expectations, participants highlighted the potential of BWC to improve evidence collection (72%), enhance transparency (58%), and reduce complaints (57%). Key concerns centered around privacy (73%), potential disciplinary actions (68%), and added workload (68%). Nearly all respondents emphasized the need for training and support before implementation, particularly in legal and policy guidance (91%), reviewing footage (86%), and technical operation of the cameras (83%).

Table 6. Expectations, Concerns, and Training Needs Related to Body-Worn Cameras

Category	Response	Count (%)
Expectations from Body-Worn Cameras	Improve evidence collection	196 (72%)
	Enhance transparency and accountability	157 (58%)
	Reduce complaints against officers	154 (57%)
	Improve officer safety	121 (44%)
	Increase public trust	118 (43%)
	Reduce administrative tasks	53 (19%)
	Other (e.g., improve training, aiding internal reviews, and supporting community outreach)	31 (11%)
Primary concerns	Privacy concerns	212 (73%)
	Increased scrutiny and potential discipline	196 (68%)
	Additional workload	196 (68%)
	Operational challenges	170 (59%)
	Other (e.g., data security, morale, and legal implications of footage use)	42 (15%)
	No concerns	14 (5%)
Training and support needs	Legal and policy training	250 (91%)

	Guidelines on reviewing and using footage	237 (86%)
	Technical training on using the cameras	229 (83%)
	Scenario-based training	181 (66%)
	Other (e.g., ethical guidance, community relations workshops)	15 (5%)
	No additional training needed	2 (1%)

Ideas and thoughts shared by NRPS members

In total we received 290 thoughts by NRPS members. The responses to the implementation of body-worn cameras at NRPS reveal a mix of support and concern. Supporters highlight benefits such as increased transparency, accountability, and evidence collection, which could enhance public trust and officer safety. However, many expressed concerns about privacy, the potential for increased scrutiny and discipline, the impact on officer morale, and the financial burden. They are also worried about the practical aspects of managing and vetting footage, the potential hindrance to proactive policing, and the overall effectiveness of the cameras in improving public perception and trust.

Supporters of BWC believe they will enhance transparency, accountability, and public trust. They argued that BWC will provide clear evidence in disputes, reduce frivolous complaints, and improve interactions between officers and the public. Supporters also referred to BWC as a tool for protecting officers from false allegations and enhancing the judicial process.

Opponents of BWC expressed concerns about privacy, increased scrutiny, and the potential negative impact on officer morale and proactive policing. They worried that BWC will lead to micromanagement, hinder officers' discretion, and add to their workload. Critics also highlighted the high costs and logistical challenges associated with implementing and managing BWC footage.

Both supporters and opponents of BWC agree on the importance of proper training for officers. They believe that comprehensive training on the use of BWC is crucial to ensure that officers understand when and how to use the cameras effectively. Proper training can help mitigate concerns about misuse, privacy, and the additional workload associated with BWC. Feedback provided by members will inform a plan and implementation of the program in case of approval.

• Community Members

As shown in Table 7, responses about the perception of police and community interaction indicate a generally positive view of NRPS. Only a small percentage (15%) expressed dissatisfaction with police performance. Regarding the police addressing community concerns, 56% agree or strongly agreed that police are dealing with important issues. On response times, only 20% disagreed that officers respond quickly

to calls for assistance, and the majority agreed or strongly agreed that police response times are adequate (57%). Most respondents (78%) feel comfortable calling the police for help, with only 13% disagreeing, showing a strong sense of trust and accessibility.

Table 7. Perceptions of police

Question / Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe the police in my area are doing a good job	54 (5%)	105 (10%)	195 (19%)	403 (39%)	264 (26%)
I feel that police officers in my community address the issues that matter most to residents	68 (7%)	138 (14%)	236 (23%)	378 (37%)	195 (19%)
I believe that police officers respond quickly to calls for assistance	65 (6%)	138 (14%)	234 (23%)	379 (38%)	192 (19%)
I feel comfortable calling the police if I need help	51 (5%)	83 (8%)	94 (9%)	313 (31%)	480 (47%)

Perception of Body-Worn Cameras

Support for body-worn cameras is largely positive. 82% believe or strongly believe cameras would increase trust in NRPS officers. About 90% strongly feel cameras would improve officer transparency. In terms of accountability, 89% strongly agree cameras would help. Regarding safety, 73% of participants believe they will feel safer around officers wearing cameras. Additionally, 62% think cameras will reduce the use of force incidents. Finally, 76% of participants believe cameras would improve officer-community relations. Only 10% of participants believe that BWC are an invasion to personal or community privacy.

Table 8. Perceptions of Body-Worn Cameras

Question / Response	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I believe that BWC cameras will increase my trust in NRPS officers	44 (4%)	29 (3%)	103 (10%)	282 (29%)	526 (53%)
I believe that BWC will help NRPS officers be more transparent	40 (4%)	21 (2%)	39 (4%)	291 (30%)	595 (60%)
I believe that BWC will increase NRPS officers' accountability	42 (4%)	20 (2%)	49 (5%)	246 (25%)	622 (64%)

I will feel safer when interacting with NRPS officers who wear BWC	50 (5%)	35 (4%)	183 (19%)	225 (23%)	494 (50%)
I believe that BWC will reduce the use of force by NRPS officers	51 (5%)	60 (6%)	266 (27%)	238 (24%)	369 (38%)
I believe that BWC will improve the relationship between NRPS officers and my community	50 (5%)	38 (4%)	150 (15%)	308 (31%)	438 (45%)
I believe that body-worn cameras are an invasion of personal and/or community privacy	486 (49%)	314 (32%)	82 (8%)	44 (4%)	63 (6%)
I have cultural, religious, or spiritual concerns about the use of body-worn cameras in my community	629 (64%)	207 (21%)	79 (8%)	16 (2%)	47 (5%)

In terms of demographics, most respondents (481, 49%) reported not interacting with an NRPS officer in the past year, while 48% (469) have had such interactions. A small number (33, 3%) preferred not to answer or did not know.

Ideas and thoughts shared by community members

The responses to the proposed initiative for implementing BWC at NRPS highlight several key themes. Many respondents support the initiative, emphasizing the importance of accountability, transparency, and protection for both officers and the public. They believe body cameras can reduce false accusations, improve trust, and provide clear evidence in disputes. Some express concerns about privacy, the cost to taxpayers, and the potential for officers to manipulate footage. Questions about data security, footage retention, and the impact on police behavior are also raised. Overall, there is a strong call for the timely implementation of body-worn cameras to enhance policing practices.

Many respondents believe that BWC are essential for ensuring accountability and transparency for both police officers and the public. They argue that BWC protect officers from false accusations, provide clear evidence in disputes, and help maintain public trust. Supporters also emphasize that BWC can deter misconduct, improve police-community relations, and enhance overall safety.

Some respondents expressed concerns about the implementation of body-worn cameras, citing issues such as privacy invasion, the potential for footage to be misused or leaked, and the high costs associated with the program. They worry that BWC might make officers less personable and could lead to a surveillance state. Additionally, there

are concerns about whether the cameras will always be on and how the footage will be managed and stored.

Both supporters and opponents of body-worn cameras agree on the importance of accountability and transparency in policing. While their views on the implementation of BWC differ, they share a common goal of ensuring that police actions are monitored and that both officers and the public are held accountable for their behavior. This shared value can serve as a foundation for finding balanced solutions that address concerns while promoting trust and safety.

Recommendations and next steps

In conclusion, the findings from the community consultation and surveys suggest a strong, yet nuanced, support for the proposed BWC program by the Service. Both community members and NRPS personnel recognize the potential for BWC to improve transparency, accountability, and public trust, with clear advantages in evidence collection and officer safety. However, concerns related to privacy, data security, the potential for misuse, and the financial burden remain prevalent. Moving forward, it is essential for the NRPS to prioritize a transparent, inclusive, and culturally sensitive implementation strategy, considering the diverse perspectives and concerns raised during the consultation. Furthermore, a robust change management strategy, inclusive of proper communication, training and policy development will be critical to addressing potential challenges, mitigating privacy concerns, and ensuring the effective use of this technology.

If the program is approved, future engagements should continue to explore these opportunities and refine the program's framework. Policy implications include a focus on clear data management protocols, ongoing community involvement, and potential phased implementation to foster trust and minimize challenges. The insights gained from this consultation will be instrumental in shaping a thoughtful and effective BWC deployment strategy, with the goal of enhancing public safety and police-community relations in the Niagara Region.

Alternatives Reviewed

In the context of this analysis, the only alternative identified is to not proceed with the implementation of BWC, thereby maintaining the status quo. While this approach might avoid immediate challenges, it presents significant long-term implications. Diverse studies highlight the growing gaps among technology, individuals, businesses, and public policy over time. When advancements like BWC are delayed, these gaps expand, making it increasingly difficult to align with evolving public expectations and operational standards. Delaying implementation means falling behind as technology outpaces current practices, and police services lose opportunities to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Without BWC, the adaptation process for officers and the public is postponed, public trust in police services' commitment to modern practices is undermined, and valuable data-driven insights for improving community interactions are missed. Given that most large police services in Ontario have already adopted BWC,

continuing with the status quo widens the technological and procedural divide, creating a gap that will be challenging to overcome. For these reasons, maintaining the status quo is not recommended.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

BWC could be a major component of service modernization as part of the 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan, aligned with goals: 1. Public Safety, 2. Community Engagement and Collaboration and 3. Continuous improvement and Organizational Continuity.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Internal

- GO - 006 - MUNICIPAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT
- GO - 016 - CROWN BRIEF SUBMISSION
- GO - 035 - EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

External

- *Model Governance Framework for Police Body-worn Camera Programs in Ontario*, available: <https://www.ipc.on.ca/sites/default/files/legacy/2021/07/model-governance-framework-police-body-worn-camera-programs.pdf>

Other pertinent reports:

- 2015 – PSB Report 104-2015
- 2016 – PSB Report 279-2016
- 7.1 – 2025.01.23 – Presentation: Use of Body Worn Cameras by Law Enforcement Agencies Update
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This report was prepared by Dr. Hector Perez, Corporate Analyst, with information provided by Director Akram Askoul, Director Technology Services and Laura Rullo, Director Finance and Asset Management and reviewed by Mr. Rany Audeh, Manager Corporate Strategy and Innovation.



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Appendices

Appendix 1 Community consultation with leaders results - March 24, 2025.

Appendix 1 World Café Results

World Café-style discussion – Summary Results

Date: March 24, 2025, 09:00 am to 10:30 am (90 minutes)

Purpose of the session: To **(1) share information** about Body Worn Cameras Program and community consultation and **(2) obtain feedback** from community leaders regarding the proposal to implement the program at the Niagara Regional Police Service.

Methodology: World Café-style discussion

Agenda:

- Welcome & Opening Remarks (10 min)
- Brief Presentation on the BWC Program (10 min)
- World Café Discussion
 - o Round 1: Challenges, Barriers, Concerns (20 min)
 - o Round 2: Opportunities & Optimism (20 min)
 - o Round 3: Refining insights & solutions (20 min)
 - o Group Summary & Closing (10 min)

Results

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the insights, concerns, and recommendations provided by community leaders regarding the implementation of body-worn cameras (BWC) by a police service. Community leaders emphasized that while technology offers significant **opportunities** for accountability, transparency, and safety, its success depends heavily on how it is introduced, governed, and communicated to the public.

Key challenges raised include concerns over privacy, cost, cultural sensitivity, policy clarity, and the potential for misuse or politicization. Simultaneously, leaders identified **opportunities** for enhancing community trust, improving officer and public safety, and increasing transparency. Several proposed solutions were put forth, ranging from community consultations and culturally sensitive education campaigns to strong policy frameworks and strategic partnerships.

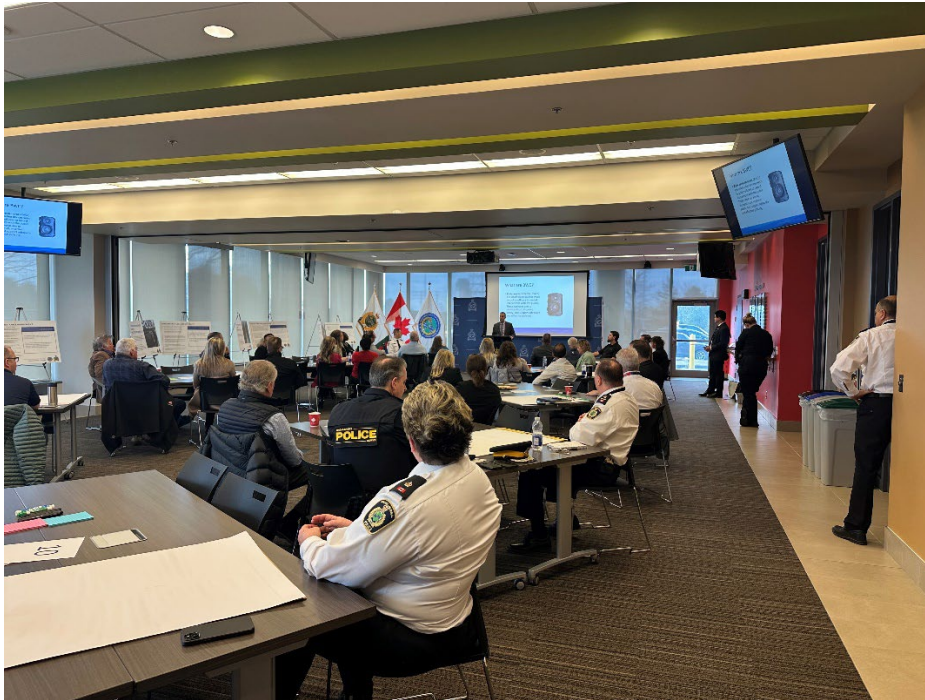
The report concludes with a clear call for a thoughtful, inclusive, and transparent implementation strategy that prioritizes both public trust and officer well-being.

Introduction

The implementation of body-worn cameras (BWC) by police services has gained momentum globally as a tool to enhance public safety, officer accountability, and community trust. In this context, the perspectives of community leaders offer critical insights into both the potential and pitfalls of deploying this technology. This report synthesizes the challenges, opportunities, and proposed solutions shared by community stakeholders to inform a responsive and inclusive implementation strategy. This activity

was conducted on March 24, 2025, as part of the Community Consultation on Body-Worn Cameras.

Pictures gallery



1. Challenges Identified by Community Leaders

Community leaders expressed a range of concerns regarding the implementation of BWC, emphasizing that success will hinge on addressing the following key challenges:

1.1 Privacy and Confidentiality Concerns

- Fear that vulnerable individuals (e.g., victims of domestic abuse, patients, newcomers) may be unwilling to engage with police while being recorded.
- Concerns over who has access to footage and how recordings will be stored, retained, and used.
- Worries about inadvertent capture of witnesses and sensitive situations.

1.2 Cultural and Language Barriers

- Newcomers and marginalized communities may not fully understand their rights or the purpose of BWC.
- Lack of culturally sensitive training for officers and public education for communities.

1.3 Mistrust and Misunderstanding

- Skepticism about police motives and fear of politicization of the initiative.
- Concern that without clear, consistent policies, BWC could be misused or inconsistently applied.

1.4 Operational and Technical Barriers

- Officer discretion on when cameras are turned on/off may create mistrust.
- Concerns about technological reliability (e.g., AI misinterpretation, hacking).
- Significant costs related to hardware, data storage, staffing, and training.

1.5 Implementation and Organizational Resistance

- Resistance to change among officers and uncertainty around association agreements.
- Perception of BWC as a form of surveillance or government overreach.

2. Opportunities Highlighted

Despite the challenges, community leaders identified several promising opportunities associated with BWC:

2.1 Enhanced Accountability and Transparency

- BWC are seen as a potential equalizer in community-police interactions, helping to de-escalate situations and provide an objective record.
- Increased public trust through greater visibility into police conduct.

2.2 Improved Public and Officer Safety

- Cameras may deter inappropriate behaviour by all parties and provide valuable evidence for investigations.

- Opportunity to reduce complaints and lawsuits, freeing up officer time for community engagement.

2.3 Community Engagement and Relationship Building

- BWC could act as a bridge to improve police-community relations if implemented inclusively.
- Framing BWC as tools for fairness, not surveillance, helps shift public narratives.

2.4 Technology-Driven Efficiencies

- Real-time information and AI-enhanced analysis could improve reporting and operational efficiency.
- Positive spillover into other public safety and justice processes (e.g., court efficiency, case preparation).

3. Proposed Solutions from Community Leaders

Community leaders provided a range of constructive suggestions to ensure the successful rollout of BWC:

3.1 Inclusive Policy Development

- Involve community representatives, including vulnerable groups, in co-developing policies.
- Create clear protocols for when and how cameras are used, and ensure they are publicly available.

3.2 Continuous Community Engagement

- Establish forums, surveys, and consultations to gather ongoing feedback.
- Leverage schools and youth programs for education and awareness-building.

3.3 Transparency and Communication

- Develop marketing and communication strategies to clarify the purpose and benefits of BWC.
- Regular public reporting on usage, effectiveness, and challenges faced.

3.4 Training and Cultural Sensitivity

- Provide culturally responsive training for officers, focusing on equity and relationship-building.
- Offer multilingual resources to increase awareness and understanding among diverse communities.

3.5 Cost Management and External Support

- Explore funding partnerships (e.g., with provincial governments) to offset costs.
- Demonstrate long-term cost savings (e.g., reduced litigation, time savings) to build support.

3.6 Pilot Programs and Phased Rollout

- Implement pilot programs to assess impact, refine practices, and build trust.

- Use data and experiences from other jurisdictions to avoid pitfalls and adopt best practices.

Conclusion

The introduction of body-worn cameras offers a powerful opportunity to enhance transparency, trust, and safety within communities. However, these benefits will only be realized if implementation is approached thoughtfully, inclusively, and transparently. The voices of community leaders point to a strong desire for collaboration and a shared vision of safer, more accountable policing. Policymakers and the NRPS must heed this guidance, ensuring that the rollout of BWC is grounded in equity, community, and evidence-based practices.



**Community Consultation
Body Worn Cameras
April 24, 2025**

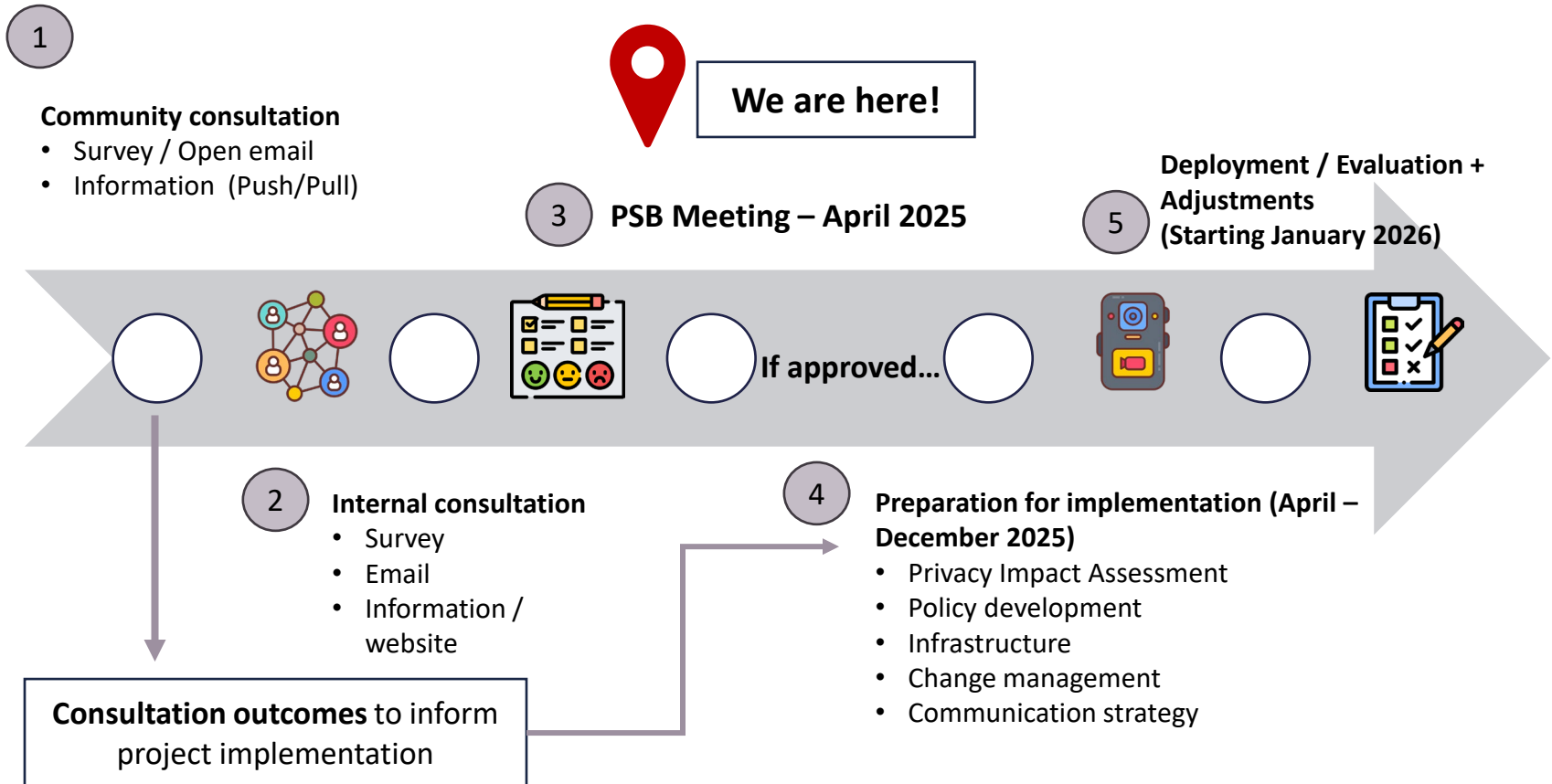
Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Community consultation
 1. Overview
 2. Results
3. Financial and strategic considerations
4. Recommendation

Introduction

- On *January 23, 2025*, the Niagara Regional Police Service presented to the Police Service Board an update on the use of Body-Worn Cameras (BWC) by police service in Ontario and in Canada.
- The Police Service Board approved and directed the NRPS to undertake a Community Consultation to inform the public and NRPS' members about the proposed Body-Worn Cameras program and collect feedback on their opinions about the proposal.
- A community consultation was conducted from *March 7 to April 4, 2025*, inclusive of multiple locations and reaching groups and representatives of groups across the Niagara Region.
- The community consultation reached a total of 2,780 participants across the Niagara Region, inclusive of NRPS' members.

Introduction (continued)



Community Consultation: Overview

- **Period:** March 7 – April 4, 2025
- **Partners:** General public, community leaders, academics, NRPS staff members, other police services, etc.
- **Engagement Methods:**
 - 2 community presentations
 - 6 in-person events (morning & evening sessions)
 - Dedicated email and website with FAQs and evidence-based info.

Community Consultation: Overview (continued)

Objective:

- Inform the public, gather feedback and identify challenges & opportunities
- Include voices of community and NRPS members

Key Consultation Themes:

1. Transparency & Accountability
2. Community Trust & Engagement
3. Privacy & Data Protection
4. Public & Officer Safety

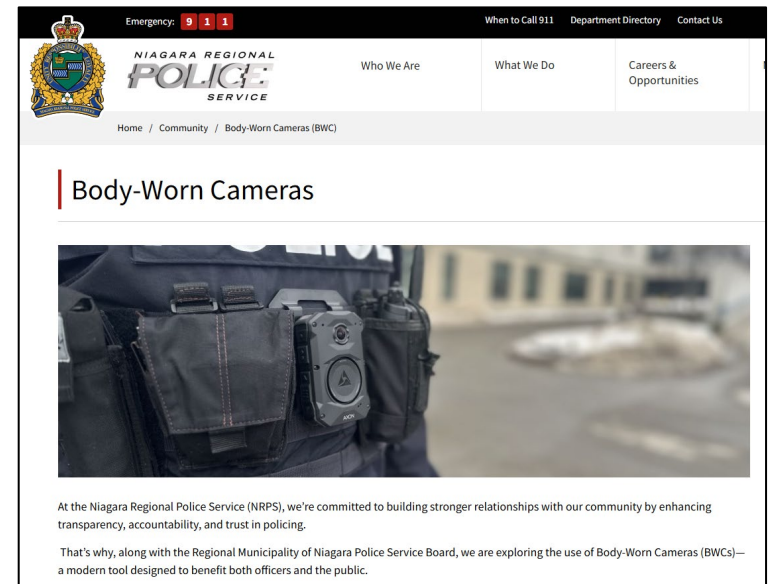
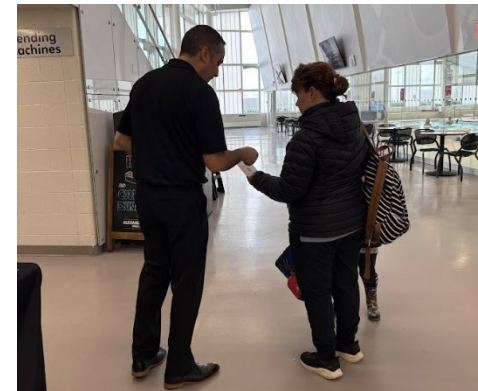
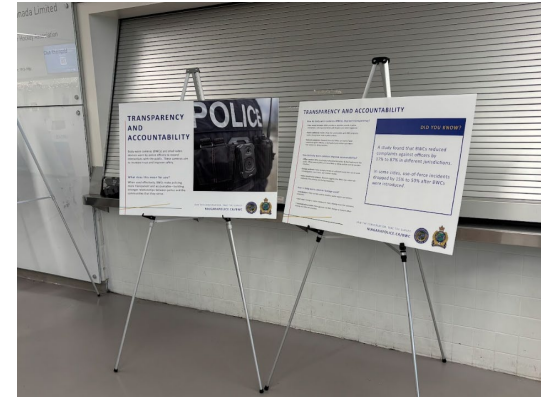


Figure: NRPS BWC - Website

Community Consultation: Overview (continued 2)

- **In-Person Consultations (Feb–Apr 2025)**
 - Total participants: 1,281 across 7 events in 7 municipalities
 - Events included presentations, World Café, and Open Houses
- **Online Surveys (Mar 7 – Apr 4, 2025)**
 - Total participants: 1,499 | Completed surveys: 1,329 (89% completion rate)
 - Thoughts shared: 1,188 | Total ratings submitted: 22,195
 - Two surveys: NRPS members (334) & General public (1,165)
- **Key Instruments**
 - Member survey: demographics, impressions, training needs
 - Community survey: demographics, BWC perceptions, trust, safety

Community Consultation: Open Houses



Community Consultation: Results

Total Participants Engaged: 2,780

- In-Person Consultation Events: 1,281
- Online Surveys (Completed): 1,329 / Online Surveys (Accessed): 1,499
- Ideas and thoughts shared: 1,188 / Total ratings submitted: 22,195

NRPS Members:

- 66% Frontline Officers
- 41% with 15+ years of service

Community Members:

- 81% White, 3.5% South Asian, 3% Black | 9% 2SLGBTQQIA+ | 83% No Disability
- 56% Female | 40% Male
- 34% from St. Catharines, 24% Niagara Falls, 20% Welland
- 96% English spoken at home

Community Consultation: World Café with community leaders



Community Consultation with Leaders

- **Date & time:** March 24, 2025, 09:00 - 10:30 am
- **Consultation focus:** Gathered input from community leaders on the BWC proposal.
- **Key concerns:** Privacy, community mistrust, costs, inconsistent usage policies.
- **Opportunities identified:**
 - Enhanced transparency, safety, and community relations.
 - Increased operational efficiency.
- **Key recommendations:**
 - Involve diverse stakeholders in policy development.
 - Provide robust training and communication strategies.
 - Consider phased or pilot-based rollout.

Community Consultation: Survey Results - NRPS Members

- **General support:** Positive outlook on BWCs.
- **Expectations:**
 - 72%: Improve evidence collection / 58%: Enhance transparency & accountability / 57%: Reduce complaints.
- **Concerns:** Privacy, policy, discipline, and workload.
- **Training demand:** Over 91% legal and policy, 83% technical, and 66% scenario-based training.
- **Support for implementation:** Strong interest in adopting BWCs with proper support.

Community Consultation: Survey Results - NRPS Members (continued)

- **Positive Feedback:** BWC will enhance transparency, accountability, and officer safety.
- **Concerns:**
 - Privacy invasion and increased scrutiny.
 - Impact on proactive policing and officer morale.
 - Logistical challenges and/or potential costs.
- **Agreement:** Training on BWCs and related policies and procedures is essential.

Community Feedback

Positive feedback:

- 15% believe police are not performing well.
- 20% believe that police officers are not responding quickly to calls for service
- 13% do not feel comfortable calling the police if they need help

BWC Perception:

- 82%: BWC will increase trust and 90% believe BWC will improve transparency
- 89%: BWC will increase accountability
- 73%: Feel safer with BWC
- 76%: BWC will improve community relations
- 10% believe that BWC are an invasion to personal/community privacy

Community Consultation: Survey Results - Community Members (continued)

Support for BWC:

- Enhance transparency, accountability, and trust
- Protect officers from false accusations

Concerns:

- Privacy invasion and footage misuse
- Issues with footage management and retention
- Use of BWC for other purposes and potential cost

Community Consultation: Example of highly rated thoughts by participants

- **Accountability:**

"I think it creates accountability on both sides, offering protection to the community members and to the officers involved."

- **Officer Safety & Public Accountability:**

"People lie. Cameras don't."

- **Transparency and Accountability:**

"Body cameras provide an impartial account of any interaction between police and individuals."

Financial and strategic considerations

- Should the Board approve the recommendation, then the Service will include the capital and operating costs in 2026. Preliminary costs associated with capital infrastructure are estimated at \$1,200,000.00 and for operating costs estimated to be \$2,284.187.00 per annum.
- The costs for both capital and operating will be evaluated during the budget process and adjusted accordingly.

Recommendations

- Based on the findings from community consultations and NRPS member surveys, we recommend the approval of the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program for the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), with budget considerations to be included in the 2026 capital and operating budget.
- This recommendation is supported by strong interest in improving transparency, accountability, and public trust, as well as enhancing evidence collection and officer safety.