



Item	09
Meeting	2009 Aug 31

COUNCIL REPORT

TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2009 August 17
FROM: OFFICER IN CHARGE, RCMP 27100-01
SUBJECT: COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICES – FRONT COUNTER UPGRADES
ITEM 3(C) , REPORTS, COUNCIL 2009 JULY 20
PURPOSE: To provide Council with supplementary information in support of the above noted report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this supplemental report be received for information.

REPORT

Council, at the Open Council Meeting held on 2009 July 20, received the above noted report, and TABLED the above noted report/recommendation. This matter was tabled to allow staff an opportunity to provide additional information to Council with respect to the security issues to be addressed by the proposed upgrade, and the potential impact on community accessibility to the Community Police Offices.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In August of 2008, personnel from the RCMP “E” Division Departmental Security Section conducted security infrastructure reviews of Burnaby Detachment’s four (4) Community Police Offices (CPO’s).

These security infrastructure reviews were requested by the OIC Burnaby Detachment, following numerous security and safety complaints from members and civilian staff at the CPO’s. These reviews recommended “the completion of a Threat and Risk Analysis (TRA) of the Community Police Offices, to determine the requirement for a counter barrier, and if so determined, the installation of an Anti-Vault Barrier, in accordance with the RCMP’s Property Management Manual”.

Accordingly, TRA’s were completed for each CPO, and it was determined that the installation of the proposed upgrades (Anti-Vault Barriers) was necessary for each CPO.

CURRENT SITUATION

From their inception, the primary purpose of the four CPO’s has been to provide citizens of Burnaby with enhanced opportunities to access programs, community policing and crime prevention literature, and the convenience of accessing some of the policing services normally offered only at the Main Detachment at 6355 Deer Lake Avenue.

To: City Manager
From: Officer in Charge RCMP
Re: COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICES – FRONT COUNTER UPGRADES
ITEM 3(C), REPORTS, COUNCIL 2009 JULY 20
2009 August 31..... Page 2

Each Community Police Office is divided into two distinct zones or areas:

1. Public Areas (Non-Secure), defined as the entrance foyer and main lobby area.
2. Police and Authorized Employee Only Areas (Secure)

Note: The “public areas” are separated from the “police and authorized employee areas” primarily by the Front Counter, and there are access-egress doors controlled by access card readers. Each CPO is unique in its physical configuration, and the location of access doors and the actual Front Counter. In every case, there is a further access point into the police/secure area from the area behind the Front Counters.

Over the years, security standards for RCMP-occupied facilities have evolved and been enhanced, and the dynamic environment of policing and public safety has also changed dramatically. These changes are driven in large part by:

- ✦ Changes in legislative requirements (Criminal Code) for storage of firearms, ammunition and restricted weapons (e.g. Tasers). The RCMP is not exempt from these statutory requirements.
- ✦ Increased health and safety regulations related to staff/employee security and safety, pursuant to the Canada Labour Code.
- ✦ Increased Federally-mandated security standards for RCMP-occupied facilities, whether they are RCMP-owned or not, including those facilities owned by contracting partners (e.g. the City of Burnaby) which the RCMP occupies, to safeguard sensitive equipment and assets under the control of the RCMP.
- ✦ Court rulings (civil suits) and Public Inquiry (Jury) Recommendations, which drive such issues as monitoring equipment, cellblock standards, and sensitive asset access and storage standards.

Originally, Burnaby RCMP members were not stationed at each of the CPO's. Rather, they began their shifts at the Main Detachment, where they dressed and picked up their equipment, and then patrolled to their respective duty areas and CPO's. This practice has changed significantly, and currently, all the members (Neighborhood Liaison Officers, School Liaison Officers, CPO Commanders and CPO Office Managers) now assigned to each of the CPO's begin and end their scheduled shift rotations at the CPO, where they store their uniforms and equipment. Valuable and sensitive police assets, including radios, police cars, desktop and laptop computers, cell phones and other police equipment, are now stored and accessed within each CPO.

Following a recent restructuring initiative, S/Sgt. Regina LYONS was appointed the Commander of all four Community Police Offices, and Sgt. Dean SCOTT became the Operations NCO for all four CPO's.

Each District CPO's is currently staffed by:

- ✦ A District CPO NCOi/c (Corporal)
- ✦ Neighbourhood Liaison Unit (NLU) (Constables)
- ✦ Youth/School Liaison Unit (SLO) (Constables)
- ✦ CPO Office Manager (City Employee)
- ✦ Youth Restorative Justice Coordinator – Southwest CPO
- ✦ Anti-Graffiti Coordinator/Investigator – Southeast CPO
- ✦ Community Policing Program Volunteers

To: City Manager
From: Officer in Charge RCMP
Re: COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICES – FRONT COUNTER UPGRADES
ITEM 3(C) , REPORTS, COUNCIL 2009 JULY 20
2009 August 31..... Page 3

Each District CPO is currently configured and equipped with:

- ✦ A large meeting room, which is available for use by our Community Policing Volunteer Groups, subject to availability and ongoing priorities.
- ✦ Private offices for supervisory staff.
- ✦ Workstations, telephones, and computers that have access to RCMP databases (e.g. PRIME) and email systems (e.g. GroupWise and ROSS).
- ✦ Storage for sensitive equipment and assets (firearms, exhibits, radios, and miscellaneous equipment.)
- ✦ An intrusion alarm system to monitor the CPO during closed periods.

All members and staff of Burnaby Detachment have access to all CPO's after hours. Police officers assigned to 24/7 General Duty Patrol have been strongly urged to utilize a CPO office for meeting citizens, writing reports, making telephone calls, or taking their mid-shift meal breaks. Burnaby Detachment supervisors report that usage of the CPO's by police officers for these purposes is high.

More police programs and services are now available to the public at each of the CPO's than ever before, including Criminal Record Checks, Police Certificates, Special Occasion Licences, Pardon Applications, and Name Change Applications. As well, the CPO's provide a convenient location for citizens to report crimes against property and minor motor vehicle accidents. Each CPO has now become, in effect, a sub-Detachment of the Main Detachment on Deer Lake Avenue.

SECURITY AND SAFETY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE PROPOSED UPGRADES

On frequent occasions during the work day, the CPO Commander and NLU officers are out in the community attending meetings or working on community concerns, and are not within or near the CPO. The School Liaison Officers are rarely in the CPO's, as they report to their schools soon after starting their shifts, and only return at the end of the day to complete reports prior to going off-duty.

This leaves the CPO Office Manager and Volunteers working alone in the CPO for extended periods of time during the workday. The Office Manager is in contact with the CPO Commander and other members by telephone/cellphone and police radio, and the CPO's are equipped with panic alarms to the Main Detachment. That said, should there be a security or safety incident in the lobby area of the CPO, the Office Manager and Volunteers are vulnerable, as they may not be able to access the panic alarms or telephones, and the members may not be able to respond/attend quickly enough to prevent an unfortunate incident or occurrence.

Over the past two years, there have been several incidents at each of the CPO's where the Office Managers (City Employees) or Volunteers working at the CPO's have felt vulnerable and unsafe, as a direct result of interactions they have had with clients/citizens at the Front Counters.

Briefly described, examples of these incidents include:

1. In October 2008, the Southwest CPO Office Manager was dealing with a well-known, violent and drug addicted male at the Southwest CPO, who had attended there to obtain a file number for "stolen" Social Assistance money. The Office Manager was attempting to assist the man, to get details from him, and get him in touch with the Ministry of Social Services. The man became verbally abusive to the Office Manager and volunteers in the CPO, raising his voice and pacing in

To: City Manager
From: Officer in Charge RCMP
Re: COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICES – FRONT COUNTER UPGRADES
ITEM 3(C), REPORTS, COUNCIL 2009 JULY 20
2009 August 31..... Page 4

the lobby. The man was put in touch with Social Services via a telephone in the lobby area, and when he realized he was not going to get any more money from them, he slammed the telephone receiver down and stormed out of the CPO. The Office Manager and volunteers, who were working alone in the CPO at the time, were shaken by the man's actions, and immediately locked the doors and notified police officers. The man appeared to be high on drugs. While the male did not physically assault or threaten the CPO Office Manager, his actions and volatility made her decidedly uncomfortable, and left her feeling unsafe. This incident was reported to the City Coordinator and OIC Burnaby Detachment by way of "Workplace Violence Incident Investigation Report" shortly after the incident.

2. In November 2008, a male attended the Southwest CPO to seek advice concerning a Family Court Order. He asked the CPO Office Manager, who was working alone along with two Volunteers that day, what the police response would be if he they were called if he violated the Court Order. The man was well known to the Office Manager, as he had attended the CPO in the past on unrelated matters, and had demonstrated a propensity to be verbally aggressive. The Office Manager rightly explained that she was not a police person and could not offer an opinion, and suggested he pose his questions to the Family Court. The man became louder and more aggressive, demanding to speak to a police officer. The Office Manager advised him none were available or expected back, and that he could attend the Main Detachment if he wished. The man continued to raise his voice and demand answers to his questions. The Office Manager forcefully asked the man to leave the premises, which he did, and she locked the door. The man returned a few minutes later and attempted to gain access, which was refused. The man forcefully tried to open the door, but left the area. The Office Manager and two volunteers in the office were shaken by this man's aggressive behaviour, and were left feeling unsafe. This incident was reported to the City Coordinator and OIC Burnaby Detachment by way of "Workplace Violence Incident Investigation Report" shortly after the incident.
3. There are numerous other examples where male and female clients, who are exhibiting mental health and/or substance abuse challenges, attend the CPO's and make nonsensical requests and enquiries. The nature and status of these individuals are not known until they are actually in the lobby area, and engaged in dialogue with the Office Manager or volunteers behind the Front Counters. In many of these incidents, the Office Managers and Volunteers, and even some police officers, were shaken by the aggressive or erratic behaviour of the visitor to the CPO. These less serious incidents were recorded locally, and reported to the OIC Burnaby Detachment.

These are only a few examples provided to illustrate the concerns of the Office Managers, Volunteers and other personnel who work at the CPO's. Fortunately, no City of Burnaby employee has been physically assaulted or injured while engaged in their duties at the CPO's. These examples, however, suggest and confirm the potential danger exists.

While the proposed barriers are not "bullet proof" or fail-safe against a goal-oriented individual, the inherent risks to the Office Manager, Volunteers and other citizens who are working at the CPO's would be significantly mitigated by the installation of Anti-Vault Barriers at each of the CPO's. Such a barrier would eliminate the opportunity for a client to make physical contact with employees and volunteers, or obtain access to the secure areas of the CPO.

To: City Manager
From: Officer in Charge RCMP
Re: COMMUNITY POLICE OFFICES – FRONT COUNTER UPGRADES
ITEM 3(C) , REPORTS, COUNCIL 2009 JULY 20
2009 August 31..... Page 5

Of note, the City Coordinator for Burnaby Detachment reports that some Auxiliary Employees have declined the opportunity to work at the CPO's on a relief basis, as the CPO's do not have the same level of security and employee safety measures (Anti-Vault Barriers) as the Main Detachment.

IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY

The installation of Anti-Vault Barriers at the CPO Front Counters will not inhibit or interfere with accessibility to services at the CPO.

Attached are recent photographs of the new Front Counter area at the Main Detachment, which was a major renovation project that was completed in 2008. The proposed design for the CPO Front Counter upgrades has been based on this proven design model, consisting of reinforced glass and metal structures.

The proposed design for the CPO's will incorporate glass panels that will have the added feature of being mobile, so that they can be completely opened if desired once the status and nature of the client(s) at the Front Counter have been established. This feature will not reduce the barrier's effectiveness. Even in the closed position, the configuration and placement of the glass still permits unrestricted sight lines and verbal communication between the parties on either side.

Public and employee reaction to the new Front Counter at the Main Detachment has been uniformly positive. This design has ensured employee/volunteer safety and security, while maintaining a pleasing appearance and accessibility to the public.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that this project be approved as proposed.

The risks to the Office Manager, Volunteers and other citizens who are at the CPO's would be eliminated by the installation of Anti-Vault Barriers at each of the CPO's. Such a barrier would eliminate the opportunity for a client to make physical contact with employees and volunteers, or access the secure areas of the CPO.

The installation of Anti-Vault Barriers at the CPO Front Counters will not inhibit or interfere with accessibility to services at the CPO. As noted in the original report, the proposed/selected design permits effective audio communication between CPO staff and the public without electronic enhancement, and the sight lines and visibility to ensure the CPO's still provide a welcoming atmosphere to visitors to the CPO.

The installation of Anti-Vault Barriers at the CPO Front Counters will provide the Office Managers, Volunteers and visitors with a safe working environment, where they can feel secure and protected from potential violence.



R.B. (Rick) TAYLOR, Superintendent
Officer in Charge
Burnaby Detachment

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