



Item.....
Meeting..... 2009 Oct 5

COUNCIL REPORT

TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2009 September 28
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING **FILE:** 2410 20
SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEW COMMUNICATIONS TOOL FOR COMMUNITY POLICING
PURPOSE: To seek approval for the publication of a monthly newspaper supplement on Community Policing in the *Burnaby NewsLeader*.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council approve funding for a new monthly newspaper supplement on Community Policing in the *Burnaby NewsLeader*, as outlined in Section 2.0 of this report.
2. **THAT** Tracy Keenan, Publisher of the *Burnaby NewsLeader*, be informed in writing of Council's decision.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

The contents of this report was forwarded to the Community Policing Committee at its meeting of 2009 September 24. Unfortunately, the meeting was not held. As the subject matter is time sensitive, the Chair of the Committee has requested that the report be forwarded directly to Council for its consideration.

Community Policing was introduced in Burnaby in 1995. Since that time, the City and the Burnaby RCMP have used a number of methods to communicate information to the public about community policing and the opportunities it provides for citizens to participate in crime prevention initiatives. In the early years, the Communications Subcommittee of the Community Policing Committee co-ordinated external communications using the following means:

- articles in *InfoBurnaby*;
- a Community Policing Information Line;
- "townhall" information meetings, focused on volunteer recruitment and/or specific community safety issues;
- an eight episode Shaw Cable television series on Community Policing in Burnaby; and

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- a quarterly newsletter entitled “UpBeat” which was distributed through City facilities, schools, other community venues, and Block Watch mail-outs.

For the past eleven years, a primary external communication vehicle for Community Policing has been “The Beat”, an insert in the *Burnaby Now*. The insert consisted of one to four pages, depending on the month, was authored by a *Burnaby Now* reporter, and appeared eleven times a year. The City’s commitment to “The Beat” was to cover the cost of a ¼ page advertisement in each edition, and the cost of the reporter’s research and co-ordination efforts. For the past several years, the annual cost to the City has been approximately \$9,400.

In 2008 December, the Community Policing Committee directed its Communications Subcommittee to consider the development of a multi-faceted external communications strategy. In 2009 March, the Committee suspended its commitment to “The Beat” pending the outcome of the subcommittee’s deliberations.

The Communications Subcommittee met eight times between December 2008 and July 2009. It identified a number of possible goals, objectives and actions for a broad communications strategy which would rely on a wide range of media for information dissemination (including local print media), and which would take some time to finalize and implement. Although the subcommittee has not made a final decision on the advisability of recommending a comprehensive communications strategy, it concluded in 2009 July that it would be advisable to continue providing community policing and crime prevention information to the public through the local print media as a key component of communicating with the Burnaby public. The subcommittee, therefore, invited both the *Burnaby Now* and the *Burnaby NewsLeader* to submit proposals for a monthly Community Policing supplement. The invitation noted that editorial content would be supplied by the Subcommittee.

Both newspapers responded to the invitation. The *NewsLeader* submitted a detailed proposal outlining several possible regular features intended to attract a wide range of readers. The *Now* provided a letter expressing interest in a partnership, but did not provide a proposal with ideas for features or layout. After reviewing the responses, subcommittee members concluded that the proposal from the *Burnaby NewsLeader* best met the Subcommittee’s objectives of raising awareness of Community Policing in the community and attracting more citizens – including those from cultural minority groups and a wider range of age groups – to participate in Community Policing.

This report outlines the *Burnaby NewsLeader*’s proposal for a monthly Community Policing supplement, and seeks Council approval for funding to support it through 2010.

2.0 BURNABY NEWSLEADER PROPOSAL

The *Burnaby NewsLeader* has proposed a monthly, full-colour, two-page supplement – which could expand to four pages in future – dedicated to increasing public awareness of and participation in Community Policing in Burnaby. The supplement would be located in the centre of the newspaper, allowing readers to use it as a “pull-out” that can be set aside for future

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reference. It would appear on the second last Saturday of each month, beginning on 2009 October 24. Almost 46,000 Burnaby households would be exposed to the supplement through the *NewsLeader's* circulation, and approximately 150 monthly over-run copies would be distributed through City venues such as Community Police Offices and City Hall. The supplement, which has yet to be named, would include regular features such as:

- a column focusing on crime and safety issues encountered by Burnaby residents (e.g., staying safe on SkyTrain, avoiding vehicle theft, Hallowe'en safety). Safety tips would be included.
- locational information and news/events for each of Burnaby's Community Policing districts. This section would also include a map depicting the location of and contact information for the Community Police Offices.
- a highlight of a local crime prevention "champion", be it a police officer or a resident who "went above and beyond".
- a spotlight on a local business which has implemented a creative idea to prevent crime in the neighbourhood or on its business premises. This feature would give the business a positive profile, while sharing information about crime reduction.
- a kids' colouring contest with a police or crime prevention theme.
- a word scramble puzzle on the theme of crime prevention.

The public would be invited to submit suggestions for topics for the column, and for citizen and business crime prevention "champions".

The *NewsLeader* would provide design, layout, and photographic services for the supplement for review by the Communications Subcommittee. Content would be supplied by the Subcommittee.

The size of the supplement would be partially dependent on the *NewsLeader's* success in selling advertising space in the supplement. The City would assist in this endeavour by purchasing a monthly ad, as it did in "The Beat". The content of the ad would be determined by the Communications Subcommittee – but it would typically be used to publicize crime prevention events such as public safety meetings, educational seminars, and community graffiti clean-ups. Total annual cost for twelve monthly 3/8 page ads would be \$8,032.56.¹ If the City were to commit to the proposed supplement for the remainder of 2009 and through 2010, the total expense would be \$10,040.70 (which includes \$2,008.14 for 2009.) The funds would be allocated from the Committees, Boards, and Commissions budget. Following 2010, a review of the supplement would be undertaken by the Community Policing Committee. Henceforth, should the supplement have been deemed a success, requests for funding to support the supplement would be made to Council on an annual basis.

3.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In an effort to improve communication with the Burnaby public about Community Policing, the Communications Subcommittee of the Community Policing Committee is proposing that a


¹ Each 7 x 7.7 inch ad would cost \$669.38 inclusive of GST.

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monthly, full-colour, two-page newspaper supplement dedicated to increasing public awareness of and participation in Community Policing in Burnaby be published as a supplement in the *Burnaby NewsLeader*. The City's commitment would consist of providing editorial content for the supplement, reviewing the layout of each edition, and purchasing twelve monthly 3/8 page ads at an annual cost of \$8,032.56. As it is proposed that the supplement be launched in 2009 October, costs of \$2,008.14 for ads for the remainder of 2009 would be incurred. Total expense would be \$10,040.70. The City Clerk has advised that sufficient budget funds are available for the 2009 portion of this initiative in the 2009 Committees, Boards, and Commissions budget, and that provision could be made for the supplement for 2010.

It is recommended that Council approve funding for a new monthly newspaper supplement on Community Policing in the *Burnaby NewsLeader*, as outlined in Section 2.0 of this report.

It is further recommended that Tracy Keenan, publisher of the *Burnaby NewsLeader*, be informed in writing of Council's decision.



B. Luksun, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS:sa/tn

cc: Deputy City Manager
Director Finance
OIC – RCMP
City Clerk