



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Date: September 26, 2006
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Meeting Date: October 31, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Chief Constable, Vancouver Police Department
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Fleet Additions - Vancouver Police Department School Liaison Officer
Program

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT, Council approve the addition of fifteen (15) mid-size vehicles to the Vancouver Police Department Fleet for the School Liaison Officer Program. Funding for the purchase of the vehicles to be provided through an allocation of \$468,000 from the Truck and Equipment Plant Account. Capital and operating costs to be repaid to the Truck and Equipment Plant Account through annual charges of \$91,200, with funding to be provided from an increase to the Vancouver Police Department Operating Budget subject to full or partial recoveries of costs via corporate sponsorship of the School Liaison Officer Program vehicles.
- B. THAT, Council authorize the Vancouver Police Department and the Equipment Services Branch to seek corporate sponsorship of the School Liaison Officer Program vehicles, through competitive bidding processes, to either partially or fully fund the fleet costs of the School Liaison Officer Program.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of A and B.

COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

I recommend that Council approve the two (2) recommendations to allow the School Liaison Officer Program to continue as the Program has proven to be successful in meeting the goals of the Vancouver Police Department's Strategic Plan; these recommendations also allow the Vancouver Police Department and the City of Vancouver to explore partnership opportunities with the private sector.

COUNCIL POLICY

Council approves expenditures from Reserves, including the Truck and Equipment Plant Account.

Council approves all increases in service levels, including the addition of vehicles and equipment to the fleet.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this report is to obtain Council authorization to add fifteen (15) vehicles to the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) Fleet for the School Liaison Officer (SLO) Program; secondly to obtain Council authorization for staff to seek corporate sponsorship of the SLO vehicles for the Program.

BACKGROUND

Schools are prime locales for gang activity and recruitment. To assist in reducing these activities, a SLO Program was launched in 1975 with a focus on crime prevention and education. Since its launch, the Program has been a success as it has assisted in meeting the following strategic objectives of the VPD:

- *Reducing violence caused by gangs and guns.*
- *Reinforcing a commitment to Crime Prevention and a Healthy Community through specific focus on youth.*
- *Improving public safety awareness and encouraging positive police/community relations.*

There are currently fifteen (15) SLOs and one (1) Sergeant that are responsible for the ninety-one (91) elementary schools and eighteen (18) secondary schools within Vancouver that are served by the SLO Program. The sixteen (16) member team also provides support to fifty-seven (57) independent schools.

Prior to 2002, the SLOs used their personal vehicles for the performance of their duties and were paid a mileage allowance to cover their operating costs. The allowances paid in 2002 totalled \$27,053; the Program has a current year mileage allowance budget of approximately \$28,000. The practice of requiring the SLOs to use their private vehicles however was a contentious and growing labour management issue as uniform wearing members were using their personal vehicles while carrying out their professional policing duties.

In 2002, Honda Canada and the Honda Dealers' Association of BC donated fifteen (15) vehicles for temporary use for the SLO Program in the elementary and secondary schools in the City. Honda Canada and the Honda Dealers' Association saw an opportunity to contribute to the community in its Western Region by partnering with the VPD SLO Program and supplying each SLO with a new Honda Civic SIR. By providing the sponsored vehicles, the Honda Dealers' Association covered the capital cost of the fleet for the SLO Program for the year. Outfitting, decommissioning and operating costs however were covered by the VPD.

By providing the SLOs with vehicles that appealed to the student demographic, the students were provided a socially acceptable reason to approach them and begin productive and interactive dialogue. The fifteen (15) vehicles were replaced regularly in the subsequent years but in April 2006, the VPD received notice from the vehicle sponsors that they were withdrawing their support effective July 1, 2006.

Historically, the VPD attempted to absorb the operating costs of the sponsored vehicles within the existing \$28,000 budget. However, it was apparent that the continuation of the Program required formal recognition of additional vehicles to the VPD fleet and an increase in funding to cover the associated maintenance and operating costs. Since the vehicles for the SLO Program were donations and not City owned units, they were not included as part of the VPD Fleet Review in 2003 and as such are not currently approved as authorized units for the VPD fleet. Therefore, to address the vehicle requirements of the SLO Program, the VPD is requesting approval of an increase in the size of its fleet.

DISCUSSION

With the termination of the Donated Honda Program and the SLOs' continuing requirement for marked police vehicles, approval is sought to increase the VPD fleet by fifteen (15) marked mid-size vehicles.

The use of marked police vehicles has resolved the Vancouver Police Union issues with the members' use of personal vehicles. It has also allowed the role of the SLO to evolve in response to changes in youth crime activity such as increases in gang related crimes and other criminal behaviour among young people in and around school property. The SLOs' role now also includes an emphasis on enforcement and investigation in addition to the original focus on crime prevention and education. The expanded role is evident by the following types of investigations by the SLOs in Vancouver in 2005: sexual assaults, assaults, threats, weapons related offences, drug investigations, mischief, extortion, bomb threats, robberies, cyber-crime and breaches of court undertakings.

Additionally, a recent coroner's inquest into a fatal police shooting of an 18 year old suspect in Port Moody resulted in a recommendation for all police vehicles to be readily identifiable if they are expected to perform typical policing activities. This identification is best accomplished via a marked (decaled) police vehicle.

Marked vehicles also increase the SLOs effectiveness away from the schools. The SLO's are now being used for traffic enforcement and for responding to general incident calls when regular marked vehicles are not in the vicinity of incidents. Marked vehicles will also give the VPD the ability to use the vehicles in other operational areas, when not in use for the SLO Program.

Procurement Options - Vehicle Sponsorship and City Owned Units

Creation of a formalized Fleet Sponsorship Program is recommended for the SLO Program via a competitive bidding process as a means of reducing capital costs for the VPD fleet. This formalized sponsorship process will give all vehicle manufacturers and dealers an opportunity to provide vehicles and cover partial or full capital costs of their donated vehicles in the Program. This process will help reduce costs for the City and assist the SLOs in bridging the gap with youth through new and interesting vehicles. Vehicle manufacturers will obtain the benefits of contributing to the community and the opportunity for corporate marketing. The intent is that there would be no sponsorship advertising on the vehicles but the sponsors would advertise their partnership with the City of Vancouver independently.

If vehicle sponsorship that is financially beneficial to the City can not be obtained, the City would proceed with the purchase of City owned vehicles. The vehicles would be purchased and used by the SLO Program for three (3) years and then rotated into the administrative and investigative fleet to replace existing vehicles requiring scheduled replacement. The SLO vehicles would be rotated into the regular VPD fleet to maximize their use. Although the SLO vehicles would be used daily, the mileage on the vehicles is anticipated to be relatively low because of the service application.

Additionally, the desire to keep the vehicles relatively new, via the shorter three (3) year life, is preferred as a means of attracting young people to the vehicles and the SLOs. The three (3) year service life rotation also gives the City the ability to more frequently leverage the benefits of donated vehicles.

The financial impact of both the donated vehicle and City owned vehicle procurement options are listed in the Financial Implications section of this report.

Alternatives Considered

Apart from the donated vehicle and City owned vehicle fleet addition recommendation listed in this report, three (3) alternative options were considered. The options included using auto allowance, full-sized marked cars, and mid-size vehicles for an eight (8) year life.

The recommended option provides best value through better service and vehicle utilization. When compared to the alternative options, the recommended option costs more than option 1, costs less than option 2 and costs the same as option 3.

Option 1: Auto Allowance

Continuing with the past practice of reimbursing the SLOs for the use of their personal vehicles for the performance of their duties at an annual cost of \$28,000 was considered in the evaluation of alternatives; this option however was deemed unsatisfactory because of the need for uniformed officers to be in marked police vehicles due to safety concerns and labour management issues.

In addition, by sending the SLOs to their respective schools in their personal vehicles, schools and the community at large may incorrectly perceive that the VPD does not value the SLO Program and the various benefits to all the stakeholders.

Option 2: Full-Size Marked Cars

The use of existing full-size marked patrol vehicles was considered for the purpose of this review but was deemed unsatisfactory as it would reduce the deployment of patrol officers by up to fifteen (15) marked police vehicles during the day.

If full-sized marked cars were purchased for the SLO Program, the patrol section could benefit from the sharing of these vehicles in the evenings when the SLO Program does not require them. The total annual costs for fifteen (15) new full-size vehicles would be approximately \$250,000 per year and would require the allocation of approximately \$645,000 in funding from the Truck and Equipment Plant Account for the initial purchase and outfitting.

This option was not further pursued because the extra costs did not justify the extra availability of full-size vehicles.

Option 3: Use of Mid-size vehicles for an Eight (8) Year Life

Procuring City owned vehicles and using them exclusively in the SLO Program for an eight (8) year service life was also examined. While this option would be cost neutral when compared to the practice of rotating the vehicles within the VPD after 3 years, it was found to be an inefficient use of fleet resources due to the relatively low anticipated usage of the vehicles and as such was deemed unsatisfactory.

Financial Implications

The table below lists the anticipated costs for City owned and donated vehicle options. City owned units are included in the analysis because the City will have to purchase vehicles for the SLO Program if corporate sponsorship is not available. Mid-size vehicles with 4 cylinder engines were used for the base vehicle analysis and funding request and as such are deemed appropriate for the SLO Program application.

The following table summarizes the financial implications of the two (2) vehicle procurement options.

Procurement Option	Vehicle Class	Vehicles	Capital Cost		Annualized Cost per Unit			Annual Cost	Existing Funding	Net Increase
			Per Unit	For Program	Capital	Operating	Net Cost	For Program		
City Purchase	Mid-Size	15	\$31,200	\$499,200	\$4,700	\$ 3,300	\$8,000	\$ 120,000	(\$28,000)	\$ 91,200
*Donation	Compact	15	\$ -		\$ -	\$ 4,200	\$4,200	\$ 63,000	(\$28,000)	\$ 34,200

*Operating cost provision includes annual cost of outfitting and decommissioning.

The City will attempt to obtain corporate sponsorship of the SLO fleet as a means of covering capital costs of the sponsored vehicles. The two (2) procurement options show that the fleet costs for the SLO Program require an increase of between \$34,200 and \$91,200 in the annual VPD operating budget.

CONCLUSION

The VPD has been successful in initiating and maintaining the SLO Program to address specific crime and community relations issues, which flow directly from the VPD's Strategic Plan. The continuation of this successful Program requires the addition of fifteen (15) vehicles and the option to seek sponsorship has the ability to further enhance the existing Program while saving the City substantial costs.

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