



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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Report Date: March 22, 2011  
Contact: A/Inspector Mike Purdy EOPS - VPD  
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RTS No.: 9146  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: April 19, 2011

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Chief Constable Jim Chu  
SUBJECT: Estimate of the Policing Cost for the 2011 Stanley Cup Playoffs

### RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

### CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMENTS

The cost for this substantial policing need is not included in the 2011 police budget. The VPD is committed to giving Council advanced warning of significant expenditures, such as the Stanley Cup Playoffs, that will affect the VPD's ability to complete the year within budget.

Past extended playoff runs by teams in Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary have required significant deployments and expenses to maintain safety.

### CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS that Council receive the foregoing.

### POLICY

There is no applicable Council policy.

## SUMMARY

The cost for policing the spontaneous celebrations that result from Stanley Cup playoff games has a significant impact on the VPD budget as these events are not budgeted for.

## PURPOSE

The city of Vancouver is host to a vast number of events each year. People from throughout the lower mainland are drawn to the city to experience the variety of entertainment available at these events. Last year's 2010 Olympics and the accompanying Gold Medal Hockey Game saw the largest crowds in Vancouver's history come to the area of Granville and Robson Streets to celebrate.

A number of these celebrations can be categorized as regional events rather than civic in that the majority of the people attending are residents of other parts of the lower mainland rather than Vancouver. The citizens of Vancouver represent only 27% of the population of the region. Yet this small number of citizens is forced to pay for the policing of large regional events without the financial assistance of other municipalities.

The Vancouver Canucks appear to be poised for a playoff run. A consequence of a successful local sports franchise is that large numbers of fans gather together and celebrate wins or commiserate losses during the playoffs. Vancouver has witnessed this going back as far as 1994. Lower mainland residents tend to gather on Robson Street or the Granville Entertainment District (GED) in Vancouver and a visible police presence is required to ensure the safety and security of these citizens.

Other Canadian jurisdictions have had similar issues during the Stanley Cup playoffs. Both Calgary in 2004 and Edmonton in 2006 had problems with celebratory crowds in their downtown entertainment districts after playoff games. Both cities deployed enormous police resources into the area of these celebrations and were able to maintain reasonable control of the situation. A major difference between these two cities and Vancouver is that the people in the crowds were primarily citizens of the city rather than regional citizens as is our situation.

Operational deployment to manage the crowds must be at a level that ensures the safety of the public and VPD members. The cost for policing any playoff run can not be anticipated in the yearly operational budget because it would be speculative at the time of budget development. However, by the use of reports from the 2009 - 2010 seasons as well as referring to the 1994 "Riot Review Report", the resource needs for crowd management can be forecast.

Similar reports were prepared and submitted for the years 2007, 2009 and 2010 to ensure that the Police Board and City Council were aware of this extraordinary expenditure that may negatively affect the VPD's budget position.

## BACKGROUND

Crowds gathering to show support for local sports teams are not a new phenomenon; this has been occurring for decades. However there have been significant changes in the nature of these crowds, specifically an unfortunate change in the attitude of the people who join in the crowds.

Our local experience began in the playoff run of 1994 when the Canucks were able to win their way to the Stanley Cup final. In the first two rounds of the playoffs the celebrations were relatively short, loud and harmless. As the playoffs progressed the crowds became larger and more vociferous. During the Stanley Cup final people came from throughout the lower mainland to gather on Robson Street. After the Canucks' loss in game 7 of the final a very large crowd gathered on Robson Street. A number of minor events occurred that escalated the negative feelings in this large group. In addition, there was a criminal element present bent on taking advantage of the crowd situation to engage in various criminal activities, including looting. Several physical confrontations occurred and the crowd dynamic changed. The 1994 Stanley Cup Riot ensued.

This event was reviewed and studied and a number of reports were issued. Many recommendations were made. One of the principal recommendations directed that a highly visible and active police presence be dedicated in the area of this type of event prior to the crowd gathering. The belief is that a large visible police presence is a deterrent to those members of the crowd that attend to cause problems.

During the 2004 playoff run the Calgary Police Service deployed their members in a manner similar to what we have done in past years and are proposing to use this year. They deployed significant resources increasing in size for each round. They peaked at deploying approximately 350 members during the Stanley Cup finals. Calgary was unable to provide a total cost for this deployment but advises that the CCU component of the deployment cost \$1.2M. It can be estimated that their total cost was likely double that amount given the number of members deployed. In 2006 Edmonton also followed this deployment model and peaked at about 300 members for the finals. Their total cost was \$2.1M.

In 2007 the Canuck's were eliminated in round 2. During this playoff run the crowds were not as large as in past years and did not remain in the celebration areas for as long. Our actual cost for policing the celebration areas in 2007 was \$238,203. In 2009, the Canucks were again eliminated at the end of round two. Interestingly, the emergence of 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Scott Road in Surrey and Fraser Way in Abbotsford as alternate gathering locations occurred, which spread the problem out. We saw smaller crowds in Vancouver as a result. We had a similar experience in the 2010 Stanley Cup Playoffs. The actual cost for policing these events in 2009 was \$77,628 and \$39,803 in 2010.

Given the success of the 2010 Olympics, we believe that people will again congregate in the Granville/Robson corridors. This issue is complicated with the proliferation of social media which has recently been used to organize large impromptu gatherings in the GED as recently as February 26. This is a factor that the VPD needs to consider when estimating and planning for crowds that could increase as a result of these impromptu events.

With our local experience of crowd behaviour and building on the experience of both Calgary and Edmonton, it is clear that we must deploy police resources to provide safety and security to those citizens that attend to celebrate responsibly while dealing swiftly with those who are intent on causing problems. Our most recent experience allows us to reduce our deployment from that of past years while still allowing us to respond appropriately.

## DISCUSSION

### *Cost Estimate*

The following is the estimated cost for policing the 2011 hockey playoffs based on the current 2011 rate of pay for members at a straight overtime rate. This estimate is based on the assumption that each series will go the maximum seven games. All costs are based on a 5 hour shift as hockey games are normally 3 hours in duration. One factor that would influence shift length would be if the games took place on a Friday or Saturday when premises in the Downtown entertainment district remain open late. Fan reaction will be monitored on a game by game basis and may necessitate an increase in the deployment levels.

The deployment levels for round 3 and 4 are designed to ensure that there is a visible police presence in the downtown core prior to and during the arrival of celebratory fans. In 1994, an estimated 70,000 descended on Robson and Granville Streets and the immediate area after each game.

Included in the estimate is a cost for, only if required, the assistance of neighbouring police agencies. VPD members assigned to Rogers Arena for home games will be cost recoverable and are NOT included in this estimate.

The estimates for each round are:

- Estimate for Round 1 is \$32,884
- Estimate for Round 2 is \$42,254
- Estimate for Round 3 is \$145,202
- Estimate for Round 4 (Finals) is \$427,931
- Total estimate for 2011 Playoffs is \$648,271

This is the expected minimum cost of the deployment. The costs may rise based on fan reaction; however this cost may be reduced should one or more of the series end in fewer than seven games.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2011 Police Budget does not include funding to cover the estimated costs. Both in 2009 and 2010 the VPD was able to cover the costs of the playoffs within its approved operating budget and the VPD intends to do the same in 2011. However, if the nature of the celebrations requires a significant police presence and/or the Vancouver Canucks' playoff performance extends deeply into the playoffs; then these circumstances may increase the VPD's risk of incurring a budget deficit at year-end. Upon completion of the Canucks' playoff efforts (ranging from a minimum of 4 games to a maximum of 28) the VPD will be able to

calculate the final costs and advise the City if they can be covered within the operating budget; if not, then the VPD will require funding from other City sources.

## **SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of this extraordinary police deployment is to ensure the safety and security of the participants of these celebrations as well as the general public safety of all citizens.

## **CONCLUSION**

This proposed deployment plan can be described as our minimum recommended deployment. It is reasonable to anticipate that the crowds in this "post-Olympic" sport celebratory atmosphere will be larger than most years. We anticipate that should the large crowds arrive in the early round of the playoffs we may need to increase the deployment to that of the latter rounds earlier than in previous years.

The cost for this substantial policing need is not included in the 2011 police budget. The VPD is committed to giving Council advanced warning of significant expenditures, such as the Stanley Cup Playoffs, that will affect the VPD's ability to complete the year within budget.

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