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COMMITTEE REPORT

NO: **P005**   DATE: **April 20, 2015**

POLICE COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**   DATE: **April 16, 2015**

FROM: **Bill Fordy, Chief Superintendent**   FILE:
           Officer in Charge, Surrey RCMP

SUBJECT: **Provision of Crime Statistics to the Public**

RECOMMENDATION

The Surrey RCMP recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Detachment's past practice, as well as common practice among municipal police agencies, with respect to the provision of crime statistic and other information on the incidence of crime (e.g., crime maps).

BACKGROUND

The Surrey RCMP has been providing crime statistics on a quarterly basis to the public on the Detachment website (www.surrey.rcmp.ca) since 2006. The quarterly report is intended to create better awareness and understanding of the incidence of crime across Surrey and help inform community engagement in crime prevention. This information has generally been well received by the community and represents some of the most requested information (and most viewed web content).

The quarterly crime stat reports provide offence count totals for select crime types presented in a table format. The crime counts for the current quarter and the year-to-date totals are included, as well as a comparison with that of the year previous. The quarterly crime counts are not broken down further (e.g., into the individual months that comprise the quarter). Crime figures are provided for both the City overall and for each of the five Police Districts, but not at the neighbourhood or block/street level.

During 2014 the Surrey RCMP partnered with the City to build upon the Open Data initiative under the SMART Surrey Strategy and to also explore opportunities to utilize the City's COSMOS application in a crime mapping capacity. When the City launched its open data program on September 9, 2014 the Open Data Catalogue included data sets on select <u>crime and collision incidents</u> comprised of Residential Break and Enter, Business Break and Enter, Shoplifting, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Theft of Motor Vehicle, and Fatal/Injury Collision. These data sets are organized by calendar year and are available for viewing and download (in CSV format) dating back to 2011. The data sets provide detail on the type of incident, the month and year the incident occurred, and the incident location (address rounded to the 100 block).

On September 20 the Public Safety layer on COSMOS was "soft launched" and introduced at the inaugural Surrey RCMP Block Watch Symposium. The incident types included in the Public Safety mapping layer are the same as those that populate the Open Data catalogue data sets. The data is updated on a monthly basis, and the last 6 months of incident data is available and mapped. Mapping visualizations are focused at the neighbourhood level (i.e., incidents and associated attributes are only viewable at a scale of 1:10,000 or under). Incident details include the incident type, the date and time of incident, the location of the incident (rounded to the nearest 100 block), as well as a link to related prevention information on the Surrey RCMP website. While there has been limited promotion or marketing of the crime mapping functionality (outside of the Block Watch Symposium and Neighbourhood Safety Campaign series), a direct link to the crime mapping layer of the COSMOS application has been added to the Surrey RCMP website.

With the launch of the Open Data catalogue and COSMOS crime mapping functionality some consideration was given to whether to discontinue the provision of the quarterly crime stat reports. To this end, research was conducted on how information on the incidents of crime (crime statistics and crime mapping) was being provided by other police agencies. While police agencies across Canada were considered, particular focus was placed on other large and neighbouring municipalities in the Metro Vancouver region (police departments in Vancouver, Delta and Abbotsford). An overview of the findings is provided below.

DISCUSSION

Vancouver Police Department

- Provide crime stat reports on monthly and annual basis
    - Annual – Crime Incident and Crime Rate Statistics for City (as a whole); cover rolling five year period; comprehensive selection (20+) of crime types (violent, property and other offences)
    - Monthly – stat reports detail incidence of crime by District and City totals and a Year End Comparison Report; same crimes as annual report; includes % change figures; past reports dating back to 2002
    - Monthly – stat reports by Neighbourhood; monthly totals and a Year-end Comparison Report; mostly the same crimes as District and Annual Report; no % change figures; reports dating back to 2002
    - 2013 Key Performance Indicators – a 15 page report that speaks to long term trends (multi-year stats) for select violent and property crimes (Category Rates, Homicide, Sexual Offences, Bank Robberies, Shots Fired, Business and Residential B&E's, Theft from Auto), Mental Health Act Apprehensions, Response Times, Traffic Related Injuries/Deaths
- Provide crime maps on a weekly basis for four crime types (Res B&E, Bus B&E, Theft from Auto, Stolen Vehicles); but no back catalogue available (can only see the files for the latest week)

Delta Police Department

- Provide crime stats reports on a monthly basis (dating back to January 2013); they are presented to the Police Board and posted to website
    - Monthly bulletins – focus on five crime types that are also mapped (Robbery, Res B&E, Bus B&E, Theft from Auto, Theft of Auto); monthly stats broken down by District, along with some descriptive detail on nature of the offences (e.g. MO,

status of investigation); no YTD or % change figures in this report, but it does provide monthly totals for last 6 months for each crime for City overall)

- o Monthly stats – for comprehensive selection (20+) of crime types (select violent and property crimes, as well as Bylaws, False Alarms, Roadside Suspensions) by month and YTD, but only for City as whole (no District breakdown); includes % change
- Annual crime stats provided in annual report – three year comparison of # of incidents for select violent and property crimes, as well as collisions and total CFS; include % change 2013-2014 Annual Report
- Crime maps are also provided on a monthly basis for 5 crime types (Robbery, Res B&E, Bus B&E, Theft from Auto, Theft of Auto)

Abbotsford Police Department

- Provide crime stats on a regular basis (not monthly, but every four weeks for 13 periods per year)
    - o Reports available dating back to 2009, but underwent a transition as of Period 6 2014 when reports changed from 'Monthly Compstat' to 'Monthly Operational Stats' report
    - o 'Monthly Operational Stats' – stats for crime categories and select violent crimes (Robbery, Sexual Violations, Assault, K files) and property crimes (B&E, Theft from Auto, Theft of Auto, Shoplifting, Mischief, Fraud), as well as collisions; provide period totals YTD and also compare (% change) to year previous for period and YTD; stats presented in graphic/chart form as opposed to table
    - o 'Monthly Compstat' – stats for select violent and property crime types and other operational information (Traffic Collisions, RTCC's, Street Checks, IRP, CFS, 911 Calls, Non-Roadable Members); includes % change from previous period and YTD for City total; provided in table format (no charts/graphs)
- Crime maps provided using Crime Reports; includes Arson, B&E, Kidnapping, Property Crime, Robbery, Theft, Theft from Vehicle, Theft of Vehicle, Vehicle Recovery; incident data available for last 6 months but users can only view 30 consecutive days at a time

Surrey RCMP

- Provide crime stat reports on quarterly and annual basis
    - o Annual – Surrey Crime Profile posted to website in 2014 (the first time this report was shared publically); provides Crime Incident and Crime Rate Statistics for City as a whole (no District breakdown) over a 10 year period; comprehensive selection (30+) of crime types (violent, property and other offences); also provides 10 year trend for Crime Severity Index and Weighted Clearance Rates
    - o Annual – Surrey Open Data Catalogue includes crime and collision incident data sets (i.e., Residential Break and Enter, Business Break and Enter, Shoplifting, Theft from Motor Vehicle, Theft of Motor Vehicle, and Fatal/Injury Collision); incident location data is limited to the 100 block level; annual data sets dating back to 2011
    - o Quarterly – stat reports detail incidence of crime by District and City totals for the quarter and year to date total; comprehensive selection (25+) of crime types (select violent and property crimes along with other CC and CDSA offences; includes % change figures; past reports dating back to 2012
- Provide crime maps on a monthly basis for five crime types (Res B&E, Bus B&E, Theft from Auto, Stolen Vehicles, Shoplifting) as well as collisions (involving death or injury); no back

catalogue available (can only see the files for the last 6 months); information is not rolled-up (summarized or aggregated) and can only be viewed at the neighbourhood level
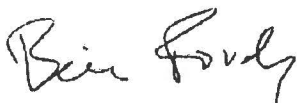
Common Practices

The degree to which information is shared (e.g. level of detail) and the manner (e.g. frequency, format, etc) in which it is shared varies. However, most agencies provide regular crime stat reports as well as crime mapping functionality. Crime Stat reports are commonly published on a monthly basis, although some agencies (e.g., Calgary Police Service) provide stats quarterly. The crime types most often include a number of both violent and property crimes, as well as other incident data (e.g. Collisions and Calls for Service). Typically crime stat reports focus on City as a whole (City totals), but neighbourhood breakdowns are provided by some agencies. While stats at a neighbourhood level are often a key feature of online crime mapping applications, Vancouver and Delta provide crime maps as static PDF documents that show crime across the entire City (although Vancouver's map includes the neighbourhood boundaries).

There is also variation in terms of the delivery mechanisms used (i.e., how information is made available). Police agencies typically provide information directly to the public via police websites and online applications. In some instances, information is provided by way of reports first submitted directly to City Councils and/or their respective Police Boards or Committees. However, with this latter approach there is often an administrative time lag in making the information available to the general public, as reports move their way through governance processes (e.g., from first reading to approval and eventual posting online).

CONCLUSION

Upon review, the Surrey RCMP is recommending that we continue the practice of publishing crime stat reports to the Detachment website on a quarterly basis, in addition to monthly updates of crime information in both the City's Open Data catalogue and the crime maps on COSMOS. In its totality, it is keeping with the City's Open Data and Smart Surrey's goals to be a leader in this area. This approach will provide for more comprehensive information on crime statistics and trends across the City as well as at a more localized level. Further, the current crime mapping functionality within COSMOS will be more actively promoted for use by community stakeholders to help inform community engagement and crime prevention efforts. Consideration may also be given to enhancing the crime mapping functionality to include additional crime types and visualization tools.

The reporting of crime data is separate and distinct from the targets and measures contained in our strategic framework – key performance index.

Chief Superintendent Bill Fordy
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Surrey RCMP

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