

BUSINESS CASE

Front Desk Alternative Service Delivery

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The Strategic Context

Problem Statement

The core services offered to the public could be more cost effectively provided to the public, while introducing efficiencies by reducing the need for full constables to come off the road to address work at the front counter.

Business Need Summary

The Front Desk is one of several ways we interact and the public receives service from the Department. Patrol, Information Management, Community Engagement and Finance all provide services through the Front Desk. There is a lot of complexity with that service delivery, the highest demand from the public being from Patrol and Information Management, although no one Division clearly owns the services provided. Many of the services provided through the front desk carry a high value to the public and a high reputational risk to the public if not properly delivered.

Background

The Community Engagement Division is currently performing a review of current and future state requirements for the Front Desk and unfortunately a complete recommendation will not likely be forthcoming until the budget process is well underway. It is important; however, to request funds to enhance services at the front desk proactively so we don't have to wait until 2023 to make the necessary changes to this essential service delivery.

The range of services provided by the Front Desk is significant. Patrol delivers a variety of services, including subpoenas, warrants, file review, property and fingerprinting. Community Engagement provides general enquiry services to the public, and general administration tasks internally. The Front Desk is the main portal for the Finance to receive deliveries, building visitors and contractors. The Information Management Division provides Police Information Checks, Exhibit Control Services, Switchboard services and online information requests.

Current State

Service to the public is primarily delivered through a combination of volunteers and Patrol resources. Scheduling of volunteers is dependable and they provide great customer services. They do, however, lack the expertise to assist the public on many issues and many services requested by the public require specialized skills or the assistance of police knowledge. We often have difficulties staffing police positions at the front desk due to staffing shortages and increased workloads, and although the services members provide at the front desk are invaluable, they take away from our response capacity on the front lines.

A review of the specific needs is underway and specific recommendations will be forthcoming on the nature and roles of the positions. This may involve the recruitment of professional customer service civilians or a program to recruit and retain retired police officers, likely into special constable roles. It is clear; however, that professionalization of the front desk is required, as is relief of our Patrol resources.

Drivers for Business Need

The main driver for change is the lack of resources available through Patrol. We are experiencing significant shortages in Patrol so providing support to the Front Desk reduces the resources available to provide core Patrol services to the public. A similar type of model is already in place in Esquimalt through the provision of two full time civilian positions. The proposed solution would provide an enhanced version of this service through the employment of two specialists, capable of providing support to the public currently provided by police officers and special municipal constables.

Risk Assessment

Benefits to the Organization:

- Reduces resource pressures on Patrol
- Enhances the value of service provided to the public
- Promotes public accountability and trust
- Improves coordination and ownership of the services provided at the front desk

Consequences of not adding the position:

- Continued resource pressures on Patrol
- Lack of ownership and potential decline in service to the public
- Reputational risk to the organization

Recommendation and Resource Requirements

Resource Request

It is recommended that VicPD create two full-time equivalent positions for the front desk. Analysis is currently underway on the best approach to staffing these positions. Current options are being explored, but a possible approach is to designate these positions as special municipal constable positions occupied by retired police officers. This approach may afford many of the benefits of having a police officer at the front desk at a reduced while attaining a reduction in the need for full constables to come off the road to provide service to members of the public at the front desk.

Based on the current hours of service to the public this would free up a minimum of 1,984 hours of existing police officer time each year. By deferring implementation until May the implementation costs in the first year of operations can also be reduced. The hourly rate of a Special Municipal Constable is 45% less than that of a fully qualified Constable, offering a lower cost alternative that can be resourced from a readily available labor pool as we continue to experience challenges in maintaining our deployable strength of police officers.

Resource Requirements

Estimated Start Date	2022 Impact				Full Year Impact	
	One-Time	Ongoing	Total	% Impact on Budget	Ongoing	% Impact on Budget
May-22	-	112,613	112,613	0.19%	150,150	0.25%