



To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** November 28, 2001
From: Shawn Issel **File:** -
Manager, Divisional Programs
Re: Replacement of Community Safety Buildings - Communications Strategy

Staff Recommendation

That the Communications Strategy for the Replacement of Community Safety Buildings be approved.

Shawn Issel
Manager, Divisional Programs

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Staff Report

Origin

This report accompanies the “Replacement of Community Safety Buildings – Site Options” report. A cross-divisional team with representation from several departments, including Fire/Rescue, RCMP, Facilities Planning and Communications was created in September. The mandate of this team is to identify, develop and implement a plan to manage the major tasks associated with the replacement of the Community Safety Buildings.

This first report overviews the key tasks in the plan and addresses the need for a communications strategy to create awareness and support in the community for replacing Community Safety Buildings.

Analysis

Although the “Replacement of Community Safety Buildings – Site and Financing Options” report contains several site and funding options, there are three major components of the replacement plan that remain constant:

- **Community Input** - a communication strategy to build support for the project in the community and to gather input on what community functions might be included in each building.
- **Building Design** - designing the buildings taking into consideration the site selected, the neighbourhood location and the needs of internal and external stakeholders.
- **Funding Process** - working with key departments to identify the funding process and, in the event of a referendum, to develop the referendum bylaw and any associated reports.

Table 1 shows the timeline for major tasks. The completion dates were developed to accommodate a referendum being held in November 2002. The dates may be adjusted if internal financing is used.

Table 1

Task	Completion
Siting and funding options report to closed Community Safety Committee	December 11
Communications Strategy – Phase I - Media campaign	January
Acquire sites for locations	End of January
Sites acquired and report to Council	February
Consultants to work with Facilities Planning and Community Safety Staff on functional design	February - April

Task	Completion
Communications Strategy – Phase II - Neighbourhood Meetings - Public Information Program	March – April May - June
Report to Community Safety Committee with detailed designs and costs	June
Referendum Bylaw & Associated Reports (if required)	October

It is staff's intention to bring forward interim progress reports to Committee as key milestones are reached.

Communications Strategy

The team recognized the magnitude of the cost to replace Community Safety Buildings could be a cause for a concern in the community unless an appropriate communications plan to support the project was developed. The team is proposing a two phase communications plan:

Phase I

Initially the community needs to become aware of the condition of the current buildings and the need for replacement. This should occur before the site locations and financial impact become public knowledge. A media campaign is suggested which outlines:

- The condition of the current buildings, based on the building audits
- The importance of community safety to Council and the community
- The need to have 'first responders' able to respond quickly and efficiently

The team proposes:

- A media tour of the buildings, with the participation of the Community Safety Committee Chair, and senior Fire and RCMP personnel.
- A 'FAQ' Sheet for Mayor and Councillors to provide background information on the condition of the buildings,

Phase II

The second phase of the communications plan will be to build support for replacing the buildings and to gather input on design and location. The team proposes the following steps:

- Publicizing the replacement plan in the local media.
- Holding informal neighbourhood meetings to build support and gather input. The information gathered from the neighbourhood meetings would be used to assist in the design of the buildings.
- Holding larger Public Information sessions with displays showing design and location of buildings would include participation of divisional staff in all departments.

- Developing a 'FAQ' Sheet with background information on the condition of the buildings, replacement locations, costs and replacement schedule.
- Posting information on the website
- In the event of a referendum, notices in local papers, including the referendum question.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

At this time there is no financial impact. As the communications strategy becomes more defined there will be some costs associated with advertising and holding community input sessions, which would be funded from the project.

CONCLUSION

The cross-divisional Team will continue to develop the specific components of the Community Safety Buildings Replacement plan and will provide Committee with status reports as milestones are reached.

Shawn Issel
Manager, Divisional Programs