



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Community Safety Committee

Date: September 6, 2006

From: Ward Clapham
Officer in Charge

File: 09-5000-00/Vol 01

Re: Integrated Homicide Investigation Team Increase in Resources

Staff Recommendation

That the attached staff report regarding the increase in resources for the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team be received for information, and

That the increase for IHIT be considered as an additional level for the 2007 budget process.

Ward Clapham
Officer in Charge
(4741)

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Budgets	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO
					YES
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					NO
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Staff Report

Origin

The Lower Mainland District has forwarded to the City a business case regarding an increase in the complement for IHIT (Integrated Homicide Investigation Team). There is a financial impact associated with this increase therefore staff thought it prudent to provide a summary of the business case to Council.

Analysis

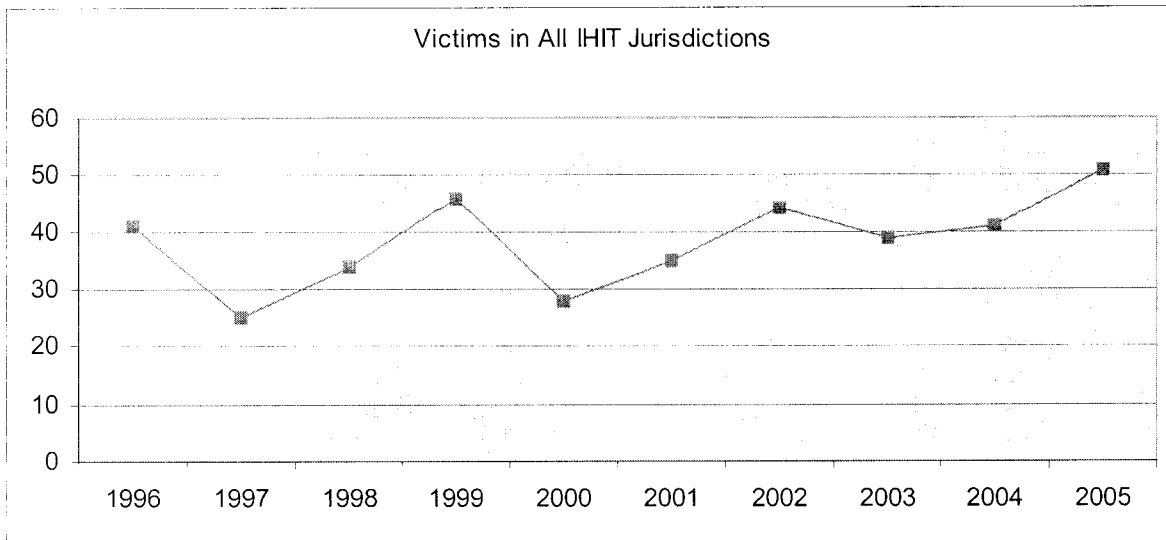
IHIT was established in June, 2003, with a complement of 46 investigators, representing 15 communities (RCMP departments) in the lower mainland. IHIT now has 60 investigators representing 23 communities (including 4 with municipal police departments). Delta and Vancouver are the only lower mainland communities that are not part of IHIT, however discussions are underway regarding their integration into the unit.

IHIT was established based on the premise that homicide investigation has no municipal borders. A homicide might be committed in one municipality but the body might be discovered in another. Where the victim is located is where the criminal investigation begins. IHIT was designed to provide a seamless approach to homicide investigation. IHIT is also responsible for investigating suspicious deaths, police shootings, in-custody deaths, serious attempted murders and missing persons where foul play is suspected.

IHIT is now recognized as a world class operation, regarded as a leader in homicide investigation by many police agencies. Pre-IHIT homicide clearance rates for the large lower mainland detachments was approximately 50%. From 2003 to 2005 IHIT has averaged a 75% clearance rate.

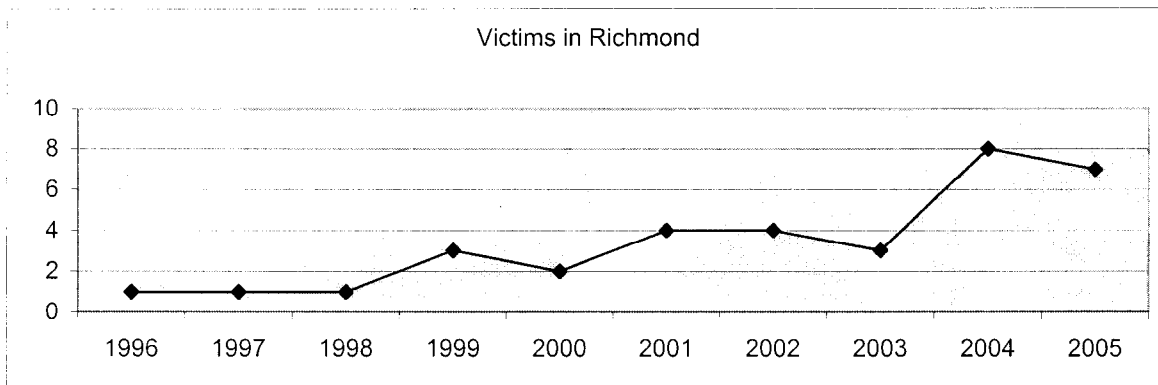
However, IHIT has identified a number of factors which are affecting the performance of the team. Homicide investigation has become more complex over the past 10-15 years. The average murder trial which used to take six weeks now averages 12 weeks due in part to increased use of sophisticated investigational techniques. The body of law related to homicide investigations is constantly evolving. Case Law resulting for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms has had an effect on policing workload and costs. The jurisdictions served by IHIT are experiencing growth with a corresponding increase in the number of homicides to investigate. Yet, there has been no increase to the IHIT complement other than through the addition of new municipal partners and detachments.

The graph below illustrates the number of homicides investigated between 1996 and 2006 for the 23 communities that are now part of IHIT.



From January to May 15, 2006 IHIT responded to 26 homicides. As a comparator, Toronto, Ontario experienced 22 homicides.

The second graph illustrates the number of homicides that have occurred in Richmond in the same period of time.



In order to address the factors identified, the LMD is proposing to add 24 new investigators to compensate for the additional workload the unit is experiencing - 8 new investigators in each year from 2006 to 2008. Provincial Police Services approved fully funding the 8 new investigators for 2006, therefore there was no cost increase to municipalities this year. However, there will be a cost increase in 2007 when the next 8 investigators are added, and a further increase in 2008 when the last 8 investigators are added.

Homicide investigations can be extremely costly. The first 72 hours is the most critical, necessitating round the clock investigation. The funding formula used to determine each municipalities share of the cost is based on a five year rolling average of 25% population and 75% criminal code cases. Therefore, no one municipality is required to bear the brunt of a homicide investigation that occurs within their jurisdiction.

Financial Impact

Although the number of homicide investigations in Richmond has increased over the past three years the cost of investigating these homicides has been mitigated by the funding formula that was approved by the municipalities when IHIT was created.

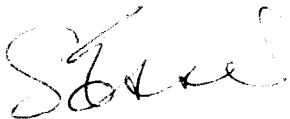
For the 2007 operating budget \$713,227 has been included in the base level for the cost of IHIT. The total cost of the IHIT increase to all municipalities is \$1,350,000. The cost of the increase to Richmond would be \$71,988, based on Richmond's share, which is 7.9%. This has been included in the 2007 Additional Levels Requests. It is worth noting that Richmond's share of IHIT has dropped from 8.26% in 2006 due to an increase in participation by other cities.

The increase in 2008 when the last 8 investigators are added will be similar with adjustments for inflation and any salary increases.

The increase for IHIT is the number one priority for the RCMP with respect to the additional levels for the 2007 budget. If the Additional Levels Request is not approved then funding will have to be taken out of the Detachment's 2007 Operating Budget.

Conclusion

Since the inception of IHIT in 2003, municipalities have experienced a great degree of comfort in knowing that homicide investigations were being handled by a team of highly skilled and experienced investigators. IHIT's complement has not increased, other than through the integration of new municipal partners and detachments. No increase associated with demand has taken place. The true cost of a homicide investigation which occurs within Richmond is significantly mitigated by the funding formula used to determine the City's share of the cost.



Shawn Issel
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