

RCMP AAP – Communication Plan

Background:

In March 2019, North Cowichan Council agreed in principle to proceed with plans for a new integrated detachment for Municipal and Provincial police and staff. The detachment will be located on property already owned by North Cowichan, located at Ford Road and Drinkwater Road. The new building will bring together the North Cowichan/Duncan Detachment, Forensic Identification Services, South Island Traffic Services, and Indigenous Policing.

Goals:

1. To *inform* the public about the AAP process and Deadline to allow for informed decision-making
2. To *inform* the public about the need for a new RCMP detachment, what the benefits of the new detachment are and the implications of not moving forward with it
3. To *inform* the public about the fiscal impacts of a new detachment

Spokespeople:

North Cowichan's main spokesperson is Mayor Al Siebring. Additional spokespersons may be:

- Ted Swabey, CAO
- Mark Frame, General Manager, Financial and Protective Services
- Megan Jordan, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
- Chris Bear, Inspector, North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment
- Al Siebring, Mayor

Target Audience:

The target audience is residents and non-resident property electors who reside in British Columbia.

Strategy:

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCMP AAP can still move ahead, but more emphasis will be placed on digital communication. It is imperative that the Municipality is transparent with residents and provides key educational materials to the desired audience. In order to ensure the correct information reaches the intended audience, the following tools will be used.

Method:

Tool	Type	Method
Website	Owned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a project page under "current topics" • Include timeline, background, information on the new detachment, implications, etc. • Maintain throughout the life of the project and update continuously with updates and links to official releases • Publish results of AAP and next steps
Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)	Owned /Paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information will be shared through social media linking to the RCMP AAP webpage • Promote the informational video on Facebook • Inform about results of AAP
News Releases	Owned /Earned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News Releases will be published at every milestone • News Released picked up by the local paper maximize North Cowichan's earned media reach • Promote results of AAP • These will be shared with <i>stakeholders</i> and <i>other levels of government</i>
Mail Drop	Paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochure highlighting need for new detachment, cost, policing statistics, and implications of not proceeding with the new detachment distributed to all residents, and an elector response form
Video	Paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A short video will be produced by a local videography company that explains the need for the new detachment, financial implications and overviews the AAP. This will be promoted on social media and boosted to reach a large audience.
OpEds	Earned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OpEds (i.e. opposite editorial page) can be submitted to the local media by key spokespeople in order to help illustrate the need for a new detachment, address misinformation, and provide useful information. • Photographs detailing the condition of the existing detachment should be submitted to help illustrate the need for a new detachment in lieu of a media tour
Radio Interviews	Earned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews should be scheduled with key Spokespeople, and aired at no cost to North Cowichan
Newspaper Ads	Paid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper ads will be used to run the statutory required notices.

Tool	Type	Method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A more detailed newspaper Ad campaign could be considered if digital ads do not seem to be reaching enough of the intended audience (at an additional cost – not currently included in the budget)

Budget:

Type	Cost per Item	Total Cost
Newspaper Ads (4 1/8 page ads – 2 in Cowichan Valley Citizen & 2 in Chemainus Courier)	\$280	\$1,120
Mail Drop	N/A	\$3,500
Video	N/A	\$1,600
Total		\$6,100

**Note: all costs subject to applicable taxes*

Key Messages:

- **Fast Facts**
 1. The North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP Detachment is a Municipal and Provincial detachment with members that work in an integrated manner.
 2. There are 32 Municipal members, 24 Provincial members, four First Nations Police members, and 23 support staff.
 3. The existing detachment was built in 1980 to serve an original workforce of approximately 30.
 4. The existing detachment is falling apart.
 5. A new detachment will cost around \$40M to construct. North Cowichan would borrow this amount, and the RCMP would pay back about 60%. Building a new detachment will require about a 4% tax increase, phased in over 2019-2021. **The total cumulative cost to the average homeowner will be about \$65.**

- **Need for a New Detachment**
 1. A new RCMP detachment is badly needed. The current detachment no longer meets building standards or health, safety, space, and security requirements. It has ongoing issues with rodents, leaking, flooding, and lack of adequate space. The existing building must be replaced.
 2. RCMP require a “suitable building.” If North Cowichan and Duncan residents don’t take the initiative to replace the detachment, the RCMP will likely build it themselves at a higher cost and we will be required to repay them.

3. Renovating would likely cost far more than building a new detachment, upgrading the existing cells would cost approximately \$1 Million alone. The current site where the detachment is situated is too small to house the size of facility that is needed. The old RONA building has been proposed frequently as a good option for the new detachments since a structure is already there. This also would likely cost more than building a new detachment. The structure itself is too large, would require extensive security upgrades, cells, and it would be largely unsafe to have police vehicles passing through the Cowichan Commons Centre.
4. The new detachment will be built on land North Cowichan purchased in [2014] specifically for a new detachment. The land is located on the corner of Ford and Drinkwater Roads, across from the Cowichan Commons Commercial Centre (see map).
5. The new detachment will bring together the North Cowichan/Duncan Detachment, Forensic Identification Services, South Island Traffic Services, and Indigenous Policing. This integrated detachment will be more efficient than the current model, where these teams are located in different buildings. The 'hub' model facilitates better coordination of police services, 24/7 coverage, and better information sharing about crime trends.
6. The new building is expected to serve our community's needs for 50 years.

- **Financial & AAP**

1. A new detachment will cost around \$40M to construct. This money has to be borrowed from the Municipal Finance Authority and repaid over time.
2. North Cowichan would borrow 100% of the debt up-front and bill the RCMP for just under 60% of the debt payments over the course of the loan.
3. It is expected to take 20 years to repay North Cowichan's portion of the debt.
4. Building a new detachment will require about a 4% tax increase, phased in over 2019-2021. **Over these three years, the total cumulative cost to the average homeowner will be about \$65.**
5. North Cowichan needs citizen consent to borrow the money to construct the new detachment. Consent will be sought through an Alternative Approval Process. Under an AAP, if 10% of the population oppose the proposal, North Cowichan will reconsider how to proceed.
6. Providing a suitable building is a requirement of North Cowichan's RCMP contract. If North Cowichan does not borrow this money and construct the detachment, the other two options are: 1) The RCMP could build the building and charge the cost back to North Cowichan. This would be at a higher cost to the taxpayer than if North Cowichan were to borrow the funds and build the building; or 2) to conduct another referendum based on a smaller detachment, which would also likely be at a higher cost to North Cowichan taxpayers.