Hamilton Police Services Board

SUBJECT: CCTV Camera Program Expansion (City Wide) (PSB02-033f)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report PSB02-033f respecting CCTV Camera Program Expansion be received.

Lois Morin, Administrator
Police Services Board

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Police Services Board met on Monday, September 15, 2008 and respectfully submits the above recommendation which, the Police Board approved.
ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES:

(see attached report PSB 02-033f)

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

(see attached report PSB 02-033f)

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

(see attached report PSB 02-033f)

CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES:

(see attached report PSB 02-033f)

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

(see attached report PSB 02-033f)

Attachment: PSB 02-033f
CCTV Camera Program Expansion

cc Chief Brian J. Mullan, Hamilton Police Service
HAMILTON POLICE SERVICES BOARD

- INFORMATION -

DATE: 2008 August 27

REPORT TO: Chairman and Members
Hamilton Police Services Board

FROM: Brian J. Mullan
Chief of Police

SUBJECT: CCTV Camera Program Expansion
(PSB-02-033f)

BACKGROUND:

The Hamilton Police Service is expanding the current Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Program as recommended by the Police Services Board in the fall of 2006.

In 1998, during the Hamilton Police Service business planning process, it was suggested that the use of CCTV cameras could have an impact in crime prevention, detection and deterrent. One of the recommendations from the C.O.P.P. 2000 report was that the use of CCTV cameras could be a significant deterrent strategy and crime prevent tool for the Hamilton Police Service.

In the early part of 2000, the idea of CCTV cameras was introduced to two (2) downtown business improvement areas (B.I.A.), and there was strong support from the business community in supporting the undertaking of the Hamilton Police Service of piloting such a program.

In 2002, extensive community consultation was conducted under the direction of the Police Services Board, as recommended by the Ontario Information and Privacy Commission, for the use of video surveillance cameras in public places. Policies were developed and after community consultation that overwhelming supported the use of CCTV cameras, the Hamilton Police Service worked towards implementing the pilot project.

In March, 2003, the Police Services Board sought the approval of City Council to implement a two (2) year pilot project involving the installation of CCTV cameras in downtown Hamilton. Council approved the pilot project and after resolving several technology problems, the CCTV Pilot Project was officially launched on June 3, 2004.
The CCTV program was to operate for a two (2) year pilot project, which ended on May 31, 2006. An evaluation committee was struck to determine the feasibility of the CCTV Program, as well as the public support and the impact of crime prevention that should occur in the core.

In October 2006, the final report was submitted to the Police Services Board indicating that the pilot project was a success, not only in the reduction of crime in the specific targeted areas but also in public acceptance of the use of this crime prevention tool. As a result of the community consultation, as completed by this evaluation committee, the CCTV Steering Committee showed that 92% of those surveyed believed the cameras have a positive effect in the deterrence, detection and suppression of crime. Also, there was 89% support for the use of CCTV cameras by the Hamilton Police Service.

As a result of this positive feedback from the community, the CCTV Steering Committee supported the expansion of the CCTV cameras in the City of Hamilton. The Police Services Board, as a direct result of the report, supported the enhancement of the CCTV program throughout the City of Hamilton.

A CCTV Implementation Committee, headed by Deputy Chief Ken Leendertse, was created for the expansion of our current CCTV program with the focus on increasing the current complement of cameras by 10 in high risk areas in the city. The committee has now completed its work and will be implementing the recommendations.

RESEARCH

The current five (5) cameras located in the downtown core are hard wired back to Central Police Station where they are connected to viewing monitors. The images are digitally recorded 24 hours per day, seven (7) days a week, throughout the year. The original costs of the cameras was approximately $60,000.00, however the system is currently six (6) years old and is a partial fiber optic system. The expansion of this type of system is not financially feasible as conduits would have to be placed throughout the entire city in order for the fiber wire to be connected to our system. It was the only viable solution at the time it was implemented. During our research of best practices, the Committee looked at several implementations, including Wi-Fi connection, internet protocol (I.P.), as well as Evolution Data Optimizer (EVDO). Each system has its shortfalls and benefits because of the current landscape as well as the difficulties of placing signals throughout the city, in or around tall buildings, as well as environment that may affect the system. A system recording capability as well as frames per second and controls of the cameras were all important aspects to examine prior to the expansion of this system.
In 2007, the Hamilton Police Service piloted the Internet protocol (I.P.) cameras as well as a Wi-Fi camera in Memorial Park in Waterdown. This was the specific site tested not only because there were concerns about vandalism at the park, but it also provided the distance as well as testing capabilities, which would see the feasibility of both systems. The EVDO system, as offered by Bell Mobility, is still not advanced enough to provide the sufficient frames per second as well as controls needed to make CCTV camera system effective. Although this system will be capable in the future, it could offer significant benefits of being able to place a camera in remote locations and receive signals back, which will create an excellent opportunity for intelligence gathering as well as a specific mobility in our response to troubled areas. At this time, the EVDO solution is not a viable solution.

The current Wi-Fi camera in Waterdown has numerous pitfalls and the tests showed that the Internet protocol (I.P.) solution was the most appropriate, reliable and had the best cost option. This one (1) year test has determined that the most cost effective way to expand this program is through the Internet protocol, which gives the operator full control of the system as well as the advancement of cameras and technology, a crisper image and more expandable system. The advantages of the Internet protocol (I.P.) solution is that these cameras can be controlled from any computer within the Hamilton Police Service and it is not restricted to the CCTV monitoring system that was implemented during the fiber wire cameras of the original pilot project.

**EXPANSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

In determining the best location for the expansion of the CCTV program, the Divisional Commanders and Crime Managers, working with the community, located and prioritized the areas that would most benefit from the placement of CCTV in their prospective divisions. In Division One, James Street North was identified with the new business association as a priority. As well, Hess Street Village would benefit greatly from the use of CCTV technology. In Division Two, the Ottawa Street Business Community was identified as their priority and in Division Three, the Commanders, along with Crime Managers, identified the Concession Street business area as a priority for CCTV technology.

The CCTV Internet protocol (I.P.) solution allows for streaming of CCTV cameras right into any computer, as well as allows for the future capability for cameras to be monitored in mobility data terminals in police cruisers. This technology can also be used for hand held devices for officers walking the Beat who may wish to monitor cameras in their specific beat areas. During major events, the cameras could also be monitored in our Communication Centre and possibly Command Centres.
Because the technology has improved and the cost of the equipment has decreased, it allows us to expand the current system to meet the needs and demands for CCTV. At current prices, including installation, the average price for two (2) cameras is approximately $10,000.00 plus associated back-end costs depending on accessibility of the city network.

NEXT STEPS

During the initial planning stages, the Committee found a report from London, England that shows that CCTV operators can only effectively monitor four (4) cameras at a time. The benefit of the CCTV cameras, even though they may not be monitored, is that they do record on a 24/7 basis and our current policy holds the data for 72 hours. This will allow sufficient time to gather information on activities that may have occurred in the area and to assist in criminal investigations. Proper signage also acts as a crime deterrent.

Technology is also able to allow for portable monitoring of CCTV cameras in high crime areas. A portable unit could be set up in a specific area to monitor the activities. This has been shown to be very effective during the Caribana Festivals with the Toronto Police Service.

One of the challenges identified as we expand the CCTV monitoring location is that the facilities that we currently use are cramped and not effective to monitor the additional cameras. One of the solutions is to have CCTV cameras monitored at other locations, in particular, the Mountain locations of Memorial Park and Concession Street can be monitored by the front desk personnel at the Mountain Station. Likewise, Ottawa Street North can be monitored by the East End Station Duty Officers with the additional cameras of James Street North, being monitored by the current system. Hess Street cameras will be used specifically during the high activity times, which are Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. These cameras can be accessed during these times to assist in deployment, as well as proactive deployment to prevent disturbances prior to them occurring.

As we move forward with the CCTV camera expansion, issues of monitoring facilities and monitoring equipment still need to be addressed, however with these specific locations (James Street, Concession Street, Ottawa Street and Hess Street), all are identified as high traffic areas, we believe that the expansion of this program will continue to meet the original goals of the CCTV program as well as add an additional tool to deter crime and anti-social behaviour.
Brian J. Mullan
Chief of Police

BJM/K. Leendertse