

# Report

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Date December 12, 2023  
Subject New Position Request RCMP FIS/IDENT Member

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File:

## PURPOSE

To consider adding one additional RCMP officer to the Municipal complement (33 Members) as a Forensic Identification Specialist (FIS).

## BACKGROUND

Currently, North Cowichan and Duncan municipalities and most of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) receive FIS services from Nanaimo. Shawnigan Lake receives services from Victoria. Since 2008, E Division has proposed the creation of an FIS unit in the North Cowichan/Duncan area to help improve service delivery levels to the same as the rest of the Island District.

## DISCUSSION

A newly created North Cowichan/Duncan Integrated FIS unit is to be located within the new RCMP Detachment building, which will relocate one Provincial FIS position from Nanaimo and one Provincial FIS position from Victoria. The addition of a Municipal FIS position will ensure the same service levels regardless of the jurisdictional boundaries. Additionally, a 2018 District Integrated Forensic Identification Services Summary Report identified the need for a Sergeant to oversee the two Provincial positions.

The creation of this position will enable opportunities for on-site training and more frequent training for front-line members. Greater file attendance also creates a greater chance of evidence recovery, more significant contributions to local crime reduction strategies and increased community presence.

## OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include an FIS/IDENT Officer in the 2025 budget.
  - This gives pre-budget approval to the new position and allows the RCMP to begin the lengthy recruitment process during 2024 to enable the officer to be in place early in 2025.
2. THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include an FIS/IDENT Officer in a future budget year.
  - This could result in an underutilization of IFIS to support crime reduction strategies and front-line policing initiatives.

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## IMPLICATIONS

Lack of direct supervision and/or lack of a Municipal FIS officer could result in limited and delayed file review, poor quality control, decreases in overall member wellness, little to no real-time guidance and consistently seeking human resource assistance from neighbouring units.

Staff reached out to E-division to determine if this position could be acquired without increasing North Cowichan's member count of 32; however, this is likely not possible. As such, the current cost per member is \$224,233. Some of this cost would likely be shared with the City of Duncan, and staff will continue to determine the exact amount over the next year.

Approval is necessary early in 2024 as the hiring process for RCMP officers can be quite lengthy, sometimes taking longer than a year. Therefore, there would be no budget impact until 2025.

## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct staff to include an FIS/IDENT Officer in the 2025 budget.

Report prepared by:



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Talitha Soldera, CPA, CGA  
General Manager, Corporate Services

## Approved to be forwarded to Council:



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Ted Swabey  
Chief Administrative Officer