



NIAGARA REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

Police Service Board Report

PUBLIC AGENDA

Subject: Special Fund Request for Auto Theft Prevention Campaign – Faraday Bags

Report To: Chair and Members, Niagara Police Services Board

Report Date: 2024-09-25

Recommendation(s)

That the Niagara Police Service Board approves a special fund request of \$5,000.00 for the Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS) to continue distribution of faraday bags in support of the ongoing Auto Theft Prevention campaign.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's approval for a \$5,000.00 Special Fund donation for the NRPS for the continued distribution of faraday bags to Niagara residents.
- The Service is a member of the provincial strategy to prevent auto thefts and conducts investigations in partnership with Ontario Police Services and International Partners. This investigative initiative has been made possible by a grant from the Ministry of the Solicitor General.
- The distribution is combined with an on going comprehensive social media campaign aimed at reducing auto theft within Niagara.
- Faraday bags are made available to residents at District front desks across the Niagara Region.

Financial Considerations

- \$5,000.00 Special Fund request
- The Board has a discretionary pool of funds, which it uses for grants and donations. Disbursements from the fund are in accordance with guidelines provided in the Community Safety and Policing Act (CSPA), and also with Board By-law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines. Section 258 (2) of the CSPA establishes that the Niagara Police Service Board has the sole authority for spending the proceeds from the sale of property which lawfully comes into the possession of the police service. The Act stipulates that "the Chief of Police may cause the property to be sold, and the Board may use the proceeds for any purpose that it considers in the public interest, including charitable donations." These funds do not form part of the police operating budget and are separate from the Regional tax base. If this

request is approved by the Board, the cheque can be made payable to the Niagara Regional Police Service in care of Inspector Nilan Davé.

Analysis

Across Southern Ontario, there has been a rise in thefts targeting vehicles from residential driveways, tourism centres, and commercial parking lots.

Most vehicle thefts occur in large remote parking lots, shopping malls, residential driveways, and unlocked garages.

Auto crimes have become a prevalent issue across Ontario, impacting and compromising safety, security, and the well-being of many residents and communities. Since 2022, auto theft is among the top three generators for organized crime groups.

A report by the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CSIS) reported that Canada witnessed a staggering 62% increase in organized crime groups' involvement in the stolen vehicle market between 2022 and 2023.

There are several factors that have contributed to the increased prevalence in auto crimes, one of which include the disruption of supply chains during the pandemic, that created a shortage of auto manufacturing parts and supply of vehicles. The result was an opportunity to profit from the sale of stolen vehicles in domestic and foreign black markets, and an incentive to use sophisticated innovative methods and technologies to commit these crimes.

The NRPS is a member of the provincial strategy to prevent auto thefts and conducts investigations in partnership with Ontario Police Services and International Partners. This investigative initiative has been made possible by a grant from the Ministry of the Solicitor General, allowing the NRPS to create the Auto Theft Investigation and Prevention Unit.

Additionally, the NRPS is an active participant of the OPP-led Organized Crime Towing and Auto Theft (OCTATT) Unit which conducts joint forces investigations related to identifying, disrupting, and dismantling organized crime networks operating high-level criminal and fraudulent activities related to vehicle crime, auto theft and misconduct in the towing industry.

In addition to crime prevention campaigns already underway, such as the #9pmRoutine, the NRPS is offering faraday bags at District front desks across Niagara to help residents combat this issue. Faraday bags are small pouches that interrupt the signal from a car and its key fob. Car thieves sometimes target and acquire the signal to facilitate the theft of cars.

The initial distribution of faraday bags to the public was well received with over 4000 bags distributed across the Region in less than 24 hours with this interest leading to additional procurement.

The distribution of faraday bags is a direct, positive, supportive initiative and interaction with our community. It sees our Service addressing a concerning issue in a tangible way that provides the community with means to protect itself from possible victimization by way of auto thefts. It is a tangible demonstration of Police and the community working together in crime prevention.

Alternatives Reviewed

To not support this request.

Relationship to Police Service/Board Strategic Priorities

The NRPS is part of the Preventing Auto Theft Grant Program in partnership with the Ontario government. A keystone of this program is bringing awareness within the general community while focusing on auto theft prevention, detection, analysis, and enforcement.

Through a comprehensive media and social media campaign, coupled with distribution of faraday bags to Niagara residents, the Service is working collaboratively to address one of the most serious issues facing the residents of Ontario.

This program also aligns with the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Goal 1: Public Safety – Objectives 1.0 Reduce violent crime and 2.0 Reduce property crime by providing educations and crime prevention assistance.

Relevant Policy Considerations

Board By-law 403-2024, Special Fund Administration, Limitations and Guidelines

Other Pertinent Reports

Not applicable

This report was prepared by Corporate Communications Manager Stephanie Sabourin, in consultation with Staff Sergeant Mike Tripp, and reviewed by Bill Fordy, Chief of Police.



Submitted by:

Bill Fordy O.O.M. #9615
Chief of Police

Appendices

Not applicable