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2900-01

Mayor and Council  
The District of West Vancouver  
750 - 17 Street  
West Vancouver, BC  
V7V 3T3

March 4, 2009

Dear Mayor and Council

**Re: Policing costs and effectiveness**

The Globe and Mail provided an analysis of lower mainland police forces on page S3 of the February 28, 2009 paper, including the attached graph. As you can see, according to these figures, the North Vancouver RCMP produced a lower crime rate in 2007 at 44% of the per capita cost of the West Vancouver Police.

As a taxpayer, this concerns me deeply as I'm sure it concerns you. There have been rumours and articles about the problems within the West Vancouver force for some time. I suggest that with the current chief having resigned, it is now time for West Vancouver to support a regional police force. As an intermediate step, I hope that serious consideration is being given to replacing our small stand-alone force with the RCMP.

Yours truly,

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# HUME

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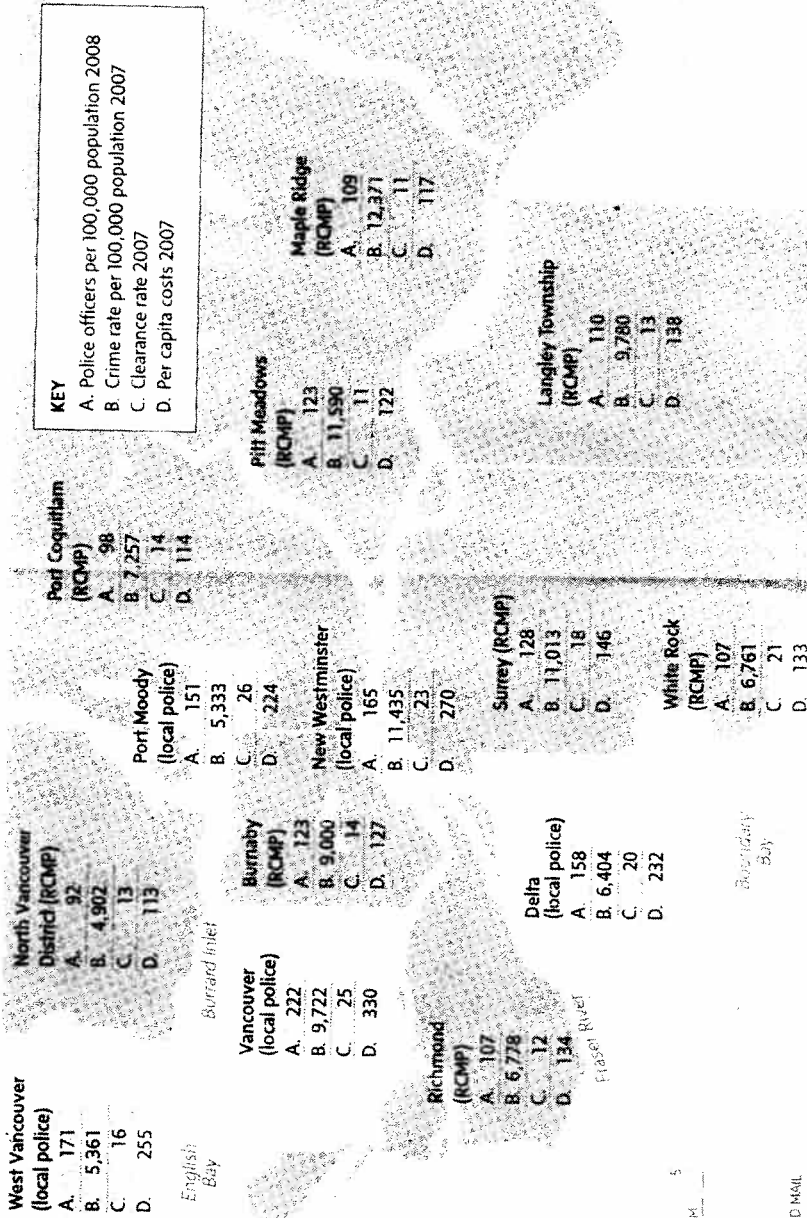
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When former Vancouver police chief Bob Stewart joined the force in 1971, he'd preceded into the profession in exciting times. He's going to see Vancouver up and have metropolising, he recalls saying. Stewart laughs at that because, 55 years later, Metro Vancouver is still an elusive

rising tide of gang-relatedness - 18 shootings, 10 deaths in the past year with a possible ninth investigation - Mr. Stewart says the police are largely because of an inefficient system that inefficiencies in multiple jurisdictions, creating a "mosaic" in which 126 RCMP detachments are more than a patchwork of criminal gangs. He says the patchwork doesn't make any sense, says Mr. Stewart, who

## One big police force - or many smaller ones?

Vancouver and surrounding areas are served by multiple forces, each with varying characteristics. Many mayors argue against the idea of a unified force on the grounds local forces can better serve their communities.



blunt assessment: "If the Harvard Business School were asked to assess the management model for Greater Vancouver police work, I suspect the outcome would be to recommend psychiatric care for whomever designed the system. It must be understood

whose crimes went undetected for years as he picked up victims in Vancouver Police Department territory and disposed of them in Port Coquitlam, where the RCMP patrol. He also cites examples of officers, on patrol in Vancouver, who were unaware that

country, with a recent poll showing 93 per cent of respondents are satisfied with police services. The reason, he says, is simple: "We sweat the small stuff and that gives us a real connection with the community." A homicide investigator with

Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit. But he acknowledges the system needs work. "Not only are the integrated units not working together effectively, but neither are the local and integrated units. It would appear they are all

rector of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University, disagrees. "I'm with Bob Stewart on this one," he says.

Prof. Gordon says the Metro Vancouver police concept should have been acted on long ago, and he blames the provincial government for failing to initiate change.

"They are scared," he says. "They are afraid of the reaction of local mayors ... they are also afraid of the RCMP ... the great red machine that has its own political power and is very much into its own survival."

Prof. Gordon says local mayors and police chiefs will always want to protect their own turf, while the RCMP doesn't want to lose the big urban detachments it has in Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond, where a total of more than 1,000 officers are employed.

"The system we have now made sense in 1950 when Burnaby was an orchard and Surrey a forest, but not now," he says.

Whether or not Metro Vancouver should have a unified police force is one of the issues on the desk of B.C.'s new public-security commissioner. David Morhart, B.C.'s deputy solicitor-general since 2005, was given the posting this week, as part of a provincial initiative to battle gang violence.

Mr. Morhart, dubbed B.C.'s "crime czar" in some media reports, says he will be consulting communities about the issue but hasn't decided on a course of action yet.