

# Recommendations for Increasing the Profile of the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre (HSCPC) is a non-profit organization located in Vancouver, British Columbia and has been in operation since 1999. It provides a number of programs and services to improve the safety and well-being of the diverse Hastings Sunrise community, such as Citizens Patrols, Community Clean-Ups, Outreach Events and Workshops, and Information and Community Assistance Services, with the support of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and funding from the City of Vancouver. While the organization has seen an increase in its success over the past several years, such as record attendance at outreach events and expansion of a few of their programs, it has identified that its profile in the community is lower than desired. The organization believes an increased profile could lead to increased participation in and interaction with the organization by volunteers and community residents, and result in a safer and more cohesive community.

### ***Research Questions***

The main research questions of this project are:

- What is the current state of awareness and perception of the organization by the community?
- What can be done to increase awareness and the profile of the organization in the community?

These research questions are answered by exploring the personal experiences and perceptions of five of the organization's main stakeholder groups (HSCPC and Hastings North Business Improvement Association staff, HSCPC volunteers, Board members, VPD representatives and community members who live and/or work in the area) to assess the current level of awareness and the organization's profile in the community, and provide recommendations accordingly.

### ***Literature Review***

A literature review of the non-profit marketing and branding literature from the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada was undertaken. The literature indicated that using various marketing and branding techniques has become a viable method to increase the awareness and profile of non-profit organizations. However, while many non-profit organizations have introduced some form of marketing into their everyday activities, most lack a strategic approach to introducing and implementing marketing activities. This includes not performing adequate research and market segmentation, as well as failing to assess and monitor stakeholder perceptions. The concept of branding has emerged from the literature as providing a necessary foundation for marketing activities by encouraging non-profit organizations to create and communicate core values and key messages to stakeholders, allowing it to differentiate itself from like-minded organizations. Similar

to marketing, branding is most beneficial when used strategically and consistently and clearly communicated to an organization's internal and external stakeholders.

### ***Methodology***

Given the nature of the research questions the preferred research design focused on soliciting opinions from organization-relevant stakeholders. Thirty seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with the main stakeholder groups. The interview questions were designed to assess the level of awareness of the organization as well as offer an opportunity for interview participants to suggest ways in which they thought the organization could increase its profile.

### ***Findings***

A number of key themes emerged from the interviews. The overall response findings indicated a great need for improvement in the level of awareness of the organization, as the level of awareness is seen to fluctuate based on proximity to the organization's storefront office. The community members view the HSCPC primarily as a policing organization, as opposed to a grassroots community organization. The majority of those interviewed have a positive perception of community policing and community policing organizations, and this positive perception increases with the amount of knowledge and interaction a person has with the HSCPC. However, some participants also indicated the existence of neutral and negative perceptions. The main perceived barriers in increasing the organization's profile included a lack of knowledge and understanding of the goals, services and programs of the organization, poor physical location and an inadequate amount of marketing and advertising. The three most commonly suggested ways for the organization to better communicate its mandate, services and programs were more organizational attendance and visibility at community outreach events, communicating a clearer and more focused message about the organization, and more marketing and advertising through written materials, in person interaction, website and social media, and detailed signage in front of the office.

### ***Discussion***

Based on an analysis of the literature review and interview findings, it was found that many of the main arguments put forth in the literature were supported by the interview findings. The integration of the literature review and interview findings themes produced five discussion themes: (1) stakeholder groups' awareness of the organization; (2) assessing, understanding and managing stakeholder perceptions; (3) creating and communicating value-based key messages; (4) consistency of actions and messaging at all levels of the organization and; (5) marketing by increasing visibility. These themes provided the basis for interpreting and reflecting on the literature and interview findings and highlighting areas of commonality and disagreement. The areas of stakeholder relations, the valuable role of frontline staff such as volunteers, and consistent

and targeted communication through various mediums, emerged as important areas to be addressed by the organization.

### ***Recommendations***

Based on the research and analysis undertaken in this report, and using the strategic areas identified in the discussion, the report proposes four strategies with 17 overall recommendations to increase the awareness and profile of the HSCPC. These strategies reflect the importance of approaching marketing and branding activities in a coordinated and strategic approach.

#### **1. Connecting with Stakeholders**

Short Term (3-6 months)

***Recommendation 1.1:*** Create a more concrete brand that is rooted in the core values, beliefs, vision and strengths of the organization which differentiates it from other organizations. Ensure the focus is on the written content as opposed to items such as logos, which can be developed in the future.

***Recommendation 1.2:*** Create new communication materials that clearly and directly articulate the organizational brand which should include the values of the organization, the types of interaction the organization would like from the community, and how the organization directly benefits the community.

***Recommendation 1.3:*** Develop an education campaign focused on promoting positive perceptions and minimizing negative and/or incorrect perceptions about the organization. This should be based on providing clear and detailed information about the concept of community policing, and the role, values, services and programming offered by the organization in the community, to improve stakeholder understanding and perception.

***Recommendation 1.4:*** Assemble a focus group of members from the organization, business and community partners, and community members to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the communication materials before distribution.

Long Term (6-12+ months)

***Recommendation 1.5:*** Conduct research, such as a survey, six months after the education/awareness campaign to assess level of knowledge and awareness and determine whether campaign should be decreased, maintained at the same level, or increased.

***Recommendation 1.6:*** Use focus groups composed of community members and community organization employees, to research the needs and values of the various ethnic minority populations and the 20-49 year old demographic in the area to determine how to best target these populations and increase their interest and participation in the organization.

**Recommendation 1.7:** Create a set of communication materials, informed by the research, for the various ethnic groups in the area and the 20-49 year old demographic.

## **2. Engaging Volunteers**

Short Term (3-6 months)

**Recommendation 2.1:** Consider adding marketing activities to the current volunteer training sessions that emphasize more one- on-one interaction with organization stakeholders such as communicating key messages and values to the community.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Expand the distribution of communication materials to the entire catchment area and set aside more volunteer time to target the middle and outer perimeters of the organization's catchment area.

**Recommendation 2.3:** Set aside a group of three to five volunteers every month to run an information booth in front of the storefront office, with an emphasis on communicating the key values of the organization as well as how the community can interact with the organization.

Long Term (6-12+ months)

**Recommendation 2.4:** Consider strategically recruiting volunteers that have research, marketing, and/or communication skills to create a work team that can dedicate time to profile building activities on a regular, long-term basis.

## **3. Marketing Activities in Paper and Electronic Form**

Short Term (3-6 months)

**Recommendation 3.1:** Provide partnering organizations with new communication materials to clearly indicate the values, role, services, and nature of interaction the organization offers to, or would like from, the partnering organization's clients.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Create new signage in front of the office that offers more detail regarding the role of the organization, and the programs and services it offers, to attract and encourage more foot traffic into the office.

Long Term (6-12+ months)

**Recommendation 3.3:** In future phases of website development, implement features such as message boards, videos of information sessions or workshops the organization has conducted, interactive components where visitors can leave comments and provide detail about themselves and what they would like to see on the website, and areas targeted to certain demographics.

#### **4. Monitoring and Evaluating Profile Building Activities**

Short Term (3-6 months; Ongoing)

**Recommendation 4.1:** *Provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on all profile building activities conducted by the organization, in written, verbal, or electronic form. For example, including a detachable comment card in the quarterly newsletter or through email if the newsletter is distributed electronically, to assess how these materials are being received and identifying any gaps that can be filled.*

Long Term (6-12+months)

**Recommendation 4.2 :** *After the implementation of at least three of the recommendations from any of the strategies, evaluate the effectiveness of these actions by interviewing 10 community members to assess their knowledge and awareness of the organization and its services.*

**Recommendation 4.3:** *Consider creating an internal evaluation framework based on soliciting verbal and written feedback of the community regarding programming, outreach events and written/online communications, in addition to the numbers-based outcome indicators required by the Vancouver Police Department.*

Based on the interviews with the organization's five main stakeholder groups, it is clear that the HSCPC is an important and necessary organization to have in the Hastings Sunrise community. However, based on the research undertaken in this report, there is room for improvement in terms of increasing the awareness and profile of the organization. The recommendations provided in this report can assist the HSCPC in approaching profile building activities in a coordinated and strategic way, thus increasing the safety and engagement of the Hastings Sunrise community.

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## INTRODUCTION

Community based non-profit organizations provide great value to the communities that they serve. Their services and programs, when combined with the participation of community members, can help increase community cohesion and improve the quality of life for all residents. However, these types of organizations also face a variety of challenges, such as limited financial and human resources, which prevents their expansion and ability to provide the number of programs and services they desire. The Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre (HSCPC) is a community based organization located in Vancouver, British Columbia that is also experiencing the challenges that accompany a non-profit organization relying on government funding and the personal time and financial generosity of the community. The HSCPC has identified that their profile in the community is lower than desired and that a heightened awareness of their organization would benefit both the organization itself as well as the entire community that they serve. An increased profile would result in a larger membership and donor base, as well as a higher rate of community participation, which would help the organization fulfill its mission of creating a safe, cohesive, and engaged community. As a result the research questions of this project include:

- What is the current state of awareness and perception of the organization by the community?
- What can be done to increase awareness and the profile of the organization in the community?

The objective of this report is to explore the perceptions and experiences of members of five of the organization's stakeholder groups to answer the aforementioned research questions, and provide the organization with recommendations to assist them in increasing the awareness and profile of their organization.

The key deliverables of this project include the findings of 37 interviews and recommendations for increasing the organization's profile which will be based on the interview findings and the academic literature review, and organized according to short term and long term priorities.

The first section of this paper provides a background of the organization, including its structure, services, programs, a brief demographic scan of the community it serves, and the challenges it faces in raising its profile. The second section provides a literature review of approaches that non-profit organizations take to increase their profile, chiefly non-profit marketing and branding. This section also includes the challenges and opportunities of using non-profit marketing and branding, as well as how these techniques have been applied in non-profit organizations. Section three details the study's methodology including how the data will be analyzed and the limitations of the study. The fourth section presents the findings of 37 interviews, which are organized according to specific themes that emerged across all stakeholder groups. Section five consists of a discussion which

analyzes the interview findings within the context of the academic literature to provide the foundation for section six, which includes several recommendations for the organization to help increase its profile based on short and long term priorities. The seventh and final section provides some concluding thoughts for the future.

## BACKGROUND

The background of the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre includes six sections. The information in this section was gathered from the organization's website and manuals, Statistics Canada data, and an interview with the organization's Executive Director. The first section provides an overview of the concept of community policing and how it has been adapted in the city of Vancouver and by the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre. The second section outlines the history of the HSCPC, its mission statement and guiding values. The third section discusses the characteristics of the population that the organization serves and the implications the population characteristics have on the organization. The fourth section provides a brief overview of the organization's programs and involvement in the community. The fifth section explores the challenges the HSCPC faces in building its profile. The final section includes a description of the activities the organization currently uses to build awareness of the organization, its services, and programs it provides to the community.

### Community Policing

The concept of community policing is a relatively recent phenomenon that has taken on various meanings over the past thirty years. Rosenbaum and Lurigio (1994) explain that community policing evolved out of the team policing concept in the 1960s-1970s, in which police forces attempted to close the divide between policing and the community by encouraging beat officers to work closely with community members. This approach was largely unsuccessful due to inadequate implementation, and community policing emerged in the 1980s as a new approach to involve the community in policing as well as build relationships between police officers and community members (Rosenbaum & Lurigio, 1994). Community policing was viewed as a paradigm shift that would transform the way modern policing was viewed rather than an individual program or initiative (Goldstein, 1987). Seagrave (1996) indicates that community policing required "not only increased police involvement with the public but a complete overhaul of police management and structure to create this change in policing philosophy" (p. 6). As a result, community policing was seen as representing a more coordinated and all-encompassing approach compared to other policing approaches that focused on one solution or program to target crime.

A number of definitions are used to explain community policing. Leighton (1991) indicates that community policing is based on "a full *partnership between the community and their police* in identifying and ameliorating local crime and disorder problems" (p. 487, italics in original) while Trojanowicz and Bucqueroux (1990) emphasize an improvement in the quality of life in the community. Cordner (1995) explains that community policing encompasses a community-centred philosophy which should influence police operations and strategy, and help inform programming. While the concept of community policing lacks a universally agreed upon definition, for the purposes of this paper Skogan's (1990) main principles will be used, which are as follows:

- community policing assumes a commitment to broadly focused, problem oriented policing
- community policing relies upon organizational decentralization and a reorientation of patrol tactics to open informal, two-way channels of communication between police and citizens
- community policing requires that police be responsive to citizen demands when they decide what their local problems are, and set their priorities
- community policing implies a commitment to helping neighborhoods themselves, by serving as a catalyst for local organizing and education efforts (pp. 91-92)

Communities and police forces can adapt these principles to suit their crime and safety needs in a way that they see as most beneficial. The most important aspect of community policing is encouraging participation of people in their community and the realization that the reduction of crime and increased safety is not the role of police alone but can be greatly improved through local involvement.

The concept of community policing has been embraced by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) as one approach to making the city of Vancouver a safer place. Their use of community policing includes Block Watch, which is a neighbourhood based effort to curtail residential crime, Citizens Crime Watch, which encourages people to look out for the safety of their community, and Community Policing Centres (CPC) which allows residents to seek help in person from staff, volunteers, and Neighbourhood Police Officers (NPO) who operate out of these offices (Vancouver Police Department, n.d.). Currently, the City of Vancouver provides partial funding through the VPD for eight non-profit CPCs in Vancouver, and an additional two CPCs that are run by the VPD (Vancouver Police Department, n.d.). The mandates and programming of each CPC vary according to their location and the population they serve but in general the main objective of all CPCs is to decrease crime and increase safety in their community with the support of the VPD.

### **History of the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre**

The Hastings-Sunrise community is located in the city of Vancouver, BC and is primarily a residential area. Due to its proximity to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, which is notorious for its sex trade, drug, and homelessness problems, the Hastings-Sunrise area began to experience an influx of similar problems. As a result, the community began to believe the safety of their community was deteriorating and were intent on reversing this trend. An advisory group of local residents was created with the assistance of an NPO and funding from the government, which ultimately founded the non-profit CPC. The CPC, named the Hastings North Community Policing Centre, was to be governed by an elected board of directors and opened its office doors in 1999. The CPC board soon helped to establish Hastings North Business Improvement Association (HNBIA), which promoted the

role of local businesses in improving safety and well-being in the community. The partnership of these two organizations allowed for the CPC to increase programming and services to the community. The capacity of the organization grew in 2002, which allowed for the creation of five core programs largely due to funding from the VPD and other community partners. This expansion also increased the organization's catchment area to include all of Hastings-Sunrise, as well as Grandview-Woodlands north. Three years later in 2005, the organization changed its name to the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre (HSCPC). That same year, the City of Vancouver increased its funding to CPCs across Vancouver and solidified its role as the HSCPC's primary funding partner, which allowed the HSCPC and the HNBIA to move into a larger office on East Hastings Street, where it still operates.

The HSCPC views itself as a community organization that operates with the support and assistance of the VPD. The mandate of the HSCPC is based on the following Mission Statement:

*The Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre is a community driven non-profit volunteer organization that provides leadership and services to promote a safe, healthy, and thriving community*

The organization is governed by the following Guiding Principles and Values:

- *Local governance is an essential element of community policing*
- *Supporting the involvement of residents and businesses in their community builds a healthy and safe environment*
- *Everyone in this community has something to contribute; engaging the diversity within Hastings Sunrise and north Grandview-Woodlands is essential to our success*
- *Our volunteers are our greatest resources and we strive to support their growth and development*
- *Community members play a crucial role in identifying issues, contributing resources, and providing solutions within this community*

### **HSCPC Catchment Area and Hastings-Sunrise Community Characteristics**

The HSCPC's catchment area is from Burrard Inlet south to Broadway Street, east to Boundary Road, and west to Nanaimo Street, as well as north Grandview Woodlands, which is north of Hastings Street from Nanaimo Street to Clark Street, as shown in Figure 1 below. In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the community the organization serves, the population characteristics of the catchment area will be explored and analyzed in this section.

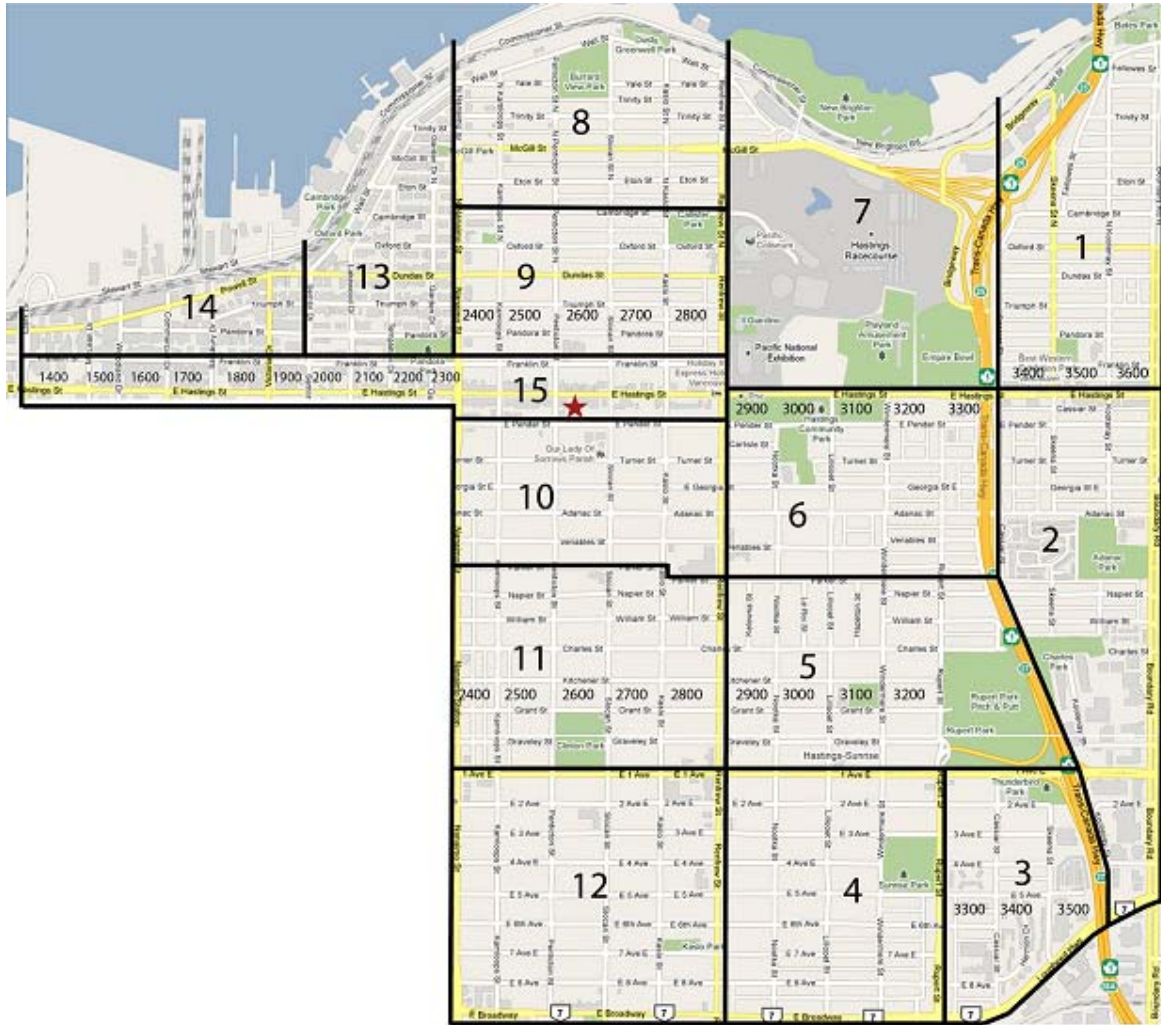


Figure 1. Map of the HSCPC Catchment Area

Population characteristics were determined by comparing the organization’s catchment area map with the map provided by Statistics Canada’s GeoSearch (2006) tool. Twelve census tracts, which are small areas of approximately 2,500-8,000 people located in larger urban areas (i.e. Vancouver) that have a population of at least 50,000 were identified as being included in the entire HSCPC catchment area (Statistics Canada, 2006). Detailed tabulation of the data from the 12 census tracts can be found in Appendix A. Based on data from these tracts, the population of the catchment area is 61, 333 people. The census tracts also provide detailed data on the main characteristics of the population, including age, family characteristics (including income), household characteristics (including income), education, ethnicity, and knowledge of official languages. The data from the Hastings-Sunrise census tracts will be compared with the data from the census metropolitan area of Vancouver, which includes population characteristics from the entire city of Vancouver, which has a

population of 2.1 million. This comparison will highlight the unique characteristics of the Hastings-Sunrise area.

The population in the HSCPC's catchment area has varied slightly over the past five years, in which five out of the 12 census tracts have seen their populations increase by less than 5%. The populations in six out of the 12 census tracts have decreased by less than 5%, with the population in one of the 12 census tracts decreasing by 7%. These numbers differ from the population census metropolitan area (CMA) of Vancouver, in which the population has grown by 6.5% over the same period.

The median age in all of the 12 census tracts varies slightly ranging from 35.9 to 40.3 across all census tracts. The lower end of the median age range varies by four years and the higher end of the median age range varies by 1.2 years from the median age of 39.1 in Vancouver (CMA). In all 12 census tracts, over 83% of the population is over the age of 15. Ten out of the 12 census tracts have an over 15 population higher than Vancouver (CMA).

Based on family characteristics data, eight out of 12 census tracts have over 1000 census families<sup>1</sup> living in their area with the remaining four census tracts having over 800 census families. The median income of census families across the 12 census tracts ranges from a low of \$31,762 to a high of \$59,943. The median incomes in all 12 census tracts are below the median income in Vancouver (CMA), which is \$64,332. In terms of private household characteristics<sup>2</sup>, all 12 census tracts are comprised of a mix of couples with children, couples without children, one-person households, and other household types, which may include more than one family or non-family residents. In 10 of the 12 census tracts, the number of private households that do not contain children (under 25) outnumber those that do contain children. The median private household income in the 12 census tracts range from a low of \$29,295 to a high of \$57,367, with 11 out of the 12 census tracts having a median private household income below that of Vancouver (CMA), which is \$55,231. The HSCPC's catchment area is moderately educated, with 10 out of 12 census tracts having 20% or more of their population possessing an education including and higher than a

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<sup>1</sup> A census family is defined as "a married couple (with or without children of either or both spouses), a couple living common-law (with or without children of either or both partners) or a lone parent of any marital status, with at least one child living in the same dwelling. A couple may be of opposite or same sex. 'Children' in a census family include grandchildren living with their grandparent(s) but with no parents present" (Statistics Canada, 2006)

<sup>2</sup> A private household is a "person or a group of persons (other than foreign residents) who occupy the same dwelling and do not have a usual place of residence elsewhere in Canada. It may consist of a family group (census family) with or without other persons, of two or more families sharing a dwelling, of a group of unrelated persons, or of one person living alone" (Statistics Canada, 2006)

university certificate, diploma, or degree. Two out of the 12 census tracts have a percentage of university educated residents that is higher than Vancouver (CMA)'s average of 30.9% with an education at the university level.

The Hastings-Sunrise area is ethnically diverse, in which five out of the 12 census tracts have visible minority populations that comprise over 50% of the total population, with the remaining census tracts having visible minority populations ranging from 18-49%. Eight out of the 12 census tracts possess visible minority populations that are higher than that of Vancouver (CMA), which has a visible minority population of 41.7%. The 12 census tracts also include Aboriginal populations which range from 1.5 – 20% of the population, in which 10 out of 12 census tracts have Aboriginal populations that are larger than the 1.9% Aboriginal population in Vancouver (CMA). The ethnic background most greatly represented in all 12 census tracts is Chinese. Furthermore, 2006 census tract data indicates that over 10% of the population in eight of the 12 census tracts cannot carry on a conversation in either English or French, which is higher than 5% of the population in Vancouver (CMA).

The discussion of the Hastings-Sunrise catchment area provides important insight into the population the HSCPC serves. The area has a large population in the age range of 20-49 years old and a smaller population under the age of 15 than the rest of the city of Vancouver. Furthermore, there is a significant number of one-person households and households that do not include children. Another significant theme is the high number of visible minorities in the Hastings-Sunrise area, as well as a higher percentage of residents that have limited knowledge of the official languages. These population characteristics can have notable implications for the way the HSCPC provides its programming and services.

### **HSCPC Organization and Programming**

The HSCPC operates with the combined efforts of the Executive Director, 10 Board of Directors members, 2 full-time and 2 part-time staff, 80-100 volunteers, and VPD support including an in-house Neighbourhood Police Officer (NPO), as shown in Figure 2.

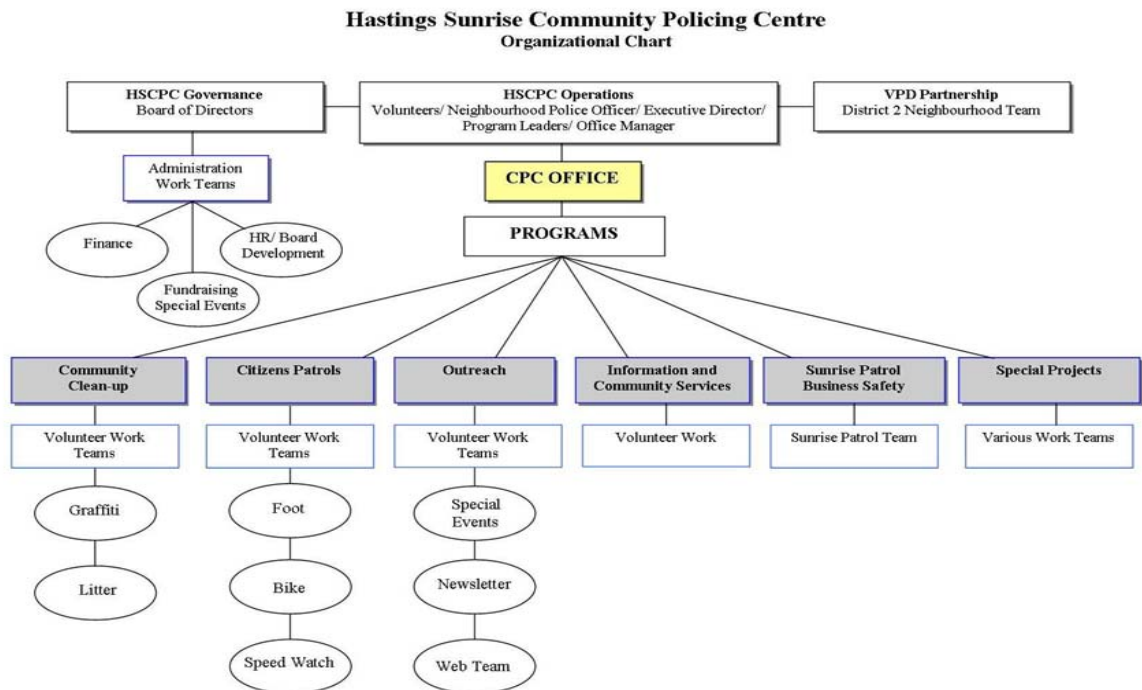


Figure 2. HSCPC Organizational Chart. Adapted from Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre Board Handbook, 2011.

The HSCPC runs five core programs, consisting of Citizens Patrols (Bike and Foot), Community Clean-Ups, Outreach, Information and Community Assistance Services, and Sunrise Patrol – Business Safety.

#### *Citizens Patrols (Bike and Foot)*

The HSCPC Citizens Patrol is supported by the VPD, City of Vancouver, the Insurance Corporation of BC, and local organizations. HSCPC volunteers conduct patrols around the Hastings-Sunrise area on foot or by bike, in which they take note of and report suspicious or possible criminal activity. They also interact with residents and document any safety concerns that residents may have. Any issues that arise or are brought to the attention of patrol members are passed on to the HSCPC and in some cases the VPD. Speed Watches are also conducted in high traffic areas as well as near schools and playgrounds to emphasize the importance of maintaining a safe speed. This information is provided to the VPD to raise awareness of areas which may require a police presence to enforce speed limits, and is also used as a tool by the City of Vancouver to consider implementing traffic calming measures in high speed areas.

In addition, patrol teams:

- distribute crime-prevention information
- answer community questions
- locate abandoned and stolen vehicles
- report suspicious activities, crimes in progress and quality of life concerns (HSCPC, 2011)

#### *Community Clean-Ups*

With the support of the City of Vancouver and the HNBIA, HSCPC volunteers participate in community clean-ups in which litter and graffiti are removed in order to promote a sense of pride in the community. Community clean-ups are done on a regular basis and local residents are encouraged to, and often do, participate in these efforts.

#### *Outreach*

HSCPC volunteers, staff, and the NPO conduct various outreach activities in order to increase community engagement as well as provide crime prevention and safety information. Outreach activities include community events, safety and crime prevention talks at schools and community centres, Block Watch support, and participating in events and workshops with other local community groups.

#### *Business Safety – Sunrise Patrol Team*

The Sunrise Patrol Team, which is trained by the HSCPC and the VPD and operates in partnerships with the HNBIA, work closely with local businesses to improve safety in the Hastings Sunrise area. They conduct patrols three days per week, for five hours each day and focus on identifying any suspicious or criminal activity. This program allows the VPD to identify potential crime trends in the area which allows them to focus their efforts in certain areas. The Sunrise Patrol Team goals include:

- providing a positive presence while acting as “eyes and ears” for the police and community
- educating businesses about crime prevention and business safety
- facilitating the exchange of information among the VPD, City of Vancouver, HSCPC, HNBIA and businesses
- promoting HSCPC and HNBIA programs, activities and other resources among residents, businesses and visitors
- helping homeless and other disadvantaged people to access services and support (HSCPC, 2011)

### *Information and Community Assistance*

HSCPC staff, volunteers, and the NPO provide information and community assistance from the HSCPC street front office from Monday-Saturday. This is one of the HSCPC's most important programs, which offers the community a safe haven to report and obtain information. The main services provided consist of:

- assisting with citizens' complaints and concerns
- providing safety and crime prevention information
- referring citizens to other community resources
- handling found property for processing by the VPD
- providing interpretation and translating services in 21 languages
- providing crime statistics for Hastings Sunrise and the City of Vancouver (HSCPC, 2011)

### **Problem Definition/Project Rationale**

While the organization has a number of programs and services in place, they find community participation in and awareness of their organization is lower than desired. As a result, the organization is interested in increasing their profile in the community to help fulfill their safety and community engagement and well-being objectives, which is the rationale for this research project. However, there are a number of challenges that has decreased the ability of the organization to increase their profile in the Hastings – Sunrise community. The challenges, along with the current approaches being taken to increase the profile of the organization, are detailed below.

#### ***Profile-Building Challenges Faced by the HSCPC***

There are a number of challenges that the HSCPC faces that inhibit its ability to increase its profile in the Hastings-Sunrise community.

- 1) *Location*: The most prominent challenge is the physical location and size of their store front office. A large condominium building was recently built directly beside the office, which has resulted in a significant decrease in visibility of the office from the street. The obscurity of the office is thought to be partly responsible for a reduction of in-person visits to the office by Hastings Sunrise residents, which contributes to decreased awareness of the organization. In addition, there is limited space within the office itself and expansion at the moment is not an option.
- 2) *Lack of financial resources*: The inability to expand is partly due to a lack of financial resources. The HSCPC receives core funding from the City of Vancouver through the VPD, however, any expenditures not covered by this funding must be covered by fundraising

initiatives by the organization itself. As a result, they have little, if any, consistent funding that it can dedicate solely to profile building activities.

- 3) *Limited number and capacity of staff:* Four core staff members are responsible for the organization's operation, programming, and volunteer coordination. As a result, staff members have a limited amount of time to dedicate to profile building activities alone, in addition to their various other responsibilities.
- 4) *Cultural and linguistic characteristics of the population:* As discussed earlier in catchment area population characteristics, the Hastings-Sunrise area has a large visible minority population, many of which have emigrated from countries that have policing systems that differ from the Western policing model. These residents often hold less than favourable opinions regarding the police due to experiences they may have had in their mother country. This has led to an incomplete and often mistaken understanding regarding the role the police play and the extent to which the police can be assistance to them in terms of safety and criminal matters
- 5) *Large size of the organization's catchment area:* The HSCPC's storefront office is not within walking distance of the entire catchment area. This means that residents on the outer perimeter of the catchment area lack accessibility to the office if they do not own a vehicle, and the limited manpower and time of HSCPC staff and volunteers makes it difficult for them to interact with those that are not as close to the HSCPC's office.
- 6) *General complacency:* A sixth challenge is the tendency for people to be complacent when it comes to actively participating in their community and local organizations. In order to help keep the Hastings-Sunrise community safe, the participation of its residents is very important and requires a certain level of commitment. The success of the HSCPC is highly dependent on the support and participation of the people that it serves.

#### *Current Profile-Building Activities*

The HSCPC engages in a number of direct and indirect profile-building activities. Some traditional approaches include a quarterly newsletter, distribution of flyers, promotional video, business cards, postcards, promotional boards, and various other paper-based communications which always include the HSCPC's logo. The HSCPC also participates in numerous outreach events, workshops, and presentations throughout the year, in which their presence alone encourages greater awareness of the organization as well as allows them to interact with the population that they serve.

The HSCPC has a Communications Plan in place, which was created by the Communications work team which consists of three Board Members. The Communications Plan focuses on tools such as

personal contact, public and media relations, a branding audit, website, advertising, marketing and communications partnerships, and a promotional video. The Communications Plan also includes an evaluative component of its objectives, which focus on indicators such as number of website visits, number of individual participating in events, number of volunteers and members, number of individual sponsors, and number of cross-organizational events involved in.

The HSCPC contributes a number of valuable programs and services to the community to fulfill its mission of increasing the safety and engagement of the Hastings-Sunrise community. However, the organization believes its profile in the community could be raised and that there is still a general lack of awareness of the organization. The next section will explore academic literature that details the ways in which non-profit organizations approach increasing their profile, largely through non-profit marketing and branding, and how these techniques can be applied to increase awareness of a non-profit organization. The remaining part of the paper will detail the methodology used to inform the research questions, the research findings, and a number of recommendations that are based on the academic literature and the research findings.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is based on journal articles and studies from Canada, the US, the UK and Australia which were obtained from various academic and non-profit databases. The UK and Australia in particular provide a wealth of information and in-depth studies on topics such as the non-profit sector and marketing and branding in the non-profit sector. The literature review is divided into six main sections. The first section focuses on the general concept of marketing, including its history, development, and its current applications. The second section explores marketing and its uses in non-business organizations, which is a commonly used approach to increase the awareness and profile of a non-profit organization. The third section describes the challenges and opportunities that the application of marketing in the non-profit sector provides. The fourth section discusses the marketing techniques currently used by non-profit service organizations. The fifth section explores the concept of branding and its relevance to the non-profit sector. The final section provides guidelines on how to create and apply a branding strategy to a non-profit organization which is essential to establish to obtain benefit from marketing activities.

### Marketing

Marketing is commonly seen as a concept that exemplifies the business/private sector. There are various definitions of marketing, however, Simkin (2000) states that the majority of the definitions reflect these general ideas:

- the ability to satisfy customers;
- the exchange of product or service for payment or donation;
- the need to create an edge over competitors;
- the identification of favourable marketing opportunities;
- profits or financial surpluses to enable a viable future for the organisation;
- that resources are utilised shrewdly to maximise a business's market position;
- the aim to increase market share in priority target markets (p. 157)

In order to fulfill these objectives, businesses must first analyze their “customers, company, competitors, collaborators, and context” (Silk, 2006, p. 5). Through this analysis they can determine the needs of the customers, the ability to satisfy their customers, identifying other like companies that may compete for the customers, potential organizations or individuals that can assist them in fulfilling customers’ needs, and finally the characteristics of the environment they are operating within (Silk,2006). Once this analysis is complete, businesses create a marketing strategy that is based on market segmentation (identifying target markets based on factors such as age or lifestyle choices) and positioning of the product/service (Simkin, 2000; Silk, 2006).The positioning of the product is determined by incorporating the oft-cited four P’s: product (value the product has to the

customer), place (how the product will get to the customer), promotion (making a product appealing to the customer), and pricing (establishing a competitive yet fair price) (Simkin, 2000). Businesses must also ensure that they are well-versed regarding the types of consumers they will be marketing their products to and how best to influence their buying habits (Simkin, 2000). Finally, they must select relevant and effective methods of communication and promotion, which often include forms of advertising through personal, written, and web-based communication (Silk, 2006).

The marketing literature also indicates the importance of a higher level of strategic marketing. This indicates a shift from the traditional transaction based marketing which usually involves a one-time occurrence, limited customer service and emphasis on the product only (Harwood & Garry, 2006), to relationship marketing, which encourages building relationships that are beneficial to customers and other business partners (i.e. suppliers) (McNally & Griffin, 2005; Lane & Piercy, 2009). This ensures more long-term involvement and ultimately, success (McNally & Griffin, 2005; Lane & Piercy, 2009).

## **Marketing in Non-Business Organizations**

The use of marketing is no longer limited to for-profit enterprises but instead has emerged as a viable approach to improving the overall performance of non-business organizations such as universities, churches, and performing arts organizations.

Lewison and Hawes (2007) indicate that universities are increasingly implementing marketing techniques to make their schools more appealing to potential students. A UK study that surveyed 71 universities found that 75% of the respondents' institutions had a marketing department and 90% had strategic marketing plans (Naudé & Ivy, 1999). Some of the marketing techniques used included advertising, direct mail outs, holding open houses and projecting a strong public image based on teaching and research (Naudé & Ivy, 1999). The use of more advanced marketing techniques were more commonly practiced by newly established institutions compared to older institutions (Naudé & Ivy, 1999). Furthermore, Lewison and Hawes (2007) indicate that universities also use the strategy of target markets, in which the university promotes its programs and facilities based on the unique needs, similarities, or differences of various types of students. Creating these types of markets allows a university to position itself in a way that differentiates it from other educational institutions. For example, a university in the UK markets the type of education they provide as leading to a higher likelihood of employment upon graduation (Maringe, 2006). Consequently, using target markets and positioning strategies, universities can distinguish themselves, their programs, and services from other educational institutions and recruit more students.

Marketing is also used in churches, and while the literature is more limited and more controversial compared to the literature on other types of organizations, several studies do indicate that

marketing can be useful for church purposes. An American study of Protestant churches found that the most commonly used forms of marketing in churches include advertising and strategic marketing planning (Newman & Benchener, 2008). Furthermore, a study conducted in the United States on Southern Baptist churches found that conducting research such as surveys and focus groups, creating and tailoring different programs based on the various demographics of the congregation, and opening and maintaining open lines of communication through written, verbal, and face-to-face methods were some of the marketing techniques used to increase congregation membership (Vokurka & McDaniel, 2004). The study's authors conclude that while only Southern Baptist churches were surveyed, the marketing techniques discussed could be applied to other types of churches as well.

Performing arts organizations have also embraced marketing techniques to remain competitive and increase their customer base and satisfaction levels. The literature indicates that arts organization that use relationship marketing, which refers to putting the needs of the customer at the forefront of the marketing strategy with a long-term strategic perspective, were more likely to be successful than those that did not use this type of marketing (Conway & Whitelock, 2007). Relationship marketing encourages long-term and personal relationship building with consumers, for example, in performing arts organizations, the focus is on audiences, rather than selling mass quantities of tickets (Rentschler, Radbourne, Carr & Rickard, 2002).

## Non- Profit Service Organizations Marketing

In addition to the above organizations, there is also an increasing use of marketing in non-profit service organizations. This section focuses on non-profit service organizations that provide various types of programs and services to the community, are volunteer based and rely on government and donor funding. The term non-profit and charity will be used interchangeably throughout the paper. Marketing is becoming more commonplace in the non-profit sector to increase the awareness of an organization and attract more donors (Blery, Katseli, & Tsara, 2010). The applicability of marketing techniques to the non-profit sector can be traced back to Kotler and Levy (1969) who posited that when marketing focuses on fulfilling the needs of consumers or clients rather than the promotion of a product itself, it can and should be used effectively in the non- profit sector. Shapiro (1973) named four concepts that marketing is based upon in the private sector:

- 1) *Self-interest* – both parties in the transaction obtain benefit
- 2) *Marketing task* – fulfilling the needs of the consumer
- 3) *Marketing mix* – referred to as the four P's (price, product, promotion, place)
- 4) *Distinctive competence* - the organization should focus on its strengths (p.123, emphasis included in original)

Shapiro (1973) argued that these concepts could also be applied to the non-profit sector by addressing the needs of clients and donors in its marketing task, by altering the marketing mix to suit the non-profit context, and using the distinctive competence concept for collaborative rather than competitive purposes. However, these concepts only form the foundation of marketing. While the definition varies among academics in the marketing field, the term market orientation is generally used to indicate the “implementation of the marketing concept or philosophy” (Sargeant, Foreman, & Liao, 2002, p. 43). More specifically, it can allow for an organization to “focus towards the customer (and competitors) and use the knowledge they gather about the needs and wants of the customer in their decision making” (Brady, Brace-Govan, Brennan & Conduit, 2011, p. 87). As a result, market orientation is seen as being applicable to the non-profit sector as it is to the for-profit sector, as it allows for the non-profit organization to concentrate on and become informed about the people it is trying to serve as well as obtain funding from.

## **Non-Profit Sector Marketing Challenges and Opportunities**

While non-profit marketing is becoming increasingly accepted in the literature and in practice, there is still some dissension regarding the use of marketing in non-profit organizations. Bennett and Savani (2004) maintain that while non-profit organizations are increasingly using marketing, many are doing so in reaction to low funding and increased competition, rather than because they see it as a positive strategic move for the organization. Furthermore, many non-profit organizations still perceive marketing as being based solely on advertising and other traditional business sector promotional tactics (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). Consequently, the challenges that confront non-profit organizations in implementing marketing will be explored, followed by a discussion of the opportunities non-profit marketing can provide when it is introduced and implemented appropriately.

### **Challenges in Non-Profit Marketing**

Non-profit organizations face a number of challenges when using marketing techniques. One of the most commonly cited challenge is a limited amount of funds, staff and time available to dedicate to marketing (Pope, Isley & Asamo-Tutu, 2009). Marketing is also seen as possibly diverting resources away from other duties of the organization such as programs and services (Pope et al, 2009). Furthermore, non-profit organizations often have an incomplete and/or incorrect understanding of what marketing will actually entail. Dolnicar and Lazarevski's (2009) study of non-profit managers in the USA, UK, and Australia found that over 80% of respondents viewed marketing as public relations and advertising. The association of marketing with the type of promotion used by profit seeking businesses results in some non-profit organizations looking upon marketing unfavourably and are therefore resistant to using it in their organizations (Brady et al, 2011). Conversely, many non-profit organizations have accepted marketing as beneficial to their organization. These organizations often use a few marketing techniques, but generally lack an

overall marketing strategy or a coordinated approach that is organization-wide (Akchin, 2001). This finding can be partly explained by the fact that marketing activities were often performed by staff or volunteers who had little experience or training in marketing (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009)

Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) also state that many non-profit organizations “are still heavily dominated by an organization-centred mindset” (pp. 285-286) as opposed to placing the customer at the forefront. One of the primary indicators used to determine whether or not the non-profit organization lacks a customer orientation, is the inconsistent and infrequent use of market research to identify those most likely to support the organization (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). This finding is supported by Hershey and Posey (2005), whose US study found that 90% of non-profit organizations did not participate in research as part of their marketing strategies. As a result, marketing strategies and techniques were not being used to their full potential, thus limiting the success they could provide to the organization.

A distinguishing characteristic of non-profit organizations is that they have several stakeholders, which include clients, donors, customers, funders, government, staff, and volunteers (Padanyi & Gainer, 2004; Pope, et al, 2009). Consequently, non-profit organizations may need to create and implement a number of marketing campaigns based on which stakeholder group they are targeting (Pope et al, 2009). However, since these campaigns may “subordinate [the organization’s] financial goals to achievement of their mission” (Padanyi & Gainer, 2004, p.45), stakeholders may not necessarily be convinced of the intangible benefit they will obtain from supporting the non-profit organization (Pope et al, 2009). In addition, Pope et al (2009) maintain that the non-profit organizations they surveyed could “clearly identify their target market for clients, but they were often unable to do so when it came to donors or volunteers” (p. 193). While an organization may recognize their general stakeholder groups, specific characteristics that are preferred within those groups such as age or education are often less discernible. Finally, using technology such as a website or social media is a marketing tool that is not used to its full potential due to the lack of staffing to maintain and update these tools (Pope et al, 2009). As a result, many non-profit organizations are unable to capitalize on the valuable interactive nature of internet-based technology (Wenham, Stephens & Hardy, 2003).

### **Opportunities of Non-Profit Marketing**

There is often a misunderstanding among non-profit organizations regarding what constitutes marketing. Dolnicar and Lazarevski (2009) state that this problem can be avoided by seeking out staff or volunteers knowledgeable about marketing who can assist in making it part of their daily operations. The first step is an organization-wide discussion on what marketing is and what it will entail in their organization. The literature is clear in its agreement that in order to obtain the greatest benefit from marketing activities, the non-profit organization must engage in some form of market research before undertaking any marketing activities (Akchin, 2001; Padanyi & Gainer, 2004;

Hershey & Posey, 2005; Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Brady et al, 2011). Research allows for a non-profit organization to assess the public and stakeholders' opinions of the organization's image, mission, key messages, and overall performance compared to other non-profit organizations (Bendapudi, Singh & Bendapudi, 1996; Brady et al, 2011). This would assist in highlighting any discrepancies between what the organization believes it is communicating to stakeholders, and what the stakeholders' actual perceptions are of the organization. Hershey and Posey (2005) maintain that research tools such as surveys and focus groups can be used without a significant amount of funding, and may even result in saving money in the long-term by avoiding embarking on uninformed marketing activities.

Once organizations have completed adequate research, they can more successfully implement marketing into their everyday functioning. Non-profit organizations can benefit most from marketing when they approach it in a strategic way, which includes: putting the client's needs at the forefront, tailoring their marketing approaches to the stakeholder group they would like to target, and using the information to attract more engaged and knowledgeable volunteers, staff, and donors (Pope et al, 2009; Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). The literature also suggests that this type of approach is not limited to larger non-profit organizations, but smaller non-profit organizations could also increase their success by adopting research based strategies (Brady et al, 2011).

## **Application of Marketing Techniques in the Non-Profit Sector**

This section explores the variety of marketing techniques that non-profit organizations have implemented although the majority of the literature indicates that most non-profit organizations are not using these tools or techniques to their full potential. This is primarily because they fail to adopt a high level of market or societal orientation, in which the needs of stakeholders provide the basis of their marketing efforts.

Increasingly, non-profit organizations are using market segmentation by defining target groups. A study of 401 participants from a range of non-profit organizations in Australia, found that these organizations were "generating information on their donors and maintaining an understanding of competitor activities" (Brady et al, 2011, p. 88-89) This meant that they are engaging in some form of market research in order to gather information on these user groups. However, the literature shows that many non-profits fail to view current and potential volunteers as another target market (Pope et al, 2009). Non-profit organizations can obtain greater benefit from volunteers if they are recruited for special skill sets, and market research can help the organization obtain a better understanding of how to recruit and retain these volunteers (Pope et al, 2009). Another study that evaluated the marketing campaign of the UK non-profit Barnardo's, found that advertising through channels they had not previously used, but had identified as being the source of the type of donor or stakeholder they desired, meant that they received a larger amount of exposure and opened their organization up to a larger target market (Denney, 1999). However, the frequency of market

research continues to be an area in need of improvement to identify any changes in the perceptions or engagement of stakeholders (Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009).

Non-profit organizations have also used collaboration, rather than competition, as a marketing tool for their organization. Abdy and Barclay (2001) indicate that this can take the form of a few organizations holding events and sharing any proceeds, providing access to their mailing lists, and joining together other organizations with similar missions to encourage people to support one specific cause while contributing to a number of non-profit organizations. Sargeant, Foreman, and Liao's (2002) research indicated that non-profit organizations were seeing the value in communicating with other non-profit organizations to discuss successes and failures as well as initiate partnerships. While the terms of partnerships and sharing of resources should be discussed at the beginning, collaboration appears to be a viable option for non-profit marketing.

Using technology, such as websites or social media, is becoming a more common form of marketing for non-profit organizations. The most commonly cited reason by a non-profit organization for having a website was to increase the profile and highlight the objectives of their organization (Goatman & Lewis, 2007). Wenham et al (2003) maintain that using the web "gives equality of access to information to larger numbers of people, regardless of the size of the site and the information being portrayed" (p. 216). Web-based technology can be highly interactive and "give the consumer the opportunity to be in control of the contact and the content viewed" (Wenham et al, p. 214). However, Wenham et al found that the majority of environmental non-profit organizations they studied in the UK do not use their websites to obtain information about the person visiting, provided little opportunity or space for the user to provide feedback, and had few interactive tools. The authors suggest that non-profit organizations can gain greater benefit from their websites by adding features that allow them to interact with their users to achieve a more client-centred approach to marketing. The literature also indicated that limited financial or staff resources do not prevent an organization from having a successful website, rather, a conscious decision must be made to have an updated and monitored website as a priority (Wenham et al; Goatman & Lewis, 2007).

## **Branding in the Non-Profit Sector**

Non-profit marketing, if done strategically, can help increase public awareness of an organization, but marketing will be unsuccessful if the messages and values of the organization are not being framed effectively or provide a lack of differentiation from other organizations. Therefore, the concept of branding in non-profit organizations is an important part of the marketing process. For the purposes of this paper, the definition of non-profit branding used is the "unique set of values or associations that define the [organization] not only in terms of what it does (its cause) but more importantly in terms of the values it represents" (Hankinson, 2002, pp. 30-31). The sentiment behind this definition is echoed by a number of other scholars, who agree that the values of a non-

profit organization are usually static, and therefore are a consistent, powerful, and representative basis on which to build their brand (Stride, 2006; Ritchie, Swami & Weinberg, 1999; Hankinson, 2000; Saxton, 2008). While the majority of the literature on non-profit branding focuses on branding and its effect on fundraising and increasing the number of donors, the general theme of branding is equally as important in terms of raising public awareness of the organization, which may ultimately lead to increased financial resources.

The concept of branding also encompasses several dimensions such as brand image, brand personality, brand awareness, brand equity and brand orientation. This paper will focus on brand orientation, which explores the extent to which non-profit organizations can benefit from “understanding the brand, communicating the brand, using the brand as a strategic resource, [and] managing the brand actively and deliberately” (Hankinson, 2001, pp. 234-235). The following sections describe the challenges and opportunities of using branding and brand orientation in the non-profit sector, as well as how creating and communicating an effective brand strategy can increase the profile and awareness of a non-profit organization. However, the majority of the branding literature is based on studies that document the perceptions and experiences of fundraising managers or general executives of the organizations, which may differ from the viewpoints of staff or volunteers.

### **Branding Challenges and Opportunities**

One of the main challenges that accompany branding in the non-profit sector is the availability of resources. The use of branding is a long-term process, which often requires a significant amount of funding as well as the time and commitment of those creating, implementing, and maintaining the brand (Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2001). The organization’s programs and services may be seen as losing resources at the expense of the branding process, especially since the brand will require long-term attention and may or may not increase the success of the organization (Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2002). The use of branding in non-profit organizations may also be seen as buying into the commercialization usually found in the private sector, conflicting with the values of the non-profit sector (Ritchie et al, 1999; Sternberg, 1998). Finally, Ritchie et al (1999) maintain that if a negative event or story emerges based on one aspect or area of the organization, the entire organization will be affected if it has a strong unified brand. The public’s trust in, and commitment to, an organization may decline if it continues to associate a negative incident with the organization’s overall brand (Ritchie et al, 1999).

The general consensus in the literature is that branding can be particularly advantageous and offers a number of opportunities to the organization. One of branding’s main benefits is the ability for an organization to differentiate itself from other similar organizations, which is especially important due to the high number of non-profit organizations seeking limited financial resources (Ritchie et al, 1999). This is as referred to as positioning, which is defined as “the place a brand occupies in a given

market” (Hankinson, 2000, p. 215). The creation of a brand can help increase the profile of a non-profit organization by providing a better idea of the cause they are working for and their underlying values, which may lead to their ability to obtain resources over other like-minded organizations (Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2002; Stride, 2006). A strong brand can help counteract “image spillover, in which public perception of an individual nonprofit is determined by the average image of all similar organizations” (Ritchie et al, 1999, p. 29). A strong brand can help not only differentiate an organization from others, but also counteract any opinions the public may hold that work to the detriment of the organization. Moreover, a strong and consistent brand can help convey the values and beliefs of the organization to potential donors, volunteers and stakeholders, which is an important part of developing and maintaining relationships with these user groups (Ritchie et al, 1999,; Faircloth, 2005). Several authors also indicate that building a strong non-profit brand helps to entrench a positive image of the organization in the eyes of the public, thus increasing trust in the organization and encouraging a higher rate of participation in the organization (Tapp, 1996; Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2002; Faircloth, 2005). Consequently, the perception of trust can help attract more donors, volunteers, and general participation from the community as a whole. Finally, the creation of a non-profit brand is seen as being conducive to the long-term and strategic disposition of non-profit organizations (Tapp, 1996; Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2001). A brand evolves over time and requires constant development and maintenance, which mirrors a non-profit organization’s continuous pursuit of fulfilling its objectives (Ritchie et al, 1999).

Overall, branding appears to be a promising strategy for non-profit organizations but the extent to which non-profits are using branding in their organizations is still limited. In a 1995 study of non-profit organization managers and directors in the UK, Tapp (1996) found that while various types of non-profit organizations may participate in branding activities, the majority of these organizations did not refer to their practices as branding. Most organizations exhibited an inadequate knowledge of branding and lacked a brand development strategy, and therefore were not capitalizing on the benefits a brand could offer (Tapp, 1996). In a more recent UK study, Hankinson (2000) found that managers of non-profit organizations do have a better understanding of brands and brand development, but still do not use the branding process strategically.

### **Creating, Communicating, and Applying a Brand and Brand Strategy to a Non- Profit Organization**

Hankinson (2002) states that in order to begin the branding process, there must be an “a priori recognition that the charity organization is indeed a brand, and secondly, that charity brand status may benefit the charity overall” (pp. 31-32). The brand may derive great benefit from embodying an amalgamation of functional attributes and symbolic values (Hankinson, 2000). The functional attributes refer to the cause that the organization is working towards, and the symbolic values are the values that the organization would like to be associated with, such as compassion or optimism

(Hankinson, 2000). These attributes and values work together to compose a brand which ultimately differentiates one organization from another even if they share a similar cause.

While there are a number of ways to approach creating a non-profit brand, the main features of the brand development and orientation process should ideally include:

- Identifying stakeholders' perceptions of the organization's values
- Agreeing on the beliefs and values that the organization embodies
- Creating communication aids such as logos and key messages
- Launching the brand internally
- Launching the brand externally
- Continuous development of the brand and monitoring the brand

(Hankinson, 2000, p. 216; Saxton, 2008, pp. 8-10)

#### *Identifying Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Organization's Values and Agreeing on the Beliefs and Values of the Organization*

When creating a non-profit brand, Saxton (2008) and Hankinson (2000) emphasize that an organization must establish clear, relevant, and focused values and beliefs. Stride (2006), points out that "values are not optional or negotiable but are integral to the organization itself" (p. 118). These values should reflect the organization's mission and indicate that the organization is as committed to its underlying values as it is its mission. Saxton (2008) also indicates that establishing such values can encourage greater dedication of clients and donors by allowing them to relate to values they believe in rather than an impersonal organization. It is important that these values and beliefs are continuously and consistently communicated throughout the behaviour and promotional tools used by the organization (Hankinson, 2002).

Non-profit organizations serve and interact with several user and stakeholder groups, such as funders, clients, donors, and the general public. Since the level and scale of interaction will likely vary based on the stakeholder, organizations need to be aware of how each stakeholder group perceives the organization and the values that it represents (Ritchie et al, 1999). Ewing and Napoli (2005) note that an organization is more likely to be successful when "there is consistency between an organization's brand vision and stakeholder's brand beliefs" (p. 842). This demonstrates the importance of taking into account stakeholders' views of the organization when determining how best to either maintain or change the organization's messaging, programs, or services.

#### *Creating Communication Aids*

Hankinson's (2000) study found that a variety of brand communicators were beneficial to a non-profit organization's brand development. Brand communicators could take the form of visual

communicators, key messages, and behavioural communicators (Hankinson). Visual communicators include the development of a logo that represents the values of the organization, as well as written communication tools, such as newsletters (Hankinson, 2000; Tapp, 1996). More recent literature mentions the increased importance of using internet based visual communicators such as websites, in order to appeal to a larger audience as well as remain current by updating information on a frequent basis (Wenham et al, 2003; Goatman & Lewis, 2007). Key messages are another important form of brand communicators that are effective when used appropriately. Tapp (1996) found that most charities did not use the technique of using the personality of the organization in their communications tools to appeal to donors or stakeholders. Most communications were geared towards publicizing the services and programs they offered, but failed to communicate the values and image of the organization which could allow for the brand image to align with the image of stakeholders and potential donors, and thus the organization itself (Tapp 1996; Stride, 2006). While many charities saw this technique as inconsistent with the nature of a non-profit organization, Tapp (1996) indicates that those who did employ this technique experienced noticeable improvements in the way their marketing efforts were received by stakeholders.

Tapp (1996) and Hankinson (2000) note the importance of finding a balance between short and incomplete and lengthy and complicated key messages. Key messages that were either incomplete or too complicated meant that stakeholders and donors had an inaccurate or limited understanding of what the non-profit organization did (Tapp, 1996). Key messages should allow for the organization to communicate a complete picture of the work that they do, and the “the tone and language should reflect, consistently, the key charity brand values” (Hankinson, 2000, p. 214). Finally, a third type of brand communicator is behavioural. This refers to a brand exhibiting its values in its everyday actions and relationships with stakeholders (Hankinson, 2000). However, these types of communicators are more difficult to pinpoint and measure, and therefore are usually not as prominent in a brand strategy.

#### *Launching the Brand Internally*

When a non-profit brand is being created, those who are internal to the organization need to be made aware of the brand and how they can best exemplify it as representatives of the organization. Internal stakeholders such as staff and volunteers, are often informed of changes in an organization after the fact. Hankinson (2001) states that involving staff members throughout the branding process is important to ensure that not only do employees have an understanding of the brand from the beginning, but are also better positioned to support the brand once it has been implemented. One of the few studies evaluating staff responses to a branding exercise in the UK found that “management (senior and middle/lower) are better informed generally than administrative/clerical staff” (Hankinson & Lomax, 2006, p. 202), which meant information was not being fully disseminated throughout in the organization. The staff that were involved or informed about the branding process were more likely to be more engaged in the organization (Hankinson &

Lomax, 2006). Furthermore, volunteers should also be involved in the branding process as they are often those on the front lines and their actions and information they provide should reflect the values and beliefs of the brand (Grounds & Harkness, 1998). Efforts should also be made to update staff and volunteers on a consistent basis and provide an opportunity for them to provide feedback and ask questions (Grounds & Harkness, 1998).

#### *Launching the Brand Externally*

Once a brand has been presented and understood internally, it must be communicated externally to current and potential stakeholders and donors. The brand communicators can be used to help publicize the brand and solidify its values in the eyes of external audiences. When launching the brand externally, the central theme that emerges from the literature is the importance of consistency. Regardless of the approach taken to launch the brand, the underlying values and beliefs of the charity brand must be consistently represented and communicated (Hankinson, 2002). This will discourage the possibility of conflicting perceptions about the organization among stakeholder groups, as well as ensure the organization has a baseline it can use to keep itself on the right track (Hankinson, 2002). Furthermore, the organization must be consistent in the way it communicates its brand to each stakeholder group. While the organization may tailor its message based on the group it is targeting, the underlying values must remain clear and constant (Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson).

#### *Continuous Development and Monitoring of the Brand*

Another important component of branding is ensuring that stakeholders' perceptions of the brand are extensively and routinely re-assessed (Hankinson, 2000). Ewing and Napoli (2005) explain that stakeholders' views can evolve over time and therefore it is important to evaluate and respond to their needs. Ritchie et al (1999) also argue that when "the brand falls out of step with public sentiment, the organization risks erosion of the value of the brand" (p. 40). Also, efforts should be made to continuously practice segmentation and targeting and adapt the key messages of the brand for each stakeholder group in order to obtain the best possible response and participation from these user groups (Hankinson, 2000; Saxton, 2008). Consequently, time and resources must be put aside at the beginning of the branding process to monitor the brand in the long-term.

## **Summary**

The literature suggests that marketing has developed into a viable option for the non-profit sector. While marketing has its share of challenges, adapting it to suit the non-profit sector is feasible and presents a number of opportunities in terms of increasing awareness and the profile of a non-profit organization. While many non-profit organizations have introduced marketing into their everyday activities, most lack a strategic approach to introducing and implementing marketing practices, in particular, failing to do adequate research, market segmentation, and monitoring stakeholder

perceptions. The concept of branding has emerged from the literature as providing a strong foundation for marketing activities by prompting an organization to define and communicate core values and key messages to stakeholders, allowing it to differentiate itself from similar organizations. As with marketing, branding yields the greatest benefit when used strategically and consistently and clearly communicated to an organization's internal and external stakeholders.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The research methodology used to explore the project's objective consisted of semi-structured in-person or telephone interviews with the researcher's target population of five HSCPC stakeholder groups, which includes staff (including Executive Director and HNBIA staff), volunteers, Board of Directors members, Vancouver Police Department representatives, and community members who are either familiar or unfamiliar with the organization. These interviews sought to understand the current state of awareness of the organization as well as obtain suggestions as to how the organization's profile could be raised in the community. Data collection by means of interviews was used for three reasons. First, the more personal nature of interviews corresponds with the objectives of the organization and the project, in which the key to community cohesiveness is building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Second, the researcher wanted to obtain extensive and accurate information from the participants. Interviews are conducive to "gaining in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, and discovering aspects of that phenomenon that researchers did not anticipate" (Manheim, Rich, Willnat, & Brians, 2008, p. 372). The researcher hoped to encourage a conversational tone and allow interviewees to ask any follow-up questions they had, which would not be possible with a survey (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006). Third, due to the various workloads and family commitments of stakeholder groups such as volunteers and board members, participation in scheduled interviews would likely be higher as opposed to sending out self-administered surveys (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006).

### Sample Characteristics

The researcher used a non-probability, purposive sampling method. Approaches included recruiting participants based on fitting the criteria of the researcher's target population(s), expert sampling, in which participants are selected because they have experience/expertise regarding the topic at hand, and to a lesser extent, snowball sampling, to recruit some participants from the community members' stakeholder group, in which a participant that fits the desired criteria refers the researcher to other potential participants that may also fit the criteria (Web Center for Social Research Methods, 2006). This approach was used because the researcher had identified five stakeholder groups that would best inform the project's objective based on their experience working, volunteering, or interacting with the HSCPC, or conversely, because they were not aware of the HSCPC and its objectives. The sample size of each stakeholder groups is as follows: 6 HSCPC and HNBIA staff, 100 HSCPC volunteers, 11 current or previous Board members, 2 VPD representatives, 50 Hastings-Sunrise community members.

## Participant Recruitment

The recruitment process for staff, volunteers, VPD representatives, and Board members consisted of the following stages:

- 1) The Client sent out an email which consisted of an introductory email by the researcher, to one hundred volunteers, four staff, and eleven board members. The client also sent out an email forwarding an email provided by the researcher and/or contacted by phone, two Vancouver Police Department contacts. The researcher then followed up with all the respondents to schedule an interview time or to discuss any assistance they could offer in terms of recruiting additional participants
- 2) A second email was sent out approximately one week later to HSCPC volunteers, staff, and board members. In person or telephone interviews were then scheduled at the convenience of the participant.
- 3) A third email was sent out approximately a week and half later to staff, volunteers, and Board members. The researcher followed up with all participants to schedule an interview.
- 4) A final email was sent three weeks later to staff, volunteers, and Board members, with interviews being scheduled with all remaining participants

In all, seven volunteers out of one hundred volunteers approached, six staff members out of six staff members approached, seven board members out of eleven board members approached, and one VPD representative out of two VPD representatives approached, participated in a 15-30 minute in-person or telephone interview. Participant consent forms were provided either via email for telephone interviews, in which verbal consent was noted by the researcher, and in-person for in person interviews (see Appendix B for a copy of the participant consent form). Responses were recorded through typed or written notes.

The Hastings-Sunrise community member recruitment process consisted of the following steps:

- 1) The Client sent out an email which consisted of an introductory email by the researcher and/or contacted by phone, seven local community organization contacts/coordinators. The researcher followed up with all seven respondents to schedule an interview time or to discuss any assistance they could offer in terms of recruiting additional participants
- 2) The remaining community members were recruited in person or by referral from community-based contacts at various community centres, businesses, and gathering places in the Hastings-Sunrise catchment area and interviewed either at the time of recruitment or at a later scheduled time

Fifteen community members out of a total of fifty community members approached participated in a 15-30 minute in person or telephone interview. Participant consent forms were provided either via email for telephone interviews, in which verbal consent was noted by the researcher, and in-person for in person interviews. Responses were recorded through typed or written notes.

### **Instrument Design**

Five sets of six to nine interview questions were created and wording of the questions varied slightly based on the stakeholder group being interviewed. In general, all sets of questions were designed to determine the participant's experience-based opinion of community policing, the HSCPC's profile in the community, and to obtain suggestions as to how the awareness and profile of the organization could be heightened. A list of all five sets of interview questions asked can be found in Appendix C. The semi-structured nature of the interview also allowed the participant to provide any other information they deemed relevant or of importance, which did not necessarily follow the order of the interview questions.

A sixth set of nine interview questions was created specifically for an interview with the Executive Director. Some of the questions asked are similar to the questions asked to the other participants, and are therefore included in the themes in the Findings section. The rest of the questions were used to obtain some background to inform other sections of this report. This set of interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis was used to analyze the interview data, in which common themes that arose from the data were identified. Common themes were organized based on five topics: perception of the level of the organization's awareness/profile in the community, perception of community policing and community policing organizations, perceived barriers to increasing the organization's profile in the community, suggestions as to how the organization's objectives, services, and programs could be better communicated, and general suggestions as to how the HSCPC's profile could be raised in the community. The individual questions themselves were not used to analyze and organize the data, due to the structure of the interview in which participants often provided information that did not follow the exact order of the interview questions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are three main limitations of this research project. The first limitation is that the researcher has a personal interest in the organization because she is an active board member. All participants were made aware of the researcher's role in the organization, and therefore it was possible that participants from some stakeholder groups did not fully disclose their experiences and opinions due to the researcher's connection to the organization. However, none of the participants raised any

concerns due to this and the researcher did not make any reference to or acknowledge any board opinions, activities, or duties at any time before, during, or after the interview. A second limitation is the relatively small number of community member participants in relation to the population of the area. However, since the research method chosen was qualitative, the researcher was more interested in understanding the experiences and opinions of the participants rather than obtaining a statistically representative sample of the entire population. The community members that did participate represented a range of ages, ethnicities, and social, economic, and educational backgrounds which the researcher believed resulted in a well-rounded sample. The third limitation is the relatively small number of volunteer participants. This can be attributed to two likely factors. Most of the recruitment was done over the summer holidays which made it more difficult to find available volunteers. The second factor is the nature of non-profit volunteering, in which volunteers may not necessarily be active in the organization every month and only volunteer a minimal amount of hours. However, the volunteer stakeholder group provides only one of many perspectives in the study and the volunteers that did participate provided valuable insight into the experiences of those on the front lines of the organization.

## FINDINGS

The data obtained from 37 interviews with participants from five stakeholder groups, including Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre volunteers, Hasting Sunrise Community Policing Centre and Hastings North Business Improvement Association staff, Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre Board members, Vancouver Police Department representatives, and community members were analyzed and the findings are described in this section. A set of six to nine questions were asked during the interviews, based on the stakeholder group and the nature and amount of information the researcher wanted to obtain from each stakeholder group. However, the participants were encouraged to provide as much information as possible so the interview questions were not necessarily responded to in sequence or solely based on the question itself. The findings of these interviews are presented according to specific themes across all stakeholder groups. These themes were chosen because they provide a good indication of the current state of awareness of the organization, perceived barriers to increasing the organization's profile, and how the participants thought the organization could increase its profile and awareness of its programs and services. In some sections, the community member stakeholder group will be addressed separately as some of the responses given touch on content that did not feature as prominently in the interviews with the other stakeholder groups.

### **Perception of the level of awareness/profile of the organization in the community**

Participants provided opinions based on their personal perceptions and experiences regarding how they viewed the level of awareness and profile of the organization in the community. Five main themes emerged from their responses:

#### *Level of awareness/profile of the organization varies based on geographical location*

The majority of respondents indicated that the level of awareness of the organization is the highest in the immediate area surrounding the HSCPC's storefront office, along Hastings Street, which is one of the major streets that run through the Hastings-Sunrise area. However, participants noted that awareness and the profile of the organization is much lower in the outer perimeters of the catchment area, in which residents may not have exposure to the organization's office on a regular basis.

#### *Level of awareness/profile of the organization is high*

Five participants indicated that there is a high level of awareness of the organization in the Hastings-Sunrise community and believe it has increased significantly over the past few years.

*Level of awareness/profile of the organization is low*

Five participants indicated that the organization isn't well-known at all. This perception was often based on the fact that friends, acquaintances, and other people that they come into contact with on a daily basis in the area, were not aware that such an organization existed in their community. Furthermore, a few participants indicated that they were only aware of the organization because they had either driven past it and seen a sign, or had walked by it because they frequented the coffee shops/cafes that are located near the office.

*Participant was unaware of the existence of the organization*

Eleven out of the fifteen community members interviewed had never heard of the organization. Based on this response, these participants were then asked what they thought the role of the HSCPC was in the community. The following answers were offered:

- Organization that liaises between the community and the police
- A police detachment
- A community safety office
- Crime prevention office

**Perception of community policing and community policing organizations**

Based on their experiences interacting with the public, or in the case of community members, their personal perceptions, participants were asked to comment on the community policing aspect of the organization. The most common themes are as follows:

*The organization is viewed by the public solely as a policing organization/police office*

The majority of the participants indicated that in their interactions with the public, or based on personal perception, the HSCPC is viewed as an organization that participates in policing activities on behalf of the Vancouver Police Department. One participant commented that volunteer patrol members are often mistaken for parking enforcement officers when in fact they are patrolling the area for suspicious behaviour or stolen vehicles.

*Public perception of the role of community policing and community policing organizations is highly influenced by personal interaction with the organization*

Several participants indicated that the public's perception and understanding of community policing and community policing organizations is highly dependent on the level of personal interaction with staff and volunteers of the organization. If a volunteer or staff member interacts with a member of the public for even a few minutes, their perception of the role the HSCPC plays in the community can be changed quickly, from viewing the organization as an extension of the police to one in which the organization strives for community safety, engagement and cohesion through public participation and involvement.

### *The public views the organization as a grassroots community organization*

Three participants suggested that members of the public do in fact view the organization as a community organization rather than a policing organization. However, in most cases, this was because these members of the public had interacted with the organization before by attending community events or visiting the storefront office.

Participants also commented on the nature of their perception, or the public's perception, of community policing and community policing organizations, and the degree to which they have a positive, neutral, or negative perception of this type of policing and organizations:

#### *Positive perception*

Several community member participants had a personal perception of community policing organizations that was very positive, whether they had had previous experiences or interactions with the organization or not. This positive perception was often based on the fact that they equated community policing with an increased police presence, which was seen to be a good thing. The majority of participants from the other stakeholder groups also indicated that in their interactions with the public, they were usually received positively and the public viewed community policing as a beneficial thing to have in the community. Furthermore, those who interact with or work closely with the HSCPC have an extremely high regard for the work that they do and their experiences with this organization has contributed to the positive perception they have of community policing and community policing organizations.

#### *Neutral perception*

Several participants commented that they personally had, or had interacted with people that appeared to have, a neutral perception of community policing and community policing organizations. The reasons they offered for having a neutral perception included:

- regardless of the good work the organization does, public participation and involvement in these types of organizations may be highly dependent based on whether a person has had good or bad experiences with the police in the past, which may limit the success of this type of organization because of either its actual or perceived ties with the police
- a lack of knowledge of what community policing organizations actually do resulted in their inability to have either a positive or negative perception

#### *Negative perception*

A few participants commented that it would be possible that some people have negative perceptions of community policing and community policing organizations because they were either distrustful of the police or had negative interactions with police officers in the past and associated the organization with this negative event. However, only one participant firmly stated they had a negative perception of community policing organizations, because they believed these types of

organizations lack authority and the community would be better served by an actual police detachment.

### **Perceived barriers to increasing the organization's profile in the community**

All stakeholder groups except the community member stakeholder group were asked to provide their opinions on perceived or experienced barriers or challenges in increasing the HSCPC's profile in the community. While the community participant group was not asked this question directly due to the number of participants that were unfamiliar with the organization, barriers were identified based on participant responses to similar questions or general comments provided throughout the interview.

Several themes were shared across all participants groups:

*Lack of awareness of what the organization actually does, including the programs and services they provide and the nature of their relationship with the VPD*

The majority of participants commented that this was one of the greatest perceived barriers to increasing the profile of the organization based on their experiences with the public. A lack of a clear understanding about what the organization contributes to the community also adds to common misconception that the HSCPC is more of a policing than community organization. Fourteen out of the fifteen community member participants indicated they had little to no knowledge or understanding of what the organization does in the community, and in turn, what they could do to participate in or support the organization. Several participants were unclear on the nature of the organization's relationship with the VPD, and the extent to which the HSCPC provided services based on direction from the police or independently. They suggested that this was also a barrier because they were unsure of whether the office was just a place to report suspicious activity and if so, whether it would be more beneficial to report it to the police directly. The community member participants indicated that they would be hesitant to participate in any organization when they were so unclear of what they do in the community and the benefit they provide. However, when provided a couple of examples of what the organization does, community member participants agreed this type of an organization is an asset to the community and they would be more likely to engage in the organization if they received more information.

*Poor location of storefront office*

The location of the storefront office was the second most commonly cited perceived barrier to increasing the organization's profile. Participants believed that the location is not visible enough to drivers and pedestrians, and as a result, not enough people visit the office which contributes to a

lack of awareness. However, among community member participants, location was not seen as being as significant of an issue because they would be more likely to interact with the organization in ways other than attending the office.

#### *Lack of advertising and marketing of programs/services/goals of the organization*

A lack of visible advertising and marketing was seen by many participants as a major barrier. In particular, the biggest issue was a lack of advertising throughout the catchment area, rather than just in the area immediately surrounding the office. Several community member participants noted that they had never seen a flyer or written advertisement in their area and had experienced very little personal communication with members or volunteers of the organization.

#### *Lack of funding*

Three participants indicated that a lack of funding inhibits the organization from increasing its profile. They suggested that inadequate financial resources affects the number of staff that run the organization and its programming, which decreases the organization's ability to finance and engage in profile building activities.

#### *High number of visible minority groups in the area*

A few participants suggested that the high number of ethnic minorities in the area could be responsible for preventing the organization in increasing their profile. They believed that in some of these cultures the police are viewed unfavourably and therefore they would be less likely to participate in an organization that partners with the Vancouver Police Department. Furthermore, ethnic minorities might also assume that communication with the organization will be in English only, and therefore the organization would not be accessible to non-English speakers. A couple participants noted that while some members of these ethnic groups believe the services and programs are beneficial, they are more likely to interact with the organization through other community groups they belong to, rather than directly with the HSCPC.

#### *Low media profile*

Three participants believed that a low media profile limits the awareness of the organization. A lack of presence in local newspapers, radio, and television was equated to the organization being able to reach a larger audience in the community.

### *Small membership base*

One participant suggested that a small membership base limits financial and personal commitment to the organization, which has resulted in a lower profile.

### **Suggestions on how the organization's mandate, services, and programs could be better communicated**

All stakeholder group participants were asked how they believed the organization's mandate, services, and programs could be better communicated to the community. The most commonly cited suggestions include:

#### *More attendance, visibility and being more proactive at community outreach events*

Many participants agreed that attending community events in which the organization could interact face to face with the community was one of the best ways to communicate information about the organization. Participants suggested that the organization should attempt to attend more community outreach events and gatherings, however, if that was not possible, to increase their presence at the events they are able to attend. Participants viewed being more proactive at events as important, in terms of actively drawing people to their booth and engaging in a conversation with them, as opposed to just handing out flyers or information sheets.

#### *Communicating a clearer and more focused message to the community*

The majority of participants commented that a clearer and more focused message should be communicated in all forms of written and verbal interaction with the community. A focused message should include exactly what the organization does, what they provide to the community, and the nature and level of participation they would like from the community. For example, a few participants did not know if they could only attend the office if they had a problem or if they could drop by on a social basis and learn more about what was happening in the community. The community members that had attended events where the HSCPC was in attendance explained that they had received items such as stickers or safety flyers, but did not obtain any written or verbal information concerning what the organization did, which contributed to their lack of participation in the organization.

*More advertising in the form of flyers, newsletters, general information bulletins to the entire catchment area*

Several participants, in particular the community member participants, believed that more advertising was necessary in the form of written flyers, newsletters, or general information handouts. In particular, they thought the frequency of communication should be increased and a larger effort should be made to communicate with as much of the catchment area as possible.

*Use of social media*

A number of participants believed that the organization should make use of social media tools. An improved and higher functioning website, with more interactive features, was commonly cited as being a key tool to communicate up to date information to a large audience. Some participants also mentioned that using Facebook and Twitter would increase the appeal of the organization, and would help reach younger members of the population that may otherwise not interact with the organization.

*Greater number of smaller scale information sessions and more open houses*

Several participants thought that more information sessions and open houses would be advantageous in increasing the organization's profile. Smaller sessions and open houses would allow for a higher level of interaction with the community, and actually seeing the organization in action would be important for those who had limited knowledge of the organization.

*Increased/improved signage and monthly information booth in front of the office*

While many participants noted that signage has improved in front of the office, they suggested that more of the signage should indicate the programs and services the organization provides. This would provide those walking by with more information about the organization without having to actually enter the office, and would make it more likely that the person would think of the organization if a community issue were to arise. Furthermore, several participants thought having an information booth on a monthly or every few months basis directly in front of the office would be advantageous. Increased visibility of members of the organization was seen as important, particularly because seeing an organization providing information is often more appealing than just hearing of the work that they do.

## General suggestions to increase the HSCPC's profile in the community

All participant groups provided general suggestions they thought could increase the HSCPC's profile either in response to the direct question or during the course of the interview. These suggestions are discussed below in order of commonality.

### *Increase outreach activities*

Outreach activities, such as attending events, providing workshops and administering information sessions were seen as being one of the best approaches to increasing the organization's profile. While participants thought that the organization is currently doing well in this area, many believed there was still room for improvement in terms of the organization capitalizing more on the advantages of face to face communication by educating and promoting the organization to the public.

### *Increased general marketing/advertising and targeted marketing to various demographic groups in community*

The majority of the participants believed that the organization should engage in more marketing and advertising, through written communications, face to face or verbal communication, and through social media and the organization's website. In addition, a higher frequency of these types of activities was seen as being beneficial to the organization and the community. A few participants took this idea a bit further, and suggested that the organization should get a better idea of the demographics of the area to help target their communications, advertising and marketing based on the various groups in the area based on age, social and economic background.

### *Better location*

A number of participants commented that a better location would increase the organization's profile. However, most recognized the lack of feasibility of this suggestion but thought it was important to take note of nonetheless.

### *Increase partnerships with other community organizations, businesses, social groups, schools, Block Watch*

Several participants recognize that the organization currently has partnerships with various other community groups and businesses in the area, however, they thought that the number and variety of partnerships could be improved. A few believed that their partnership with the Hastings North Business Improvement Association is a definite asset, however, also thought that the organization

should partner or interact with more businesses that were located on the outer perimeter of the catchment area. Other participants thought the organization should increase ties with Block Watch groups throughout the catchment area. A couple participants also noted that the HSCPC should leverage their partnerships with other community organizations and places of trust, such as churches, so that these organizations could pass on more information to their membership who may not be comfortable approaching the HSCPC directly.

#### *Increased visibility in the rest of the catchment area*

Several participants, from the community member stakeholder group in particular, indicated that the organization should be more visible in areas in other parts of the catchment area. These participants would be more open to interacting with volunteers from the organization in their neighbourhoods, as opposed to travelling to the office to receive face to face contact. To them, increased visibility meant more advertising and signage at local shops, on telephone poles, or other areas that they routinely passed by in their area. Increased visibility would mean more curiosity and interest in the organization and encourage them to either want to learn more about the organization or participate in their programming.

#### *Reallocation of resources to focus on a few initiatives*

Some participants thought that since the organization's financial and manpower resources are limited, it would serve the organization well to reallocate these resources to focus on just a few initiatives at a time. They suggested that trying to do too much with too little may decrease the effectiveness of their initiatives.

#### *Strategic recruitment of skilled volunteers*

Two participants indicated that the organization should look into more strategic recruitment of skilled volunteers. Volunteers that had a background in profile building activities, such as using marketing tools or social media, could help relieve the pressure on staff members and take ownership of profile building in the organization.

#### *Increased grant writing to secure more financial resources*

A couple participants viewed securing more financial resources, such as through grant writing, would help increase the organization's profile. These participants equated more financial resources with increased awareness of the organization.

### *Increase number of champions in area to promote organization through word of mouth*

Two participants put forth the idea of champions, in which community members in various parts of the catchment area are tasked with networking by providing information and promoting the organization in their area through word of mouth.

### *Continue to limit terms of board members*

One participant thought the organization should continue to limit the terms of its board members, which the organization currently does. They thought this would allow the organization to continually bring in new people with new ideas and community contacts, which would help the organization increase its profile.

## **Summary of Findings**

Overall, the interview findings have provided a number of important themes. Currently, the awareness of the organization is seen as being highest in the area immediately surrounding the storefront office, and lowest on the outer perimeter of the catchment area, but overall, the level of awareness has much room for improvement. The community mainly views the HSCPC as a policing organization, as opposed to the grassroots community organization image that the organization would like to project. Overall, the majority of those interviewed have a positive perception of community policing and community policing organizations, and this positive perception increases based on the amount of knowledge and interaction a person has with the HSCPC. The main perceived barriers the organization faces in increasing its profile include a lack of knowledge of the goals, services and programs of the organization, poor physical location and inadequate amount of marketing and advertising. The three most commonly suggested ways for the organization to better communicate its mandate, services and programs are more attendance and visibility at community outreach events, communicating a clearer and more focused message about the organization, more marketing and advertising through mediums such as written materials, face to face contact, website and social media, and more detailed signage. Finally, participants would not only like to see the organization build upon the current profile building activities it engages in, but also refine their current approaches and be open to new ideas.

## DISCUSSION

This section provides an analysis of the findings of the 37 interviews conducted with participants from five of the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre's (HSCPC) stakeholder groups in light of the academic literature discussed earlier in this report. A number of the main arguments presented in the non-profit marketing and branding literature are supported by the interview findings. As a result, the discussion explores five common themes that emerged from the integration of the interview and literature review themes. The five themes are: stakeholder groups' awareness of the organization, assessing, understanding and managing stakeholder perceptions, creating and communicating value-based key messages, consistency of actions and messaging at all levels of an organization and marketing by increasing visibility. These themes will address the research questions set out at the beginning of this report and indicate the implications of the research findings.

### Stakeholder Groups' Awareness of the Organization

One of the objectives of the research was to assess the current state of awareness of the HSCPC. Interview participants indicated varying levels of awareness of the organization. Many of the participants from all stakeholder groups except the community member stakeholder group (those who lived/worked in the area), believed that people's level of awareness varied greatly depending on proximity to the organization's storefront office. Those who lived in or frequented the area on Hastings Street where the organization is located were more likely to be aware of the organization than those who lived in the middle or outer perimeters of the catchment area. However, five interview participants believed there was generally a high level of awareness regardless of proximity to the office, while five participants indicated there was generally a low level of awareness, regardless of proximity to the office. There are a few possible explanations for these contradictory results. First, some participants believe that because a storefront office is a large, visible and tangible entity, it is a major contributing factor to awareness. Those who live in the middle or outer areas of the catchment area are less likely to see the office on a daily basis, thus limiting their awareness of the organization. Second, the perception of the level of awareness may be based on the participant's role in or relation to the organization. Participants that have been with the organization since the beginning have seen it grow and become more successful over the years, which they may attribute to an increasing and higher level of awareness. Third, other participants may view the level of awareness based on how well-known the organization is among their own familial and social networks, or compared to the profile of organizations they are familiar with or participate in. If the people they associate with are not aware of the organization, they may perceive that there is generally a lower level of awareness.

Another important finding is that the majority of community member participants were not aware that the organization existed at all, whether they lived near the storefront office or not.

Furthermore, those who had some awareness of the existence of the organization had a low level of awareness regarding the role of the organization. While very little was found in the literature on the concept of awareness in itself, the literature indicates that awareness of a non-profit organization is linked to non-profit marketing and branding, and can be increased through various activities such as researching the perceptions and needs of stakeholders, targeting certain demographics and stakeholder groups (including staff and volunteers), promoting a strong brand image, and using various communication tools to promote the organization (Hankinson, 2000; Akchin, 2001; Pope et al, 2009; Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009; Blery et al, 2010; Brady et al, 2011). Consequently, these literature review and interview findings suggest that either the organization is engaging in an insufficient amount of marketing, the marketing activities they are using are not reaching enough or the right people, or the content of the marketing activities is not appealing to the needs of the community.

In general, therefore, it seems that there is significant room for improvement in the marketing activities of the organization in promoting awareness of the organization. Some of the elements of non-profit marketing and branding which the literature suggests are antecedents to an increased level of awareness will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections.

### **Assessing, Understanding and Managing Stakeholder Perceptions**

Another important objective of the research was determining stakeholders' perceptions of community policing and community policing organizations. The results indicate that there are various types of perceptions among those who were aware of the organization. Those who were unaware of the organization were asked to comment on the general concept of community policing and community policing organizations. For purposes of this analysis, participants' overall perceptions of community policing and community policing organizations were assessed as well as the nature of their perception (positive, neutral, or negative).

The majority of participants indicated that the HSCPC is primarily viewed as an organization that is based on policing and policing activities rather than a community organization. This is not a surprising finding since the organization's name has the word policing in it, however, this also confirms the general lack of awareness and understanding of the role of the organization in the community. Some participants stated that perception is also dependent on the level of interaction a person has with the organization. Those who had interacted with the organization, even briefly, were more likely to have a better understanding of the concept of community policing and how community policing organizations can contribute to the community. This attests to the HSCPC's ability to maintain strong relationships with people that currently interact with the organization, however, the challenge that remains is how to increase the number of people that do interact with the organization.

In terms of the nature of perceptions, several community member participants had positive perceptions of community policing organizations. In addition, participants from the other stakeholder groups had interacted with people who also had positive perceptions of the organization. However, others held neutral and negative perceptions. Those who held neutral and negative opinions explained it was because they either did not understand what the organization was or did, which did not enable them to formulate a clear perception, or believed perceptions of community policing organizations were unavoidably linked to the type of experience people have had with the police themselves. This finding is in agreement with Rothschild's (1979) argument that people are indifferent to organizations when they lack knowledge of the organization's role and services, or do not recognize how the organization can benefit them. These participants have based their perceptions on either incomplete or erroneous information including the idea that interacting with the organization is akin to interacting with a police detachment. This finding is consistent with that of Tapp's (1996) study, in which most charities interviewed stated that most people either had an incomplete or incorrect understanding of the work that they did. This appears to be a common situation, which can lead to a lower than desired organizational profile. Based on these findings, there appear to be two main issues at hand. First, perception is highly dependent on the level of knowledge and understanding a person possesses about the concept of community policing and community policing organizations, and second, misinformation about and lack of interaction with the organization can lead to neutral and negative perceptions.

The non-profit marketing and branding literature provide a few approaches to addressing the perceptions of stakeholders. They include understanding stakeholder perceptions through market research, creating a brand image for an organization to establish a rapport with stakeholder as well differentiate it from similar organizations by highlighting its strengths. Determining and understanding the perceptions of stakeholders through market research is seen as essential in uncovering discrepancies between what an organization believes it is communicating to its stakeholders and what the stakeholders' actual perceptions are (Bendapudi et al, 1996; Brady et al, 2011). Based on the research undertaken in this report, there appears to be a disconnect between what and how the organization is communicating to the community and how, or whether it is being received by its stakeholders. Many participants, particularly those who reside in the middle and outer perimeters of the catchment area, do not understand what community policing entails, nor do they have a clear understanding of the work the organization does in the community. If a person does not perceive there is a need for such an organization, then they will be less likely to participate in the organization such as volunteering or donating (Bendapudi et al, 1996). However, the interview findings indicate that many community member participants once told what the HSCPC does in and for the community, believe that there is a need for such an organization. This seems to indicate that there is a knowledge- and interaction-based gap that needs to be filled. Hershey and Posey (2005) suggest that frequent market research, whether it is through surveys, focus groups, website message boards or informal conversations with community partners, can better inform the

organization of the community's level of knowledge as well how the organization is viewed by the community. This can allow the organization to approach the community strategically and tailor its information, programs and services to reach the widest audience possible in a manner that connects with and addresses the needs of the entire community in a more direct and in-depth way.

The non-profit branding literature also identifies the importance of establishing a strong brand image (Ritchie et al, 1999; Hankinson, 2000; Stride, 2006; Saxton, 2008) as well as differentiating, or creating a niche for the organization based on its strengths (Ritchie et al, 1999). Branding can be used to differentiate an organization from other similar organizations, and prevent image spill-over in which the public associates an organization with all similar organizations (Ritchie et al, Hershey & Posey, 2005). Some interview participants indicated that they believed the office was only a place where they could report a problem, and therefore the organization was associated with crime and policing elements alone. As a result, these participants were less likely to interact with an organization which was associated with negativity. However, as mentioned in the background section of this paper, there are ten community policing centres in Vancouver, which have mandates that vary in scope and encounter issues that are often based on the nature of the social and geographic landscape of their catchment areas. The fact that the HSCPC views itself as a community organization that strives for a cohesive and safe community differentiates it from other community policing centres in Vancouver, which may operate as an extension of the Vancouver Police Department. As noted in the findings, when interview participants who had never heard of the HSCPC before were made aware of the organization's community based mandate, they immediately had a more positive perception of the organization and indicated they would be more likely to participate in the organization if they knew more about it and its role. As a result, the concept of increasing safety and community cohesion is seen as a worthy cause by most people. Overall, these findings support the idea that increased communication of a very well-defined and differentiated brand image that focuses on positive activities, such as promoting safety, encouraging interaction other than reporting crimes, and increasing community cohesion may decrease negative perceptions of the organization.

### **Creating and Communicating Value-Based Key Messages**

The theme of the necessity of creating and communicating value-based key messages addresses the second objective of the research, which is what can be done to increase the profile of the HSCPC. Lack of understanding or knowledge of the organization's objectives and what it offered, needed, or wanted from the community was a key interview finding. This lack of understanding can be linked to the inadequate communication of organizational values as well as to the length and clarity of the messages being communicated. The non-profit branding literature indicates that most non-profit organizations communicate either short and incomplete messages, or lengthy and complicated ones (Tapp, 1996; Hankinson, 2000), and often fail to communicate the personality and values of

the organization (Tapp, 1996). Both of these actions can contribute to a failure to connect with stakeholders on an emotional or personal level.

Saxton (2008) and Hankinson (2000) stress the importance of using value-based messages to communicate with an organization's stakeholders which should be present in all forms of communication, from verbal to written to behavioural. Value based messages are more likely to connect with stakeholders, particularly if the values of the organization match values important to the stakeholders (Ewing & Napoli, 2005). In particular, stakeholders must make the connection as to how the organization directly benefits them, their family and friends, and their community overall. When community member participants that were unaware of the organization were told some of the values the organization espouses and how they contribute to the community, they were not only more likely to have a positive perception of the organization but demonstrated willingness to interact with the organization. Furthermore, Saxton (2008) suggests that people respond to or interact with an organization on a variety of levels, from obtaining personal benefit, to believing in an organization is capable of producing results, to identifying with an organization's broad vision of the way the world should be. However, if a person's motivation is solely based on how it benefits him/her alone, he/she will be less likely to remain committed to an organization on a long-term basis (Saxton). This presents an interesting dilemma. On the one hand, appealing to stakeholders on a personal level can increase short term involvement because of the explicit link between how their participation in the organization can benefit them in the short term. Conversely, as stated in the literature, appealing to someone on a more universal level, such as appealing to their inherent moral code or personal view of the world might secure a longer term commitment. The challenge appears to be how to strike a balance between the two in order to gain the widest spectrum of support.

Furthermore, as evidenced by the brief demographic scan in the background section of this paper, the Hastings-Sunrise area is composed of a large visible minority population. Important values can vary among different ethnic groups, and as indicated in the interview findings, some may view policing in a less than favourable way. As a result, it is important that the values that are integral to these populations are seen as aligning with the values of the organization in order to increase the participation of these groups in the organization. This does not suggest that the organization needs to create new values, but rather frame them in a way that is acceptable and understandable to the ethnic group they are trying to communicate with. In addition, the demographic scan also revealed that there are a number of one-person households and residents aged 20-49 years old in the area. The priorities and interests of these types of households and age groups may differ from those of families with children, or seniors, for example. Therefore, it is important to determine what types of issues are important to this demographic and how value-based messaging can be tailored to appropriately and effectively target them and increase their interest in the organization.

The other component of creating and communicating value-based key messages is the length and complexity of the messages. The majority of the community member participants indicated that they did not know what type of issues they could bring to the organization, what type of interaction they could have with the organization, or how they could participate in/help the organization, indicating that the messages being communicated are incomplete. This also holds true for those who were aware of the organization. Among those who had attended events, the majority left having a limited idea of what the organization actually did. While key messages may be more powerful when they are concise, their brevity may also account for an incomplete or inaccurate understanding by stakeholders (Tapp, 1996). However, this concept was viewed in two different ways by interview participants. Some participants stated that they needed more clearly stated and detailed communications that outline exactly what the organization does and the type of interaction they would like from the community, while some interview participants noted the importance of unique selling points, which are short, powerful, and to the point messages that are commonly referred to in marketing literature (Tapp, 1996). There are a couple of possible explanations for this result. Participants who were already aware of the organization and what it does, may see unique selling points as a way to quickly and effectively target stakeholder groups such as current or potential donors. Donors would already be aware of the organization and would not need more detailed communication. Conversely, if the objective was to attract new people to the organization, it would be essential to present them with detailed information about the organization in order to ensure they had a complete and well-informed understanding of the organization and its vision, in addition to its services and programming. This once again reflects the importance of understanding the needs of a stakeholder group and approaching them in a way that supports their needs.

Key messages are not just for written communications, but must also be emphasized through verbal interaction. The interview findings indicate that the most powerful messages are received through verbal interactions with the organization's staff and volunteers, and ensuring that value-based and detailed messages are at the forefront of interaction with stakeholders can increase the awareness and understanding of the role of the organization. They are also most beneficial when communicated clearly at outreach events through frontline staff and volunteers where interpersonal interaction is at its highest. This idea will be explored in further detail in the next section.

### **Consistency of Actions and Messaging at all Levels of the Organization**

A prominent theme in the literature review and interview findings is the importance of consistency of actions and messaging throughout the entire organization. Hankinson (2001) highlights the importance of ensuring organizational values and beliefs are represented, communicated and understood throughout the entire organization, and in particular, by frontline staff. Several interview participants indicated that they were given pamphlets on safety or identity theft at an

outreach event, but received little or no information about the organization itself from the person they interacted with at the event. This finding is consistent with Bennett and Savani's (2004) assertion that volunteers are often involved with the organization because they are dedicated and interested in the organization's cause, yet they don't necessarily understand or are told how to interact with stakeholders to increase their interest in the organization. As mentioned in previous sections, the perceptions and understanding of stakeholders can be altered most positively through verbal interaction, and the best forum for this kind of interaction is at outreach events. This highlights the importance of ensuring that brand values and key messages are understood and communicated by those who work at the frontlines, such as volunteers. There are two possible ways to address this finding. First, volunteers may benefit from being included in decisions regarding the types of messaging communicated and how best to convey these messages to stakeholders (Grounds & Harkness, 1999). This can help volunteers have a sense of ownership and personal connection to the messages they are communicating to stakeholders, as well as ensure that a unified and cohesive image is being projected to the community. Second, the consistency of actions and messaging can be improved through recruiting volunteers with particular skill sets, such as marketing and communications (Pope et al, 2009). Volunteers that have some experience in these areas are more likely to understand how to communicate effectively with stakeholders and can take more initiative at outreach events. This approach also aligns with the suggestion from a couple of interview participants that volunteers with marketing or communication skills should be recruited by the organization to strengthen overall interactions with stakeholders.

The concept of consistency also applies to the dissemination of key values and messages throughout the entire catchment area. This situation is unique to the HSCPC as they serve a particular catchment area which is extensive and highly populated. While the literature does not speak to this type of instance in particular, the general concept of consistency is seen as essential in all non-profit organizations (Hankinson, 2002). The majority of interview participants indicated that awareness of the organization decreases based on relative proximity to the organization's storefront office. Residents that live closer to the office may be receiving clearer messaging and may have more interaction with the organization than those who live in the middle or outer perimeters of the catchment area. This appears to be a major contributing factor to the lack of awareness and thus lower profile of the organization. As a result, there appears to be a need for consistent messaging throughout the entire catchment area in order to decrease the current disconnect that exists between the residents of these outlying areas and the organization. The importance of connecting to the rest of the catchment area in various ways is discussed in further detail in the following section.

### **Marketing by Increasing Visibility**

Another significant theme from the interview and literature findings which addresses the research objective of what can be done to increase the profile of the HSCPC, is increasing visibility of the

organization directly and indirectly. Direct visibility includes increasing advertising through print in all parts of the catchment area, providing a higher level of interaction at outreach events, increasing the organization's online presence through a more interactive and functional website, and using more detailed signage and visible interaction around the storefront office. Indirect visibility refers to marketing through mediums such as leveraging partnerships with community partners and organizations to increase the organization's profile.

Advertising is one component of non-profit marketing and branding that can increase the visibility of an organization. However, this does not require flashy handouts or slick slogans, but rather clear, focused, and frequent messaging in the form of both written and verbal communications (Tapp, 1996; Hankinson, 2000). It is important to emphasize, however, that advertising and marketing are not synonymous. Creating a brand based on values and communication informed by market research is futile unless it is communicated to the people the organization is trying to reach. Advertising is a tangible means of communicating essential information to stakeholders. Interview participants indicated that they would like to see more advertising to increase their awareness and understanding of the organization. Several interview participants indicated that they had never seen any type of advertisements in their area, especially in the middle to outer perimeters of the catchment area. Consequently, the strategic placement and use of advertising in the form of flyers, newsletters, or informational brochures is essential. Several interview participants were also very open to receiving written communications in the mail, and noted that frequent updates are necessary to maintain their attention. Overall, most participants felt that more distribution of written communication in their area was needed from the organization.

Visibility of the organization at outreach events was also seen as being important by several interview participants. In this case, visibility meant the organization being more proactive at events by engaging community members through conversation, rather than being handed a pamphlet or brochure without any explanation. This finding is consistent with earlier observations, which indicated that while volunteers are often the first point of contact of an organization, they are usually the least likely to have an understanding of or experience in marketing activities (Bennett & Savani, 2004; Dolnicar & Lazarevski, 2009). A higher level of interaction, centred on value-based key messages, could make it more likely that the community members left with a better understanding of the organization and the work that it does, which may lead to increased awareness. Outreach events are some of the most valuable ways to increase awareness and knowledge of an organization by effectively engaging stakeholders through personal interaction at these events.

The use of social media and a more interactive website were also commonly suggested ways for the organization to increase its visibility. The literature suggests that most websites are informational rather than relational, in which websites provide information but do little to attempt to interact with the person visiting the website (Goatman & Lewis, 2007). Furthermore, the websites of most

non-profit organizations do not include areas for feedback, fail to collect information on who is using the site, and do not offer features that are specifically targeted to different demographics (Wenham et al, 2003). As expected, this was a common point brought up by interview participants, who stated that social media and a more interactive website are essential for targeting and increasing the interest of younger community members, such as 18-35 year olds. This demographic would be more receptive, for example, to watching a YouTube video on identifying suspicious behaviour or participate in a blog, rather than read a newsletter. While the organization's website is currently being revamped, a couple of interactive or social media features could be considered for future improvements to the website.

Several interview participants stated that a better physical location of the office was important to increase the organization's visibility. However, due to financial constraints and lack of office space available in the area, the location of the office is currently not negotiable. Nonetheless, interview participants also suggested that the visibility of the office can be increased by improving the level of detail in the signage as well as drawing attention to the office by more activity in front of it. However, an interesting interview finding was that while most of the other stakeholder groups viewed the location of the office as a major stumbling block, location was not much of a concern to the community members group. A possible explanation for this could be that written or verbal interaction in the immediate area where they live is seen as more valuable than having to visit an office to engage with or see the organization in action. This finding further supports the literature's emphasis on understanding and reacting to the needs of stakeholders (Bendapudi et al, 1996; Hershey & Posey, 2005; Pope et al, 2009; Brady et al, 2011), and in this case interaction near a person's home is more highly sought after than at an office. Nevertheless, some participants strongly believed that the location is an issue. There are a few ways that this can be addressed. Currently, there is signage in front of the office with the name of the organization, but there is lack of information that indicates the role of the office or services it provides. Residents walking by would only see the policing aspect of the organization which may or may not encourage them to actually visit the office. Signage with more detail could help clarify the role of the organization. Furthermore, increased activity in front of the office, in the form of more open houses, information booths in front of it, or even having a few volunteers interacting with people as they walk by, could increase its exposure. While the location is currently seen as a significant detriment to the organization, steps can be taken to increase its visibility from its current location.

Leveraging partnerships with community partners and organizations is an indirect way of increasing the organization's visibility. Some of the interview participants mentioned the HSCPC's relationship with the Hastings North Business Improvement Association (HNBIA) has been important in increasing their presence along Hastings Street. The organization also partners closely with some of the schools, community centres and organizations in the area. The effectiveness of these partnerships corroborates the literature's findings that collaborating with other organizations can

increase access to and number of resources as well as provide valuable information on successful as well as less successful ventures (Abdy & Barclay, 2001; Sargeant, Foreman & Liao, 2002). Yet, participants noted that there is still room for improvement in terms of increasing the number of partnerships with organizations on the outer perimeter of the catchment area. A partnership similar to the one the organization has with the HNBIA was seen by some interview participants as something that could be replicated with businesses in other parts of the catchment area to further increase the organization's profile. It is important, however, that community partners understand the core values and messages the HSCPC would like communicated to the clients of their community partners as well as the types of services and information that are available. One interview participant noted that some clients of other community organizations were open to interacting with the HSCPC through a partnering organization, but were not comfortable approaching the HSCPC directly because they did not understand what services they could provide them and if they had information available in languages other than English. The same participant also suggested that partnerships with organizations in other areas of the catchment area that cater to and are trusted by ethnic minorities (i.e. churches and local gathering places) could be beneficial. This finding further supports the idea that clear and consistent messaging is important in all organizational communication, including relationships with partnering organizations (Hankinson, 2002).

A number of key issues have emerged from this discussion. These include the importance of stakeholder relations, the valuable role of frontline staff such as volunteers, and consistent and targeted communication through various mediums. While a comprehensive approach to profile building is ideal, even a few focused initiatives can yield great benefit and can build a foundation than can be built upon in the long-term. The challenge remains for the organization to be open to new ideas and approaches and learn from both successes and failures.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides recommendations for the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre to increase the awareness and profile of the organization. In order to obtain the most benefit out of marketing and branding activities, the recommendations should be implemented in a coordinated and strategic way.

As discussed in the previous sections, approaching marketing/branding activities strategically includes determining the needs of stakeholders and target demographics through research, or market segmentation, and tailoring communications to these target groups accordingly. However, a third component of approaching these activities strategically is assessing their impact on a routine basis. Stakeholder views and opinions can change over time, and an effort must be made to continuously monitor, assess, and adapt marketing and branding activities in the long-term.

The recommendations that follow are organized into four overall strategies: connecting with stakeholders, volunteer engagement, marketing through paper and electronic based mediums, and monitoring and evaluating profile building activities. It is possible that due to financial and resources constraints, not all components of these strategies can be implemented according to a set timeline. However, the organization can benefit from the implementation of even one recommendation from each strategy. To assist the organization in selecting their decisions the recommendations for each strategy have been listed according to short term and long term recommendations. The short term recommendations can be completed in three to six months with limited resources while the long term recommendations will need more extensive planning to allocate the appropriate amount of time and resources for their successful implementation and have been given a timeline of six to twelve plus months.

### 1. Connecting with Stakeholders

Short Term (3-6 months)

***Recommendation 1.1:*** Create a more concrete brand that is rooted in the core values, beliefs, vision and strengths of the organization which differentiates it from other organizations. Ensure the focus is on the written content as opposed to items such as logos, which can be developed in the future.

***Recommendation 1.2:*** Create new communication materials that clearly and directly articulate the organizational brand which should include the values of the organization, the types of interaction the organization would like from the community, and how the organization directly benefits the community.

**Recommendation 1.3:** *Develop an education campaign focused on promoting positive perceptions and minimizing negative and/or incorrect perceptions about the organization. This should be based on providing clear and detailed information about the concept of community policing, and the role, values, services and programming offered by the organization in the community, to improve stakeholder understanding and perception.*

**Recommendation 1.4:** *Assemble a focus group of members from the organization, business and community partners, and community members to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the communication materials before distribution.*

Long Term (6-12+ months)

**Recommendation 1.5:** *Conduct research, such as a survey, six months after the education/awareness campaign to assess level of knowledge and awareness and determine whether campaign should be decreased, maintained at the same level, or increased.*

**Recommendation 1.6:** *Use focus groups composed of community members and community organization employees, to research the needs and values of the various ethnic minority populations and the 20-49 year old demographic in the area to determine how to best target these populations and increase their interest and participation in the organization.*

**Recommendation 1.7:** *Create a set of communication materials, informed by the research, for the various ethnic groups in the area and the 20-49 year old demographic.*

## **2. Engaging Volunteers**

Short Term (3-6 months)

**Recommendation 2.1:** *Consider adding marketing activities to the current volunteer training sessions that emphasize more one- on-one interaction with organization stakeholders such as communicating key messages and values to the community.*

**Recommendation 2.2:** *Expand the distribution of communication materials to the entire catchment area and set aside more volunteer time to target the middle and outer perimeters of the organization's catchment area.*

**Recommendation 2.3:** *Set aside a group of three to five volunteers every month to run an information booth in front of the storefront office, with an emphasis on communicating the key values of the organization as well as how the community can interact with the organization.*

Long Term (6-12+ months)

**Recommendation 2.4:** Consider strategically recruiting volunteers that have research, marketing, and/or communication skills to create a work team that can dedicate time to profile building activities on a regular, long-term basis.

### **3. Marketing Activities in Paper and Electronic Form**

Short Term (3-6 months)

**Recommendation 3.1:** Provide partnering organizations with new communication materials to clearly indicate the values, role, services, and nature of interaction the organization offers to, or would like from, the partnering organization's clients.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Create new signage in front of the office that offers more detail regarding the role of the organization, and the programs and services it offers, to attract and encourage more foot traffic into the office.

Long Term (6-12+ months)

**Recommendation 3.3:** In future phases of website development, implement features such as message boards, videos of information sessions or workshops the organization has conducted, interactive components where visitors can leave comments and provide detail about themselves and what they would like to see on the website, and areas targeted to certain demographics.

### **4. Monitoring and Evaluating Profile Building Activities**

Short Term (3-6 months; Ongoing)

**Recommendation 4.1:** Provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback on all profile building activities conducted by the organization, in written, verbal, or electronic form. For example, including a detachable comment card in the quarterly newsletter or through email if the newsletter is distributed electronically, to assess how these materials are being received and identifying any gaps that can be filled.

Long Term (6-12+months)

**Recommendation 4.2 :** After the implementation of at least three of the recommendations from any of the strategies, evaluate the effectiveness of these actions by interviewing 10 community members to assess their knowledge and awareness of the organization and its services.

**Recommendation 4.3:** Consider creating an internal evaluation framework based on soliciting verbal and written feedback of the community regarding programming, outreach events and

*written/online communications, in addition to the numbers-based outcome indicators required by the Vancouver Police Department.*

## CONCLUSION

The research in this report set out to assess the current level of awareness of the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre in the community and provide some suggestions as to how the organization's profile could be raised to reach more people and improve community safety and cohesion. Through consultation of the non-profit marketing and branding literature as well as 37 interviews with participants from five of the organization's stakeholder groups, important themes emerged and were discussed to provide some insight into the current state of awareness and the implications these findings have for the organization. Four main strategies, which consisted of 17 recommendations in total, were presented to build upon current profile building initiatives as well as propose new steps that can be taken to meet the organization's profile building objectives.

However, the reality that faces most non-profit organizations remains the same. An organization's success is highly dependent on the attitudes and actions of the people it serves, and a general sense of complacency or indifference can limit the effectiveness of an organization no matter how important the work they provide. Nonetheless, the success the organization has experienced thus far attests to the fact that there is a need and appreciation for an organization that strives to bring people of diverse backgrounds together to improve their quality of life through increased safety and cohesion.

The overall objective of this report was to provide the organization with recommendations, informed by the literature and stakeholder interviews to guide them in building awareness and their profile resulting in a safer and more engaged Hastings Sunrise community. Based on the unwavering commitment and dedication of the HSCPC's Executive Director, staff, volunteers, and Board members, the organization is currently in a solid position in which it can implement some of the ideas put forth by this research to build upon its current efforts and embark on some challenging, but promising new initiatives.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A – Population Characteristics Charts

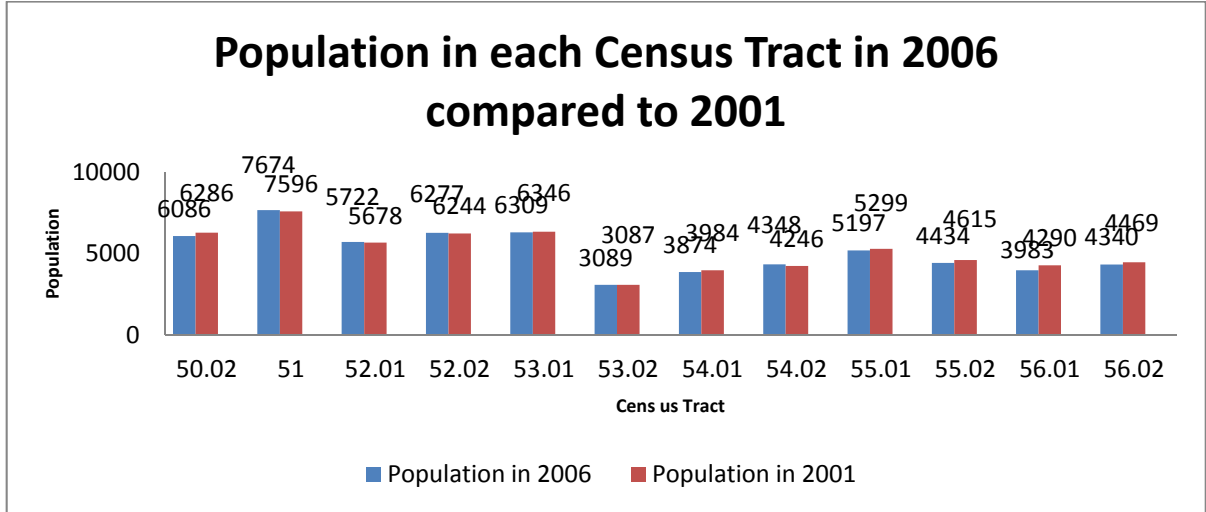


Figure 3. Population in each Census Tract in 2006 compared to Population in each Census Tract in 2001. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

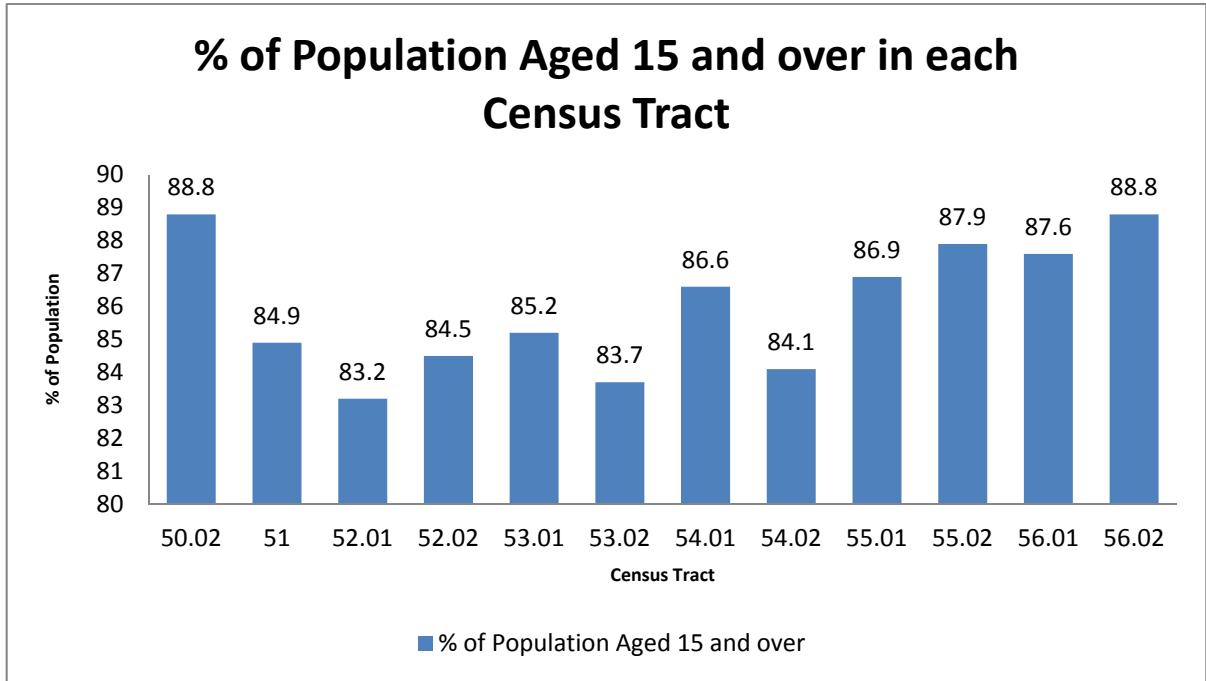


Figure 4. Percentage of Population Aged 15 and Over in each Census Tract in 2006. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

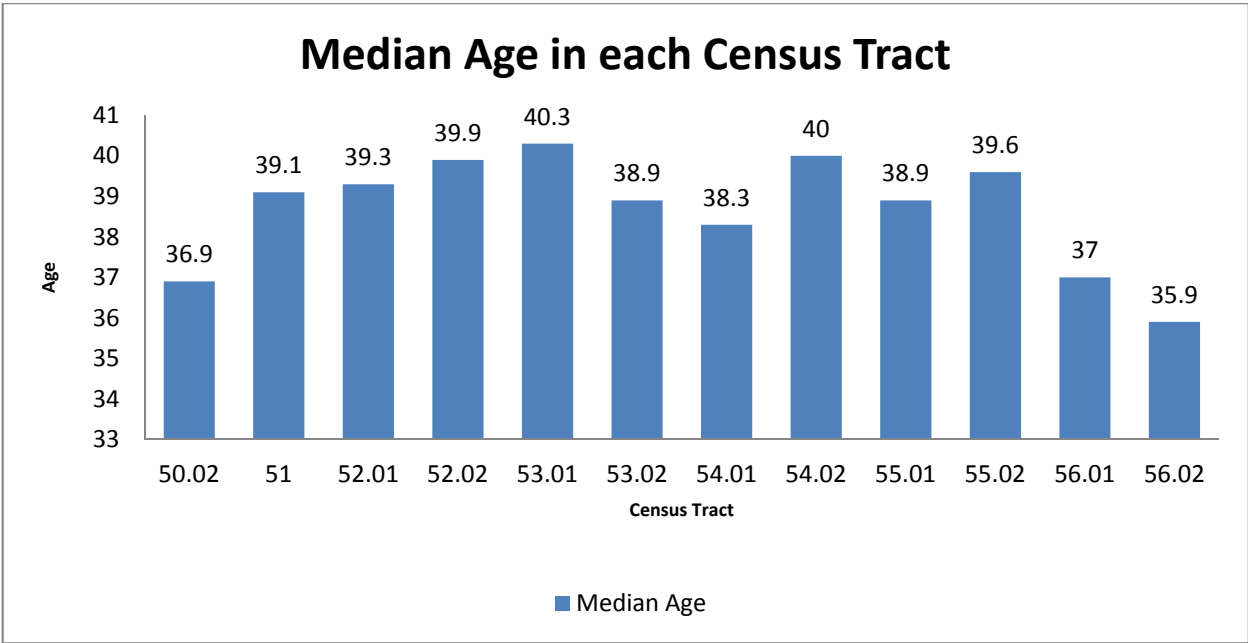


Figure 5. Median Age in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

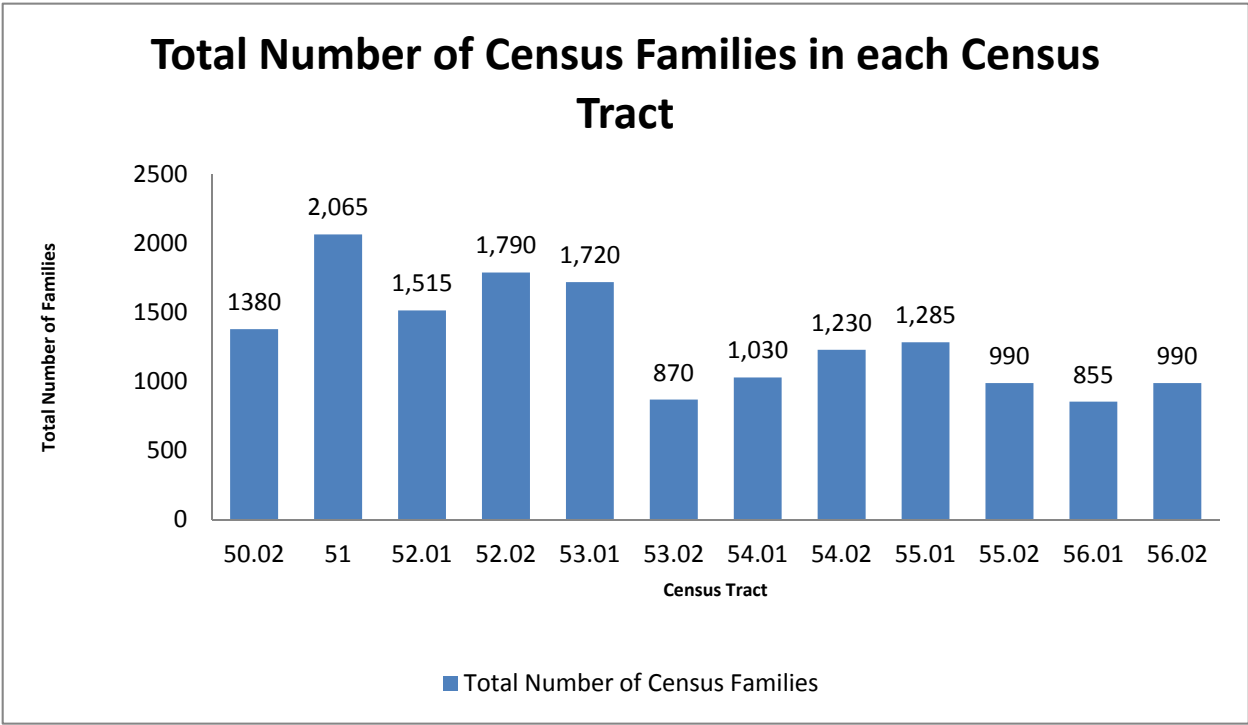


Figure 6. Total Number of Census Families in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

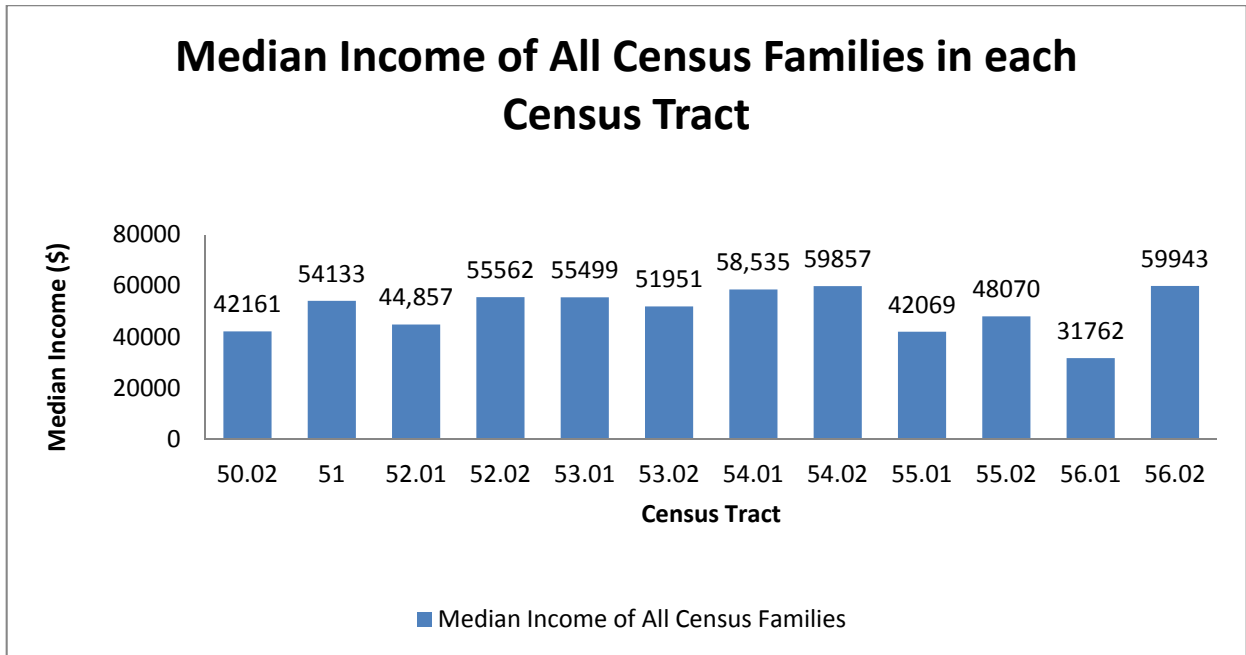


Figure 7. Median Income of All Census Families in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

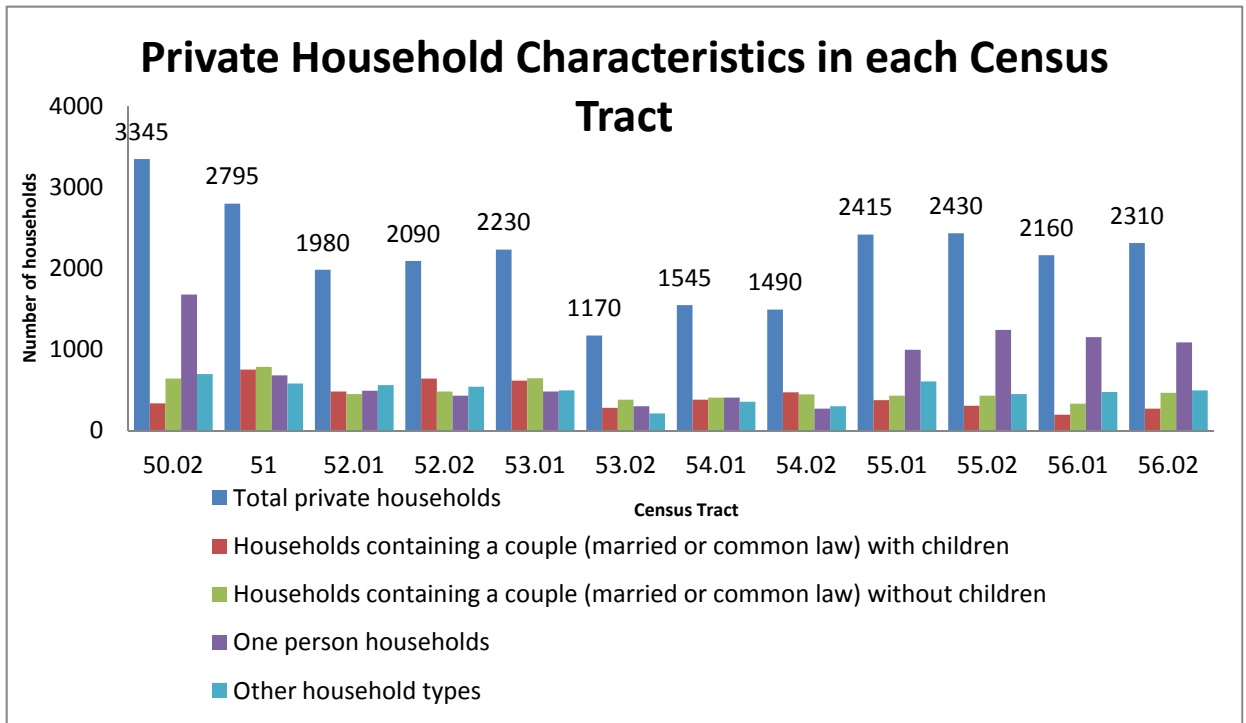


Figure 8. Private Household Characteristics in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

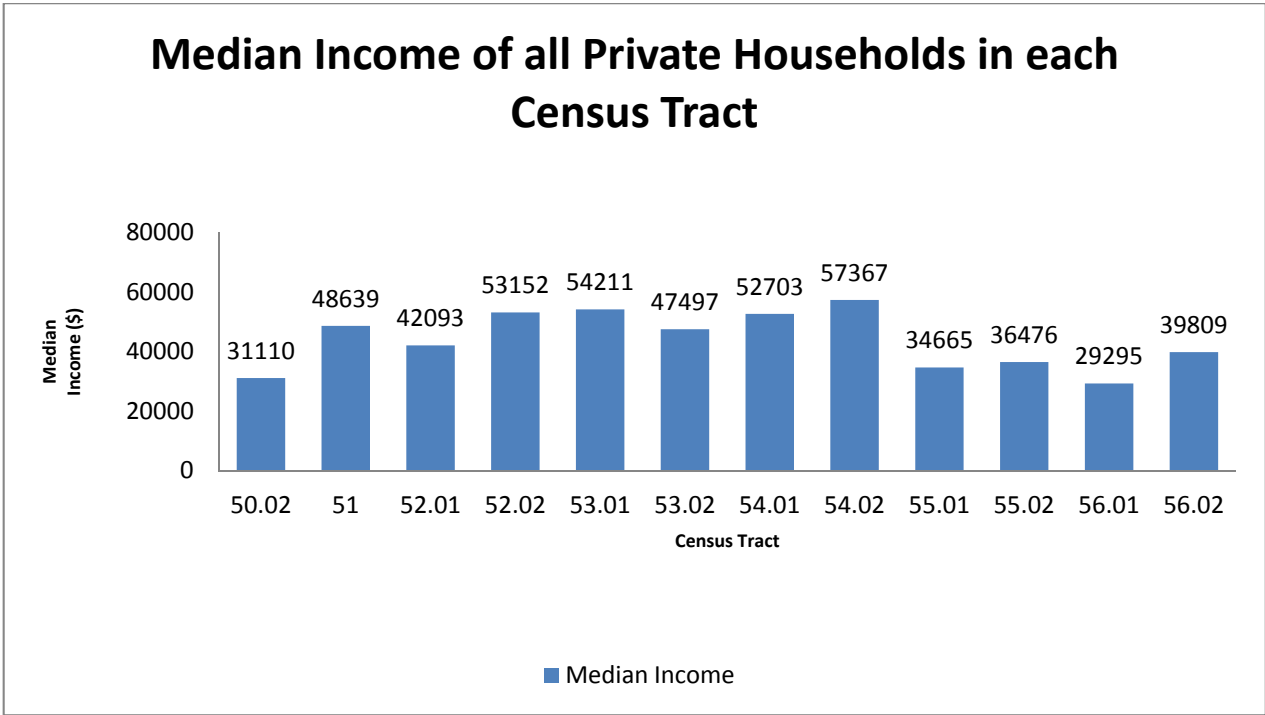


Figure 9. Median Income of all Private Households in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

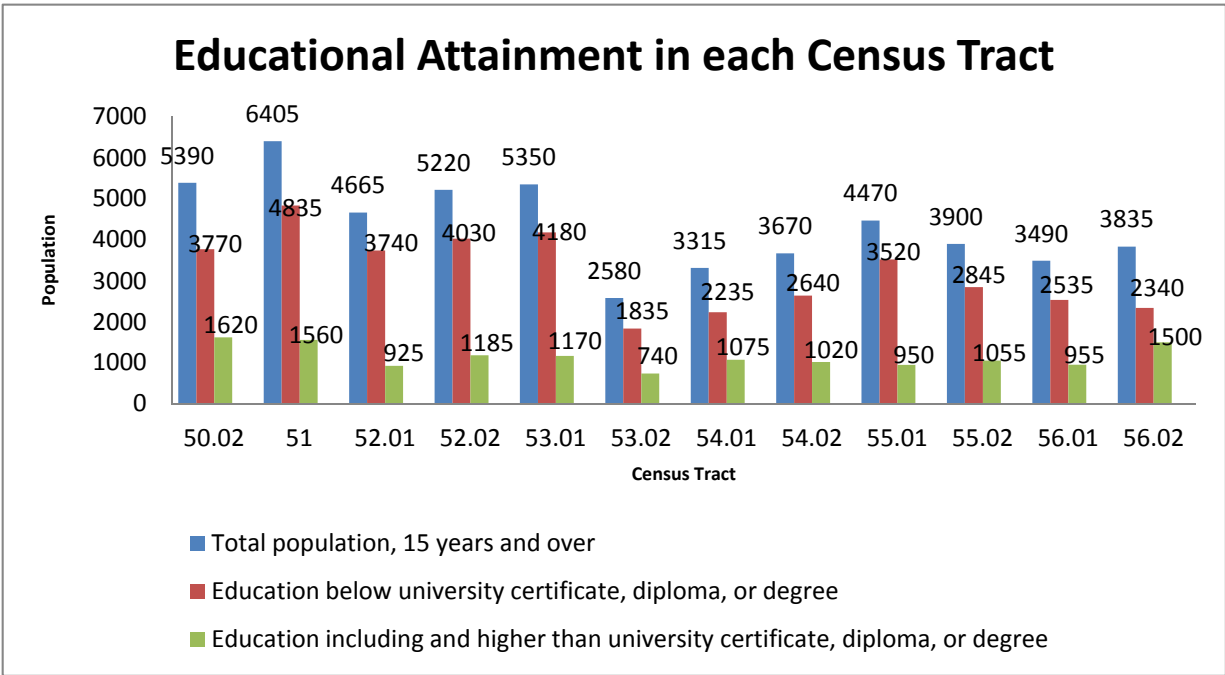


Figure 10. Educational Attainment in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

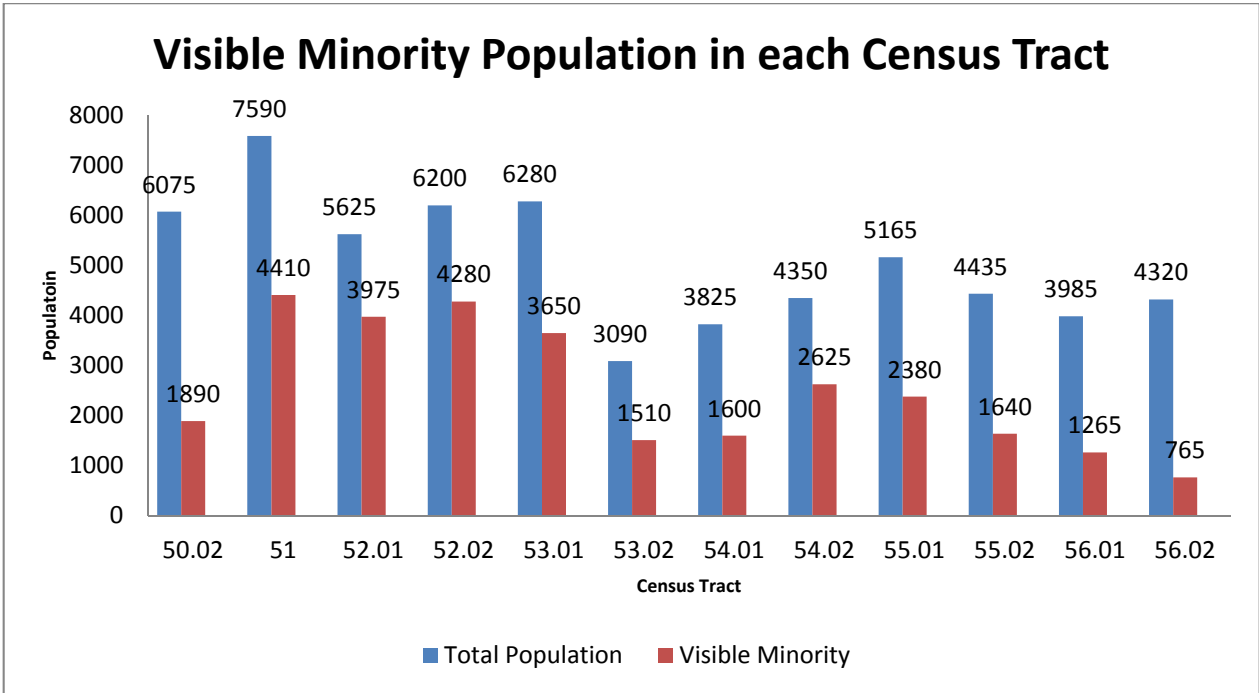


Figure 11. Visible Minority Population in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

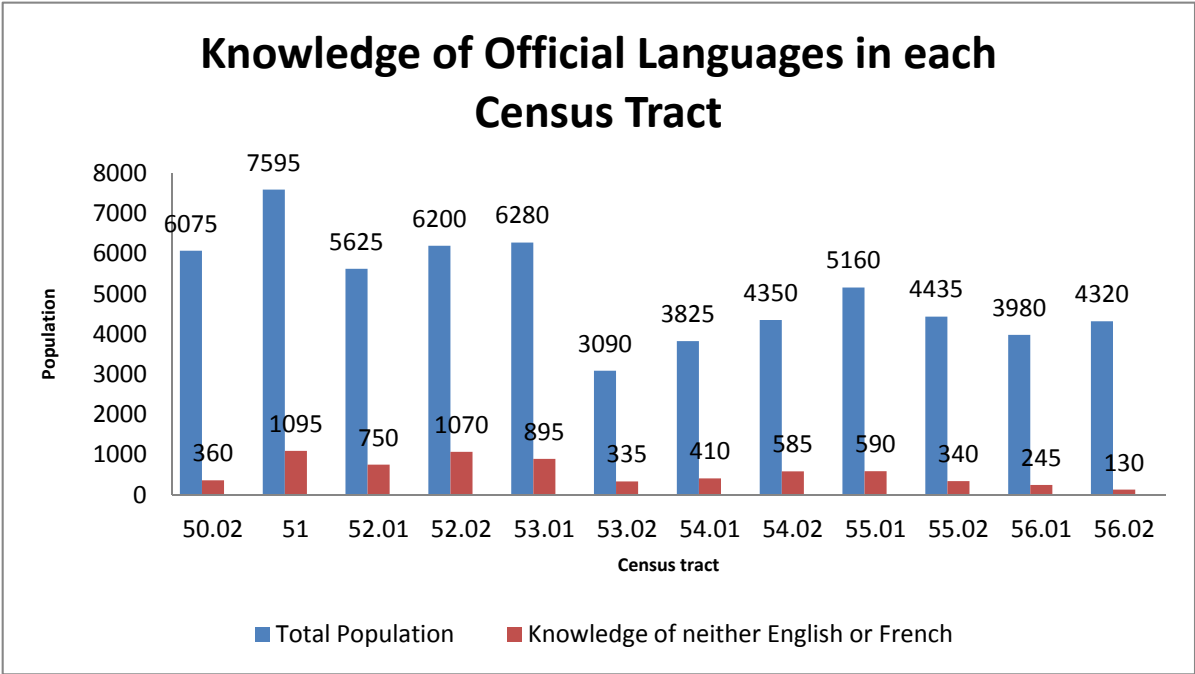


Figure 12. Knowledge of Official Languages in each Census Tract. Based on data from Statistics Canada (2006) Census Tract Profiles

You are invited to participate in a study entitled 'Examination of Profile Barriers and Recommendations for Increasing the Profile of the Hastings Sunrise Community Policing Centre' that is being conducted by Diana Murru.

Diana Murru is a graduate student in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by email at [dmurru@uvic.ca](mailto:dmurru@uvic.ca).

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Thea Vakil. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-6442.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this research project is to examine the challenges the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre (HSCPC) has faced and is facing regarding its profile in the community, and to provide recommendations as to how this profile can be raised/improved.

### **Importance of this Research**

Research of this type is important because a more prominent profile will result in a safer, more cohesive, and engaged Hastings-Sunrise community.

### **Participants Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because of either: (a) your expertise in the community policing area, (b) your experience volunteering/working with the HSCPC, (c) you work and/or live in the Hastings-Sunrise area.

### **What is involved**

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will consist of a 15-30 minute interview either by telephone or in person at the location most convenient for you. Open-ended questions will be asked and your answers will be recorded in writing or electronically.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including a time commitment of 15-30 minutes.

### **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

## **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include being able to voice your opinions on how the HSCPC can increase their profile, which can ultimately improve/increase community engagement, cohesion, and safety in the Hastings-Sunrise area.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you are personally acquainted with the principal investigator, this should not be a factor in your decision to participate or not participate. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time either verbally or in writing without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be destroyed, unless you provide permission to the researcher to use the information you provided before your withdrawal.

## **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity, only the researcher will know your identity. Your name or any identifying features will not be used in the report.

## **Confidentiality**

The researcher is a member of the HSCPC Board. However, the research being done is completely independent from the Board and is necessary to complete an academic degree. Any information you provide will remain separate from the activities of the Board.

The identity of some participants may not be entirely confidential during the recruitment and interview process due to the fact that participants are being sought from small and specific groups and some participants may require permission from volunteer or staff supervisors if an interview is done during working hours. However, the information you provide will be confidential and protected by being stored in a password protected computer or a locked cabinet.

## **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- it will be presented during an oral defense at the University of Victoria
- the report will be read by HSCPC staff and Board members

## **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed once the researcher's report has been defended. Data stored on the researcher's computer will be deleted and paper notes will be shredded.

## Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher Diana Murru and her supervisor Dr. Thea Vakil at the respective email and phone number listed above.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers. If this consent form is being read to you over the phone, the researcher will accept your participation verbally and indicate verbal consent in place of a signature.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Participant to provide initials)

\_\_\_\_\_

*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

## Appendix C – Stakeholder Interview Questions

### *Group 1 – HSCPC Volunteers*

- 1) How did you first hear about the HSCPC before you became a volunteer?
- 2) To what extent do you think the HSCPC is well known in the Hastings-Sunrise area?
- 3) In your experience working with the public, is the HSCPC seen more as a policing organization or a grassroots community organization?
- 4) In your interactions with the public, do people seem to have a positive, negative, or neutral perception of community policing organizations?
- 5) What do you see as an issue or issues that have prevented an increase in the profile of the HSCPC?
- 6) How do you think the HSCPC can better communicate their mandate, programs, and events to the community?
- 7) What do you think could be done generally to increase the profile of the HSCPC in the Hastings Sunrise area?
- 8) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?

### *Group 2 – HSCPC Board Members*

- 1) How did you hear about the HSCPC before becoming a Board member?
- 2) To what extent do you think the HSCPC is well known in the Hastings-Sunrise area?
- 3) Do you think the HSCPC is seen by the community as just a policing organization rather than a grassroots community organization?
- 4) In your interactions with the public, do people seem to have a positive, negative, or neutral perception of community policing organizations or are they indifferent?
- 5) What do you see as an issue or issues that have prevented an increase in the profile of the HSCPC?

- 6) How do you think the HSCPC can better communicate their mandate, programs, and events to the community?
- 7) What do you think could be done to increase the profile of the HSCPC in the Hastings Sunrise area?
- 8) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?

*Group 3 – Community Members: Residents/Business Owners/Employees*

- 1) Have you heard about/are you familiar with the Hastings-Sunrise Community Policing Centre? If yes, how did you hear about it? If no, what do you think its role is in the Hastings-Sunrise area?
- 2) While the HSCPC partners with the Vancouver Police Department, it is not solely a policing organization. It is also an organization that is trying to improve the quality of life in the area by improving safety and engaging the community. Do you think this type of organization is an important one to have in the Hastings-Sunrise area? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- 3) Do you have a generally positive, negative, or neutral opinion towards community policing organizations? What are your reasons behind having an either positive, neutral, or negative opinion? What could be done to improve your opinion of a community policing organization?
- 4) If you had a complaint or safety concern about something happening in the area, for example, do you know that you could contact the HSCPC about it? If not, how do you think the HSCPC could better communicate this and the other types of services they offer to the community?
- 5) Do you or would you attend community events in the Hastings-Sunrise area? Why or why not?
- 6) How do you think the HSCPC can better communicate their mandate, programs, and events to the community?
- 7) What could the HSCPC do to increase your interest in their organization?

- 8) Do you have any general suggestions as to how the HSCPC could increase its profile in the community?
- 9) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?

*Group 4 – VPD Representatives*

- 1) In your experience, what do you find is the general attitude/opinion/knowledge the public has of community policing centres?
- 2) Do you think the HSCPC currently has too low of a profile in the Hastings-Sunrise community?
- 3) What do you see as the biggest challenge or challenges facing the HSCPC in terms of increasing its profile?
- 4) How do you think the HSCPC can better communicate their mandate, programs, and events to the community?
- 5) Do you have any general suggestions as to how the HSCPC can raise their profile?
- 6) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?

*Group 5 – HSCPC Staff Members*

- 1) How did you hear about the HSCPC before you became an employee?
- 2) To what extent do you think the HSCPC is well known in the Hastings-Sunrise area?
- 3) In your experience working with the public, is the HSCPC seen more as a policing organization or a grassroots community organization?
- 4) In your interactions with the public, do people seem to have a positive, negative, or neutral perception of community policing organizations?
- 5) What do you see as the main barriers preventing the HSCPC from having a more prominent profile in the community?

- 6) How do you think the HSCPC can better communicate their mandate, programs, and events to the community?
- 7) What are your suggestions as to how the HSCPC could raise its profile in the Hastings-Sunrise community?
- 8) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?

## Appendix D – Executive Director Interview Questions

- 1) In your interactions with the public, do most people seem to have a positive, negative, or neutral perception of community policing organizations or are they indifferent?
- 2) To what extent do you think the HSCPC is well known in the Hastings-Sunrise area?
- 3) What do you see as the main barriers preventing the HSCPC from having a more prominent profile in the community?
- 4) How often does the HSCPC participate in profile building activities?
- 5) Does the HSCPC currently have in place any formal profile building strategies?
- 6) What are some profile building activities that the HSCPC currently engages in?
- 7) To what extent have profile building activities been successful in the past? What factors do you think contributed to their success or lack of success?
- 8) How do you think an increased profile in the community would benefit the HSCPC?
- 9) Do you have any final thoughts or information you would like to provide?