

**DATE:** December 1, 2008  
**TO:** Mayor and Councillors  
**FROM:** Kathleen Vincent, Director, Legislative and Administrative Services  
**SUBJECT:** CITY OF PORT COQUITLAM PAGE ON FACEBOOK - STATUS REPORT

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**RECOMMENDATION**

That the City of Port Coquitlam continue to maintain a government page on the Facebook social networking website.

**1. BACKGROUND**

In March 2008, the City of Port Coquitlam officially launched a page on the Facebook social networking website. This initiative was supported by the Corporate Management Team and Council with the following understanding:

- a) That the page on Facebook would be launched on a trial basis and reviewed after six months.
- b) That, during the trial period, the Communications Division would monitor the page usage as well as the staff resources required to maintain the page with the objective of providing statistics and performance measures at the end of the trial to objectively evaluate the merits of maintaining the Facebook page.

**2. STATUS**

**2.1 Staff Resources**

The City's page on Facebook is maintained exclusively by the Website & Communications Technician, who spends on average less than two hours per week updating the information on Facebook. Updates include new job opportunities postings, sending out notifications, event invitations, and changing the graphics and feature newsfeed. Most of the Facebook page updates are done in conjunction with similar updates to the City's website or the development of the City's monthly E-Update newsletter. Consequently, there is very little, if any, demand on other City staff to provide content and graphics to support the City's page on Facebook.

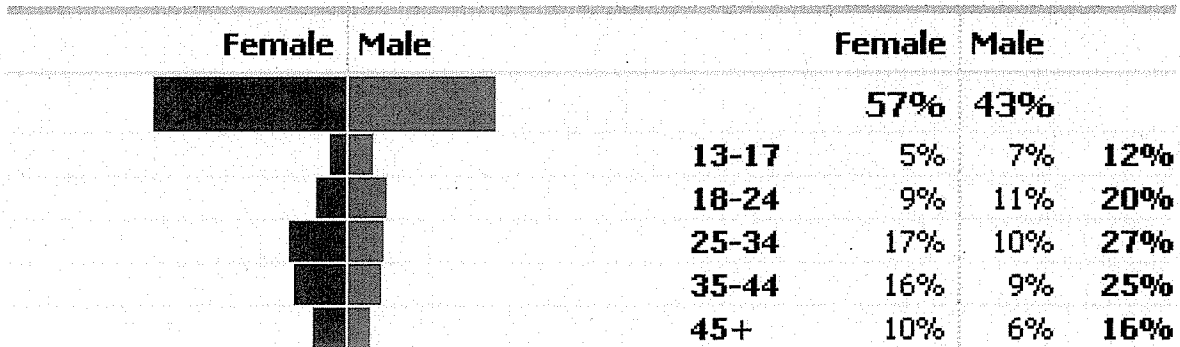
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**2.2 Fan Demographics**

As of November 30, 2008, the City of Port Coquitlam’s page on Facebook had attracted just over 520 fans or people who have subscribed to the City’s page on Facebook. The number of fans has increased steadily and continuously since the page’s launch in March 2008. Included below is a graphic showing the demographic breakdown of the current fans of the City’s page. The 25 – 34 age group continues to be the strongest however there is also a good balance of fans in the other age categories.

**521** Total Fans

**510** Yesterday



\* Data Last Updated: Nov. 30, 2008

**2.2 Performance Measures**

As previously reported to Council, the City of Port Coquitlam was the first Metro Vancouver municipality to launch a page on Facebook. Most municipalities are currently investigating various Web 2.0 technologies to better engage and inform their citizens, however to date few have established a presence on Facebook. As a result of our presence on Facebook, the City of Port Coquitlam has been contacted by both the District of Maple Ridge and the City of Vancouver to seek information and advice on the best practices for establishing a government page on Facebook.

Some of the other cities found on Facebook are listed below. It is important to note that there exist many pages for various cities, but few have been initiated or maintained by the local municipal government.

- City of Port Moody – 53 fans (Pop. 30,000)
- District of Maple Ridge (careers only) – 85 fans (Pop. 73,000)
- City of Calgary - Fire Recruitment – 101 fans (Pop. 1,045,000)
- City of Claremont, California - 246 Fans (Pop. 37,000)
- City of Birmingham, UK - 353 Fans (Pop. 1,007,000)
- City of Williamsburg, Virginia - 397 Fans (Pop. 12,000)
- City of Jerusalem, Israel - 496 Fans (Pop. 750,000)
- City of Port Coquitlam – 521 Fans (Pop. 57,000)

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In comparison to other municipally-run pages on Facebook, Port Coquitlam's page has attracted a significant number of fans. In addition, of the Facebook users that have subscribed to the City's page as fans, less than 1% have removed themselves (i.e. unsubscribed) as fans. This statistic is a good indication of support for the format and content of the Port Coquitlam page on Facebook.

The insights feature of Facebook, which provides data on the number of fans, fan demographics, and page views also verifies that on average the City's page on Facebook receives 40 views per day. While this number may be low, it is important to consider that the primary function of the City's page on Facebook is to push out information and to drive people to link to the City's website at [www.portcoquitlam.ca](http://www.portcoquitlam.ca).

Facebook continues to rank as the second highest referral site to the City's website. Visitors who come to the City's website via a link from Facebook spend an average of 3.22 minutes on the website site and view more than three pages a visit. 36% of the visitors referred by Facebook are new to Port Coquitlam's municipal website, which means that the page on Facebook has successfully engaged citizens and stakeholders who had not previously visited the City's website.

**3. SUMMARY**

The City of Port Coquitlam expends very little staff resources and there are no direct costs to maintain a presence on the Facebook social networking website. Based on the number of subscribed fans, page activity, and volume of referrals from the page on Facebook to the City's website, staff have deemed the six-month trial a success and are recommending to Council that the City maintain its government page on Facebook.

Staff also acknowledge that the City's page on Facebook is but one of many different online and print communication tools used to engage and inform stakeholders and citizens.



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