



C·V·R·D

COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2011
9:00 AM / COMMITTEE ROOM No. 2
175 INGRAM STREET, DUNCAN, BC**

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Distribution:

CVRD – Director Klaus Kuhn (Committee Chair)
CVRD – Director Lori Iannidinaro (Committee Vice-Chair)
Municipality of North Cowichan – Councillor John Koury
City of Duncan – Councillor Tom Duncan
Town of Lake Cowichan – Councillor Jayne Ingram
Town of Ladysmith – Councillor Jillian Dashwood and Councillor Lori Evans
Cowichan Women Against Violence Society / Safer Futures Program – Theresa Gerritsen
Community Options Society – Cheryl Stone
Cowichan Valley School District No. 79 – Candace Spilsbury
Cowichan Independent Living – Jim Harnden
RCMP – Kevin Day and Markus Lueder
Social Planning Cowichan – Michelle Nowzek
Community Policing – Carol-Ann Rolls
Community Representative – Michelle Bell
Community Representative – Bruce Ingram

Cowichan Valley Regional District

Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary

(Agenda Cover Only)

Warren Jones, Administrator

CVRD Directors

Minutes of the Regular meeting of the Community Safety Advisory Committee held in the Board Room, 175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC, on Thursday, October 21, 2010 at 9:03 am.

PRESENT: Director Lori Iannidinardo (Chair)
Director Phil Kent (Vice-Chair)
Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society
Councillor John Koury, District of North Cowichan
Councillor Jillian Dashwood, Town of Ladysmith
Corporal Kevin Day, RCMP
Cheryl Stone, Community Options Society
Jim Harnden, disAbility Resource Centre
Carol-Ann Rolls, Community Policing
Michelle Bell, Community Representative

ABSENT: Candace Spilsbury, Cowichan Valley School District No. 79
Michelle Nowzek, Social Planning Cowichan
Bruce Ingram, Community Representative
Councillor Joe Thorne, City of Duncan
Councillor Jayne Ingram, Town of Lake Cowichan

ALSO

PRESENT: Joe Barry, Corporate Secretary
Chris Ewing, Manager Information Technology
Thanya Al Saadoon, Safer Futures Program
Dominique Beesley, Recording Secretary

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved.

MOTION CARRIED

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2M1

It was moved and seconded that minutes of the Regular meeting of the Community Safety Advisory Committee held June 17, 2010 be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, introduced Thanya Al Saadoon, whom, she said, is the Safer Futures Program staff support to the Committee.

9:08 AM Councillor John Koury arrived to the meeting.

9:09 AM Cheryl Stone arrived to the meeting.

**BUSINESS
ARISING FROM
THE MINUTES**

BA1

Public Awareness of Community Safety Advisory Committee

The Committee discussed ways in which the Community Safety Advisory Committee's information could be better displayed on the CVRD website.

The Manager Information Technology, provided his feedback on technological viability of the suggested updates given by Committee members. Theresa Gerritsen advised that Safer Futures Program would compile a list of the Committee's recommended changes to be put forward for the Committee's consideration. The changes, she said, include a recommendation for Community Safety Advisory Committee to be posted on the opening page of the CVRD website.

Thanya Al Saadon, Safer Futures Program, said that she would begin updating of the posted documents.

DELEGATIONS

4D1

Pam Alcorn representing the Seniors Safety Advisory Committee, provided a presentation on findings of the Age Friendly Cities for Seniors Report.

It was moved and seconded that the Community Safety Advisory Committee adopt the *City of Duncan Age-friendly Seniors Safety Project Report* and further that the *Report* be forwarded to the Board, Cowichan Tribes, the City of Duncan, the District of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith and the Town of Lake Cowichan.

MOTION CARRIED

It was moved and seconded that the *City of Duncan Age-friendly Seniors Safety Project Report* be reviewed by a subcommittee of the Community Safety Advisory Committee and that this subcommittee prepare and forward to the Committee any of the recommendations contained in the *City of Duncan Age-friendly Seniors Safety Report* identified for its review and action.

MOTION CARRIED

REPORTS

5R1 A report from Theresa Gerritsen, Safer Futures Program dated September 16, 2010; regarding a showcase of community responders—that, noted Ms. Gerritsen, was held adjacent to the Creating Capacities for Coordination in Domestic Violence Cases Conference, Thursday, September 16th 2010; was received.

5R2 A report from Theresa Gerritsen, Safer Futures Program, regarding a CSAC Panhandling Report 2010, was considered.

It was moved and seconded:

- 1. That a further update be added to the CSAC Panhandling Report 2010 that describes actions that have arisen from the activities described in the Report;**
- 2. That the Report be then distributed to stakeholders; and**
- 3. That a further report of any outstanding recommendations be provided for the Community Safety Advisory Committee at the next meeting.**

MOTION CARRIED

5R3 A report from Theresa Gerritsen, Safer Futures Program, regarding a community safety bulletin September 2010, was received.

5R4 A report from Theresa Gerritsen, Safer Futures Program, regarding a community safety bulletin October 2010, was received.

ADJOURNMENT
11:12 AM **It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.**

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 11:12 am.

Certified Correct:

Chairperson

Recording Secretary

Dated: _____



CSAC Report
2010/11

Prepared by Safer Futures for
CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee
Chair: Lori Iannidinardo, CSAC Chair

February 2011

Safer Futures Support to the Community Safety Advisory Committee
(CSAC)

Safer Futures has engaged in many projects in addition to providing support to the CSAC Committee.

The last project completed was called 'Making the Links' funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada and Vancouver Foundation which came to a close on June 30, 2009.

The project assisted to develop capacities in local neighborhoods to identify safety issues.

Safer Futures continues to work with groups and agencies to integrate a community safety perspective. Safer Futures makes connections between local concerns and local government on issues related to community safety.

About Safer Futures:

Safer Futures is a community research and development program of the CWAV Society. We research issues related to the safety of women, children and other vulnerable groups in their communities and work collaboratively to develop and implement solutions.

History:

Safer Futures has provided a supportive role to the work of CSAC since CSAC's origins in 2003. Safer Futures has also assisted in bringing a safety perspective to the Cowichan region, including safety audits and other initiatives. Safer Futures has provided support to CSAC in its mandate of advising the CVRD on safety issues of regional, inter-municipal, and inter-agency importance.

The Role of Safer Futures:

Safer Futures provides support to the CSAC Committee as follows:

- *Coordinates planning and provides facilitation, education and training.
- *Contributes to the development and implementation of the CSAC Work Plan and the work plans of CSAC subcommittees.
- *Brings forward and represents the perspective of neighborhoods and its residents on safety issues.
- *Assists in issue or problem identification and conducts relevant research on safety issues at the local, provincial, federal, and international levels.
- *Assists CSAC in identifying activities to promote and enhance safety for the Cowichan region based on research as above.
- *Creates or contributes to CSAC reports and produces documents upon direction of CSAC and CSAC subcommittees.
- *Assists with the production of communication materials related to community safety.

Safer Futures
Project Team
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Jane Worton
Contractors

Safer Futures is a
program
operating
underneath the
umbrella of the
Cowichan
Women Against
Violence Society.



Safer Futures

CWAV Society: providing a range of programs to promote safety for women, children and families in the Cowichan region.

103-255 Ingram Street, Duncan BC V9L 1P3

CSAC Report 2010-2011

2010 Community Safety Advisory Committee
Member List

GEOGRAPHIC AREA	NAME
Central	
CVRD	Phil Kent (Vice Chair)
Municipality of North Cowichan	Councillor John Koury
City of Duncan	Councillor Joe Thorne
South	
CVRD	Lori Iannidinardo (Chair)
Community representative	Michelle Bell
West	
Town of Lake Cowichan	Councillor Jane Ingram
Community representative	Bruce Ingram
North	
Town of Ladysmith	Councillor Jill Dashwood
Community Groups	
Cowichan Women Against Violence Society	Theresa Gerritsen
Cowichan Independent Living	Jim Harnden
RCMP	Kevin Day
Community Options Society	Cheryl Stone
Community Policing	Carol-Ann Rolls
Social Planning Cowichan	Michelle Nowzek
Cowichan Valley School District #79	Candace Spillsbury
CSAC Support	
Safer Futures/CSAC	Thanya Al-Saadoon
CVRD – Corporate Secretary	Joe Barry
CVRD – Recording Secretary	Dominique Beesley

Supportive and Guiding Documents

The Annual CSAC Workplan is informed by the three documents that provide a Framework for action and the basis for the main activities of CSAC for the fiscal year.

The Community Safety Action Plan In 2006, CSAC developed a draft Community, Health and Safety framework entitled "Community Safety Action Plan". This document provides an overall Strategic Plan to address safety within the Cowichan Valley region. Four building blocks provide the structure of the Plan: Policy and Guidance, Safe and Accessible Design, Building Strong Neighbourhoods and Coordinated Action. The Plan provides the framework for the CSAC Workplan each year.

The Cowichan Region Safety Lens The Community Safety Lens is a planning and development tool. As a framework document it considers safety, ensures adequate consultation and informs a range of procedures. Specifically, the lens provides planners, elected officials and developers with a tool to assess safety for proposed developments and planning in the Cowichan region.

Community Safety Bulletin The Bulletin is a new tool used by the Committee to highlight and stay apprised of arising safety issues and concerns that may guide the ongoing work of CSAC to promote community safety. It pays attention to community events and news media coverage for factors that may influence citizen perception of risk or experiences of harm. The Bulletin also highlights activities that promote safety and risk reduction by physical and social means.

CSAC Report 2010-2011

Report from Lori Iannidinardo, CSAC Chair 2010

Welcome back to a new year. I would like to give brief overview on this past year with CSAC.

The Panhandling Initiatives: We as a committee supported the community dialogues with the stakeholders, the City of Duncan, and the downtown business owners in working to come up with solutions to the panhandling issue. This is the true value of CSAC to support initiatives and safety issues that are brought forward by the community during any given year. I have seen a tremendous difference in the down town core, which I believe is a direct result of this initiative.

The CSAC Showcase of Community Responders: CSAC's parallel event held in support of the Domestic Violence Court Conference was well attended and extremely educational for our community. This was another example of learning and communication about community safety that was offered to the greater public.

CSAC information flow and connection with citizens: Through CVRD/CSAC Safety Bulletins, website upgrades, and the process and procedure subcommittee, this process is moving forward and receiving positive responses. We will continue to follow up in 2011. Our committee acknowledges that Social Media is always changing and we need to keep up with this task.

In closing, I would really like to thank Thanya and Theresa for all their support and patience with me at the helm these last few years. I would also like to inform the committee of the new CSAC chair for 2011 and welcome Chair Klaus Kuhn Area I Director for Youbou / Meade Creek. This position is very unfamiliar to Klaus. I know you will all join me in helping him in this role and working together for another year of highlighting the need for all citizens in our valley to feel safe. I will continue working with CSAC as the Vice-Chair.

In closing I would also like to thank all the members of the Committee for their continued support and commitment to this very worthwhile endeavor and all the challenges that come with it. I look forward to working with all of you in 2011.



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CSAC Activities

Setting Priorities Workshop

April 26, 2010 Presentation to the Committee

The 'Setting Priorities Workshop' was offered to the committee as a means to review the history, purposes and policies of CSAC, as well as to facilitate discussion pertaining to the review of CSAC's capacities as a resource to the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Some of the discussion points/questions centered on the committee's capacities and abilities, asking:

- ▶ Are there ways that CSAC can improve its function as an advisory to the CVRD and as a resource for citizens?
- ▶ Act as a central information link?
 - ▶ Mapping Linkages – receive referrals, requests, field concerns from citizens, responding to inquiries, assisting groups
 - ▶ Should there be a CSAC brochure?
- ▶ Tracking of community activities related to safety, bring forward a safety perspective
- ▶ Community safety forum?

Coming out of this discussion, a subcommittee was struck to create policy and procedure recommendation. Update on this subcommittee to follow in this report.

The workshop also raised social and economic issues that CSAC can direct its energy towards; issues that continue to be raised by the community as requiring the attention of municipal government and local agencies. These include:

- ▶ Coordination between initiatives
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Violence
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Youth
- ▶ Recreation and leisure
- ▶ Access to services
- ▶ Crime prevention

The committee found this workshop to be extremely beneficial in both offering a review of the function of CSAC, and as an opportunity to strategize for future initiatives.

CSAC Processes and Procedures Sub-committee

Following up on questions generated in the 'Setting Priorities Workshop', a sub-committee was struck to create recommendations addressing the communication gaps identified. This response to the committee's desire to facilitate improved accessibility for community members seeking safety focused information resulted in this 'Processes and Procedures' subcommittee. CSAC members Jim Harnden, Lori Iannidinardo, Michelle Bell and Theresa Gerritsen were assisted by Safer Future's Thanya Al-Saadoon. The subcommittee looked at instituting changes to the way



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CSAC Processes and Procedures Sub-committee continued

that CSAC information is displayed, formatted and accessed on the CVRD website, and on updating and refining the information that is provided. They also explored other communication options, including public announcements, rack-cards and a variety of means with which to allow community members to be more easily connected with the CSAC/CVRD. Acknowledging that citizens require a variety of options for accessing safety information and communicating their safety concerns, CSAC will continue to explore options for improved access. The issues that the committee focused on and the responses to those issues are:

- ▶ Public's access to CSAC
 - Safer Futures reviewed the CVRD website and brought access concerns to the sub-committee
 - A detailed list of recommendations/alterations to the CVRD website was compiled by the sub-committee
 - This list was shared with the committee as a whole, along with the CVRD website tech, and changes for increased public access were requested
 - These changes are in progress
- ▶ Other means to promote the work of CSAC and to solicit public input
 - Alternate communication avenues were discussed, including handbills, rack-cards and social media – in progress
- ▶ Committee has agreed to meet again in 2011 to finalize the recommendations

'Working Towards Solutions' Response to Panhandling

As a result of the panhandling forums and subsequent liasoning meetings, a number of responses were successfully moved forward on. These included:

- ▶ A completed report documenting the process and recording recommendations
- ▶ An RCMP reporting form was developed to record incidents to track the nature and occurrences of the problem
- ▶ RCMP increased their presence in the area with their Bike Patrol, dedicating three members and recruiting some of the 15 new RCMP auxiliary members
- ▶ A new City Bylaw was developed which sets important limits to panhandling
- ▶ An informational brochure was developed by Community Policing and a later version produced by DBIA
- ▶ Relocation of the gazebo at Charles Hoey Park to the Warmland House
- ▶ CMHA Mental Health Outreach Worker continues to provide support to people with barriers

These and other responses have been successful in shifting the onus away from viewing the panhandling issue from a criminality perspective and towards a safety and supportive services focus. The downtown business owners, services agencies, RCMP, Community Policing, the Commissionaires and those citizens in need of supports are finding ways to work together to address the safety in the downtown Duncan core.



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'CSAC Showcase of Community Responders'

September 16th, 2010

As a way to both support the 'Domestic Violence Court Conference' and to provide community safety information to the public, CSAC hosted the 'CSAC Showcase of Community Responders' as a parallel event to the September conference. Invitations were extended to several community safety/support agencies, asking them provided informational displays at the showcase. CSAC also participated with pertinent reports and initiative information provided. The showcase was opened during the morning break of the conference, and guests were welcomed to peruse the displays, talk with the presenters and eat a nutritious morning snack. Following the conference lunch break, the CSAC chair welcomed the participants back to the showcase to be entertained by a group of young First Nations dancers. This portion of the event was warmly received, and many comments regarding the informative displays and the breadth of services available in the Cowichan Valley were offered. This showcase was an excellent way to let the community know more about CSAC and safety issues in the Cowichan Valley.



2009/2010 CSAC Report Updates

Citizens Advisory to Corrections

CSAC designates two representatives to this citizen's advisory to act as a liaison between the two committees. The Citizen's advisory also provided information at the CSAC Showcase of Community Responders with a display at the forum.



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CSAC Responsiveness to Citizens Concerns about Safety

In order to act as a conduit between the CVRD and community members, CSAC continued its neighbourhood liasoning. Some of the responses were:

- Supporting the James Alexander Neighbourhood and Vancouver Island Health Authority in facilitating a community conversation about the installment of a dual-diagnosis residence. Upon hearing in the news that the Caulfield Place Apartments were to be converted into a residence for adults with substance misuse and mental health challenges, many James Alexander neighbourhood residents and business owners requested both a platform with which to voice their concerns as well as an opportunity to provided VIHA with input. This was organized and facilitated by a CSAC member, Theresa Gerritsen.
- Flood recovery work in the James Alexander Neighbourhood continues. CSAC continues to respond to the on-going, long term safety issues related to the flood of Nov 2009.

CSAC responds to community driven reports:

- Status of the Community
- Affordable Housing Directorate
- City of Duncan Age-friendly Seniors Safety Report

Next Steps – Establishing Priorities for 2011

- Clarify and complete in-process ‘Processes and Procedure’ tasks
- Review Age-friendly Seniors Safety Report, determine CSAC’s role in recommended implementation
- Complete final steps arising from Panhandling report recommendations
- Identify the 2011/2012 CSAC area of focus – suggestions for in-depth research, activities
 - Youth safety
 - Aboriginal safety

Submitted by

Thanya Al-Saadoon, Safer Futures



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CSAC Panhandling Report 2010

Prepared by Theresa Gerritsen and Thanya Al Saadon

for the Community Safety Advisory Committee

Safer Futures, CWAV Society

HISTORY

Since January of 2007, the City of Duncan has been actively addressing panhandling issues in its downtown core and surrounding areas. Along with local business owners, the RCMP, support agencies, residents, the regional district, Community Policing and others, concerned community members have gathered to explore solutions to deal with this public problem. There have been newspaper interviews conducted with Duncan's mayor to talk about panhandling, and 'A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out' brochure created by the DBIA (Downtown Business Improvement Association). This last year the Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) was asked to facilitate two community meetings to discuss the issue; a community forum on November 4th, 2009 and a February 4th, 2010 follow-up meeting. These gatherings were attended by a broad section of Duncan stakeholders, including residents, business owners, local government and agency representatives. The recommendations coming out of these meetings are being reviewed by the Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) and will be forwarded to stakeholders in October 2010.

PROCESS

Meeting Nov. 4th 2009

The purpose of the November meeting was to engage community members in a discussion about concerns regarding the emerging downtown panhandling issue. Duncan was experiencing an increase of people gravitating to the downtown core and engaging in panhandling. Incidences of people sitting on the sidewalk in front of businesses were becoming more frequent, with some of these people behaving in an aggressive manner while soliciting shoppers for money. Business owners were concerned that potential customers were becoming uncomfortable – even fearful – of being approached by the panhandlers and choosing not to shop in the downtown core because of their fears.

It was also recognized that street-involved residents have a right to access and belong to their community, the streets, parks and sidewalks of downtown Duncan is where they choose to gather. As the City of Duncan, RCMP and Community Policing were all receiving complaints about safety issues concerning aggressive panhandling in the downtown core, the need for a facilitated discussion for community members to come together was apparent.



The November 4th, 2009 meeting was arranged and structured as a panel discussion. The panel consisted of community leaders Mayor Phil Kent, DBIA spokesperson Gary MacGregor, RCMP Corporal Kevin Day, CMHA (Canadian Mental Health Association) Homelessness Outreach Worker Chuck McCandless, Anne Balding (CMHA/Warmland House), and Carol Ann Rolls of Community Policing. There were 42 community members participating in the discussion.

One of the themes that informed the discussion was about 'public spaces' and how people access and make use of public spaces. Solutions and strategies of the past and suggestions for the future were brainstormed in the meeting and this list was compiled into four areas. Discussions about the kinds of activities, accessibility and the safety of shared spaces are important in preserving our community. In general, participants agreed on the importance of equal access to space and the rights of all people to equal use of public space as they choose. Participants generally agreed that limits to the use of public space should only occur when unsafe behaviours or activities prevent the use of space by others. Safety when used as a central principle in this dialogue, was interpreted in its most specific and broadest meanings. Some participants pointed to experiences that were frightening, conflictual and aggressive. Others spoke to expectations of public behaviour and discomfort with certain activities and the appearances of individuals. Of note in the meeting, was the general consensus that discussions focus on behaviour and to promote understanding and increased ability of all citizens to participate in public space.

Meeting Feb. 4th, 2010

The second meeting was organized to explore the solutions compiled into the 4 areas. Round table discussions were facilitated by issue-engaged stakeholders, and the 31 participants were encouraged to circulate through the four topic specific discussion tables, with the opportunity to discuss the solutions. The possible solutions discussed were:

- 1) Changing panhandler behavior. Solutions in this area centered on the general public's expectation for socially appropriate/acceptable behavior and enforcement for the problematic and aggressive activities in public spaces. The possible solutions:
 - a. Report aggressive behaviours to RCMP
 - b. Enforce the 'Safe Streets Act', prosecute offenders and create 'no go' zones
 - c. Use the Commissionaire approach to shift or contain behaviours
 - d. Design a public campaign to promote 'good citizenship'

- 2) Changing donor behavior. This approach was centered on the ways that the general public relates to the panhandlers. As many of the complaints received reported feelings of fear of these street-involved residents, this was center to the discussion. Inviting the general public to view people in a more positive and inclusive light was mentioned, and it was noted that they are as much a part of the public as the shopper. Whether or not to give the panhandlers money was questioned.



The solutions discussed were to:

- a. Educate donators to give instead to social service agencies
 - b. Provide other ways for people to donate on-site
 - c. Design a voucher system for donors to purchase
 - d. Educate customers to de-escalate their fears of panhandlers
- 3) Changing the environmental factors. This approach looked at solutions that involve the use of public space, and at how alternate uses can work effectively to create a feeling of safety for all. The solutions discussed were to:
- a. Do mapping to identify where panhandlers gather, which needs are being met, track numbers of panhandlers and incidents/concerns
 - b. Provide spaces for these activities to have less impact yet promote safety, inclusion and meet needs
 - c. Create an 'ambassador' program to counteract negative behaviours and contribute to safe public space
 - d. Use a social marketing approach to promote a 'Safe Streets' campaign
- 4) Changing the social causes. This approach looked at the 'macro view' of the panhandling issue; poverty, lack of housing, lack of mental health and addictions services and others. This topic table came up with some effective solutions for beginning the process, but it was acknowledged that these are long term approaches. The solutions discussed were to:
- a. Identify social causes, maintain and promote sufficient and continued services
 - b. Develop alternative and low barrier economic opportunities (social enterprise)

WHY IS CSAC INVOLVED

The Community Safety Advisory Committee reviews issues put forward by citizens that may create conditions that promote or detract from community safety and the ability of all citizens to participate in public life. CSAC becomes involved by engaging citizens to identify the concerns and brainstorm solutions. Recommendations arising from community engagement on a safety issue are put forward to relevant bodies or organizations and also to local government if applicable.

CSAC engages with a particular issue if the presenting concern or issue:

- Creates an unsafe situation that is likely to lead to personal harm.
- Creates a perception or belief that a risk exists for harm to occur.
- That prevents or acts as a barrier for citizens to be actively involved in public life.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are drawn from the meetings and assess the viability, priority of proposed solutions and suggest the possible lead organization(s) to review solution areas.

Solution Area #1. Social development

High viability. Continue to identify social causes of panhandling and take a macro view towards the issue. Consider and identify gaps in the region related to housing, poverty, and social services. Identify relevant agencies to continue dialogue and maintain awareness of the issue. Engage in feasibility study for social enterprise – opportunities for low barrier employment or short term earning opportunities.

Suggested leaders in this area:

Social Planning Cowichan – Provide the coordination of social services, social supports.

Take on or continue with a function of supporting the coordination of social services and initiatives, identify gaps and barriers addressing multiple and intersecting social issues in the Cowichan Valley region such as homelessness, poverty, mental health and ability challenges, substances misuse, and others. Establish a means to identify and compile the intersecting activities and build on strategic social planning to guide areas of focus and development for the community.

Create a group of agency representatives to meet quarterly or semi annually to consider overall coordination of social supports in the region. Create information materials (pamphlet) that raise awareness for citizens/ business owners about complex social factors as causes for panhandling.

CMHA -Homelessness/Mental Health Outreach – maintain and increase the presence of outreach workers to provide support and assistance where appropriate.

Solution Area #2. Consistent Responses

High viability. Develop clear and consistent responses to panhandling behaviours that contribute to risk and unsafe conditions. Create clarity for citizens and business owners about enforcement and immediate approaches for concerns. Ensure reporting of incidents of aggressive behaviour and enforce Safe Streets Act to maintain consistent message about criminal behaviour. Obtain clear evidence of *actual events and concerns*.

Medium viability. Maintain strong Commissionaire presence and provide training for consistent engagement with panhandlers. Commissionaires are commended for their successful interaction with panhandlers, getting to know the people who are street involved, asking for alternative behaviours or for containment to reduce impact on public spaces.



Suggested leaders in this area:

DBIA - Create a 'one-pager' document for business owners outlining the procedure for reporting progressively more serious incidences. Develop a method for businesses to record/track incidents and concerning behaviour as it occurs. Review periodically and support businesses to provide a consistent response.

City of Duncan – Maintain funding levels for consistent Commissionaire presence and encourage best practices for consistent response. Explore bylaw development to identify areas to reinforce consistent responses (e.g. create busking or loitering bylaw).

RCMP –Maintain frequent contact with business owners to review incidents and responses. Provide RCMP presence whenever possible on foot or bicycle in downtown areas and develop relationships with panhandlers and street involved citizens. Ensure RCMP members have consistent information and training about responses to panhandling and to enforce Safe Streets Act when appropriate. Engage in prevention strategies through dialogue, suggestions for alternatives and the use warnings or to move along.

Crown Counsel – Enforce Safe Streets Act with 'no go' provisions for short terms as part of conditions.

Solution Area #3. Education and awareness, change donor behavior.

Medium viability. Provide education to increase awareness and understanding about the activity of panhandling, its causes and address fears. Redirect donors to donate directly to social service agencies rather than to individuals directly. Promote safe streets by raising awareness of the value of safe and inclusive communities and promote citizenship. Encourage tolerance and understanding of the lived realities of all citizens. Encourage engagement with panhandlers to promote inclusion and membership for all citizens.

Suggested leaders in this area:

DBIA – Review pamphlet for consistent messaging and for effectiveness. Integrate pamphlet into overall social marketing strategy that puts forward the kind of community that businesses and patrons would like to promote (such as Safe Streets campaign, Good Citizen campaign, etc.) Request presentations for local business group from community agencies and identify services that exist within the community. Encourage businesses to build proficiency at educating shoppers about the relatively low risk of harm from panhandlers and the benefit of providing donations directly to community agencies. Provide means to donate at businesses downtown to be forwarded to community agencies.

City of Duncan – Invest in tourism and encouraging shopping in downtown with ambassador program. Provide consistent training to support ambassadors in approaching citizens and contributing to safe



public spaces. Contribute to public campaigns for tourism/ shop local etc. Explore the possibility of public donation outlets or boxes on the street.

Community agencies – provide information to businesses about their activities, services and educate about social issues.

Solution Area #4. Environmental design.

High viability. Consider the built environment and design of public spaces through a safety lens. Consider areas that are problematic and create barriers for access and the inclusive participation of citizens. Consider additions and activities that promote participation and reduce emphasis on target groups.

CSAC/ Safer Futures – Identify a group of interested participants and do a safety walk/ condensed audit. Provide report with recommendations. Work with businesses to establish system for obtaining evidence of panhandling activity related to frequency, risk, and response. Engage in mapping of where activities occur and identify areas of risk.

City of Duncan – Consider recommendations and provide additions or alter public spaces to promote inclusion and increased safety. Promote and provide incentives for the use of public space for communal purposes and increase frequency of public events in problem areas. Identify areas and opportunities for communal use that are altruistic and supportive of community involvement (not only profit oriented activities). Encourage community supportive activities that promote inclusion and address basic needs.



Panhandling Update to November 2010

Since the community dialogues in November 2009 and February 2010, the ideas and solutions raised at these meetings have been carried forward by the various stakeholders to address many of the concerns related to panhandling in the downtown Duncan core. The DBIA continues to be at the forefront of raising the issue and bringing forward concerns to the attention of the City of Duncan and the RCMP. Panel participants in the dialogues point to measures that have contributed to improvement in the panhandling situation, with a reduction in the occurrence of the more serious behaviours creating a concern for personal safety in the area.

In the four areas of solutions highlighted in this report and part of an overall strategy, a number of suggested responses have been implemented.

In the area of enforcement, there is improved clarity and a renewed commitment to a consistent response that is applied to behaviour that creates risk and fear of crime. In a meeting held with DBIA, RCMP clarified the circumstances when citizens should contact them and a reporting form was developed to record incidents to track the nature and occurrences of the problem.

Over the summer, RCMP increased their presence in the area with their Bike Patrol, dedicating three members and recruiting some of the 15 new RCMP auxiliary members, being trained to assist in enforcement and prevention duties. The patrols identified areas including Centennial and Charles Hoey Parks and the strategy proved successful both as a method to respond to incidents but also as preventative for crimes such as the use of alcohol in public places, aggressive behaviours, and other concerns. Although a number of arrests occurred in July, a significant reduction was noted by August, with the initiative in its second month of operation. The RCMP continues to use intermittent bike and foot patrols to reinforce their presence in the area.

Commissionaire presence is also maintained in the area and as responders noted, the consistency of response and diligent early intervention -especially in the public consumption of alcohol, has resulted in improvements including a form of 'peer' pressure constraining certain activities.

Also in the area of consistent responses, a new City Bylaw sets important limits to panhandling that can assist to curtail certain behaviours in their frequency, duration, and location. The ByLaw provides an additional tool to the RCMP and Commissionaires to respond to behaviours. The ByLaw is one component of the overall strategy for increasing interventions as appropriate for chronic and/ or escalating behaviour that provoke the greatest concerns. Crown Counsel is engaged in the protocol of this response, and can propose conditions to the Court that support temporary or longer 'no go' provisions or suggest treatment options. In this manner, these tools provide consistency in the community's response and give clarity for all of those who are affected. These types of responses are not meant to be seen as punitive and it is acknowledged that penalties such as 'fines' are ineffective in themselves. Instead, these measures form another component of the overall strategy and emphasize the importance of setting clear community standards of behaviour that promote safety and the full participation of all citizens.



In the second area of solutions, donors continue to be educated about the uncertain benefit derived from direct contributions to panhandlers. The brochure developed by Community Policing and a later version produced by DBIA, suggest that donors channel donations to social service agencies instead.

In addition to the clarity of these responses, solutions that are related to an environmental design approach recommend improvements to the structural elements of public spaces that promote or detract from citizen safety. The relocation of the gazebo at Charles Hoey Park to the WarmLand shelter is an example of this approach and the new home for the gazebo is seen as more consistent for its intended use as a gathering and visiting structure. New bus shelters promoting access and equal use for transit users are expected to arrive at the Charles Hoey location to serve waiting passengers, with other seating interspersed throughout the park to promote consistency with park functioning.

The city has also made significant improvements to Centennial Park, which was viewed as another problematic location in terms of safety issues. Hiking trails, a new playground and spray park, improved tennis and basketball courts, a washroom structure and picnic areas are all part of the City's efforts to make this location more inviting to the general public. This park has become a busy hub of activity in this downtown neighbourhood, and is being accessed by children, families, athletes and elders.

Other environmental design initiatives include safety improvements to the railway corridor, a complex trail system linking Duncan and District of North Cowichan and a safe pedestrian access from the downtown area and the Cowichan Commons Mall. The proposed trails are intended to link up North Cowichan neighbourhood trails with Somenos Marsh trails and the urban railway trail system.

Social development initiatives continue to be a key component of an integrated and multi level strategy responding to the issue of panhandling. The CMHA Mental Health Outreach Worker continues to provide support to people with barriers to housing and advocates for clients in matters with the City. A casual labour pool was offered in the summer for people interested in working for the day for cash. With busking being defined as a separate activity, this distinction creates room for this activity within parameters that can clarify location and the duration of performance activity on the street.

Since the 'panhandling' dialogues, the Warmland Shelter is now providing temporary housing for people in the area and a number of individuals are residing in their new Transitional Housing Units. VIHA's Caulfield House also increases the overall stock of available housing for people who benefit from additional support and facilitated entry to housing placements.

With these improvements, the strategy provides for multiple levels of response that addresses immediate concerns and also seeks to address underlying causes to panhandling. Panelists in the dialogues recommend consistency in responding and a continued effort to address larger community issues that contribute to problems in this area. These include continued momentum in addressing the misuse of substances, the shortage of available housing, and the demand for adequate support and safe gathering places for challenged individuals.

