



COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2010
9:00 AM / COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 2
175 INGRAM STREET, DUNCAN, BC

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7.	<u>ADJOURNMENT:</u>	

Distribution:

Representatives by Geographic Area

Southern Sector

CVRD – Director Lori Iannidinardo (Committee Chair)
Community Representative – Michelle Bell

Central Sector

CVRD – Director Phil Kent (Committee Vice-Chair)
Municipality of North Cowichan – Councillor John Koury
City of Duncan – Councillor Joe Thorne

Western Sector

Community Representative – Bruce Ingram
Town of Lake Cowichan – Councillor Jayne Ingram

Northern Sector

Town of Ladysmith – Councillor Jillian Dashwood

Community Group Representatives

Cowichan Women Against Violence Society / Safer Futures Program – Theresa Gerritsen
Community Options Society – Cheryl Stone
Cowichan Valley School District No. 79 – Candace Spilsbury
disAbility Resource Centre – Jim Harnden
RCMP – Corporal Kevin Day
Social Planning Cowichan – Michelle Nowzek

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, June 17, 2010 at 9:00 am.

PRESENT: Director Lori Iannidinardo (Chair)
 Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society
 Councillor John Koury, District of North Cowichan
 Councillor Jayne Ingram, Town of Lake Cowichan
 Councillor Jillian Dashwood, Town of Ladysmith
 Candace Spilsbury, Cowichan Valley School District No. 79
 Cheryl Stone, Community Options Society
 Jim Harnden, disAbility Resource Centre
 Carol-Ann Rolls, Community Policing
 Michelle Bell, Community Representative <at 9:07 am>

ABSENT: Director Phil Kent (Vice-Chair)
 Michelle Nowzek, Social Planning Cowichan
 Bruce Ingram, Community Representative
 Councillor Joe Thorne, City of Duncan
 Corporal Kevin Day, RCMP

ALSO

PRESENT: Thanya Al Saadoon, Safer Futures
 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 April 15, 2010 be adopted.

MOTION CARRIED

9:07 am

Michelle Bell arrived to the meeting at 9:07 am.

CORRESPONDENCE

4C1

Correspondence from Safer Futures, regarding a Community Safety Advisory Committee setting priorities workshop 2010–2011, was received.

Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, said that the goal of today's meeting was to review the priorities of a recently held workshop, including endorsing a community safety forum, and to adopt a work plan.

Ms. Gerritsen provided an overview of the *CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee Setting Priorities Workshop 2010-2011 Notes* noting that the priorities listed were to happen over the next two years.

Community Safety Advisory Committee Staff Liaison

Director Iannidinardo and a member of the Committee expressed their concerns with the Committee being enacted for one year and the lack of a designated CVRD staff liaison person's attendance at meetings which, in their view, has affected progress. They said they thought it was staff's role is to provide assistance and guidance on CVRD policies, authorities, bylaws and legislation which would help to focus the Committee on its obligations. A designated staff person, they noted, would also provide a more seamless transition to incoming Committee Chairs.

It was also their view that this proposed staff would act as the liaison to the Board of Directors for Committee recommendations and progress and it was the overall consensus of the Committee that it would significantly benefit from a staff member providing support in this regard.

Public Awareness of Community Safety Advisory Committee

It was the view of the Committee that the role and purpose of the Committee should be heightened in order to encourage more public engagement on issues relating to community safety.

It was moved and seconded that a sub-committee be struck consisting of Michelle Bell, Jim Harnden, Theresa Gerritsen and Thanya Al Saadoon to develop a clear process and set of procedures for the public to raise safety concerns to the attention of the Community Safety Advisory Committee.

MOTION CARRIED

Cowichan Women Against Violence Society Community Safety Forum

Theresa Gerritsen, Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, recommended that the Community Safety Advisory Committee hold a

discussed a rationale and format of a forum. Ms. Gerritsen noted that it could be held at the same time as a domestic violence forum occurring at the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre which would significantly reduce the cost of holding such an event.

It was moved and seconded that the Community Safety Advisory Committee supports a community safety forum being held on September 16th.

MOTION CARRIED

Director Iannidinardo advised that the next Committee meeting is scheduled to be held in September.

**ADJOURNMENT
10:35 am**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

Certified Correct:

Chairperson

Recording Secretary

Dated: _____

Meeting notes for the CSAC Process and Procedure Subcommittee Meeting held Tuesday, July 27th, 2010

In attendance:

- Michelle Bell
- Jim Harnden
- Lori Iannidinardo
- Thanya Al-Saadoon
- Theresa Gerritsen

The group discussed public access to CSAC and created a flow-chart illustrating the process involved in a citizen bringing a safety concern to the committee. It was acknowledged that CSAC brings safety concerns and recommendations to the attention of the Cowichan Valley Regional District board and does not have decision making abilities. It was also acknowledged that access to CSAC is a public service, and that CSAC acts as a vehicle for citizens to bring their safety issues to the attention of local government.

The group discussed roles and responsibilities of CSAC – both as individual committee members and as the committee as a whole. Consideration around which specific issues are appropriate for CSAC to become involved in and what that involvement looks like were discussed.

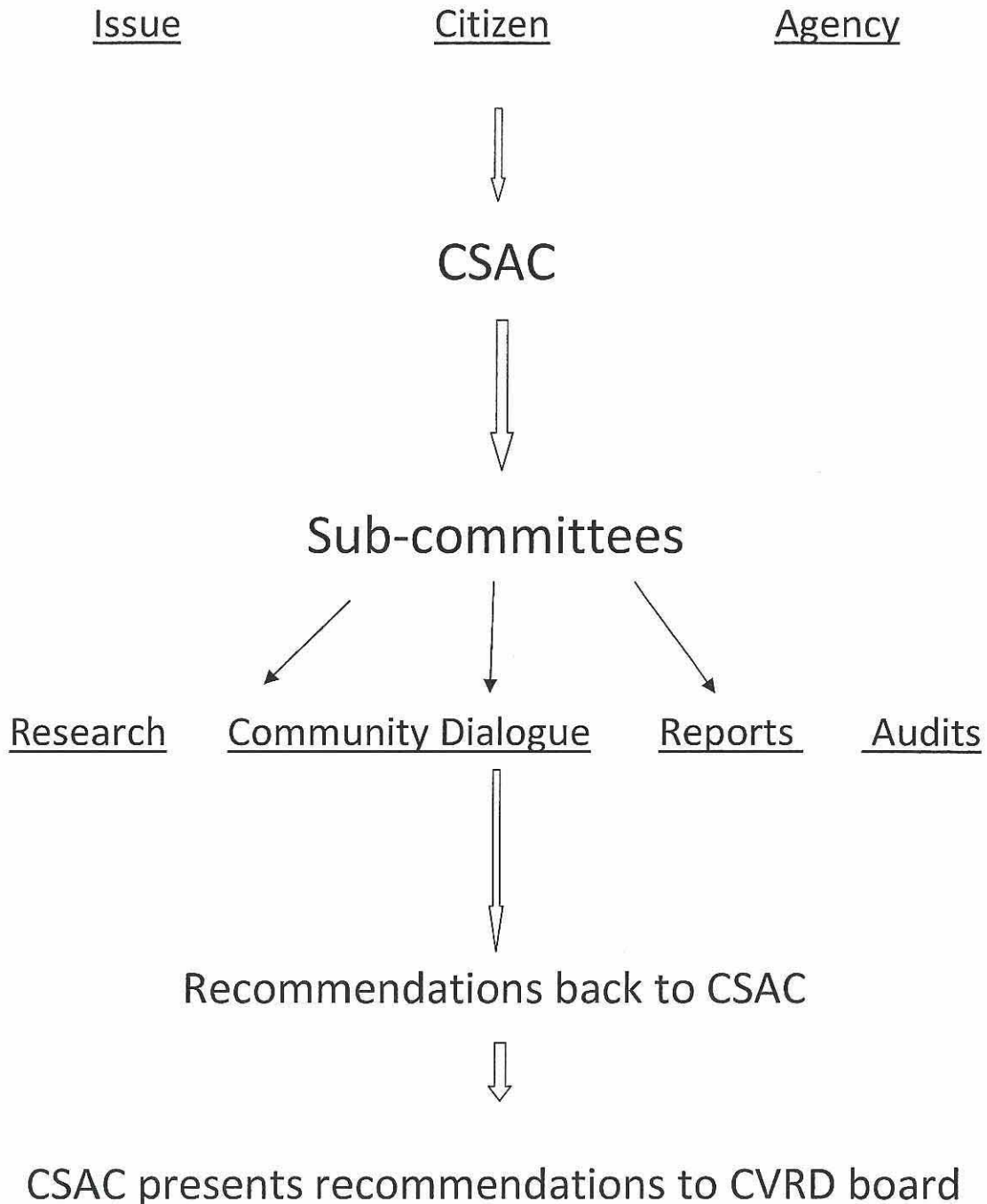
Questions arising:

1. Does CSAC do safety audits?
2. If an issue is not taken on by CSAC, what will the referral process look like?

A draft copy of the Panhandling Report was distributed to subcommittee members to be discussed at a later date.

CSAC

Community Access Process



CSAC - Community Access Process- Issues arising

Issue:

Citizen(s) identifies a safety concern and contacts CSAC Chair, CSAC representative, or Safer Futures (information on website, CSAC representatives raise awareness in community, local government elected officials provide information to CVRD Board about CSAC work, CVRD staff provides info to citizens who make inquiries)



CSAC directs a delegate to gather information about the safety concern, past activities related to the issue, and if appropriate compiles preliminary information about the issue generally (e.g. other communities). Information is forwarded to CSAC as an issue arising.



CSAC measures if the issue meets criteria for Committee mandate or identifies where to forward the issue. If CSAC carries forward with the issue a subcommittee is struck. The Subcommittee identifies a course of action that may include research, hearing from specialized groups or citizens, facilitating dialogue through structured meetings or public forums, conduct safety audits, producing materials, and making recommendations to organizations and local government. The plan is submitted to CSAC and if approved carried out by the subcommittee. Reports are provided as needed. The Citizen(s) are informed about the process.



CSAC presents report and recommendations to CVRD Board.

CSAC Website Required Revisions – Fall 2010

1. On the main Cowichan Valley Regional District homepage, there needs to be a CSAC link in the *"take a look at"* section (lower right hand panel of homepage) – this is to be in addition to the CSAC access link under the *Services* button.
2. When accessing the CSAC documentation on the website, there needs to be a *'back to CSAC'* button added, as the user is taken out of the main CSAC web area and into the broader CVRD website while perusing the documentation.
3. On the homepage link, Jacob Ellis is still listed as the CSAC contact. Need new contact person/information.
4. On 'History' link
 - a. Document titled *'History of CSAC'* needs to be revised/updated – does committee want to keep this document on the site? Or 'fold it into' the *Description of CSAC* document?
 - b. Document titled *Committee Description and Overview* is in DRAFT form.
 - c. History documents need to be updated to reflect progress after 2007.
5. On 'Who We Are' link
 - a. Needs CSAC members updating to include 2007 to present
 - b. Include CSAC members agency affiliation and contact information, including websites
 - c. Consider adding the document *About CSAC* here.
6. On 'Agendas and Minutes' link
 - a. CSAC meeting minutes need to be
 - i. Updated
 - ii. Arranged into chronological order
 - iii. Query to committee:

1. How long should meeting minutes/agenda remain on website (months/years)?
 2. How many documents need to be included on this page?
7. On 'Reports/Safety plans and Audits' link
- a. Needs updating. Decide which out of date reports need to be removed and more current reports need to be added (Safe Needle Toolkit, Making the Links, etc)
 - b. Consider using subheadings, ie:
 - i. Safety Audits
 - ii. Safer Futures annual reports to CSAC
 - c. Page needs to be arranged both chronologically and by region/area
 - d. Current/pertinent publications need to be added
 - e. There are no links on this page – consider adding some pertinent safety focused links, ie:
 - i. BCCPA (BC Crime Prevention Assc)
 - ii. Youth Crime information
 - iii. Aboriginal Safety Reports
 - f. Need a more timely process for the release/addition of pertinent links/documents/websites. A recommendation may be to send documents to CVRD IT person directly and quarterly
8. Need a link added for residents to give feedback and/or ask community-safety focused questions, ie:
- a. *Do you have safety concerns?* link with electronic space for conveying concerns and/or getting feedback
 - b. Community Access to CSAC Flow Chart

Request to Appear as a Delegation

4D1

Meeting Information

Request to Address:*

☐ CVRD Board☒ Committee

If Committee, specify the Committee here:*

Community Safety Advisory Comm

Meeting Date:*

10/21/2010

Meeting Time:*

9am

Applicant Information

Applicant Name:

Pam Alcorn

Representing:

Seniours Safety Advisory Committee

(Name of organization if applicable)

As:

(Capacity / Office)

Number Attending:

2

Applicant Contact Information

Applicant Mailing Address:

Applicant City:

Applicant Telephone:

Applicant Fax:

Applicant Email:

pamination@shaw.ca

Presentation Topic and Nature of Request:

Present findings of Age Friendly Cities for Seniors Report

* indicates required fields.

Showcase of Community Responders – Thursday, September 16th 2010

On Thursday, September 16th, the CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee hosted a 'Showcase of Community Responders' event at the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre in Duncan. The showcase was held alongside the '*Building Capacities for Coordination in Domestic Violence Cases*' Designated Domestic Violence Court conference. CSAC's aim was to provide conference goers with an opportunity to both learn about local existing services related to domestic violence and to network with others in their perspective fields. Although the conference was scheduled for 2 full days, the showcase ran only on the Thursday.

The day started early, with showcase presenters arriving to put up their displays before attending the opening public session of the conference. During the 10:30am break, CSAC offered coffee and fresh morning snacks along with an opportunity for participants to peruse the displays in the showcase room. Over 150 people accessed the showcase during the morning break. Following the lunch break, CSAC provided a cultural dance group to entertain the attendees – many appreciative comments followed this excellent performance.

Participants reported that they benefitted from learning about the support services available to families experiencing situations of domestic violence here in the Cowichan Valley. Some of the agencies that had displays at the Showcase included:

- The Native Courtworker and Counseling Assc. of BC
- Aboriginal Legal Services Society
- Ts'ewulhtun Health Center
- Community Options Society
- Cowichan Community Policing
- Social Planning Cowichan
- Cowichan Men's Center
- Cowichan Intercultural Society – Safe Harbour Program
- RCMP Victims Services
- VIHA Adult Addictions Services
- Safer Futures
- Cowichan Women Against Violence Society
- Lalum'utul Smun'eem Child and Family Services
- MCFD
- CSAC

CSAC Panhandling Report 2010

Prepared by Theresa Gerritsen and Thanya Al Saadoon

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.





Community Safety Bulletin

"Promoting Safety in the Cowichan Region"

Presented by Cowichan Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC)

September 2010

Flood News

The Municipality of North Cowichan recently distributed a Cowichan River Flood Update newsletter to residents affected by the November 2009 flood. The objective is to prepare a plan to prevent future flooding. Since the flood, several projects have been completed. These include dike construction on Lakes Road, installation of an automated 24/7 high-water level monitoring system, purchase of pumps, registration of residents in the Emergency Alert program and completion of a Flood Assessment Study and Flood Prevention Plan.

The plan involves three phases that include improving and upgrading the dike system, installing pumps and removing log jams. Much of this work is dependent on federal funds administered through grants by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). The CVRD, however, recently learned that the funds for the flood mitigation program have not been given final approval by UBCM. The money is expected this fall or early spring. In the meantime, residents have been invited to a meeting to learn more about the flood prevention plans. The meeting will take place on Thursday, September 23, 2010 at 7 pm at the Island Savings Centre.

Community resident continues to hold informal dinners for flood victims

Although the flood happened months ago, James-Alexander resident Harinder Dhaliwal continues to invite local residents to her home for discussions and home cooking. These informal monthly events are proving to be an excellent way for residents to support each other and to share information. North Cowichan Mayor Tom Walker attended the most recent event on August 10, 2010.

Domestic Violence Court Conference

September 16 and 17 2010, marks the first Domestic Violence Court Conference to be held in Duncan. An adjacent event will be sponsored by CSAC and includes a half-day agency showcase of organizations involved in domestic violence.

Report on Seniors Safety Completed

Project coordinator Pam Alcorn presented a detailed report on senior's safety to the City of Duncan recently. The report follows up on recommendations from the review of the Official Community Plan in 2007 using elements of the World Health Organization's

Age-Friendly Cities model, as well as components of the Cowichan Regional Safety Lens. The report addresses a wide-range of safety issues including social isolation, transportation and housing.

James Alexander Community Picnic

Last June, approximately 200 residents of the James Alexander community attended a community picnic hosted by members of the Neighbourhood Working Group. The objective of the picnic was to build greater community cohesion, to promote awareness of cultural differences and to foster community safety.

Spearheaded by long-time resident Laurie William's, the event included performances by the Spirit Drummers, local agency displays and activities for the children including a puppet show. Hamburgers, hot dogs and ice cream were donated by local businesses.

Centennial Park Improvements Enhance Enjoyment and Safety

A June letter to the News Leader Pictorial from Eleanor Mackenzie of Duncan expresses her gratitude for the renovations to Centennial Park. Mrs. Mackenzie, who is a senior, says that the park is now a safe and enjoyable place thanks to the upgrades. Bushes have been cleared away and there are no more tents or parties. Newly constructed paths make site lines better. It is now easier to see and be seen. "Many thanks also to the hard workers who have given our neighbourhood a safe park where all ages can go to visit and play," she writes. Centennial Park has been upgraded to include tennis courts, trail systems, a playground, picnic areas and a new water spray park. Many other people have also expressed their pleasure to local officials and community agencies.

Casual Labour Co-op a Win-Win for Employers and Those who are Homeless or at Risk

Finding employment is a huge challenge for homeless people and those in recovery from various challenges. Local resident Rory D'Amour, who is in recovery, himself, has started Square Deal. This is a casual labour co-op that offers odd jobs like painting, moving furniture and mowing lawns. Square Deal operates seven days a week from 7 am to 9 pm. Mr. D'Amour started the co-op in July with support and encouragement from CMHA's homeless outreach worker Chuck McCandless, his mentor. "It's really going great so far," he said in a News Leader interview. "It's a volunteer job for me but it's really all about getting other people back working and helping people." Mr. D'Amour has distributed posters and drives workers to their job sites. Gas and phone costs (he uses his personal cell phone) are paid for through donations.

Elder Abuse in the Cowichan Valley is More Common than we Think

Jacquie Smith, Executive Director of the Seniors Resource and Support Society states that the wounds and scars of elder abuse are not always visible. Abuse includes everything from physical and emotional abuse to financial exploitation and neglect. She reports that the society sees a couple of abuse cases a week. Charges are often not laid because the abuse goes unnoticed. Sometimes it's because the victims are too afraid to speak out, or are unaware of their options. Signs of abuse include withdrawal and social isolation, changes in hygiene or nutrition or suddenly being unable to meet financial obligations. Other indicators include physical or mental health problems.

Community education and

awareness is paramount. Knowing when to pick up the phone and call the RCMP, the Seniors Resource and Support Society, VIHA or the Community Policing office is important.

Woman Killed in High Speed Police Crash

Last June a woman was critically injured and later died after a speeding police cruiser, on its way to a serious domestic emergency, struck a car. The accident happened near the Somenos Marsh pull-out. Three cruisers were en route to a domestic assault involving a weapon, in progress in Saltair, RCMP reported. The domestic incident in Ladysmith was part of a "serious ongoing" situation involving weapons and violence. "It was a valid Priority One call, which is our highest priority for safety," stated Media Relations Officer Darren Logan in a Citizen newspaper article.



Community Safety Bulletin

"Promoting Safety in the Cowichan Region"

Presented by Cowichan Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC)

October 2010

Update from the James- Alexander Community

Flood Protection

As the winter rainy seasons draw closer, some community residents are worried about the possibility of major flooding again this year.

Weather forecasters say that this will be an 'El Nina' year and we can expect winter storms and heavy rainfalls. While the CVRD has undertaken extensive planning and protective measures against flooding in the area, significant provincial funding is needed to secure more dykes and pumps. Area officials including North Cowichan mayor have met with community members to explain the situation. While the information is helpful residents are worried that there will be a repeat of the flooding.

Community Safety Issues

Several residents, including a local business owner on Beverly Street have expressed concern about an increase in street traffic that brings with it public drinking, drugs and drug dealing. They have commented that since the 'mound' was levelled and changes have taken place to Charley Huey Park, homeless people are drifting to the James-Alexander neighbourhood.

Environmental design approaches, for example improved lighting, landscaping etc., might help along with enforcement policies and an opportunity for neighbours to work together.

Union of British Columbia Municipalities Pass Legal Aid Resolution

The UBCM recently passed a resolution supporting legal aid. Highlights of the resolution:

1. The Provincial Government has an obligation to fund legal services to ensure equal access to justice for all British Columbians.
2. Reduced provincial government funding has, in the face of significantly increased demand, resulted in deep cuts to legal aid services and staff, thus harming the most vulnerable in our society, predominantly lower-income women and children.
3. The UBCM urges the Province to restore and increase funding for legal aid in BC.

Panhandling By-law

The City of Duncan recently passed a by-law to "regulate the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and other traffic on the streets and public spaces."

People won't be able to pan-handle in front of banks, teller machines, bus stops, train station, pay phones, public toilets, and liquor stores. In addition, pan-handling won't be allowed after sunset, in the same place more than once within a 24 hour period for more than an hour.

Fines will be between \$100 and \$10,000 or a jail term of up to 6 months.

Pitt Meadows Gang Rape Raises Questions About The Power of Social Media (Facebook)

The recent gang rape of a BC student is complicated and disturbing. It raises a lot of questions about how popular culture affects the way teens view sexuality - these are questions for all communities including ours.

The crime was filmed and distributed quickly and widely on u-tube. It went 'viral.' Rape is about power not sex. Gang rape is seen as "male sexual bonding, the power and dominance of men degrading and humiliating a victim." There is also some suggestions that the girl was promiscuous and 'asked for it.'

Experts suggest that we need to have frank discussions with both males and females to unmask their assumptions, untangle misinformation and change perspective on consensual sex. There is a prevalence of sexual harassment among teens -- everything from sexual gossip to unwanted sexual touching. It's all about misusing personal power in the quest of belonging, acceptance and social status. Much of this pressure to belong is being communicated through social media. Integrating awareness of appropriate uses of social media and the potential harms from communicating harassing, intensely sexualized, or hate messages is an important component of our work in preventing violence and abuse between youths.