COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTION PLAN

DRAFT TWO –

FOR DISCUSSION AND DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES ONLY

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OVERVIEW

Cowichan is recognized as a leader in the field of planning and safer communities in British Columbia and across Canada. Since 1996, the regional district and member municipalities have engaged in safety audits and planning that has resulted in a Public Safety Policy (Appendix A) and improvements to physical design, community programming and policies in support of safer communities (see Appendix B).

Ten years later, the Cowichan Valley Regional District's (CVRD) Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC[1]) has decided to assess the results of these efforts, and identify next steps for addressing community health and safety. This Action Plan is the outcome of that work.

This Action Plan understands that, just as there is no one cause of crime, victimization and fear, there is also no one solution. Consequently, this document contains recommendations for practical and policy-based actions designed to address a range of factors that contribute to community health and safety in the Cowichan region.

This Action Plan recognizes that the successful implementation of these actions requires the support, cooperation and collaboration among all sectors (community organizations, police, business, government, citizens).

Finally, this Action Plan asserts that everyone has a role to play in creating a safer, healthier communities. It encourages all sectors to get involved.

FEATURES OF A SAFE COMMUNITY

- A safe community is one where we feel safe in our home, in the day and at night
- A safe community is one where we feel safe out in public, in the day and at night
- In a safe community, no one is assaulted, abused, raped or otherwise harmed by family members, friends or strangers. Work places are equally free from violence and harassment.
- A safe community can be measured by the experiences of its most vulnerable citizens. When women, children, seniors and other marginalized individuals feel secure and free of fear, the overall safety of the community is significantly increased.
- In a safe community, everyone has access to housing that is adequate and affordable. Everyone lives in neighbourhoods where they feel able to freely walk around and play outside.
- A safe community is accessible by all of its citizens – regardless of physical and intellectual ability. No one experiences barriers to mobility, employment or services.
- In a safe community, diversity is valued and there is no racism or discrimination.
- A safe community contains quality services (youth programs, daycare, training) and well-designed infrastructure (safe buildings, public spaces and streets).

[1] *See Appendix B for more information about CSAC*

SECTION I: BACKGROUND

The Safer Communities Approach

This Action Plan builds on the successful application of the Safer Communities Approach in jurisdictions around the world. The Safer Communities Approach focuses simultaneously on prevention and support. In other words, it aims to address issues proactively, by proposing actions that target the root causes of crime, victimization and fear.

The root causes of crime are the factors that put individuals at risk of being victimized or engaging in offending. These factors are numerous and inter-connected and include poverty, lack of access to training and employment, lack of support for young families, lack of affordable housing, inequality and discrimination.

A Gendered Analysis of Crime

This Action Plan uses a gendered analysis that recognizes that the impacts of crime, victimization and fear are unevenly distributed, and affect different people in different ways. In particular women and other vulnerable groups (seniors, children, people with disabilities, visible minorities) are disproportionately affected. This approach understands that no one is safe until all of us are safe.

Planning for Safer Communities

This Action Plan recommends that considerations about personal and public safety must be incorporated into every aspect of community planning and development processes, as well as decision-making and policy development.

This means that safety must be factored into every aspect of the physical environment (safe buildings, public spaces, transit and streets), the social environment (youth programming, quality daycare, affordable housing) and the economic climate (training programs, job creation, economic development).

EXAMPLES OF STATS
Input requested

- Women are eight times more likely than men to forego an evening activity due to concern for their safety.
- Six out of ten women are afraid to walk alone in their neighbourhood at night.
- Over one-third of women in Canada have been sexually assaulted (39%).
- Young, single women are at greater risk of stranger assaults and of sexual harassment at work than any other age group.
- As many as 90% of women with disabilities have been assaulted or abused.
- More than one in three women (39%) are worried about being home alone at night.
- 58 % of women routinely check the back seat of their car before getting in.
- About one half of women do not use parking garages due to concerns for their safety.
- Employed women are two and three times more likely to use public transportation than employed men who are more likely to drive.
- 76% of women are worried about waiting for or using public transportation after dark.
- About one half of women do not use public transportation due to concerns for their safety.

CITATIONS

The Vital Role of Local Government

This Action Plan understands that local government has a vital role to play in creating safer communities. Local government has authority over, and responsibility for, a range of community services.

Almost every function of local government has some relation to public safety and access. Policing, fire protection and emergency planning are obvious public safety functions. However, many other responsibilities and services of local government have a strong impact on personal safety and access including:

- street lighting, roads and sidewalks, signage and traffic controls
- parks and recreational facilities and programs
- public transit, land-use planning and development design

Local government may also form partnerships with other levels of government, non-profit organizations, and the private sector for such things as facilities and programs, public transportation, affordable housing co-operatives and day-care programs. It can also provide meeting space and other resources to support volunteer groups.

Finally, local government can promote safer communities through advocating on behalf of their community, with other institutions at the local, provincial and federal levels, and through making broad value-statements in support of a safer community.

The defining feature of a safe community is the ability of all of its citizens - regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, language, income or ability - to participate fully and freely in all of its environments. This requires that citizens both feel, and are, safe, and that they have meaningful opportunities to participate in local decision-making processes.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District and its member local governments have demonstrated an understanding of the important role they play in community safety by virtue of the fact that they are the only regional district in the province to have created a community safety advisory committee, and to have endorsed a public safety policy (see Appendix A).

SECTION II: BUILDING BLOCKS

Best practices indicate that there are four essential building blocks to creating safer, healthier communities.

Note: Each building block must include a specific and gendered focus on the most vulnerable in society, because we know that when we make communities safer for women, children, seniors and other vulnerable groups, we make them safer for everyone.

SAFER COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS

Safe and accessible design

The physical environment literally provides the foundation for safe and healthy communities. Our streets, buildings, parks and commercial areas can be designed to promote ease of use (accessibility) and minimize risk, especially for those who are the most vulnerable to crime and victimization.

Healthy and Strong Neighbourhoods

Building healthy neighbourhoods requires more than an investment in bricks and mortar. Social supports need to be put in place that address the root causes of violence and crime and improve the quality of life for residents – supports such as adequate housing, recreational facilities, employment and training programs, quality child care, and community-based prevention initiatives.

Policy and guidance

Comprehensive community planning and development forms the foundation for healthy communities. Planning influences our quality of life in a wide range of ways: local economic development, housing development and design, parks and recreation program provision, public transportation, and the design and maintenance of public facilities.

Coordinated actions

Everyone has a role to play in creating a safer community. The development of partnerships and coordinated actions across geographical and sectoral boundaries is vital to ensure crime prevention and community safety strategies are relevant and achievable. Collective efforts can also leverage greater community involvement, and accentuate public education efforts.

SECTION III: COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN

Using the four building blocks as a guide, this Community Health and Safety Action Plan lays out the following options for action. These recommendations are derived from extensive research, community-based project experience, and feedback obtained from citizens and community experts.

1. SAFE, ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

- 1.1 Safety audits
- 1.2 Safe design guidelines
- 1.3 Development incentives

2. BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 2.1 Neighbourhood programming
- 2.2 Youth development
- 2.3 Safe, affordable housing
- 2.4 Public Transit "Safe Travel"

3. POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 3.1 Safer Community lens
- 3.2 Official Community Plans
- 3.3 Social development
- 3.4 Emergency services and planning

4. COORDINATED ACTIONS

- 4.1 Regional safety initiative
- 4.2 Public education/training
- 4.3 Partnerships and funding

1. SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE DESIGN

1.1 SAFETY AUDITS

ACTION ONE: Review past audits, update community safety plans

Safety audits are an effective tool for creating awareness and affecting change at the local level. Numerous audits and safer communities plans have been done in communities including Cowichan Lake, Cobble Hill, Mill Bay/Malahat, Cowichan Bay, the Alexander Neighbourhood in North Cowichan, Downtown Duncan, James Street, as well as a number of site specific audits for recreation centres, buildings, malls, and parks (Appendix C). Hundreds of recommendations from these audits have been successfully implemented.

Progress:
Most recently, new or updated safer community plans have been done in the communities of Cowichan Bay, Downtown Duncan, and the Cairnsmore Neighbourhood. These communities are now in the process of implementing their plans.

Next Steps:

- Audits and resulting plans need to be reviewed with communities and updated to assess progress, re-establish or establish new priorities and action plans.

ACTION TWO: Conduct site audits in high priority areas identified as experiencing challenges.

Safety audits are an effective way to examine smaller areas or sites that may be experiencing challenges or undergoing planning processes, including: urban multi-family dwellings, rural communities slated for development, and parks and recreation areas.

Progress:
Several audits have been conducted for recreation centres, campuses, schools, malls and shopping centres and parks. Most recently, Cobble Hill school parents carried out their own traffic audit that is now being implemented.

Next Steps:

- Priority areas identified by the CSAC include urban neighbourhoods slated for community plan reviews, and urban recreation areas such as Centennial Park that will be undergoing a revitalization process.

ACTION THREE: Update progress and develop a data base of audit recommendations.

Progress:
Audit recommendations and progress reports were compiled in 2000. It was estimated that about 70% of recommendations had been addressed at that time. An update is needed to acknowledge and evaluate progress, and determine priorities for next steps.

Next Steps:

- Update and publicize progress reports.

1.2 SAFE DESIGN GUIDELINES

ACTION FOUR: Incorporate community safety design guidelines into the assessment process for development applications.

Over the long term, community planning and design that takes personal and public safety into account will help to address crime, increase accessibility and enhance sense of safety.

Progress:
There are range of resources for safe design from this and other jurisdictions that can assist local planners and developers to design safer and more accessible places, including buildings, streets, parks and open spaces.

Next Steps:

- Develop community safety design guidelines for the Cowichan region, using existing resources as a template.
- Formally incorporate these guidelines into the development application process.
- Develop an awareness and education program for designers and developers.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

ACTION FIVE: Review relevant by-laws and policies to identify opportunities for creating incentives for developers to use safer design guidelines.

As our communities grow and develop, so too does the need to think creatively about how we can support safety and accessibility through development processes.

Progress:
There have been several examples over the years of including safety in developments through working with developers and planners (Appendix C). In one example, Valleyview Mall developed a leasing policy that requires business owners to offer a safe walk program for employees. The CSAC is currently working on the development

of draft guidelines for provision of play areas and similar amenities in new developments.

Next Steps:

- Conduct research of other jurisdictions to gather information on ways that safety and social considerations are being integrated into requirements for development.
- Hold a workshop with planners and developers to invite feedback and generate local ideas.

2. BUILDING STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS

2.1 NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAMMING

ACTION SIX: Support affordable / no cost local, neighbourhood-level services, programming and supports.

Localized and neighbourhood-level programming is important for building community; it is also essential for individuals and families experiencing obstacles to affordability and mobility.

Local government can support neighbourhood programming in a variety of ways, through their planning processes and bylaws, through in-kind and financial support, and through direct provision of services and programs.

Progress:
Kinsmen Park and Kerry Park–Malahat are good examples of localized recreation programming. As well, some communities are beginning to provide outreach programming through their recreation functions, and schools are recognizing the value of affording opportunities for multi-use of their facilities for pre-school and child care.

Next Steps:

- Develop community profiles and needs assessments for priority local areas to determine service/program gaps.
- Continue to work with community groups and coalitions to support efforts such as those identified above.

ACTION SEVEN: Support neighbourhood building and management efforts

Strong neighbourhoods can foster safety and resiliency for the most vulnerable. Community building efforts – fostering “social capital” – can help bring people together to address issues and build positive solutions. It is also important to foster civic involvement.

There are many ways to build community. For example, there are a variety of community organizations that are actively involved in initiatives such as organizing youth-seniors bridging, neighbourhood social events and community gardens. Initiatives like Block Watch and Emergency Planning (PEP) can also foster neighbourhood-based activities.

Local governments can also support neighbourhood building through their functions. There are several examples of how this is working.

Progress:
The James-Alexander neighbourhood planning process provides an example of how to weave neighbourhood capacity building into the land use planning process. (Appendix D to be provided).
The City of Duncan is partnering with the Cairnsmore Neighbourhood Initiative and integrating neighbourhood building efforts into its Centennial Park Revitalization process.

Next Steps:

- Promote awareness on neighbourhood revitalization and about the vital role that neighbourhoods play in creating healthy communities.
- Local governments can provide support to neighbourhood groups to mobilize neighbours to come together. (For example, host a street party in a neighbourhood that is facing some significant issues.)

2.2 YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

ACTION EIGHT: Support youth development through regional collaboration

We know that the majority of young people contribute positively to their communities and make successful transitions to adulthood. However, too many youth are struggling through their formative years. Enhancing protective factors is key for healthy youth development, and ultimately, for community health and safety.

Community agencies, schools and local government departments are contributing in a multitude of ways. For example, youth recreational outreach workers have been designated in communities including Ladysmith and Duncan. Cowichan Lake has an integrated community outreach team that works with schools, service and recreation providers to address community needs, including a youth centre.

These efforts can be optimized/maximized through the implementation of a comprehensive youth development strategy that identifies specific roles for local government relating to:

- ✓ education, recreation and leisure programming aimed at prevention of violence; youth employment strategies
- ✓ developing youth outreach positions in major recreation centres
- ✓ supporting the development of youth centres

- ✓ establishing regional networking to foster linkages and information sharing between areas of the region

Progress:

- ➢ In 2005, CSAC recommended youth outreach workers for Duncan and South Cowichan. A youth outreach worker position was developed within the Cowichan Centre. More recently, funding has been provided by the Ministry for Children and Families for a second outreach position.
- ➢ A comprehensive youth development strategy has been identified as a goal by the Cowichan Centre Youth Outreach Program.

Next Steps:

- ➢ Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for youth development that outlines the various roles of local governments, community organizations and agencies.

ACTION NINE: Support drug prevention planning and programming

Substance misuse is a major concern for Canadians. Alcohol and drug abuse / dependency issues have been linked to a range of associated negative outcomes, including accidents, health problems, and rising crime rates in the Cowichan Region. The costs to communities in terms of policing and medical intervention is high, and highlights the need for collective efforts for prevention.

Progress:
Over the past year, community organizations and health agencies have been working to enhance knowledge of the issues, outreach, education and prevention programming through a variety of efforts.

Note to CSAC members: Does a current needs assessment exist? Is there a collaborative plan?

Next Steps:

- ➢ *Consult with community agencies and relevant coordinating bodies to determine the current picture of prevention planning and programming in the region.*
- ➢ *Identify areas of local government involvement and leadership needed to support efforts.*

2.3 SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

ACTION TEN: Develop a strategy for housing safety, provision and access

Safe and affordable housing is critical in itself. It is also critical to obtaining and maintaining employment, supporting the needs of families, and providing security for children and seniors. In turn, these workers, families and children/seniors need a variety of other supports to thrive, including transportation systems, recreational opportunities, community services, etc. Therefore housing is a crucial component of a safe, healthy community.

Housing design and provision is determined through a variety of ways, including planning, zoning, private market forces, and the efforts of community organizations.

Currently, there are many organizations and levels of government that support housing for seniors, for women, children and families experiencing violence, for people with disabilities, and for youth. However, it is clear that we are not meeting all of the needs for safe, affordable, accessible housing and shelter.

We currently do not have enough information to understand the extent or depth of housing needs (including provision and design) in the region. Research is needed to examine the spectrum of needs and current inventory, to develop a regional housing strategy that plans for future needs and to explore new ways of partnering to foster various housing forms and affordability.

Progress:

- Social Planning Cowichan is embarking on research into adequate shelter that will determine needs and develop a strategy for collective action.

- The District of North Cowichan's James-Alexander planning process is undertaking a study of affordable housing needs in that neighbourhood. This study will provide a good template for other areas to assess and plan for housing needs.

Next Steps:

- Educate local government about the role they can play in providing safe, affordable housing (examples of what other local governments are doing).
- Work with Social Planning Cowichan to raise the level of understanding about the importance of housing to community health and safety.
- Establish a task force to develop an affordable housing strategy for the region. The task force membership could include Social Planning Cowichan, developers, architects/designers, child and family service providers, seniors, people with disabilities and representatives from local government and CSAC).

2.4 PUBLIC TRANSIT

ACTION ELEVEN: Implement the Regional Transit Business Plan to expand services and address affordability, accessibility and safety of the regional transit system.

Safe travel is essential for access to and participation in community life. Fear of using transit due to safety concerns, or lack of access to transportation due to reasons of affordability, irregular service and / or geographical distances present significant safety issues, particularly for women and other vulnerable users (seniors, youth).

Over the years, the Cowichan Valley Regional District has taken steps to assess safety and increase services. Safety audits of transit stops and a regional Transit Safety Plan were completed in 1999. The CVRD also has a 'request stop' program and training for drivers.

The 2006 Transit Business Plan Draft recognizes the importance of enhancing availability and affordability of transit for everyone over the long term.

Progress:

In 2005, the Community Safety Advisory Committee put forward a recommendation to the Transit Commission to explore ways to enhance affordability through increased subsidization.

As a result, a background report was prepared for the Transit Commission, outlining potential models that could be adopted. The report is currently under consideration.

Next Steps:

- Follow-up with the CVRD Transit Commission to ascertain progress.
- Explore CSAC's other recommendations with the Transit Commission:
- CVRD Transit Commission could establish an Interdisciplinary committee to conduct a personal safety needs assessment, including a survey of transit users / nonusers to look at barriers to access.
- Develop education and training for bus drivers on personal safety for women.

3. POLICY AND GUIDANCE

3.1 COMMUNITY SAFETY LENS

ACTION TWELVE: Develop a Community Safety Lens

Community safety spans physical, social and economic realms, and can mean different things to different people. It is important for everyone to be working from a common understanding.

Establishing community safety as a common goal is an essential first step in creating a healthy, vibrant community – where everyone feels safe and free of fear. Through adopting the Safer Communities Approach, local governments can establish and set out an overall vision for safe and healthy communities.

Progress:

- The CVRD has a Public Safety Policy that establishes goals and objectives for women's safety.
- The CSAC has recommended the development of a 'safety definition' that can be used as a guide, and adapted by individual areas and municipalities for use in reviewing community plans and related by-laws.

Next Steps:

- Develop and adopt a Cowichan Region 'safety lens'.

3.1 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS

ACTION THIRTEEN: Ensure all Community Plans and related by-laws contain goals, objectives and policies to support community safety.

OCP's and other sub-plans can recognize and address many aspects of community safety, and play an important role in supporting, both directly and indirectly, all of the elements that contribute to community safety.

Progress:
A number of electoral areas and/or municipalities have developed or are developing plans that include community safety goals, objectives and/or policies.

Next Steps:

- As OCP's come up for review, the CSAC can act as a resource for integrating safety and social considerations.

- Develop a template for incorporating safety, have the CSAC help jurisdictions implement it.
- Develop education and awareness program for local governments, explaining the importance of embedding safety into OCPs and all other planning processes.

3.3 INTEGRATING SAFETY WITH SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ACTION FOURTEEN: Increase awareness of linkages between promoting safety and social development

Land use, social development, and economic development are inter-related, and community safety themes are threaded throughout all. Communities play a vital role in building safety and well-being at the local level through their combined actions in such areas as infrastructure, housing, schools, employment, recreation, and social services.

""All of a council's activities have social implications. Some activities, such as playground location and design,….and providing information in community languages, are obvious matters for inclusion in a council's social / community plan. Other activities such as the provision of roads, water supplies, development control and levying rates, are not usually seen as 'community' programs but do have significant community implications. These activities have the potential to disadvantage people if they are not provided for historical or resources reasons, or they cannot be supplied in a culturally appropriate way…" [2]

Progress:

- The Community Safety Advisory Committee has recognized the importance of integrated planning and through this Action Plan, is promoting linkages between safety and social development aims.
- We are seeing increased acknowledgment of safety and social considerations in planning and development processes.
- Social Planning Cowichan is working on a State of the Community project that will foster this understanding. Cowichan continues to develop an integrated community vision under the Visions 2020 initiative, which will now come under the wing of Social Planning.
- Two workshops are being planned to foster understanding of social and safety planning. The SPC is planning a community workshop with SPARC that will provide education to decision makers and citizens in April, 2006. Safer Futures is partnering to develop a fall workshop on Comprehensive Community Initiatives and decision making with the Tamarack Institute.

Next Steps:

- Develop and deliver educational and training initiatives for decision-makers to encourage greater awareness of integrated planning.

[2] NSW Department of Local Government; Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines; New South Wales; 2002; p.8.

- Encourage local decision-makers to invite CSAC members to their planning committees, to see how to apply this model in a concrete way.

3.4 EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PLANNING

ACTION FIFTEEN: Review emergency policies in consideration of the increased vulnerability of women, seniors and people with disabilities during times of disaster.

Progress:
The CVRD has included women's safety into Emergency Preparedness Planning.

Next Steps:

- Review emergency planning policy and protocol around disaster planning protocol and assistance to victims of violence.
- CVRD Emergency Social Services Committee to circulate policy and guidelines to community organizations for review and feedback (identified at Nov 03 workshop).

4. COORDINATED ACTIONS

4.1 REGIONAL SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ACTION SIXTEEN: Assess progress and terms of reference of the Community Safety Advisory Committee to determine an appropriate mandate, structure and partnership framework for the current term and beyond.

Evaluation of the efforts of CSAC during 2004/5 (see Appendix H for summary) determined that the goals and objectives of the committee are supported by both committee and non-committee interview participants. The merits and potential, and see the long term value of community safety work, particularly as it bridges multi-sectoral interests, were acknowledged.

However, overall there is a sense of the enormity of the work and challenges of approaching it at the regional level, and fundamental challenges of trying to do a lot within limited time and resources. There was concern that some key building blocks have not been addressed to date; key elements included communications / awareness, and sustainability.

Progress:

The CVRD Board has re-appointed the committee for 2006 and is preparing a draft terms of reference for the committee to review.

Next steps:

- Address evaluation recommendations, including:
  - Develop its mandate and relationship to the Board; address communications and linkages to departments
  - Address structure and meetings, including participation and sub-committee structures
  - Focus on products: develop a regional plan, manual for neighbourhood mobilization, definition of community safety

- Review membership, community linkages and connections with other committees and determine appropriate partnership structures, for example, with Social Planning Cowichan.

4.2 PUBLIC EDUCATION / TRAINING

ACTION SEVENTEEN: Establish central information links

Over time, feedback from communities indicates that many citizens lack information on how local governments work, how to get information on various topics, including community safety, development plans and services and programming.

Progress:

- During 2005, the CSAC worked on a communications and information plan that included information distribution via the internet and newsletters.
- The audit tool and reports have been posted on the Safer Futures web site and links have been established with local government sites.
- A recent study on women's participation in local government processes provided in depth information about how local governments can provide education and information.

Next Steps:

- Develop an information package that explains local government in the Cowichan Region. Make this available in different formats.
- Increase networking and linkages (e.g. with schools and elders)
- Assist local government to develop their own communications plans that pay particular attention to issues of community safety, and that include measures to make sure they reach all citizens.
- Implement actions laid out in the 2004 report on Women's Participation in Municipal Decision Making Processes.

ACTION EIGHTEEN: Provide regular education and training for staff and elected officials on safer community planning, and as part of orientation.

A mechanism to convey information and training on safer community planning concepts and progress to new/successive staff and councils will ensure continuity in policy development, planning, and service provision.

Progress:
Training and workshops on safety audits, design and planning have been done in the past. However, this has been sporadic and dependent upon availability of funding and staff.

Next Steps:

- Deliver annual education and training sessions on community safety to municipal staff and councilors.
- Allocate an annual budget and designate staff time for these sessions.

4.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

ACTION NINETEEN: Continue to develop and establish collaboration and partnerships across all sectors.

Progress:
The CSAC has laid out a plan for communications and networking, and has worked to build committee membership with certain sectors (e.g. Business, First Nations, schools), but recognizes that there are some key partners that have yet to be included in the Safer Communities dialogue.

Next Steps:

- Build partnerships with Social Planning Cowichan and Economic Development

ACTION TWENTY: Develop community grants program and guidelines.

Around the region, many local groups and organizations are working to improve their neighbourhoods and provide localized services and programs. Local governments already provide small grants upon request and approval. However, not everyone is aware that these grants exist, how much is available, how to access them, or how award decisions are made. It would be helpful to have a grant program targeted at improving safety or preventing enhancing neighbourhoods.

Next steps:

- Establish a regional/local government small grants programs that focuses on community safety and/or neighbourhood enhancement, and lays out clear criteria and guidelines for their distribution and the application process.

SECTION IV: BEST LOCAL PRACTICES

The Safer Communities Approach has been successfully applied to a number of local areas over the years. Here are some examples of outcomes.

- The City of Duncan Safe City Action Plan (Appendix D)
- Centennial Park Revitalization Plan (Appendix E)
- The Cairnsmore Initiative overview (Appendix F)
- James-Alexander Neighbourhood (Appendix G)
- Cowichan Bay's Safer Community Plan Vision (see below)

VISION FOR A SAFER COWICHAN BAY

In a safe Cowichan Bay, all residents, regardless of age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, or abilities, would have freedom to live, work and play, as well as be part of their community, without fear; and where everyone would be and feel valued and respected.

We would see a community where children and youth are active in all parts of the community, where people know each other, interact and take care of one another, particularly of the most vulnerable.

A safe Cowichan Bay is built on core values of inclusiveness and diversity, of collective working, trust and responsibility.

Cowichan Bay is a community where everyone participates and has a sense of ownership and belonging, and where special efforts are taken to ensure full participation and information sharing.

Cowichan Bay recognizes that a safe and healthy community depends on a solid and well-planned foundation, especially for its most vulnerable residents.

A solid foundation includes adequate and meaningful employment opportunities, safe and affordable housing, universal transportation, access to adequate food and nutrition, recreation and leisure, community supports and a quality environment. A solid foundation is not achieved in isolation but also requires understanding how all of these elements work together.

Planning for Cowichan Bay's future as a safe and healthy community reflects these values. This involves considering the social, economic, and environmental well being of the community in short and long term planning and development, and integrating safety and accessibility into all planning processes.

A safe and healthy community would promote mixed developments and include principles of safety and access in their design and management. It would promote safe pedestrian walkways, bike paths, parking areas, and a vibrant and welcoming community environment.

APPENDIX A: CVRD PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY

CVRD PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE AND PURPOSE

The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognizes that violence is an insidious problem with devastating costs that affects all residents and that violence against any person is unacceptable. Moreover, the District recognizes that one of the groups most at risk of being abused is women and that among women, the most vulnerable groups are visible minorities, aboriginal women arid women with disabilities. The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognizes a need to demonstrate leadership to achieve equality and end violence, and commits to ongoing efforts to prevent violence in our community.

2. GOAL STATEMENT
It is a goal of the Board to promote communities where all people can freely use public spaces, day or night, without fear of violence, and where people including women and children and persons with special needs, are safe from violence. Accordingly, the Board shall;

a) ensure that all CVRD programs and policies support personal and public safety, and
b) adopt development guidelines respecting issues of safety and security and apply those guidelines in its review of Official Community Plans and development proposals.

3. POLICY
The Cowichan Valley Regional District shall promote safety and security in public places, including streets, parks and open spaces, schools, public transit and public parts of buildings. To encourage public safety and security for all persons, but with particular attention to women children and persons with special needs, the Board will;

a) encourage improvement in public safety and security in approvals of buildings, streetscaping, parks and other public and private open spaces;
b) encourage the design and siting of new buildings to provide visual overlook and easy physical access to adjacent streets, parks and open spaces and to allow clear views to parks and open spaces form the street;
c) encourage appropriate lighting, visibility and opportunities for informal surveillance for buildings and open spaces;
d) encourage improvement of existing streets, buildings, parks and other publicly accessible areas, where existing conditions do not promote public safety and security.

APPENDIX B: CVRD COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) originated with the Women's Safety Advisory formed in 1996. The CSAC is a standing committee of the Board; its general terms of reference are to advise on Community Safety Issues within the regional District, including safety audits and safety related funding requests.

The committee is comprised of eleven members with representation from elected officials, community organization, school district, and residents. It has been active in directing, overseeing and participating in:

- Conducting safety audits to assess safety issues and define solutions
- Promoting community partnerships
- Developing tools and resources such as the Cowichan Valley Safety Audit Guide, Planning for Safer Communities Guide
- Providing education and training through workshops and seminars
- Engaging in policy and guidelines development.
- Conducting specialized initiatives for community safety
- Sharing information about this work with many other communities around the province.

> "The committee has tackled many different issues, and we have learned that no problem - large or small - can be solved without the help of many different people and agencies. All levels of government must be on side, as well as corporations such as Telus and BC Hydro." Chair Mary Marcotte, Presentation to UBCM Clinic Session (Permission required to use this quote)

ii) 1996 – 2002: Community Audits

Between 1996 to 2002, over twenty community-wide and site-specific audits were conducted that involved hundreds of people in consultations, problem solving and implementation to improve existing community environments to make them safer.

The audits culminated in hundreds of recommendations to address immediate physical improvements to reduce opportunities for violence, enhance sense of safety and accessibility, improve community programming and services, and to develop long term strategies for community planning to integrate personal safety into policies and processes that guide development in the region. An assessment conducted in 2000 indicated that approximately 70% of the recommendations had been addressed.

In November, 2003, approximately 40 individuals representing a range of organizations and stakeholder groups participated in a workshop that explored and evaluated progress of community safety work over time. Feedback from community organizations, agencies and departments of local government indicated that the work for safer communities has produced some positive results including:

- Increased awareness, community ownership and involvement
- Increased awareness and responsiveness to social / safety issues

- Interdepartmental coordination and communication
- Linkages outside and inside community/neighbourhoods
- Physical changes
- Safety audit has been a "jumping off" point for other actions (i.e. James St project)

Feedback has also indicated challenges to overcome, including:

- Jurisdictional complexities
- Inclusiveness and participation; communications and awareness
- Community infrastructure, resources and linkages
- Time constraints; Institutional / systemic obstacles
- Coordination of actions; loss of momentum over time
- Financial constraints / budget priorities
- Fragmentation / project–oriented work; community capacity

iii) Recommendations arising from the community feedback included the following:

1) Public Commitment

- Increase awareness and accessibility of CVRD policies that support community safety

2) Partnerships and Awareness

- Involve more community stakeholders; increase public awareness

3) Interdepartmental Liaison and Coordination

- Increase awareness within local government infrastructure and with community re: safety information and the work of CSAC (communication, education, liaising)

4) Community Planning

- Awareness of official community plans; planning and zoning (design guidelines); social services; development applications; safety checklists
- Training for newly elected officials, new municipal staff and on-going community training (education)
- Communications; meetings with planners and apc's; publicize checklist
- Additional safety audits/needs assessments
- Standardize safety audits as part of processes

5) Transportation

- Re-visit safety on regional level through regional needs assessment
- Training for bus drivers, and public re: transportation committee; safety audits
- Information and communications as key (e.g. laminated signs)

6) Social Development

- Play a greater role in advocating and assisting social development initiatives as part of community safety goals
- Identify needs and gaps; provide assistance and coordination

- Increase involvement and leadership re: community/women's safety (communication and education)

7) Policing and Emergency Services

- Review emergency policies re: increased vulnerability of women and other vulnerable groups during times of disaster (education, communication)
- Enhance collaboration and partnerships with RCMP
- Review needs for training

8) Human Relations

- Review policies and progress (e.g., safety audits of work sites, etc.)

iv) Moving Forward

Between 2003 - 2006, the CSAC worked with the Neighbourhood Links Project (Safer Futures) which has gathered research, worked at the neighbourhood level to develop community safety plans and corresponding initiatives, and identify regional safety themes. This work has involved:

Research and information gathering
Gathering of neighbourhood level data
Compiling a range of demographic, social and economic indicators
Community meetings and workshops

Neighbourhood and community level work
Focusing to date on three areas:
Downtown Duncan and Centennial Park
Cairnsmore / Berkey's area
Cowichan Bay

Acknowledging broader, regional safety themes
At the broader community level, the project has networked and participated in other community initiatives and dialogue on:
Drug abuse prevention
Youth Development
Social development
Housing and transportation

APPENDIX C:

C.1. LOCATION OF SAFETY AUDITS CONDUCTED IN COWICHAN

Cowichan Lake
Cobble Hill
Mill Bay/Malahat
Cowichan Bay
Beverly to Alexander
Davis Road, Ladysmith
Cowichan Lake Sports Arena
Kerry Park Recreation Centre
Laidlaw Bus Depot
City of Duncan Downtown
City of Duncan – Transit / Cinema
Mill Bay Elementary School and area
CVRD Transit stops
Malaspina University College
Beverly Corners
James Street
Mill Bay Centre (bus stop)
Saltair (Mount Brenton)
Cowichan Community Centre

C.2. SAFETY POLICIES IN COMMUNITY PLANNING / BY-LAW DEVELOPMENT

Official Community Plans
Cobble Hill Village
Town of Lake Cowichan
Areas F / I
Area A Mill Bay – Malahat
Area C / Cobble Hill OCP Amendment
Cowichan Bay (draft) amendment
Shawnigan Lake (draft) amendment
Saltair
Recommendations to Other Organizations/Levels of Government
CVRD UBCM resolution
Ministry of Transportation and Highways
Zoning by-laws
Area E
Other
District of North Cowichan Urban Design Guidelines adopted; OCP community survey included community health and safety component

CVRD Transit Safety Plan
Emergency Planning
CVRD APC Handbook includes safety guidelines
City of Duncan adoption of development guidelines
Development Plans Assessed
Valleyview Centre
Village Green Mall
City of Duncan public washrooms
Tom Bannister Park
Seniors Complex
Area D Parks and Recreation Commission – Lambourne Road Park

APPENDIX D: CITY OF DUNCAN SAFER CITY ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX E: CENTENNIAL PARK REVITALIZATION PLAN (Not yet finished?)

APPENDIX F: CAIRNSMORE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX G: NORTH COWICHAN'S JAMES-ALEXANDER PLANNING PROCESS

APPENDIX H: 2005 EVALUATION SUMMARY CSAC