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Cowichan Women Against Violence

COBBLE HILL SAFETY AUDIT **SUMMARY**

The Cowichan Valley Safety Audit Project is a regional initiative supported by the C.V.R.D., provincial and federal governments, whose purpose is to address women's and children's personal and public safety at the local level through design and management of community environments.

Approaches to build safer communities recognize the relationship between violence, fear and the built environment. While design of places such as neighbourhoods, commercial areas, streets, buildings and parks do not cause crime and violence, they can be an important consideration in prevention of crime and violence. Safety audits are a tool to examine places and identify ways to improve them to increase safety for women, children and everyone.

The safety audit for Cobble Hill has involved community consultation through distribution of a survey, outreach, networking and presentations, to identify places where safety is a concern and aspects of places that present obstacles to safety for women and children.

From the input received, several areas were identified for site specific audits which were carried out with the assistance of community volunteers over a two month period. Input received from surveys, audit walks and other consultation indicates the following:

Many people enjoy their rural environments and feel their community is generally safe. However, almost half of survey respondents are concerned sometimes or often for their safety at home, and over two thirds are concerned for their safety in public places - streets, roads, highways, parking lots and commercial areas. Isolation, inadequate lighting, presence of people and lack of security were noted most frequently as aspects that cause concern. For some people, safety was seen to be more of a societal issue reflecting general attitudes and beliefs which allow violence to occur.

While reported experience of crime is currently quite low (theft as the major factor), worry about crime/violence parallels general statistics, and is reflected in limitations to activities and engagement in safety precautions.

Input suggests that growth and change will require increasing attention to safety. Overall, people want to strike a balance between safety in design (e.g., lighting, infrastructure) and maintaining the rural character of Cobble Hill. Solutions offered to improve safety in Cobble Hill ranged from personal and home security measures such as taking a self defense class or getting a Neighbourhood Watch group together, to improving lighting, installing signage and public telephones in specific areas, to improving public security through areas of justice, law enforcement and policing.

Strengthening community identity, social networks and responsibility were seen as important elements in overall community safety. Planning for activities for youth was noted as important, as well as provision of local opportunities for information and education about violence issues and general safety.

Audits of places in the Cobble Hill area were chosen from specific places cited for concerns, as well as aspects of places, in particular, dark and isolated places, where safety is a concern. Specific areas included the Cobble Hill Village, portions of highways and secondary roads and three regional parks.

In general, observations and suggestions from the site visits reflected concerns and suggestions for improvements in the surveys. For the Village area, suggestions were made for minor road improvements/maintenance, lighting, signage and public telephones. Again, suggestions for lighting were balanced with a desire to maintain the rural atmosphere and focused mainly on street intersections.

Planning to maintain and enhance safety for the Cobble Hill Village included elements of design such as lighting, pedestrian walkways, signage and emergency outlets. Accessibility, mobility, and design that encourages and accommodates a diversity of people and specific user groups were also seen as important for long term goals for safety.

Audits of the highway, roads and parks focused on isolation factors. Additional public telephones were recommended to increase sense of safety for women traveling by car on the highway. Recommendations for parks included attention to design elements to increase visibility, awareness of surroundings, and access to emergency outlets. Enhancing security, cooperation, developing community education and awareness were also seen as solutions to increase safety for women who live and travel in isolated areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

Safety Audits

Safety audits have evolved as an important tool in community approaches to crime prevention. The purpose of a Safety Audit is to address personal and public safety of women and children through examining community environments from those perspectives and recommending solutions to reduce opportunities for crime/violence and enhance safety.

Why focus on women and children?

Safety audits focus on safety of women and children. This focus is not meant to ignore or minimize the high rate of violence experienced by men. Rather, it is meant to highlight the unique situations of women, their higher risks of certain kinds of crime and violence and the resulting limitations on their use and participation in their communities.

Violence and the resulting fear of violence has unique and significant implications for women's and children's lives, both as individuals, and in the way they use their communities. Statistics show that over half (57%) of all women restrict their activities out of concern for their safety, including work, education, recreation, and many seemingly routine activities. (Statistics Canada, 1993)

Small and Rural Communities

Rural communities offer many positive features and advantages because of their rural amenities and the familiarity they offer. However, rural women face obstacles to safety that are often similar to those of women living in urban areas, and they also face issues particular to living in a rural community due to geographical isolation; lack of essential and / or accessible emergency services such as crisis centres, medical clinics, social and police services; long distances to work and recreation and lack of public transportation systems.

Safety Concerns

Many people, particularly women and children, have concerns about their safety in public and semi-public places - at home alone, walking alone in our neighbourhoods after dark, going out at night to meetings, waiting for and using public transportation, at our places of work, and school. (Appendix 1 provides selected statistics on experience and worry about crime and violence.) Characteristics of places which are often identified in conjunction with safety concerns include isolation, inadequate lighting, security, entrapment and hiding spots, poor maintenance, lack of signage and access to emergency outlets. Conversely, factors that enhance both safety and sense of safety are those that:

- reduce isolation and provide for awareness and clarity of the surrounding environment, provide for clear visibility, access to emergency services, and
- foster a sense of ownership and hierarchy of space.

Certainly, design of public places and buildings do not cause crime and violence, and design does not operate independently of other social factors. Safety audits can also identify other ways communities can improve safety, for example, through education and awareness and cooperative actions of residents, community groups and police.

2.0. COBBLE HILL SAFETY AUDIT

The Cobble Hill Safety Audit has been conducted as part of a regional initiative to address safety of women and children. This safety audit is being conducted by Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, with direction of a 20 member committee of the Regional Board which includes representatives from this and other electoral areas, municipalities and community organizations.

2.1. Procedures

Procedures for the Cobble Hill Safety Audit are based on established models developed by METRAC (Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children) and the Women's Action Centre in Ottawa - Carlton. The latter model was researched and developed specifically to include considerations of rural women, people with disabilities and visible minority groups.

Procedures involve community consultation to determine types of safety concerns and areas /aspects where safety is a concern. From the input received, areas within the community are prioritized for site specific audits. Audits assess community places for factors which include awareness of the environment, places which present opportunities for crime and factors that contribute to or detract from accessibility and mobility. (Appendix 2)

Recommendations for improvements to enhance safety will provide site specific solutions and proactive guidelines to include principles into planning processes.

2.1.1. Community Consultation

- a) A survey to gather information on safety concerns of women in the community was distributed by way of drop-off locations, networking, presentations to community groups, referrals and requests.
- b) Audit staff attended meetings of various local and regional community groups to discuss the project and request participation of residents re: the survey / input process, audit walks.
- c) Focus group discussions have been conducted with local and regional community groups.
- d) Networking and referral contacts were made with numerous individuals throughout the community to provide input.
- e) Media coverage has included articles in Duncan papers and coverage in the South Cowichan News. Advertisements and announcements have been placed at intervals in three newspapers. Information about the project was also included in local newsletters of a few local community organizations and schools.

2.1.2. Audits

Audit walks were conducted during May to July; all but one were done in the evening. Each safety audit entails background research on the area or site, a preliminary visit by staff, the 'official' audit walk, and follow up visit by staff to confirm information in daylight hours. Audit walks were done with volunteers from the community and facilitated by project staff. Each walk took approximately two hours, generally from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m. The number of participants, including staff, ranged from three to eight.

Procedures for the audit walks involve walking through an area with a checklist of questions (Appendix 2) to examine aspects with respect to personal safety and the physical environment. The basic questions were: "What about this place makes me feel uncomfortable?" and "What changes would help me to feel safer?" While the intent of a safety audit is to critically assess places for safety concerns, participants are also asked to note things that contribute to a positive sense of safety to help determine what positive safety features exist and how they might be preserved as the area develops.

Observations and recommendations were then compiled and written up in the form of a draft report which was distributed to audit participants for review and further input.

2.1.3. Study Limitations

A number of potential limiting factors to the project were identified during initial stages of planning and noted during the process. General knowledge and experience with the safety audit process recognizes limitations with respect to survey sampling and seasonality. (Dame and Grant, 1996)

Further limitations to obtaining comprehensive input were noted and defined in terms of the geographical nature of the area (spread out with several distinct sub-communities), the short time frame in which the study was conducted, perceptions about study limitations and safety concerns (for example, people who do not define themselves as having concerns may not see the survey as pertinent to their interests, people who do not view the process as conducive to change may not participate).

3. 0. RESULTS

3.1. Community Consultation

Fifty surveys were returned and numerous people were contacted via presentations, discussions and networking. Appendix 3 provides a series of tables which summarize survey responses. While the low number of surveys warrants caution with respect to statistical inferences and conclusions, input from other sources generally reflected the type and nature of concerns. This sections will provide a summary of the input obtained from surveys, and comments offered during discussions with individuals and community groups.

Overall, the input reflects appreciation and enjoyment of rural living and a desire to maintain that lifestyle. The majority of people generally enjoy and appreciate rural living and many

people said they do not feel concerned for their safety. However, the input also reflects concern about violence issues, aspects of rural living that present obstacles to safety and a desire to ensure safety will not be compromised by future development. Generally, people indicated a desire to balance design for safety (for example, lighting, sidewalks) and maintaining rural nature.

Safety concerns

Over half of survey respondents indicated concern for safety sometimes or often at home, just under one third at work and over two thirds in public places. The concern expressed most often was for theft, followed by physical assault, sexual assault, harassment and verbal attack.

All age groups expressed similar levels of concern about theft. Women aged 55 and over expressed fewer concerns about their safety, however, almost two thirds indicated they are worried about theft; between 50% and 73% of women under 55 years of age say they are worried about physical or sexual assault.

Factors affecting safety

Personal aspects noted most often in relation to safety were attitudes about women in general, age, drugs/alcohol and cultural beliefs and attitudes. Almost half of women aged 55 and over cited age as a factor affecting their safety. Young women between 15 and 25 years also indicated age as affecting their safety (40%). Between one third to one half of women 55 and under felt drugs/alcohol to be a safety issue; women aged 40-55 were most likely to cite attitudes toward women as a factor which affects their safety.

Places Where Safety is a Concern

The primary areas of concern both at night and in the day are isolated and/or remote locations that include local streets, roads and parking lots, parks, institutional areas, and stretches of highway. Isolation, poor lighting, and people perceived as threatening were the main factors; however, dogs roaming loose and wildlife were also noted as concerns.

Traveling alone by car between Cobble Hill and Duncan or Victoria particularly with respect to car breaking down were noted as a concern for some people.

Specific areas cited for concerns at night included Cobble Hill main streets, the Train Station, Braithwaite/Farnsworth Road, Telegraph Road area, Cherry Point, Shawnigan Road and Duncan. Places cited for safety concerns in the day included isolated and/or remote areas in general, areas known for 'hanging out' and parks (Cobble Hill Mountain).

Traffic was also a concern, particularly with respect to speeding cars and lack of pedestrian pathways in the Cobble Hill Village area and on secondary roads. School grounds were noted for concerns with regard to portables, areas around schools for traffic concerns and people perceived as threatening.

Safety Precautions

About 40% of survey respondents said they limit their activities due to concerns for their safety. Precautions noted most often included not walking alone, going out with a friend and staying away from certain areas. The majority of respondents with children (86%) restrict

their children's activities and engage in precautions such as regular phone checkins, driving them to places and not letting them go out alone.

Solutions to improve safety

Solutions to improve safety at home included better security (alarms, secure doors, windows, drapes), more and more visible policing and a faster response time from police, as well as localizing the 911 response route and having free payphone access for 911. Neighbourhood watch or similar programs to increase community social ties were seen as helpful. Lighting in neighbourhoods was also seen as a solution to enhance safety.

Solutions to enhance safety at work included security measures such as an emergency alert button, alarm system, workplace safety programs and police response.

Solutions to enhance safety in public places included law enforcement and security measures, better lighting, more emergency outlets such as public telephones, signage, trimming vegetation that limits visibility and traffic control measures.

Education and information on various topics such as violence prevention or wildlife; local self defense classes, school programs, and local media were suggested as avenues (for example, a column in local paper about wildlife sightings and safety precautions).

Enhancing community was also seen to be important with respect to personal and neighbourhood links, education about violence issues and safety measures, and social support systems. Often this was cited in combination with policing and security (for example, bringing in a Neighbourhood Watch program), but also with respect to strengthening social ties and support systems.

COMMENTS

Comments received in surveys and through discussions with individuals and groups provided additional information about safety concerns and solutions. The following summary provides an overview of comments and discussion.

General

The majority of people generally enjoy and appreciate rural living and many people said they do not feel concerned for their safety in their community. Positive features noted about the community focused on its rural character. A high level of mobility of residents was also seen to contribute to safety. Some people noted their choice of living in a rural area as positive even given constraints such as isolation or lack of nearby services.

Some comments reflected changes in perceptions about safety over time due to growth and development, increased awareness/perceptions of crime and violence in general, and indicated a desire to consider prevention.

Safety Concerns

Most safety concerns were noted in the context of being female and being alone, most often on foot, in an isolated and/or dark area, although concerns about home and work were also noted in the same context. Traffic issues (speeding cars, pedestrian safety and drinking and driving) also figured prominently in concerns expressed.

Many concerns were associated either with presence of people perceived as threatening, and/or lack of people close by who could respond in an emergency, lack of safe place to go (or way of getting there) in an emergency situation. Women sometimes described their feelings in terms of being acutely aware that they are vulnerable to violence and that if a 'situation' were to occur, they would have no place to go and no way out.

As in survey responses, types and levels of concern about safety varied as did suggestions for improving safety. In general, suggested improvements for public places such as lighting, signage, public telephones were balanced with other solutions such as education and information, or security and policing measures. Suggestions for improvements, particularly lighting, were often balanced with a recognition of and concern for implications for taxes.

Planning for safety was felt to be important to ensure future development maintains the current level of safety. Planning items included pedestrian paths, walkways for the Village commercial core, some residential areas (Holland Avenue area was noted by a few people); design of buildings, streets, parks which promotes safety and security, better transit services (more stops and timing of services).

Societal Attitudes and Beliefs

While safety concerns were related to physical aspects of the community, some comments reflected concerns about safety as a reflection of the larger societal issue rather than the local landscape.

The need to better address violence in the home and have better supports for women who need to leave abusive situations was noted. (i.e., Somenos House provides emergency shelter, but supports to help women to leave permanently, get work and day care, and be safe over the long term are needed). Accessible information, for example, about existing support services, was also noted as a need for women who live in outlying areas.

Seniors

Discussions with some Arbutus Ridge residents revealed a general satisfaction with safety in their local area due in large part to the level of security and neighbourhood support system. However, some noted that seniors may feel less secure outside Arbutus Ridge. It was also noted that recent transit changes mean that Arbutus Ridge is no longer a scheduled stopping place, and the closest one now is at Telegraph and Hutchinson. It would help to have public transit stop closer to Arbutus Ridge, even if only on a part time basis.

Children and Youth

Several comments reflected concerns about safety of children and lack of activities for youth.

A young person noted that not much to do forces kids into drugs and a youth cited a known incident of another youth who experienced assault. Some comments reflected perceptions of youth in groups as intimidating, although some also noted that this perception may be unwarranted. Education for youth about their safety, violence issues in general and respect for others was noted as a need.

School grounds were noted for safety concerns around traffic congestion, security, and portables which cause concern around children going to the washroom alone. A few people expressed concern about the proposed location of the new school in an industrial area.

Community

Building a 'sense of community' was seen to be an important aspect of maintaining and enhancing safety. Comments reflected a desire to ensure safety is not compromised by growth and that development design and provision of services foster safety and accessibility. The need to develop 'community' as a mutually supportive resource (for example if there was a community emergency or crisis) and more of 'getting to know your neighbour' were felt to be important for overall community safety.

Suggested avenues included Neighbourhood watch, community policing (e.g., neighbourhood station) and support of local community activities and education opportunities.

A few people felt that the current type of growth and development (i.e., Cobble Hill has grown as a bedroom community) doesn't really foster "community". Negative aspects identified included the orientation of people toward Duncan and Victoria, the location of many direct services outside the local community, and an absence of activities outside the Farmer's Institute which link the community.

Security / Policing / Justice System

Comments reflected both satisfaction with and perceived gaps in policing and emergency services and justice system. Several comments called for a larger presence from police, faster response time and more localized service in the Cobble Hill area. Community policing for the South End was seen to be a positive step forward, however, several people said that they wanted to see a very local police presence. A local community policing station was suggested.

Suggestions to improve emergency response systems included not having 911 calls routed through Nanaimo, and making 911 calls from public telephones free.

Several comments also reflected frustration with the current justice system and perceived lack of consequences for offenders; these were often cited with suggestions for stronger consequences for offenders and stricter enforcement of laws.

Skeleem Village¹

¹ *Skeleem Recovery Centre, operated by Cedar Lodge Society, provides post rehabilitation services for individuals with a brain injury. The centre is located on a large parcel of land adjacent to Cobble Hill Village off Holland Avenue. Programs at Skeleem involve social and life skills development, vocational training, behavioral intervention and community re-entry.*

Discussion of safety issues for people with mental and physical disabilities highlighted needs of individuals in terms of living in a local environment which is safe and which accommodates their needs for recovery and rehabilitation. Within this context is the need also for individuals and the Centre to be able to co-exist with the general community. In this and other areas, co-existence and therefore recovery, is made difficult when there is a lack of acceptance and/or fear of people with disabilities by the community at large.

Comments received via surveys and general discussions expressed similar considerations for the safety and well-being of people living at Skeleem both in an individual and community context; however, some concerns were expressed for safety of Skeleem residents and the general public with respect to the potential for violence to self and others. Measures for security were among solutions suggested; for example, accompaniment for Skeleem residents when out of the Centre, and/or confinement of residents to Skeleem grounds.

While the number of specific concerns expressed was low (two survey respondents and two discussion participants), discussions about the nature of concerns was felt to warrant some proactive attention and measures to address actual and perceived issues and to facilitate positive relations.

The need for greater mutual cooperation and understanding (i.e., of the general population with regard to people with disabilities, *and* of safety concerns due to fear of behaviours of people with head injuries) through communication and interaction between Skeleem Centre and the community at large, education about issues for people with brain injuries, and information about Skeleem programs were noted as avenues that should be pursued. It was noted that Skeleem holds an annual open house at Christmas and this year will be hosting a barbeque in July to which the community will be invited.

3.2. The Audits

Audits of places included the Cobble Hill Village and surrounding area, community parks, the Trans Canada Highway and secondary roads. This section outlines observations, comments and suggestions for improvements from the audit walks, and presents recommendations pertaining to each area. A summary of recommendations is presented in Section 4.

3.2.1. COBBLE HILL VILLAGE

Four Safety audit walks were conducted in the Cobble Hill Village area during April and May. Participants on the audit walks varied in their opinions with respect to type and level of safety concerns about the Cobble Hill Village. However, in general, the area is considered to have a good level of safety with respect to current levels and type of use, and people wish to maintain and/or enhance that level of safety despite growth.

i) General Impressions and Overall Community Design

There are many positive features that contribute to safety and sense of safety in the Cobble Hill Village. These include:

- Ambiance generated by building and street design (historical theme).
- Narrow roads, residential density, and mix of land uses (commercial, residential).
- Mostly clear sightlines (except for a rise in the road between Watson /Hutchinson).
- Low noise level except for the occasional (speeding) vehicle.
- Emergency services: the public telephone at the Cobble Hill Market is in a good location, is visible and well-lit.
- Activities at the Farmer's Institute Hall provide a central activity node.
- Presence of security (on one of the evenings, two police cars were seen patrolling).
- Generally well-maintained with minor exceptions - the Train Station, Heigh Street, an old car on a property at the corner of Hutchinson and Watson.

ii) General Accessibility / Mobility and Pedestrian Safety

Participants who were familiar with the Village area layout felt the area "made sense" and that it was easy to find their way around. However, those not familiar with the local generally disagreed, felt the area's layout was confusing, and that there was not enough (visible) information such as signage to indicate general direction and location of emergency outlets. In a few places it was felt that some street signs are situated too far off the road for adequate visibility to motorists.

Narrow roads through the Village area contribute positively to the area's rural atmosphere; however, in some places, parked cars force pedestrians to walk on the road.

Lack of adequate walkways poses problems for parents walking with children, especially in strollers, and would pose a problem for someone with a disability. For the most part, this was

not seen to be an immediate hazard, except around Cobble Hill School (Watson Street) during peak traffic times and near the intersection of Fisher and Holland where cars have been noted speeding.

General traffic issues included speeding motorists, traffic congestion, particularly in school zones, and with respect to visibility at intersections. Drinking and driving, particularly on weekends, was a cause for concern around children playing. A spot cited for this concern was the Cenotaph park, corner of Heigh and Fisher, where kids play. Cobble Hill and Fisher Roads were also noted for concerns around speeding and alcohol.

One of the audits included observing traffic on Watson Street in the early morning hours been 8:20 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. While traffic was indeed quite heavy between these times due to children being transported to school, it was noted that the school had a staff person outside to supervise, and that motorists were generally observant of speed limits. Afternoon traffic however, is more concentrated and congested.

Deep ditches on Holland Avenue, on Watson near Heigh, and also at Hutchinson/Watson may present general safety hazards. They also offer hiding spots.

The Village is presently served by one public transit stop at the corner of Fisher and Cobble Hill Road. This was seen to be an issue for future planning considerations.

Suggestions arising from safety audit walks included:

- address lack of pedestrian walkways as the community grows and develops.
- more surveillance, policing to reduce traffic and speeding violations.
- lower speed limits in Village area down from 50 km.
- repair potholes (Heigh Street in particular).
- repaint crossing areas.
- attend to and in future, avoid creating deep ditches.
- no parking zone across from the pub.
- enhance public transit.
- widen shoulders near school on Watson*
- make Watson a one way street*
- speed bumps on Watson*

* These options may present obstacles for implementation. Installing speed bumps on a public road may not be an allowable option. Making Watson a one way street could present difficulties around diversion of traffic in general and traffic going to and from the Cobble Hill Hall, increasing the actual volume of traffic traveling in one direction during peak times. Residences on Watson across from the school are close to the road and widening shoulders may reduce yard frontage.

Recommendations:

1) That the CVRD request the Ministry of Transportation and Highways to:

- attend to road improvements for Heigh Street, explore solutions regarding the deep ditches on Holland Avenue and Watson/Hutchinson.
- explore solutions regarding improvements to Watson Street to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.
- repaint pedestrian crossing areas in the Village area.
- reduce speed limits within the Village area.

2) That the CVRD Public Transit Committee be requested to register a request for improved transit service to the area and forward that request to the appropriate authorities.

3) That R.C.M.P. be requested to increase traffic surveillance and enforcement of speeding limits and drinking/driving in the Village area*.

4) That the CVRD support cooperative efforts with and between schools and RCMP to enhance awareness and promote solutions regarding speeding issues.

*An example of a community initiative to address speeding is the Speed Watch Program sponsored by Ladysmith Citizens on Patrol, R.C.M.P. and I.C.B.C., which uses volunteer efforts to monitor speeding.

iii) Visibility and Lighting

Nighttime visibility is enhanced by lighting from residences and some commercial buildings, particularly around the Cobble Hill neighbourhood pub. However, a question arose as to visibility in later hours if/when lights are out.

Areas where lighting was felt to be lacking included:

Some street intersections.

Watson between Fisher - Heigh St.

Farmer's Institute Hall - parking lot, building rear/yard and front.

Holland Road subdivision

Suggestions arising from the audit walks included:

- Installing lighting at street intersections.
- Future development should include considerations for lighting in residential areas, and recommendations for lighting (preferably low level, low intensity) of commercial and institutional buildings that would contribute to overall levels of lighting. It was stressed, however, that lighting be balanced with the desire to maintain the rural character of the area.

Recommendations

5) *That the CVRD investigate methods with residents to improve current levels of lighting in the Village area.*

*Possible methods include the addition of streetlights at intersections (priority areas are Watson/Heigh, Heigh/Fisher, Fisher/Watson, Watson/Hutchinson, Gallier/Holland) * ; supporting residents who desire additional lighting in neighbourhoods through purchasing motion detector lights and selling them at cost.*

*This recommendation should be reviewed in light of potential implications for costs to local residents and be prioritized and implemented in such a manner as to minimize any direct costs.

Should streetlighting not be an option at this time, due, for example, to budget considerations, they should be planned and prioritized for future development. Options such as a neighbourhood “porch lights on” campaign have been done very successfully in other areas and could be explored as an interim measure.

6) *The CVRD should support efforts of the Farmer’s Institute to improve their building and grounds with respect to lighting and accessibility.*

iv) Isolation

When an area feels isolated there is a sense that there is no one around that would hear a call for help, or there is little prospect of getting to help on foot. Isolation is often associated with:

- absence of people around the area (residents and particular user groups, women)
- inadequate access to emergency services, for example, public telephones and signage which provides direction and information.
- vacant buildings and spaces that are adequately lit, or lack security.

The Village core was somewhat isolated in evening hours (after 9:00 p.m.), except for the Cobble Hill Pub. However, this was offset by the presence of cars and people entering and exiting the pub. Lack of lighting contributes to feelings of isolation in some places. Access to emergency services was felt to be available through private homes in the area. However, where homes (or businesses) were not nearby, this would be a problem.

Locations that felt particularly isolated:

- Bus stop at corner of Fisher/Highway at night.
- The Train Station, day and night.
- While the Farmer’s Institute buildings are well-used, during times they are not in use the area is isolated. Lack of lighting contributes to isolation.
- The two elementary school grounds at night.

Suggestions arising from the audit walks included:

- Additional emergency outlets such as pay telephones, information (signage) about area layout and direction.
- Attention to access at schools after hours, for example, ensuring school gates are closed.
- Lighting at noted intersections and around Farmer's Institute Hall.
- Trim tree tops behind pub to extend the range of lighting in behind.
- Incorporate design considerations such as signage into future development.

v.) Train Station

The Train Station is fairly isolated and lacks nighttime visibility. The station itself is in an open area, but is backed by a wooded area (regional park) that contains potential entrapment spots.

The station structure is covered in derogatory graffiti. While some participants did not find the contents (for example, one of the captions reads "Die Nigga") to be a significant issue, some felt it to be offensive. (For some people, graffiti can lend a strong message about "ownership" of an area. People who are the recipients of such messages; i.e. racial minorities, women, often report feeling threatened and sometimes reluctant to use a place where the message is that they are unwelcome or even hated.)

The primary concern seemed to be safety of youth who use this area at night; however, some survey respondents noted that they feel unsafe walking through areas when groups of youth are present. While a payphone is located across the highway, few other options for emergency support exist due to absence of people and service outlets in the area.

Suggestions arising from the audit walks to incorporate improvements into future development of this area included:

- Install lighting near or at the Train Station structure.
- Involve youth in plans to improve or develop this area. Suggestions include mural painting on the station structure to deter graffiti.
- Park benches placed strategically would encourage people to use specific areas, hopefully away from the wooded area. It would also encourage other people to use the area and provide a mix of ownership and interests.
- Install signage (perhaps in conjunction with park development) indicating ownership and emergency service numbers. (Signage might also contain other positive messages; for example, Mesachie Lake Central Park posted signs reading "Respect Our Parks".)
- Thin the adjacent wooded area slightly (perhaps by thinning low branches of selected conifers) to enhance visibility and reduce hiding/entrapment spots. If this is not a desired option, additional lighting might be considered.
- Install an additional streetlight on the corner of Fisher and CH Road.
- Put in a crosswalk from the store across the road, well-marked and indicated with signage.

Recommendations

7) That the CVRD, in cooperation with local businesses and organizations, request B.C. Tel to install an additional public telephone(s) within the Village area. Possible locations include the Cobble Hill Post Office, the Farmer's Institute Hall. Install a sign at or near the Cobblestone Inn to indicate the location of a public telephone inside the building.

8) That the CVRD incorporate lighting and design considerations noted in this report into future plans regarding Quarry Park, and that it explore measures to work in cooperation with E & N to make improvements to the Train Station and surrounding area.

9) That the Ministry of Transportation be requested to put in a crosswalk over Cobble Hill Road to the Train Station.

10) That the CVRD further explore with residents, elementary school personnel and School District 79, options to improve grounds security at existing elementary schools.

11) That the CVRD incorporate design considerations for signage to improve information about the area into future development plans for the Village area (refer to Section vi, Planning Considerations).

vi) Community Planning Considerations: Keeping It Safe

Maintaining and enhancing the current level of safety, and planning for improvements in some areas was a consideration in the Cobble Hill Safety Audit. As mentioned previously, discussion about measures to maintain or enhance safety were often balanced with considerations to preserve the rural character of the area.

The proposed concepts for mixed residential and commercial development near the Village core are considered to be a positive feature of the draft Local Area Plan.

This section will bring forward suggestions which arose during the audits with respect to planning for design and management of streets, roads, parking lots, commercial and residential areas. It will also bring forward suggestions which have been offered with respect to enhancing safety through education, awareness and building sense of community.

Community Planning and Design

12. Encourage location and design of buildings, streets, parks and open spaces that promotes public safety and security and accommodates a variety of lifestyles / mix of people (age, income, etc.) in provision of services and amenities (parks, open space, youth centre, etc.)

- a) Commercial and residential development should consider location, site and building design, lighting, landscaping, street and parking area design, which maximizes visibility, avoids creation of hiding and entrapment spots. Design suggestions to maintain a balance with respect to the area's rural character included low level lighting balanced between buildings and streets.
- b) Provision of adequate pedestrian paths / walkways with respect to location (including crossings), visibility, and accessibility for people with disabilities, strollers, will be an essential consideration for planning of commercial and residential development within the Village area and should be a component in all sizable residential developments.
- c) Encouraging a mix of people living in the Village means considering all age groups, incomes and abilities. Commercial and residential development should consider site and building design, provision of services (e.g., transit, medical needs) and amenities needed with respect to particular user groups. For example, seniors housing development would need to consider mobility needs such as transit and pedestrian walkways suitable for scooters, wheelchairs, and service needs such as medical services and supplies.

Planning for the needs of children and youth needs to be a priority. Youth activities will be important as the community grows and develops.

It was noted that presently there are no neighbourhood park/open space/ play areas within the Village core area and that plans for provision of open space (the C.V.R.D. has plans to obtain land for opens space/park in the Village area) would be a positive contribution.

The space behind the Cobble Hill Pub adjacent to the Post Office was also suggested as an ideal location for a small picnic area or tot lot. However, the viability of this particular space for such a use was noted as doubtful due to its private ownership and the existence of a septic field here.

The C.V.R.D. has plans to develop its Watson Street land for nature viewing. While this was considered to be a positive feature for the area, concerns were noted with respect to potential problems around its attractiveness as a gathering spot and vandalism for the park and adjacent areas. Attention to design and management to avoid problems will be important.

- d) Transit (and train) services should be planned to meet the current and future needs of residents. Some participants felt current location and timing of transit services does not meet needs of some people and that accessibility could be improved through adding another stop within the Village area. If for example, the community sees the accommodation of commuters to Duncan and Victoria as desirable, services should accommodate those schedules. (It should also be noted that lack of safe and accessible transportation limits people's ability to access support services and employment opportunities. Service providers have noted that teens are more likely to hitchhike to central areas when public transportation is not available.)

13) Promote community identity and sense of local ownership and control.

- Design suggestions included a gateway sign to the Village.
- Support and encourage community groups in the provision of community programs. The Farmer's Institute as a primary example of a central focus to the Village could be supported in its ability to provide activities and in improvements to its buildings and grounds.
- Promote Neighbourhood Watch, community policing (a local station was suggested to provide opportunities for community awareness and familiarity).

14) Promote local opportunities for information, education and awareness about safety issues, violence issues and support systems.

Suggestions included:

- education in schools on violence issues and wildlife safety.
- develop and promote avenues for information such as distribution and display of brochures and pamphlets in central locations, such as the Cobble Hill market or Farmer's Institute Hall; stickers with emergency numbers posted on mail boxes.
- promote local opportunities for presentations and seminars on violence issues. Suggested avenues included Town Hall meetings, Parent Advisory Groups.
- promote local opportunities for workshops/seminars, for example, on self-protection for women. This might be done in conjunction with existing groups such as local aerobics classes, parent groups, the Farmer's Institute, Arbutus Ridge.
- enhance and support communication and interaction between Skeleem Village and the community to increase knowledge and understanding of mutual needs and concerns both of the community at large and the residents of Skeleem..

Examples of Interest

Planning and Community Design Information

Cowichan Women Against Violence in partnership with the C.V.R.D., is developing a guide which will provide information and direction on safety considerations in planning and design of community environments.

Designing in Safety Features - a local example...

Valleyview Centre, located on the Trans Canada Highway at Cowichan Bay Road, has incorporated personal safety features into design and management of the centre. Buildings have been situated on the site to promote opportunities for natural surveillance from the highway; additional lighting has been planned for buildings and parking lots; additional windows were designed into office buildings to allow for visibility into parking lots; security staff for the site will provide escorts to parking lots for staff working at night.

Local Education and Information

Duncan/North Cowichan R.C.M.P. currently offers self-protection seminars for women. Kerry Park Recreation Centre has offered self defense workshops in the past and, pending possible extensions to its mandated service area, may possibly be able to offer opportunities in various locations in the South End. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks will provide information on wildlife safety to schools and community groups. MELP will do presentations to local community groups according to staff availability.

Information ideas from other areas...

The Hintonburg Community Association in Ottawa developed and distributed pamphlets encouraging citizens to respond to safety concerns. Their information included resources to report unkept property either private, business or City. They suggested residents participate by keeping their porch lights on and clearly mark their house or business addresses with large, easy to read numbers and lobby the City for clear, visible street signs.²

Private business participation in safety ...

Also in Ottawa - some businesses participate in a safety program by placing stickers in their windows which inform the public that if they feel unsafe, they can approach that business for help. They will be offered a safe place to wait, a phone call and drink of water.³

² Women's Action Centre Against Violence, *Women's Safety Audit Implementation Guide*, September, 1996, p. 34.

³ Ibid, p. 27.

3.2.2. PARKS, RURAL ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Highways, secondary roads and community parks were noted for safety concerns primarily due to their isolated nature. Women using or traveling through isolated areas are often acutely aware that should a threatening situation occur (examples included having their car break down on the highway at night, walking alone and encountering someone perceived as dangerous), they may have little or no chance of escaping an assault.

Women's descriptions of their experiences and sense of safety for these areas generally included a heightened sense of awareness and being on guard, coupled with a feeling of futility should an actual or perceived situation occur.

Women's awareness of their surroundings included wariness of who they might encounter with respect to cars passing by, other people on foot. For some women, traveling alone on foot was not an option at all, while others said that they did so despite their concerns. Similarly, traveling by car presents potential issues for women such as access to help should her car break down and having to be careful, even when someone stops to help.

While the primary safety issues for the more rural and isolated areas revolved around their isolated character, women often noted that isolation is a part of living in and using rural areas and that, in some cases, design solutions such as lighting and signage would play less of a role than for more urban areas.

Audits of areas noted for isolation included portions of rural roads and the Trans Canada Highway and for some community parks. Although Quarry Park / Cobble Hill Mountain was the only regional park cited by name, some survey respondents listed community parks in general as places where they would be concerned for their safety. The audits therefore included all developed parks in the area except Douglas Hill.

A brief visit was also made to an area just outside the Cobble Hill boundary, to a property which is commonly referred to as "the Quarry". While the property is privately-owned and not intended for public use or recreation, it is a well-used area and was identified for safety concerns. A detailed audit was not done, due to its ownership and location outside of Cobble Hill. However, it is recommended that this area receive attention with respect to public safety measures. A detailed audit should be conducted.

The following sections outline observations and comments for specific areas.

D) Trans Canada Highway

The primary safety concerns about the highway involve fear about being alone in a situation which would put a woman at risk of assault. For example, a woman whose car broke down on the highway after dark, any distance from an open business or public telephone, would be in a precarious situation. Carrying a cell phone would help in terms of calling for assistance,

but even during the time it takes to receive assistance, she would be aware of the potential for danger.

The most frequently noted factor was the distance between outlets that could be accessed in an emergency. Lack of public telephones in particular was noted. Between Cobble Hill and Duncan, there are several sections of highway that are very dark and isolated. With the exception of two restaurants and one gas station, currently no other businesses are open late at night. There are a number of pay phones between Cobble Hill and Duncan, located at Fisher Road and the highway, Cowichan Bay Road intersection, Payless near Koksilah Road, restaurant at Whippletree, Old Farm Market, Jolly Rancher Inn at Allenby intersection. However, as previously mentioned, these are felt to be too few and far between to be of significant help to a woman alone at night in her car on the side of the highway.

Suggestions for improvements included installing more public telephones along the highway and better lighting and signage to indicate their locations. The feasibility of location and servicing would need to be explored in more detail. Other suggestions for improving safety of women concerned about their safety in isolated areas and traveling along the highway included self-protection courses and programs, and exploring creative solutions that may exist in other areas. Examples of information and workshops have been noted previously for the Cobble Hill Village audit.

An example of an innovative program is “Cab Watch” - a partnership program developed in Winnipeg in which cab drivers are asked to be aware of safety issues and call for assistance when they see someone in need.

ii) Secondary Roads

Many areas of secondary roads in the study area are by their nature isolated. In doing safety audits of these areas and in talking with residents, there was a fair amount of uncertainty about what could be done in terms of physical design (for example, lighting, signage, public telephones) to enhance safety for women who need to travel these roads or who wish to use them on a recreational basis.

Generally, lighting was seen to be cost prohibitive and possibly conflicting to other residents in terms of maintaining the rural character of an area. However, lighting at intervals, and lighting at intersections was considered to be a worthwhile option to explore. As with safety concerns for women traveling the highway, measures to increase ability to protect oneself, such as self-defense courses were suggested. It was suggested that programs be local in nature and offered at places such as the Cobble Hill Hall and Arbutus Ridge.

In addition, similar to suggestions received for the Cobble Hill Village area, measures to enhance community and to bring about better awareness and support for women’s safety were suggested. An example of the latter included forming a neighbourhood walking group that would walk at set times during the day and evening that women could join. Design and delivery of information and programs should be community driven in order to meet the needs of local residents.

Recommendations

15) That the CVRD explore options for locations and request B.C. Tel to install additional public telephones along the Trans Canada Highway.

16) That the CVRD explore options with residents for additional streetlighting at intervals and at intersections of secondary roads in the Cobble Hill area, and that the CVRD request participation of MoTH in implementing solutions .

17) That the CVRD support and encourage local residents and community groups in exploring options for design and delivery of local community education and awareness programs, such as self defense workshops for women's safety.

18) That the CVRD support and encourage the development of local community initiatives that promote cooperative efforts between residents, businesses and community groups to improve women's and children's safety. Examples that have been noted in this report include programs such as "Cab Watch," Business Merchants Safety Assistance, Neighbourhood Porch Lights on programs.

iii) PARKS

Quarry Park

Quarry Park is located on the east side of Cobble Hill Mountain. This 23 acre park has been developed as a nature park with walking and horse trails. The CVRD has plans to install signage to improve legibility of the area at the park entrance on Empress Road. Recent clearing and placement of gravel in an area adjacent to the Train Station lot has been undertaken.

Quarry Park's intention as a nature park will affect the degree to which design measures for trails, picnic areas, signage, or lighting can be employed to enhance safety. However, the following observations and measures are offered as considerations for future development.

The main issues for an isolated area are legibility (knowing where you are and where you are going) and access to emergency services. Aspects that can be addressed are provision of information about the area's physical layout and where to go in an emergency. In addition, opportunities for casual surveillance will be important in terms of the park entrance.

1. The entrance to this park is fairly unclear, particularly to anyone who is not aware of its existence. The CVRD has plans to install a kiosk with map and this will greatly enhance legibility of this area. Maximum benefits would be obtained by placing signage at the corner of Empress and Cobble Hill Road, at the trail entrance near to the Train Station, and at the Empress Road entrance itself. If possible, signage should indicate telephone numbers to call for maintenance and emergency, and location of the nearest payphone.

2. While the Train Station and Cobble Hill Road are visible to someone standing in the graveled parking area, and in the trail area nearby, the reverse is not as clear. Since the lower park area may be used more intensively as a rule (this area is a known gathering spot for youth), visibility of that area is important to enhance opportunities for natural surveillance.

While the intent is to keep the area in its natural state to the greatest extent possible, lighting at or near the Train Station structure and perhaps at the Empress Road entrance, and minor thinning of vegetation in the lower area (perhaps trimming lower branches of trees would be sufficient) could be considered.

Manley Creek Park

This park is a well-developed nature park with a sign at the entrance and clearly defined trail system. It is well-maintained and has obviously received a great deal of care and attention. Due to its location at the end of Ratcliffe Road, the park and its entrance are quite isolated. Again design solutions would be limited in this case.

However, the washroom located at the entrance to the park is designed so that one walks through a maze-like structure to the entrance. The structure as it is designed presents opportunities for hiding and entrapment and feels quite unsafe. The CVRD no longer uses this design and may have plans to make changes here. This would be a positive step. The addition of a public telephone at the park entrance would also enhance safety.

Farnsworth Park

Farnsworth Park is located on Farnsworth Road between Christina Drive and Braithwaite. This is a small, neighbourhood-oriented park that has been developed with extensive involvement of the local community. Facilities include children's play equipment and paved basketball court and provide for a mix of age groups and activities. Much of the park is visible to houses from all sides, with the exception of portions of the wooded area, and for the most part is within hearing distance of surrounding residences.

Outside of the wooded area which intends to provide nature trails and viewing, safety aspects of design are positive to ideal. In any park or common space, safety hazards could be presented by a motivated offender combined with an unsupervised child or solitary person; however, considering the site, this park is an example of good design and management and few, if any, design improvements would be warranted to enhance safety in this park.

Botswain Park

Botswain Park, located in the Satellite Park subdivision area, is a two acre parcel developed with nature trails. It's location adjacent to the neighbourhood mail boxes and nearby homes contributes quite well to natural surveillance. While it is not visible from nearby homes, it is still within hearing distance. At the time it was visited, several cars passed through and stopped at the mail boxes.

Aspects of this park that may present safety concerns include:

- 1) The present parking area is screened from the road by vegetation, creating isolation and limiting visibility.
- 2) In combination with and addition to the above, three small access trails in and near the parking area provide potential movement predictors and hiding spots for a motivated offender.
- 3) The park entrances and parking area are not marked. Unless you are familiar with the area, it is difficult to find your way around.

Considering its intended use as a nature park, removal of vegetation to enhance safety is suggested only as a last option and should be supported by local residents. In the event that this would be a desirable option, suggestions would be to thin around the perimeter adjacent to Aros and Granfield Roads to increase visibility of the lower area and parking area.

The CVRD has plans to improve and develop this park which include an adventure playground/tot lot in the present parking area, and signage at the Aros Road entrance. These developments will enhance safety, particularly if adequate attention is given to maximizing opportunities for natural surveillance and accessibility.

The addition of a picnic table close to the main entrance, and further leveling of the main entrance would also provide better accessibility for people who are disabled and/or mobility impaired.

Recommendations

19) That CVRD Development Services explore the feasibility of implementing improvements for public safety through sensitive design for the parks noted in this section.

20) That future plans for development of parks in the region be undertaken with considerations for personal and public safety in location and design of parks with respect to layout and facilities, with attention to visibility, accessibility, and access to emergency services.

4.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Cobble Hill Safety Audit has entailed community consultation and site assessments to identify safety issues and concerns and provide information about solutions to maintain and enhance safety in the area. This report has attempted to bring forward those concerns and present solutions that balance safety considerations in terms of present conditions and future plans.

Levels and types of concerns for personal and public safety varied among survey respondents and discussion participants, as did aspects of community environments which were attributed to concerns, and solutions to increase safety and sense of safety. In addition to measures to improve physical design, solutions involved aspects of community development to enhance education and awareness, and delivery of various services and programs to address broader social issues of crime and violence.

4.1 This section will summarize recommendations that have been presented in previous sections, and bring forward recommendations which have arisen from surveys and discussions.

COBBLE HILL VILLAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

1) That the CVRD request the Ministry of Transportation and Highways to:

- *attend to road improvements for Heigh Street, explore solutions regarding the deep ditches on Holland Avenue and Watson/Hutchinson.*
- *explore solutions regarding improvements to Watson Street to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.*
- *repaint pedestrian crossing areas in the Village area.*
- *reduce speed limits within the Village area.*

2) That the CVRD Public Transit Committee be requested to register a request for improved transit service to the area and forward that request to the appropriate authorities.

3) That R.C.M.P. be requested to increase traffic surveillance and enforcement of speeding limits and drinking/driving in the Village area.*

4) That the CVRD support cooperative efforts with and between schools and RCMP to enhance awareness and promote solutions regarding speeding issues.

*An example of a community initiative to address speeding is the Speed Watch Program sponsored by Ladysmith Citizens on Patrol, R.C.M.P. and I.C.B.C., which uses volunteer efforts to monitor speeding.

7) That the CVRD, in cooperation with local businesses and organizations, request B.C. Tel to install an additional public telephone(s) within the Village area. Possible locations include the Cobble Hill Post Office, the Farmer's Institute Hall. Install a sign at or near the Cobblestone Inn to indicate the location of a public telephone inside the building.

8) That the CVRD incorporate lighting and design considerations noted in this report into future plans regarding Quarry Park, and that it explore measures to work in cooperation with E & N to make improvements to the Train Station and surrounding area.

9) That the Ministry of Transportation be requested to put in a crosswalk over Cobble Hill Road to the Train Station.

10) That the CVRD further explore with residents, elementary school personnel and School District 79, options to improve grounds security at existing elementary schools.

11) That the CVRD incorporate design considerations for signage to improve information about the area into future development plans for the Village area (refer to Section vi, Planning Considerations).

COBBLE HILL VILLAGE Community Planning and Design Recommendations

12. Encourage location and design of buildings, streets, parks and open spaces that promotes public safety and security and accommodates a variety of lifestyles / mix of people (age, income, etc.) in provision of services and amenities (parks, open space, youth centre, etc.)

a) Commercial and residential development should consider location, site and building design, lighting, landscaping, street and parking area design, which maximizes visibility, avoids creation of hiding and entrapment spots. Design suggestions to maintain a balance with respect to the area's rural character included low level lighting balanced between buildings and streets.

b) Provision of adequate pedestrian paths / walkways with respect to location (including crossings), visibility, and accessibility for people with disabilities, strollers, will be an essential consideration for planning of commercial and residential development within the Village area and should be a component in all sizable residential developments.

c) Commercial and residential development should consider site and building design, provision of services (e.g., transit, medical needs) and amenities needed with respect to particular user groups. For example, seniors housing development would need to consider mobility needs such as transit and pedestrian walkways suitable for scooters, wheelchairs, and service needs such as medical services and supplies.

Planning for the needs of children and youth needs to be a priority. Youth activities will be important as the community grows and develops. It was noted that presently there are no neighbourhood park/open space/ play areas within the Village core area and that plans for provision of open space (the C.V.R.D. has plans to obtain land for opens space/park in the Village area) would be a positive contribution.

The space behind the Cobble Hill Pub adjacent to the Post Office was also suggested as an ideal location for a small picnic area or tot lot. However, the viability of this particular space for such a use was noted as doubtful due to its private ownership and the existence of a septic field here.

The C.V.R.D. has plans to develop its Watson Street land for nature viewing. While this was considered to be a positive feature for the area, concerns were noted with respect to potential problems around its attractiveness as a gathering spot and vandalism for the park and adjacent areas. Attention to design and management to avoid problems will be important.

d) Transit (and train) services should be planned to meet the current and future needs of residents.

13) Promote community identity and sense of local ownership and control.

- Design suggestions included a gateway sign to the Village.
- Support and encourage community groups in the provision of community programs. The Farmer's Institute as a primary example of a central focus to the Village could be supported in its ability to provide activities and in improvements to its buildings and grounds.
- Promote Neighbourhood Watch, community policing (a local station was suggested to provide opportunities for community awareness and familiarity).

14) Promote and support local opportunities for information, education and awareness about safety issues, violence issues and support systems.

- education in schools on violence issues and wildlife safety.
- develop and promote avenues for information such as distribution and display of brochures and pamphlets in central locations, such as the Cobble Hill market or Farmer's Institute Hall; stickers with emergency numbers posted on mail boxes.
- promote local opportunities for presentations and seminars on violence issues. Suggested avenues included Town Hall meetings, Parent Advisory Groups.
- promote local opportunities for workshops/seminars, for example, on self-protection for women. This might be done in conjunction with existing groups such as local aerobics classes, parent groups, the Farmer's Institute, Arbutus Ridge.
- enhance and support communication and interaction between Skeleem Village and the community to increase knowledge and understanding of mutual needs and concerns both of the community at large and the residents of Skeleem..

HIGHWAYS AND SECONDARY ROADS RECOMMENDATIONS

15) That the CVRD explore options for locations and request B.C. Tel to install additional public telephones along the Trans Canada Highway.

16) That the CVRD explore options with residents for additional streetlighting at intervals and at intersections of secondary roads in the Cobble Hill area, and that the CVRD request participation of MoTH in implementing solutions .

17) That the CVRD support and encourage local residents and community groups in exploring options for design and delivery of local community education and awareness programs, such as self defense workshops for women's safety.

18) That the CVRD support and encourage the development of local community initiatives that promote cooperative efforts between residents, businesses and community groups to improve women's and children's safety. Examples that have been noted in this report include programs such as "Cab Watch," Business Merchants Safety Assistance, Neighbourhood Porch Lights on programs.

PARKS RECOMMENDATIONS

19) That CVRD Development Services explore the feasibility of implementing improvements for public safety through sensitive design for the parks noted in this section.

20) That future plans for development of parks in the region be undertaken with considerations for personal and public safety in location and design of parks with respect to layout and facilities, with attention to visibility, accessibility, and access to emergency services.

4.2. OTHER

Concerns and recommendations that were mentioned in surveys and discussions but not addressed in detail during audit walks include the following:

i) Community Education and Awareness

Increase awareness and understanding of violence issues in general and particularly for youth. Increase awareness of the community with respect to positive activities of youth.

Suggested avenues included cooperative efforts between community groups, police and schools to provide education in schools.

ii) Community Support Services and Activities

Increase availability of support services in the South End for women and children experiencing violence in the home, particularly with respect to services that support women's ability to sustain home and family after leaving an abusive relationship.

Increase availability of programs and activities for youth. Suggested avenues included planning for a youth centre in the Cobble Hill area.

iii) Security/Policing/Law Enforcement

Explore options to make 911 services more accessible (more localized response).

Continue and where possible, enhance support to R.C.M.P. and South Cowichan Community Police Advisory Council in design and delivery of public safety programs, particularly with respect to youth activities, domestic assaults, and monitoring and enforcement of traffic safety.

Encourage residents to post house numbers to be clearly visible from the street to enhance emergency response.

iv) Workplace Safety

Women who work out of the home expressed concerns related to being at work and about traveling to and from work. Suggestions to improve safety in the workplace included implementing safety programs, security measures such as alarms and police response. Avenues should be explored for cooperative efforts of planning departments, labour organizations and private businesses.

v) By-law Enforcement

Enhance efforts to enforce dog by-laws and to educate the public about regulations governing control of dogs.

vi) Safety Audits

Survey respondents and discussion participants identified places and aspects of places that were not included for site specific audits, due to time limitations of this project. These

included Cherry Point, beaches, Douglas Hill, portions and aspects of secondary roads and highways.

Safety Audits should not be viewed as a one time event, but rather an ongoing process that allows people to provide input and recommendations regarding safety concerns.

Further investigation with respect to these areas could be done at a later date with the assistance of the Safety Audit Project; it may also be done by residents themselves. Cowichan Women Against Violence will be developing a Safety Audit kit that can be used by community and neighbourhood groups, which will be available in late 1997.

4.3 OUTCOMES

The Cobble Hill Safety Audit Project has received a great deal of assistance and support from community residents, businesses, community organizations, regional planners and RCMP. In addition to this assistance and support, the community has already begun to assume responsibility and take action for safety.

1. A violence prevention support group with students of Frances Kelsey who reside in Mill Bay-Malahat, Cobble Hill, Shawnigan and other areas, was set up with the assistance of Somenos Children's Program. There has also been interest by student(s) to develop a similar program at Cowichan Secondary.
2. With direction and assistance from regional planners and R.C.M.P., Valleyview Centre, which is currently under construction, has incorporated design elements and management strategies for safety into the centre. A safety audit will be conducted on the centre in September.
3. Interest in and requests from community individuals and committees for information and/or presentations on violence issues with respect to children and youth, women, seniors .
4. Offers and assistance to provide space in local community papers, newsletters and school newsletters for information on violence prevention services and the safety audit project has raised awareness and provided information about violence prevention services. MANY THANKS!
5. South Cowichan Police Advisory Committee has reviewed the draft report and has identified several areas of interest re: the committee and projects it can undertake and that will be taken to a public meeting in the fall.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

"Preventing acts of public violence calls for a variety of approaches. These approaches should modify physical and social environments, not just personal behaviour. Solutions need to be based on enhanced communities, not fortified privacy."
(Guelph City Council, 1991)

This report has outlined concerns and solutions put forward by area residents, and has provided information on options that may be useful.

Implementation of solutions to improve safety often present challenges that include budgets, the need for coordination and volunteer efforts, and for some recommendations, the need to further explore feasibility.

Implementation of solutions in other areas has been achieved through prioritizing actions which begin with small, achievable steps that fit within current budgets and organizational frameworks. For example, community groups often have resources for education and awareness and can be asked to provide presentations and seminars for schools and community organizations.

Other solutions are more long term in nature and could require significant expenditures and therefore, planning and prioritizing of budgets. Many of the recommendations in this report present the need for planning of long term solutions, and will be achieved only with cooperation and coordination between the CVRD and other levels of government, community residents and organizations.

This draft report is being sent out to audit participants for review and further input as to what these priorities should be and what steps should be taken to achieve them. The final report will incorporate comments and suggestions for implementation.

APPENDIX 1 **SELECTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

- Using definitions from the Criminal Code of Canada, one out of every two women in Canada since the age of 16 has been physically or sexually assaulted by a man at least once.
- Most assaults on women are perpetrated by someone known to them. One in three BC women is assaulted by her husband or partner. However,
- An estimated 2.5 million Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual assault by a stranger. Many assaults take place in the victim's home and homes of people known to them; however, about 68% of stranger assaults occur in public places, almost one third in streets or parking lots.
- Only about 6% of sexual assaults are ever reported to police. Of these only about 16% make it to court.

Of women in the following situations:

- 55% are worried about walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark,
- 76% are worried about waiting for or using public transportation after dark,
- 83% are worried about walking alone to their car in a parking garage,
- 40% are worried about being home alone at night.
- Women are eight times more likely to forego an evening activity due to concerns for their safety
- About one half of women do not use public transit or parking garages due to concerns for their safety.
- Women are twice as likely as men to carry something to defend themselves
- About two thirds of women who are fearful of walking alone after dark say they would do so if they felt safer.

(Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993)

Between 1994 - 1997, Somenos Transition House accommodated about 6,000 bed-stays for women and children.

On average, the WAVAW crisis line receives about 800 to 1,000 calls per year.

(Cowichan Women Against Violence, 1997)

APPENDIX 2 SAFETY FACTORS AND CHECKLIST ITEMS

General Impressions and Overall Design

Is it easy to find your way around this area?

Is the area (building) accessible? Is it served by transit?

Would you know where to go for help? How accessible is help?

Are there signs, for example, indicating how to access emergency services?

Isolation

Are there many people around the area?

Do the surrounding land uses encourage people to be there?

Problems include being in a place where there is no one around that would hear a call for help, or little prospect of getting to help on foot. Factors associated with isolation include:

- absence of people around the area - residents and particular user groups, women
- inadequate access to emergency services, for example, public telephones and signage which provides direction and information.
- vacant buildings as well as spaces that are adequately lit, or provided with security.
- building design that does not contribute to surveillance of parking lots, parks and paths.

Lighting

Is the lighting bright enough, even and in good repair?

Are walkways, directional signs or maps sufficiently illuminated?

Is lighting obstructed by trees or bushes?

Would you be able to identify someone from a distance?

Lighting is essential both in day and at night, to see and be seen, particularly for pedestrians. Many areas may be lit for motorists, but not for people walking through them. Problems include: not being able to identify someone from a distance., not being able to see an adequate distance or into potential hiding areas.

Sightlines, Movement Predictors/Entrapment Sites

Are you able to see clearly what is up ahead?

Are there small, confined areas where you (or others) could be hidden from view?

How easy would it be to get away if you were threatened?

Movement predictors are paths or routes where a potential attacker can predict a person's movement, and which offer no alternative for a person to escape. Entrapment spots are offered by small, confined, often isolated areas, in and around buildings, including entrance ways, storage buildings, rooms, washrooms, elevators, vacant buildings, car lots.

People need to be able to see far enough ahead to anticipate potential problems/danger. Areas where sightlines may be a problem are pathways, trails, tunnels, hallways, stairways, building entrances and exits. Obstructions to sightlines include:

- vegetative cover and bush that obstruct a person's ability to see what is ahead.
- visual barriers such as high, solid fences.
- sharp corners in halls and stairways.
- recessed entrances and exits.

Maintenance

What is the level of maintenance in the area?

Does it feel cared for or abandoned?

Is there graffiti or vandalism present?

Maintenance of facilities such as sidewalks is essential for safety; maintenance of buildings and grounds also contributes to a sense of ownership of space. If a place is littered with garbage or graffiti (especially racist and other derogatory messages) it presents a message that it is not safe for some people to be. It is important to have clear responsibility for maintenance of places, as well as information for people to report problems.

Signage

Are there signs or other information that tell you about the area?

Can they be seen and read easily?

Signage is necessary for people to know where they are and where they are going. It can also provide essential information about accessing emergency services or public facilities, and can lend messages about an area's ownership, intended use, and hazards. Directional and other information is needed for people who may not be familiar with an area and for people who do not speak English, have a disability or are visually impaired.

APPENDIX 3 - SURVEY RESULTS

50 surveys returned.

Respondents ages range from 15 to 75.

Approximately one third of respondents have children at home.

Concern for safety sometimes or often - By % of total respondents

Place	Often	Sometimes	Total	(Females)
Home	8.3	43.7	52	57
Work	6	23	29	20
Public Places	6	60	66	71

Experience and worry about crime/violence by type - By % of total respondents

	Experienced	Worried About	(Females)
Theft	21	69	75
Verbal Attack	29	21	23
Physical Assault	8	54	57
Sexual Assault	6	44	51
Harassment	17	29	30

Experience and Worry about crime/violence by type and age - By % of total respondents

	18-24		25-39		40-55		56+	
	E	W	E	W	E	W	E	W
Theft	13	69	20	70	45	73	0	64
Phys. Assault	19	75	0	50	9	64	0	18
Sexual Assault	6	56	20	30	0	64	0	18
Harassment	31	44	10	30	18	27	0	9
Verbal Attack	50	25	40	20	9	27	9	9

Other: Youth vandalism, animals (bears, cougars), home invasions

Factors that affect personal safety - By age and % of respondents

	% All	% Females	15-24	25-39	40-55	56+
Attitudes about women	33	40	30	30	75	9
Age	25	26	40	10	0	45
Drugs/alcohol	25	30	30	40	50	9
Cultural beliefs	10	10	10	10	12	9
Income	8.3	10	10	10	11	9
Job	8.3	7.5	10	10	11	0
Racism	6	5	10	0	0	9
Health	6	7.5	10	10	0	9
Disability	4	5	10	0	0	9
Marital status	2	2.5	10	0	0	0

Places where safety is a concern - By Number of Responses

Places where safety is a concern	AT NIGHT # Responses	IN THE DAY # Responses	TOTAL
General Isolated areas, streets, roads (parks, alone, unfamiliar areas, parking lots, highways, roads)	19	9	19
Specific Isolated areas: Train Station, Braithwaite area, Braithwaite/Farnsworth; Shawnigan Road, Beaches, Cherry Point, Telegraph Road, Cobble Hill Mountain	10	3	13
Cobble Hill Village areas named (school areas, Train Station, main streets, post office, home near Skeleem)	3	2	5
Where groups of teens are		1	1
Highway due to traffic	1	1	2
Other: Duncan, Cowichan Bay	3	1	4
Home	2	2	4

Aspects of places that cause concern - By number of responses

Aspects of Places that cause concern	# Responses
Darkness/poor lighting	11
Isolation/lack of people	8
People perceived as threatening (e.g.s., drinking people, rowdy people, reports of prowlars, groups of teens, people with head injuries)	12
Animals (dogs, wildlife)	3
Traffic/Speeding cars (Holland, Garland)	2

Limitations to Activities / Self - By % of total respondents

Limits to Activities	%
% of respondents who limit their activities due to concerns	40
Don't walk or go out alone at night	55
Stay away from certain areas, go out with a friend, carry personal alarm, pepper spray, cell phone, stay at home to protect property, do go out alone in the day	60

Limitations to Children's Activities - By % of total respondents

Limits to Children's Activities	%
Respondents with children who limit their activities	86
Methods noted: Do regular phone checkins, Drive children to places Don't let them go out of the yard alone; Don't let them go alone between portables / school	45

Solutions Noted to improve safety - By % of total respondents

Solutions to improve safety	% All	% Female only
Security (home, work and public places) (Policing, law enforcement, legal/justice/offender consequences/ neighbourhood and community measures)	48	51
Community Design and Management	31	37
Lighting (esp. roads, parking lots)	19	23
Other (signage, payphones, trim vegetation)	12	14
Home security, self awareness and defense)	12	14

Solutions to improve Safety in Public Places - By number of responses

	# Responses
Lighting	6
Personal security measures (self defense, whistle, go out with friends)	5
More pay phones	1
More police presence (speed checks, security); tougher laws	5
Community, neighbourhood involvement, awareness	3

Solutions to improve Safety at Home - By number of responses

	# Responses
Streetlights	2
Laws, Policing (more, faster response); local 911 response	6
Home security	4
Community response (neighbourhood watch, other)	3

Solutions to improve safety at work - By number of responses

	# Responses
Emergency alert button	1
More police presence	2
Safety watch, work programs	4
Alarms systems	2

APPENDIX 4

COBBLE HILL SAFETY AUDIT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your Age _____ Gender: Female _____ Male _____

2. Your work _____ home _____ out of home _____ attend school / college _____

3. How long have you lived/worked in Cobble Hill? _____

4. Do you have children at home? yes _____ no _____

5. Are you ever concerned for your safety
At home _____ often _____ sometimes _____ never _____
At work _____ often _____ sometimes _____ never _____
Public places _____ often _____ sometimes _____ never _____

6. Have you ever experienced or are you ever worried about any of the following in your community? (Never, sometimes, often?)

Table with 3 columns: Item, Experienced, Worried about. Rows include Theft/robbery, Physical Assault, Sexual Assault, Harassment/Stalking, Verbal Attack, and Other.

7. Please name places in your community where you would feel concerned for your safety at night? _____

in the day? _____

8. What is it about these places that makes them feel unsafe? _____

9. Do you feel your safety is affected by any of the following?

- Income / economic conditions, Job/Occupation, Marital status, Disability, Racism, Drugs/ Alcohol, Cultural beliefs / attitudes, Age, Health, Sexual orientation, People's attitudes about women generally

Other _____

APPENDIX 4 - QUESTIONNAIRE CONTINUED

10. Do you ever restrict your activities due to concerns for your personal safety?
YES _____ NO _____

If yes, how? (eg., not going out at night, stay away from certain areas, carry personal alarm, etc.)

11. Do you ever restrict your children's' activities due to concerns around safety?
YES _____ NO _____

If yes, how? (eg., don't let them go out alone, do phone check-ins, etc.)

12. Please name places where you feel safe in your community

at night? _____

in the day? _____

13. What would help you to feel safer in your community?

At home _____

At work _____

In public places _____

COMMENTS:

