



Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Program

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Regional Community Safety Action Proposed Work Plan and Budget 2007

Introduction

Safer Futures is pleased to provide background regarding our community safety work with the CVRD, outline our assistance and support to the regional Community Safety Advisory Committee, and suggest a framework and budget for work during the remainder of 2007 (March to December).

Background

Since 1996, Safer Futures has worked in partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District and its Community Safety Advisory Committee in conducting community audits and safer community planning processes, including:

- Conducting safety audits to assess safety issues and define solutions
- Conducting research and data gathering and preparation of comprehensive reports on trends and indicators
- Developing community partnerships to address solutions for community programming and resources
- 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
- Working with planners on policy and guidelines development
- Conducting specialized initiatives for community safety
- Sharing information about this work with many other communities around the province.

This work has resulted in improvements to physical infrastructure, community programming, and long term planning policies. Evaluations have confirmed a range of outcomes including increased awareness, community ownership and involvement; increased awareness and responsiveness to social / safety issues; interdepartmental coordination and communication. In addition, safety audits have been a “jumping off” point for other projects (i.e. James St project). Other important spin-offs of this work have included attraction of project and program resources such as three youth violence prevention initiatives and a drug prevention research and development.

Working with the CSAC

The format offered by the CSAC has been key. CSAC is a multi-sectoral committee that advises the CVRD on community safety issues of regional, inter-municipal, and inter-agency importance and it has a lead role in providing advice and support to safer communities initiatives across the region. The added value of the CSAC is the impetus

that is created through its collaborative approach. I.e., members are encouraged to act upon the information they receive through their own agencies and organizations.

The structure and participation on CSAC has fostered involvement in and initiated a broader discussion in the Cowichan region about the fundamental quality of life issues that affect personal and public safety – like public transit, community design, recreation and housing.

During 2006, the CSAC's more direct involvement in various activities such as undertaking neighbourhood safety audits, supporting the creation of recreational youth outreach worker positions, examining youth and panhandling issues, researching and advocating for affordable and accessible transit, and developing a draft community safety action plan has received strong support and guidance from Safer Futures. Safer Futures has been able to offer such support over the years due to the project dollars they have pursued and received through a variety of sources.

CSAC Action Plan

During 2006, the Community Safety Advisory Committee reviewed the breadth of safety work achieved in the region and developed a draft action plan (refer Appendix A). The plan builds on work completed over the last decade in the area of planning for safer communities, and identifies next steps for addressing community health and safety in the region. It is still in its development stages and has yet to be adopted by the Board.

The 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. *The successful implementation of these actions requires the support, cooperation and collaboration among multiple sectors (community organizations, police, business, government, and citizens).*

These actions relate to four essential building blocks that as a whole create safer, healthier communities. They are: Safe and accessible design; Healthy and strong neighbourhoods; Policy and guidance; and Coordinated actions.

The Community Safety Advisory Committee has elected to work on one building block at a time, further developing recommendations and next steps for each one. As a first

Safe and accessible design

Reducing vulnerability of individuals, their homes and neighbourhoods to crime and violence and enhance sense of safety and accessibility.

Healthy and Strong Neighbourhoods

Addressing root issues of violence, changing attitudes and behaviours that allow violence to occur, and improving the quality of life of residents.

Policy and guidance

Encouraging development and design that incorporate needs for safety and accessibility through linking community safety goals with land use, economic, transportation, and social planning, and through making decision making processes more accessible to those who experience barriers to participation.

Coordinated actions

Promoting and fostering community involvement and collaboration and working across geographical and sectoral boundaries to connect neighbourhoods and communities, and the policies that guide planning and development.

step, CSAC will be developing a Cowichan Region ‘safety lens’ under the building block of Policy and guidance. 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.

Safer Futures Staffing and Services

Moving the important agenda and plans of the CSAC forward will require staffing and expertise not currently provided within the staffing structures of the CVRD. Safer Futures is able to provide this much needed assistance and expertise during 2007, specifically to provide research and coordination services to the CSAC to facilitate the development and progress of their action plan and development of priorities identified. This work is estimated to involve an average of twenty hours per week over eight months during 2007.

We have provided a detailed budget which follows and thank the Board for their consideration.

Projected Budget 2007 – Safer Futures Assistance to CSAC

Item	Budget
Personnel	\$22,000
Materials and Office Supplies	\$500
Overhead (office space, utilities, computer equipment, maintenance, telephone, internet)	\$2400
Staff Travel	\$100
Bookkeeping / administration	N/a
Total	\$25,000

APPENDIX A:

Overview of Community Safety Action Plan – DRAFT ONLY (October 2006)

The Cowichan Community Health and Safety Action Plan is a draft document belonging to the CVRD's Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC). The plan builds on work completed over the last decade in the area of planning for safer communities, and identifies next steps for addressing community health and safety in the region. It has yet to be adopted by the Board.

The Action Plan is modeled after the safer communities approach applied in jurisdictions around the world. This approach 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 interconnected, some examples are poverty, lack of access to training and employment, lack of support for young families, inadequate housing, and discrimination. In order to target these root causes, it is recognized that considerations about personal and public safety must be incorporated into every aspect of the physical, social, and economic environment. This can be realized through community planning and development processes, as well as decision-making and policy development.

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

The 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. The successful implementation of these actions requires the support, cooperation and collaboration among multiple sectors (community organizations, police, business, government, and citizens). Everyone has a role to play in creating safer, healthier communities.

These actions relate to four essential building blocks that as a whole create safer, healthier communities. They are:

1. Safe and accessible design;
2. Healthy and strong neighbourhoods;
3. Policy and guidance; and
4. Coordinated actions.

The Community Safety Advisory Committee has decided to work on one building block at a time, further developing recommendations and next steps for each one. As a first step, CSAC will be developing a Cowichan Region 'safety lens' under the building block of *Policy and guidance*. 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. The 'safety lens' will be a simple checklist and awareness-building tool.

APPENDIX B:



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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 and 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 from 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.