

### City Centre Response Plan

Like all municipalities, Surrey is facing increased challenges related to homelessness, mental health, and substance use. When all of these issues are present addressing the needs of our most vulnerable people creates both public health and public safety challenges. These individuals are easily preyed upon by those willing to exploit their vulnerable situation and their dependency.

In Surrey these issues play out daily in our City Centre (in particular on 135A Street between 106 and 108 Avenues and the surrounding neighbourhood). These issues are especially complex and require integrated solutions in keeping with the priorities of our Public Safety Strategy.

#### *Increasing Challenges*

Police, Fire, Bylaw and Ambulance services are all seeing increased calls for service in the City Centre area.

- RCMP: In 2015, the four block area between 132 Street and King George Boulevard (east and west) and 108 Avenue and 104 Ave (north and south) generated 5812 calls for service from RCMP. For the 2016 year-to-date (Jan – Oct) the RCMP responded to 5132 calls for service in this area.
- Surrey Fire Service has seen a significant increase in calls for service from 945 in 2015 to 1445 so far in 2016.
- Surrey Bylaw Officers also attend the area daily and have the tents taken down and any garbage removed. Like other front line services, they have made a significant commitment to responding to the area.
- BC Ambulance also reports a significant increase in their calls for service in the area. In 2015 they reported 646 calls for service. To date in 2016 that number has increased to 1120.

#### *Increased Response*

The City is implementing a 3 pronged City Centre Response Plan, which supports the commitment in the Public Safety Strategy to responding to unique challenges within our neighborhoods. The Plan includes (1) emergency housing, (2) enhanced service presence through a 3 year pilot Surrey Outreach Team, and (3) consultation to create a long term plan for future action through a new City Centre Public Safety Advisory Committee.

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This initiative is a 3 year pilot program to step up the response to an urgent area of need in the city. The pilot is a partnership between Surrey RCMP and City of Surrey.

### **1. Emergency Housing First**

- 40 additional low barrier shelter beds at 14716 104 Avenue for the winter months – with transition support to move people into permanent housing and stable support.
- 95 extreme weather shelter mats (7pm – 7am when extreme weather is declared) across Surrey. Approval of 10660 City Parkway as an Extreme Weather Response Shelter has more than doubled the number of places in City Centre.

### **2. Enhanced Service Presence Pilot**

- Surrey Outreach Team for 135A Street area will be made up of 12 RCMP officers and 4 Bylaws officers.
- Dedicated team will focus on building relationships and trust with the vulnerable people in the area, assisting with connections to services, and increasing the safety of those who live and work in the area.
- Stepped up enforcement focused on predatory chronic offenders that victimize those with mental health and substance use issues.
- Starts December 7, 2016 with RCMP beginning to reach out to the local neighbourhood.
- Temporary office to open at 10681 135A Street in early 2017, at which time the Surrey Outreach Team will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### **3. City Centre Public Safety Advisory Committee**

- Experts, community members and City staff will come together to consider multiple perspectives on emerging challenges in the City Centre and draft an Action Plan for Mayor and Council.
- Action Plan will focus on longer term opportunities to improve public safety, health and social wellbeing with an emphasis on the persistent social challenges present on 135A Street and the surrounding neighbourhood.