

# Corporate Report

NO: R217

COUNCIL DATE: July 26, 2004



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## REGULAR COUNCIL

**TO:** Mayor & Council                      **DATE:** July 6, 2004  
**FROM:** General Manager, Planning and Development    **FILE:** 4815-20  
**SUBJECT:** Surrey Homelessness Plan – Delegation to Council-In-Committee

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Receive the Surrey Homelessness Plan as information and refer it to staff as input to the development of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents in the area of housing and homelessness;
3. Direct staff to provide a further report to Council on the recommendations in the Surrey Homelessness Plan, upon completion of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents, expected in early 2005;
4. Authorize the on-going participation of the Social Planner in the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce; and
5. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and Council's resolution to the representatives that appeared before Council on behalf of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce.

## INTENT

This report provides information, regarding the Surrey Homelessness Plan that was presented to Council-in-Committee by representatives of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce earlier this year.

## BACKGROUND

At the Council-in-Committee meeting on January 19, 2004, Council received as a delegation, Annie McKittrick of Surrey Social Futures Society and John Stark of John Talbot & Associates, on behalf of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce. The delegation provided Council with a copy of the Surrey Homelessness Plan (the "Plan") and made a presentation that summarized the contents of the Plan and recommended actions contained within the Plan. A copy of the presentation material entitled "Surrey Homelessness Plan: An Overview" is attached as Appendix I to this report. The delegation requested that Council:

- Officially endorse the Plan;

- Continue to support staff and Council involvement in the Plan and its implementation;
- Continue to support initiatives to address homelessness in Surrey; and
- Work with other levels of government to realize the recommended actions as contained in the Plan. In this respect, the delegation verbally requested that Council host a meeting with senior levels of government to discuss implementation of the recommended actions in the Plan.

Council requested that the Planning and Development Department bring forward a report on the Plan and its recommendations.

## **DISCUSSION**

- **The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce**

The Plan is the result of three years of work by the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce. The Taskforce involves a diverse group representing over 30 community agencies and residents concerned about the growing visibility and number of homeless persons in the City and people at-risk of homelessness. The number of groups participating on the Taskforce continues to grow as awareness of the Taskforce increases. Much of the success of the Taskforce can be attributed to the support provided by both Surrey Social Futures and the consultants John Talbot & Associates. With the establishment of the Taskforce the community has been able to better leverage local resources and better respond to needs and opportunities in a coordinated and timely manner.

- **Surrey Homelessness Plan based on a Framework of Housing, Income and Support Services**

The Taskforce estimates that between 200 and 250 people are absolutely homeless (with no shelter) in Surrey on any given day and a further 24,110 people or 8,535 households are at-risk of becoming homeless, primarily due to very low income, high cost of housing and lack of support services. Many homeless persons are affected by mental illness, addiction, disability and poverty, conditions that make it very difficult for many to rebuild their lives without some assistance.

Similar to the Regional Homelessness Plan, the Surrey Homelessness Plan addresses three key interrelated elements: income, housing and support services. The Plan advocates that a continuum of services in each of these areas can assist individuals in moving from minimal subsistence levels to regaining self-sufficiency and independence. The Plan includes an inventory of services currently available to assist homeless persons in each of the three areas. It contains an analysis of the gaps and priority needs in each area and sets out recommended actions. The recommended actions focus on the involvement of all levels of government and community stakeholders in achieving the Plan.

The next step in the process for the Taskforce is the development of an Implementation/Action Plan.

- **City of Surrey has limited mandate and resources to address homelessness**

The City, like other local governments, has a very limited mandate and resources to mitigate and/or prevent homelessness. The primary responsibility and mandate for addressing homelessness rests with the other levels of

government. A significant concern of staff, relative not only to the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce, but other community-based processes, is that while the City tends to be well represented at local issue tables/meetings, representatives from the provincial and federal governments, who are directly mandated to address these social services areas, are typically not involved. Participation by representatives of the other levels of government at the Taskforce level would more directly focus the resolution of these issues at the levels of government that are mandated and resourced to address such issues.

## • Plan for Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents

In April 2004, Council approved a Terms of Reference for the preparation of a Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents. The Terms of Reference approved by Council provide for the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents to focus on five key social areas considered critical to the social well-being of Surrey residents including:

- Housing and Homelessness
- Substance Abuse/Addiction
- Crime/Public Safety
- Children and Youth
- Community Development and Diversity

Once completed the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents will assist the City in making decisions and taking actions with respect to protecting and enhancing the social well-being of the City's residents in these general areas. The Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents will set the framework for the City's response to matters relating to all of the identified areas, including homelessness. Taking action in advance of the development of the policy framework and broader perspective that will be provided by the completed Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents, could be considered to be premature.

The information provided in the Surrey Homelessness Plan should be considered in developing the homelessness and housing component of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents. On this basis, it is recommended that Council receive the Surrey Homelessness Plan as information and refer this Homelessness Plan to staff as input into the development of the City's Plan for the Social Well-being of Surrey Residents. It is further recommended that Council direct that staff bring forward a further report to Council on the recommendations contained in the Surrey Homelessness Plan following the completion of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents. It is anticipated that the City Plan will be completed in early 2005.

At the same time it is appropriate and helpful for staff to continue to participate in the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce, as was requested by the delegation in their presentation to Council.

### CONCLUSION

At the January 19, 2004 meeting of Council-in Committee, representatives from the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce presented an overview of the recently completed Surrey Homelessness Plan. The Taskforce requested that Council undertake specific actions to support the Plan. Council referred the matter to staff for a report. Based on the contents of this report, it is recommended that Council:

1. Receive the Surrey Homelessness Plan as information and refer it to staff as input to the development of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents in the area of housing and homelessness;
2. Direct staff to provide a further report to Council on the recommendations in the Surrey Homelessness Plan upon completion of the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents, expected in early 2005;
3. Authorize the on-going participation of the Social Planner in the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce; and

4. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and Council's resolution to the representatives that appeared before Council on behalf of the Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce.

Murray Dinwoodie  
General Manager  
Planning and Development

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Attachment

Appendix I Surrey Homelessness Plan: An Overview

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