

In the Summer of 2005, two tragic incidents occurred in Bear Creek Park. Two elderly men, Mewa Singh Bains and Shingara Thandi, were assaulted in the Pavilion washroom during peak afternoon hours on two successive days, and later passed away in hospital. Following this, the City's senior management instituted contracted private security patrols of Bear Creek Park and initiated a comprehensive security review for the site.

An Integrated Service Team was struck to carry out a Security Review of Bear Creek Park. The Team included members of the following departments:

- RCMP
- By-Law Enforcement
- Parks, Recreation and Culture
- Risk Management

DISCUSSION

Outline of Security Review

Consultation with Stakeholders

The Task Force met on September 29, 2005, with representatives of the Bear Creek seniors to listen to the concerns of their community, to identify and explain the actions taken to date by the City and to brainstorm some potential initiatives that would meet community expectations on the need for improvements for public safety in the park. Minutes of this meeting are attached as Appendix 1.

Other park stakeholders were contacted in an effort to determine any concerns that their group/organization might have about existing security measures at the park and to solicit comments and suggestions about ways to improve park security. A summary of the survey responses is attached in Appendix 2.

CPTED Security Audit

A thorough Security Audit of key areas of the park was carried out by RCMP, By-laws and Parks staff, several of whom have advanced training (Level 2) and experience in *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED). The overall findings of the CPTED Security Audit was that the park is extremely well used, and that the design of the park does not contribute in any substantial way to risks to public safety. The Audit contained numerous modest recommendations for improvements; these are outlined in Appendix 3.

Comparison of Security Measures at Other Parks

A review was carried out of security measures in place at other outdoor park areas in the Lower Mainland. With the exception of Stanley Park in Vancouver, which has a horse-mounted patrol of City police, staff could find no parks where security patrols are used on a routine basis. For the most part, security patrols are used only on a time-durated basis to deal with special events, protection of construction projects, or

during times of expected vandalism, such as on Halloween night in City-owned cemeteries.

Security Measures Introduced Prior To The Incident

It must be noted that Bear Creek Park has had considerable amenity development and investment in infrastructure upgrades over the last few years. During the upgrades, CPTED principles have been used in developing the designs for the capital improvements. These upgrades have included:

- Re-development and enlargement of the Surrey Arts Centre;
- Re-configuration and enlargement of the main parking lot;
- Re-construction and enlargement of the water playground;
- Re-alignment and replacement of major pedestrian bridges & walkways; and
- Renovation of the Bear Creek Pavilion.

Further, continuing maintenance of pathways and grounds is carried out under the guidelines of the *Security For Park Patrons Policy*, which sets minimum-security clearance zones around varying types of park infrastructure such as playgrounds and multi-purpose pathways.

Bear Creek Park has two full time gardening staff and an additional seasonal summer staff person who are present in various areas of the park during regular working days. These staff members are available to respond to enquiries and concerns raised by park patrons, and to respond to emergencies that are communicated to them.

In addition to the gardening staff, the park has a resident caretaker who opens and closes gates in the early morning hours and in the evening, and who is present at various times of the day in the park, picking litter and carrying out other minor tasks. The caretaker commutes throughout the park in a City golf cart that is easily identifiable, and is often stopped by park patrons who ask questions and pass along information about issues in the park.

Security Measures Introduced In Bear Creek Park Following The Incident

Following the attacks on the seniors, the City undertook the following specific measures to deal with public safety and security at the park:

- **Safety Seminars** – Facilitated by Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, the RCMP conducted several excellent safety seminars for the Bear Creek Seniors following the assaults. The seniors have expressed their appreciation for these seminars.
- **Security Cameras** – Security cameras have been put into place in the park. During the day and early evening hours, the cameras are monitored from the front desk of the Arts Centre. Images of all activity that takes place around the Pavilion, the two picnic grounds, and the parking lot that lies between the Pavilion and the Arts Centre are digitally recorded 24 hour per day and stored for one week. Signs have been erected near the cameras to inform park patrons that the areas are under video surveillance. Both Parks staff and the RCMP will have access to the surveillance data. The locations of the areas under video

surveillance are shown on the map in Appendix 4. The cost of the installation of the security cameras was \$33,285.

- **Vegetation Removal** – Following the CPTED Security Audit, all recommended vegetation clearing was carried out immediately. This has resulted in clearer lines of site in key areas, fewer hiding places, and greater illumination of the grounds and structures beneath and near overhead lights. Some areas previously surrounded by dense brush has been cleared and sodded. Photographic examples of vegetation before and after are included in Appendix 5. The cost of the vegetation management work is anticipated to be \$16,000 upon completion.
- **By-law Patrols** – During the period May to September when Bear Creek Park is very busy, By-law Enforcement Officers patrol the park three times per day, seven days per week. During one such patrol, By-law Enforcement Officers apprehended one of the individuals who are alleged to have carried out the assaults on the two seniors. By-law continues to have a strong presence in the park following the summer season, carrying out at least one visit to the park each day. By-law patrols were in place prior to the tragic incidents, however, they now have a heightened awareness and focus on the park.
- **RCMP Patrols** – Police monitor the park with frequent vehicle patrols, including at least one visit on the night shift, subject of course to other priority police business. Police are also in attendance at most large special events held in the park, and District #3 has a bike squad operating in the area. It has been noted by many that even occasional police patrols have a greater effect in instilling a sense of safety amongst those who use the park over full-time private security patrols. RCMP monitoring was in place prior to the incidents; following the incidents the RCMP have met with the seniors several times and increased communication with this user group.
- **Engineering Patrols** – Following the first meeting of the Task Force, the after hours Engineering Patrol began carrying out nightly drive-through of the parking lot.
- **Staff Use of Parking Lot at Night** – Staff of the Arts Centre who work into the evening hours have instituted a buddy system when exiting the building and returning to their automobiles.
- **Private Security Patrols** – Private security patrols have now been in place since October 29, 2005. For the first two weeks, two security patrol staff were in place 24 hours per day, seven days per week, at a cost of \$6,700 per week, or \$350,000 annually. However, as neither the park nor the facilities in the park are open to the public after 11:00 p.m., and neither the security or the police had reported issues of significance, patrols were discontinued between 12:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. In addition, the City moved to a different security company that provided better rates. The average weekly cost of the current private security service is \$2,800, which equates to \$150,000 annually. With the onset of inclement weather, the security hours are now 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at an approximate cost of \$3,500 a week.

Security patrols have been confined to the high-use areas of the park, near the track, the Pavilion, the picnic areas and the parking lot in front of the Arts Centre. Each security patrol includes at least one individual that speaks multiple languages, including Punjabi. The security patrol has been instructed to interact with park patrons. Results of stakeholder surveys and discussions with the seniors indicated a general level of satisfaction with the security patrols, although some minor complaints have been received relating to:

- a) concerns that the security staff are not there when needed, as the park is very large;
- b) that they are not actually able to apprehend anyone;
- c) that they simply walk around and do not perform any maintenance duties such as litter picking when at the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After significant discussion, the Integrated Service Team developed the following recommendations for reducing park patron concerns about safety and security, and are recommended for implementation;

- A. **Monthly RCMP/Community Meetings** – The Bear Creek seniors should have representatives attend the RCMP’s monthly *Newton Community Consultative Group*. This will promote open dialogue, and allow the RCMP to more effectively provide policing services to this segment of the community. As of November, this recommendation had already begun.
- B. **Public Safety Information** – The RCMP is developing brochures geared specifically to providing safety information for elderly South Asian seniors. These brochures should be placed in racks in the Bear Creek Pavilion.

In addition, Safety & Park Information kiosks should be constructed in prominent locations in Bear Creek Park. These kiosks could contain park maps, information in multiple languages to promote safe use of the park, printed information on action to taken during emergencies, and racks for the Safety Brochures.

The RCMP has stated that they are offering Health & Safety Seminars at Bear Creek Park, and are prepared to offer them at other parks where seniors gather regularly. (E.g. Fleetwood Park; Robertson Drive Park; etc.)

Signs containing safety information have been placed within the Bear Creek Pavilion.

- C. **RCMP/By-Laws/Parks Information Sharing** – Senior staff of the RCMP, By-law Enforcement and Parks, Recreation and Culture should meet formally on a quarterly basis to share information and to develop strategies for public safety in city parks and leisure facilities.

- D. **RCMP Patrols** – The police should provide regular daytime bike or foot patrols of the highly used areas of the park. It is anticipated that this will increase public confidence and will serve as a deterrent to those who currently break into vehicles in the parking lot or sell drugs near the Pavilion and the Arts Centre.
- E. **CPTED Improvements** – All of the CPTED recommendations listed in Appendix 3 that have not yet been implemented should be adopted and carried out within a three month period. The ever-increasing use of Bear Creek Park and Arts Centre is resulting in greater evening use of the isolated parking lot on King George Highway. As the path leading to this parking lot is not lighted, and the parking lot itself is not lighted, theatre patrons and park users who use this over-flow lot at night have expressed concern about their safety. Lighting should be installed on the pathway and in the parking lot in the future. The estimated cost for the CPTED improvements is \$84,000, and has been funded out of the 2005 budget. It should be noted that the planning and execution for implementation of these improvements has already begun.
- F. **Staff Uniforms** – A pilot program should be run for one year, in which the maintenance staff at Bear Creek Park should be outfitted with uniforms that make them readily identifiable as City employees. In addition, they will have two-way radios and/or cellular phones with them in order to respond to any emergencies that may arise. While maintenance productivity may suffer due to an expected increase in interaction with park patrons, it is felt that this trial program may increase the public's perception of safety and security in the park. The cost of the pilot program is anticipated to be approximately \$6,000, and will be funded by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in 2006.
- G. **Park Watch Program** – Staff will explore the possibilities of partnering with community volunteers and non-profit community organizations such as the Surrey Crime Prevention Society to develop a volunteer *Park Watch* program for Bear Creek Park. In similar programs elsewhere, volunteers have been successful in assisting the City's protective services groups by monitoring areas and reporting any suspicious or unusual activities.
- H. **Private Security Control** – Given the extensive security improvements put into place, the Integrated Service Team has determined that the effectiveness of the private security patrol is minimal, and therefore upon approval of these recommendations the private security should be discontinued.

SUMMARY

It is the overall finding of the security review by the Integrated Service Team that the design of Bear Creek Park does not contribute in any substantial way to risks to public safety, and that the park is generally safe for the public. As in all places where vehicles are parked, there is ongoing minor property theft associated with untended vehicles. The tragic attacks on the two seniors appear to be isolated incidents.

A number of recent initiatives, including installation of security cameras, modification of the physical environment at the park and the holding of safety seminars for the seniors have been well received by the community.

Some of the key recommendations include: i) additional CPTED modifications to the park, as noted in Appendix 3; ii) more frequent and better communication between the seniors, staff and the RCMP; iii) development of safety information kiosks within the park; iv) more frequent bicycle and foot patrols by uniformed police officers; v) roll-out of safety seminars at other parks where seniors gather; vi) lighting of the pathway to the parking lot on the King George Highway; vii) continued patrols by By-law Enforcement Officers, day-time patrols by Parks maintenance staff, and night-time patrols by Engineering Operations staff; viii) a potential volunteer-based *Park Watch* program; and ix) a one year pilot project to outfit Bear Creek Park maintenance staff with uniforms and radios and/or cellular phones.

It should be noted that the Security Review Process has demonstrated the benefits of an integrated service team and community development approach to resolving complex community issues. Ongoing communication between key departments regarding security in public places is strongly supported by all individuals that participated in the process.

The measures and security applications developed in response to issues of concern at Bear Creek Park will be examined for applicability in high-use parks in other parts of the City.



Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation and Culture

OC:dlg

Attachments

Appendix 1



MINUTES

File: 6140 - 20/BC
Date: 29 September 2005
Time: 10:30 AM
Location: Bear Creek Pavilion

Security Review - Bear Creek

Attendees: B. Atwal; K. Rana; G. Grewal; R. Takhar; M. Booth; R. Klassen; M. Trainor; A. Mirza; M. Budhram; H. Kooner; A. Campbell; L. Cavan (Chair); O. Croy

1. Laurie Cavan, General Manager of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Departments welcomed the participants, and facilitated introductions.
2. The *Terms of Reference* were reviewed. Participants asked that other major users be identified and included in dialogue regarding security at the park.
3. On behalf of the Bear Creek Seniors, Mr. Atwal suggested that security patrols should not end when the election is over. Police assistance in teaching seniors how to be safe has been warmly received, and seniors are now taking precautions such as removing obvious jewellery, travelling in pairs, etc.
4. Mr. Grewal stated that they are pleased with the presence of visible security staff, which is especially helpful in the afternoons, which is the time when some of the seniors are feeling insecure. By 5:00 PM, most seniors have left the park, but they many come back to walk on the track very early in the morning. Then they go home, and return again in the afternoon.
5. Ms. Cavan suggested that talks on security measures for seniors could be offered 3-4 times per year if so desired.
6. Cst. Mirza said that they have now learned that the peak time for use by seniors is 2:30 PM, and they would ensure that future talks are planned for this time of day. He also stated that it would be useful to have an outreach program for seniors in other parks. He and his team have also learned that the seniors feel very positive about the idea of cameras in the park.
7. The seniors feel that periodic bike patrols by RCMP members are better than having security guards at the site each. Cst. Mirza stated that the bike patrol would be scheduled more often into Bear Creek Park.
8. Ms. Takhar of the RCMP told the group that some seniors would like the lights turned on at the track at 4:00 AM, as they get up and start their day at that time. She also stated that they are completing a South Asians Seniors Safety pamphlet, which can be shared with the seniors and also be put up in display kiosks if Parks can supply the kiosks. Mr. Croy advised he would work with the RCMP to post flyers in any existing kiosks.
9. Mr. Trainor of By-laws expressed some concern about having seniors out in the park in the night time (4:00 AM), before the lights come on for the track at 6:00 AM, as some transients camp in the park overnight, as well as those visiting the park for illicit purposes in the night time.
10. Mr. Grewal hoped that the RCMP might be able to come to speak to the seniors once per week to hear their ongoing concerns. However, the RCMP felt that it might be more

useful to have representatives from the seniors come to the monthly RCMP/Community meetings (Newton Community Consultative Group).

11. The RCMP suggested that if the seniors didn't always know where to report incidents to, but suggested that this information could be contained in the safety bulletins or placed in the safety kiosks.
12. There was a general discussion on the city's response to the 1997 Intercultural Inclusivity report, with Ms. Cavan providing a list of the actions taken by the City to make Bear Creek Park a safer place for seniors and the general public, stressing that CPTED principles had been used when renovations and new capital improvements are carried out.
13. The RCMP acknowledged the concerns of the seniors, but stated that the fear of crime was greater than the amount of crime.
14. There was a general discussion on the relative merits of gating/not gating part or all of the parking lots; this was set aside to be dealt with in the CPTED review.
15. It was noted that by-laws and RCMP provide regular patrols of the park. Ms. Cavan asked both groups to provide information on the frequency and timing of their visits to the park for the report.
16. It was noted by Cst. Budhram that the Surrey Crime Prevention Society also provides periodic patrols of the park.
17. Cpl Booth cautioned committee members against making recommendations for significant changes solely on the basis of the tragic assaults on the two elderly gentlemen, as these were not typical for Bear Creek Park.
18. Ms. Cavan reminded people that the City provides programming for children and youth, which helps prevent trouble before it starts by keeping youth busy; if too much is spent on security, there may be fewer resources available for children and youth. With that said, the City is committed to making the park a safe and welcoming environment for seniors.
19. Cpl. Booth reminded the committee members that the City has integrated service teams of RCMP, By-laws, Parks and Recreation Staff, and departmental representatives who review community safety issues and comes up with multi-departmental solutions for dealing with the problems...this committee is an example of the City's commitment to the integrated service team concept.
20. All agreed that good communications would assist in developing the best solutions to community problems.
21. [Mr. Grewal stated that the current facility is not large enough, which is why some seniors stay outside; a larger facility may increase safety.]
22. Cpl. Booth suggested that the RCMP should have quarterly meeting with RCMP/By-laws/Risk Mgt/Parks & Recreation specifically on Bear Creek Park, thus facilitating information sharing.
23. H. Kooner of By-laws suggested that a 24-hour security presence is not likely required, based on use patterns of the park. He suggested that consideration be given to uniforms for the Parks staff.
24. The notion of a 'Panic Phone' was discussed, but the consensus was that such a device is not warranted at this time.
25. Ms. Cavan noted that security patrols would continue while this committee is reviewing the issues, and will be evaluated as part of the entire security recommendations for the park. She also noted that security cameras would be installed in the near future, covering the pavilion area, the covered shelters just east of the pavilion, the 140th Street shelters & washroom and part of the parking lot in front of the pavilion.
26. Ms. Cavan advised the group that a CPTED sub-committee would meet next week to conduct a formal review and develop a set of recommendations for key areas of the park.

Key Action Items:

1. Parks (O. Croy) to identify existing user groups that can be contacted for their input;
2. RCMP (R. Takhar) to bring copies of security pamphlet;
3. Parks (O. Croy) to get cameras mounted in park;
4. Parks (O. Croy) to continue to work with Security officers to ensure that they are focussed on the correct areas of the park, based on today's discussions.
5. Chair Laurie Cavan to call a meeting of the CPTED Group.

c:\documents and settings\cea\local settings\temporary internet files\olk1e0\security review report final.doc
CEA 7/19/10 10:00 AM

Appendix 2

Bear Creek Park Security Review – Summary of Stakeholders’ Comments

Recently Implemented Security Measures

1. The City has recently installed a video surveillance that covers selected areas of the park, including:
 - a. Part of the parking lot in front of the Pavilion;
 - b. The Pavilion’s north, east and south side;
 - c. The picnic area 50 m east of the Pavilion;
 - d. The picnic area near the washrooms on 140th Street.

2. Pending the outcome of a security review of Bear Creek Park, patrols by private uniformed security staff have been established in the park at varying hours of the day and night.

3. Vegetation has been selectively cleared from areas of the park to increase site-lines for park patrons, in an effort to make people feel safer within the park.

Through the following brief survey, we are asking park stakeholders to identify any concerns that they might have about existing security measures at the park, and to make comments and suggestions about security in general.

<p>Please comment on how safe you / your organization’s participants feel when using the park during the hours when your activities are scheduled.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parking lot on King George Highway is not lighted and the path not lighted. When main lot is full, patrons don’t feel safe walking to the parking lot on KGH • Players (400) feel comfortable during and after games • Because the lot is not gated, drug dealers drive in and use the parking lot for deals after 10 pm at night (young south Asian males in very expensive cars) • No problem for players during day, ever • Weekend days – no problems • Some problems at parking lot with drunks during evenings on Friday nights • An older woman recently stated that she didn’t feel as safe as before the assaults – security guards don’t appear to make it better. • Parks staff feel safe when working alone in the park • Parks staff report fewer plant stolen this year, less vandalism, less drug-related behaviour than previous years – all before the assaults on seniors. • Staff feel concerned about theft from cars • Some vandalism occurs even with security guards present • Arts Centre staff who work the evening shifts are not feeling safe, moving their cars close to the front door and arranging for escorts to their cars. • Groups of youth hang around/skateboarding at the front steps and ramps of the building; even though the security guards are visible over by the Pavilion, they are not dealing with this issue. • Staff of the Arts Centre no longer take walks on the trails at lunchtime, and program instructors are concerned about drug dealing, prostitutes and homeless people in the park; this impacts Summer camp participants going out into the park for lunch and other activities.
--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a few incidents each year of prostitutes and their customers coming in to use the Arts Centre washrooms for their transactions, although usually a staff presence is enough to deter this. • Each year Arts Centre staff and patrons have their cars vandalized, with windows smashed and items stolen from their cars; however it is a very small percentage compared to the number of times people park here safely. • The public pay phone behind the building is a real magnet for drug dealing; when it is out of order these folks come into the Arts Centre the pay phone; sometimes an out of order sign is put up to curtail this activity.
<p>Are you aware of recent incidents that involve the safety of your participants or other users of the park?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One month ago, football pads and bag stolen from outside the Pavilion when left unattended for 15 minutes • Around Pavilion, there has never been a problem for 20 years • Very little police presence before last major incident • Not aware of any assaults/incidents other than the two elderly gents being attacked • Two coaches had car thefts in last month, during the day • No • Someone with a pit-bull was menacing members of the public – no one was injured (incident was 2 weeks ago) • A woman in the park commented that a man was yelling profanities – she was angry at him and would have called 911 if she had had a cell phone • Staff occasionally find stashes in the gardens of items that were probably stolen • Staff feel concerned about theft from cars • In the summer, teens use the pool at night – but this is nothing new. • There is good awareness by Arts Centre staff of safety issues, but Arts Centre customers have not mentioned it much. All theatre events are getting great attendance, therefore the recent incidents have not had a negative impact on participation.
<p>Please comment on the recently implemented security measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having visible security gives a feeling of safety when you are at the park at night (up until 10:30 pm) • Security patrols may not be useful late at night (past midnight) • Everybody thinks this was a good idea, cleaning up the bushes on west side is good because dealers stash their stuff there • No need to have security/staff go to train or 140th at night • Excellent ideas, but these efforts are over and above what were needed. Newton Athletic Park has more problems – should implement the same security there, e.g.: last Friday, Oct 8, incident with violence – guns/ambulance • Parks Staff saw a kid on a bike looking in vehicles early in the morning (in the dark) – she pointed this out to security guards, who had no ability to catch the youth • Parks staff received complaints that security guards were sitting at shelters, not walking about • Some minor vandalism in the park, even with security guards • Arts Centre staff don't think the security guards have been very effective, citing the advanced age of the guards. The guards don't seem well informed about what is going on in the park and building. Other comments include: "they seem pretty bored, they never smile, they are not very welcoming".

<p>Do you have any suggestions for improving security at Bear Creek Park?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install gates on the main parking lot • Add lighting on path to KGH parking lot • Barricades to prevent cars from driving onto lawn areas may be more effective • Ensure that lights in parking lot on KGH are always left on at night. • RCMP bicycle patrols during the day • RCMP presence frequently at night to deter drug users in parking lot. • None • Regular RCMP foot & bike patrols would be more effective than private security guards • The outdoor phone booth is used by drug dealers & prostitutes which may be adding to the break-ins • A bike patrol of younger, friendlier, well informed security guards, scheduled to work at key times would be more effective than what we have currently. • It seems that a staff presence acts as a deterrent so more groundskeepers or programming staff at the Pavilion (multi-task, give them a cell phone to report incidents) would probably be more useful than security guards
---	---

Appendix 3

CPTED Security Audit

- Clearing to waist height, shrubbery around Pavilion building, 2 to 4 feet around building
- Some pruning of trees and shrubs in parking lot
- More post & chain to restrict cars from jumping curb and delineate path entrances, also bollards at path entrances
- Night lights on west side of Pavilion; recommend to discuss with groups; recommendation pole to shine light (night visit to determine if this recommendation is required)
- Check night functionality of existing lights
- Shrubs and trees outside men's washroom, bring down, lower bush
- Prune trees, around lamp post outside men's washroom
- Prune both trees and tall shrubs near lights on perimeter of parking lot that are adjacent to the park.
- Removal of sign on pathway - public washroom sign
- Post and chain along parking lot to create visible barrier for cars jumping curb and to direct foot traffic to one main entrance path
- 2 Douglas Fir along path could be trimmed from bottom up; limbing up
- Speed bump on straight-away beside bus drop area
- More post & chain along path beside parking lot near large picnic shelters
- Post and chain along parking lot adjacent to Pavilion or wooden barrier – 6 x 6 wooden
- Information Kiosk around main picnic shelter area to include safety info and Park Map
- Washroom off of 140 Street – chain & post extend to restrict access to casual pathway beside building
- Prune shrubs around washroom building – men's and women's
- Expand asphalt – bring washroom door out, and eliminate alcove
- Need night time visit to review of path from parking lot to track in dark; committee members requested to do night visit and report back to Laurie of any new observations
- Carry treatment of post and chain across 140 Street parking lot
- Generally be aware of any blind corners on pathways, trim back
- Information Safety Kiosk – to be installed at key location in park, with safety information and park map