

NO: R203

COUNCIL DATE: November 7, 2011

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council

DATE: October 28, 2011

FROM: Crime Reduction Strategy Manager

FILE: 7450-30

SUBJECT: Crime Reduction Strategy Update and the Introduction of Substance Use Awareness Week

RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager's Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the Crime Reduction Strategy including key achievements and upcoming activities such as the introduction of a new initiative, Substance Use Awareness Week, to be held between November 14th and 19th, 2011.

BACKGROUND

Crime reduction is about implementing effective crime prevention measures that are focused on the root causes of crime. It involves a comprehensive approach across neighbourhoods, which includes the involvement of a broad range of partners and stakeholders.

The Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy includes a recommendation under the Prevent and Deter Crime component that focuses on building awareness and educating the public about substance use and abuse. More specifically, the CRS recommends that Surrey support an annual drug and alcohol awareness week.

DISCUSSION

In the late Spring of 2011 in partnership with several Surrey-based community service agencies (Sources, Options Community Services Society, DIVERSEcity, Pacific Community Resources Society, B.C. Responsible and Problem Gambling Program, Alcohol and Drug Education Services and Fraser Health) a working group was established to organize Surrey's first ever Substance Use Awareness Week. The purpose of this initiative is to increase public knowledge and awareness about signs and symptoms of substance use and about where more information and other help can be obtained in relation to substance use.

The week-long awareness event will be held during the week of November 14th, 2011 which aligns with similar initiatives in other cities across Canada (i.e., a nationally recognized week). The week will be declared "Substance Use Awareness Week" (SUAW) based on a best practice which

promotes awareness about substance use through positive engagement. Using the word “Use” in the title instead of “Abuse” helps to reach a broader audience and gain attention from those who don’t identify themselves as “having a problem” or as being “addicted”. Information that is distributed during the Week is focused on educating everyone on recognizing possible signs in family and friends who may require supports to address a use problem. The working group is organizing the following events for that Week:

- The Launch of Substance Use Awareness Week will include a delegation and Proclamation at the November 7th Regular Council meeting;
- An Event Took Kit and Fact Sheets have been completed for distribution to the public and partners that highlight some common Substance Use topics. The “Host your Own Event Toolkit” will encourage agencies, businesses and groups in the community to host their own Substance Use Awareness Week events;
- An information booth will be set up in the main lobby at Surrey City Hall from Monday, November 14th to Friday, November 19th, daily between 11-2pm, involving various SUAW working group members and substance use experts, who will supply information on various topics related to substance use and supports that are available;
- A Lunch & Learn session will be held on Tuesday, November 15 in City Hall to provide information to City staff about substance use issues and how to receive help. The session will be conducted by the City’s Employee & Family Assistance Program;
- An Addictions Workshop called “Plugged In and Tuned Out: Helping Parents and Kids Navigate Digital Cultures” will be held at the main campus in Surrey of Kwantlen Polytechnic University on November 16, 2011 from 6:30pm-9pm in partnership with The CIR:CLE at KPU and Sources BC; and
- The “Community Response to Synthetic Drug Labs” brochure has been re-launched as part of Substance Use Awareness Week. Copies of this brochure will be distributed at the Substance Use Awareness events. Surrey Fire Services remains an active partner and continues to deliver the brochures to businesses throughout the City as part of their commitment to the Crime Reduction Strategy and the Meth Watch program.

It is noted that Mr. Balwinder “Bill” Kahlon, from the Drug Awareness Foundation in Calgary, was greeted and acknowledged by the SUAW working group members at Surrey City Hall on September 29, 2011 as part of his cross country walk to raise awareness about the issues of drug and alcohol use and abuse. The 7,400km walk started on April 1st in Newfoundland and ended on October 3rd in Victoria.

Crime Reduction Strategy Update - Key Achievements

Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM)

The Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy was featured as a best practice at the 2011 UBCM convention in Vancouver as part of a session entitled “Keeping Your Community Safe: Crime Prevention Programs That Work”.

25th Anniversary of Block Watch

Community Celebrations were held on October 15 in all five policing districts across the City to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Block Watch in Surrey. The RCMP Block Watch program currently engages 1500 residents who participate in the role of either Captain or Co-captain. This program serves over 20,000 homes across the City.

Crime Prevention Week

Crime Prevention Week was held during the week of November 1 through 7, 2011 in association with similar National and Provincial campaign efforts. Highlights in Surrey included the development of tip sheets specific to Bullying, Wire Theft, Theft from Auto, Police Based Victim Services, and ATM/Debit Card Safety. The week included a mall display hosted by the RCMP Crime Prevention Program Coordinators and an information booth at City hall.

Provincial Award Recognition – City of Surrey is a Recipient of Local Government Award

Each year the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General recognizes leaders from across B.C. through the Provincial Crime Prevention and Community Safety awards. These awards recognize individuals, groups and programs that have made outstanding contributions to crime prevention and community safety. This year, the City of Surrey was selected as the winning recipient of the Local Government award for its work specific to the development of and achievements related to the City of Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy. The awards ceremony was held as a key event during the BC Crime Prevention Association annual symposium in Burnaby on November 4th, 2011.

Provincial Symposium Contributions

The Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy staff organized and participated on a panel involving representatives of the RCMP, TELUS, and BC Hydro on the topic of “Addressing the Challenges of Wire & Metal Theft” at the BC Crime Prevention Association’s annual Provincial Training symposium held in Burnaby on November 3rd to 5th, 2011. This conference involved approximately 200 delegates from across the province.

Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (SCADA) Conference

The second annual Surrey Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (SCADA) Conference for Surrey-based service providers will be held November 8th, 2011 at Kwantlen Polytechnic University and is entitled, “Making a Positive Change: Breaking the Cycle of Violence for Children and Youth”.

Restorative Justice Event

In partnership with the Surrey RCMP Restorative Justice Program, a lunch hour speaker and media event will be held on November 24th, 2011 in City Hall. Dona Cadman, a well recognized Restorative justice advocate, is scheduled to attend as the featured speaker.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATION

The City’s achievements and ongoing efforts toward implementing the recommendations of the Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy are assisting in the achievement of the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter, which identifies the Crime Reduction Strategy and the Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents as important elements of the foundation for building a safe community.

CONCLUSION

The City continues to be a recognized leader in Crime Reduction and Community Safety. The City of Surrey was recently acknowledged for this leadership by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, who awarded the Local Government Crime Prevention and Community Safety Award for 2011 to the City of Surrey. New initiatives are being implemented by staff in follow up to recommendations in the Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy such as Substance Use Awareness Week. The initiatives, events and accomplishments outlined in this report demonstrate the City's ongoing dedication and commitment to community safety and crime reduction.

Colleen Kerr
Crime Reduction Strategy Manager

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