

NO: **R203**

COUNCIL DATE: **September 10, 2012**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **September 6, 2012**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **8200-01**

SUBJECT: **Outcomes of the 2012 Doors Open Event**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommend that Council receive this report as information.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the pilot Doors Open Event that was hosted in Surrey on Saturday June 23, 2012.

BACKGROUND

In July 2011 Council considered Corporate Report R143:2011 titled “Doors Open Surrey Event in 2012” (copy attached as Appendix 1) and approved its recommendations, thereby establishing a budget of \$50,000 to support the planning and implementation of a pilot “Doors Open” event. The pilot event took place on Saturday June 23, 2012. The Doors Open concept has its origins in France where the first Doors Open event (La Journee Portes Ouvertes) took place in 1984. Since then, communities around the globe including in BC have adopted the idea.

The goals of Doors Open Surrey were:

- to increase the public’s awareness and enjoyment of civic, non-profit and private facilities, buildings, services and destinations; and
- to showcase Surrey’s diversity and cultural richness.

A Community Steering Committee involving volunteers from other City committees including the Social Planning Advisory Committee, the Diversity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee and the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission provided guidance and support to the staff that were responsible for coordinating the Doors Open Surrey event. The Steering Committee was chaired by Councillor Judy Villeneuve.

The City of Surrey Volunteer Resources staff team recruited 62 Doors Open Volunteer Ambassadors to assist with the event. At each Doors Open venue they greeted attendees, ran a prize draw, counted attendees and answered questions.

A marketing plan was implemented by the Marketing Section to create awareness and excitement around the event. The marketing program included a website, www.surrey.ca/doorsopen, transit shelter ads, posters and brochures at Doors Open venues and other City of Surrey public facilities, social media messages, digital signs, newspaper ads in The Leader, The Now and The Peace Arch News, radio ads on News 130 and Red FM, a Shaw TV ad that aired on “The Express” the week before the event, media releases and an event map that helped to attract and guide participants from venue to venue on the day of the event. Signage was also used to advertise the event venues on the day of the event.

Geocaches were set up outside 10 Doors Open Venues to encourage families and participants to explore Doors Open sites with the winner of the Geocaching Prize Draw winning a GPS device.

Each of the venues in the event planned their own programming. The event ran from 11am to 4pm.

The venues that were featured as part of the pilot Doors Open event included the following:

Places of worship:

- St. Helen’s Church;
- Bear Creek Community Church;
- St. Andrews Church;
- Surrey Jamia Masjid Mosque;
- Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Temple; and
- Vedic Hindu Cultural Society.

Education institutions:

- Simon Fraser University; and
- Kwantlen University

Unique places that provide community service:

- Umoja Operation Compassion Society;
- DiverseCity North Surrey Office;
- Options Community Services – Newton Office;
- Surrey Food Bank;
- Ranmore Community Police Station;
- Options Newton Office;
- Options Early Years Centre; and
- PICS Assisted Living Seniors Complex.

Arts and cultural facilities:

- Holland Park Public Art Loop;
- Surrey Arts Centre; and
- Newton Cultural Centre.

Municipal buildings and facilities:

- City Centre Library;
- North Surrey Recreation Centre;

- Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre;
- Newton Recreation Centre;
- Newton Library;
- Newton Seniors Centre;
- Fire Hall No. 10; and
- City Works Yard

Significant sites in the history of Surrey:

- Round Up Cafe; and
- Old Surrey Restaurant.

Parks and natural sites:

- Holland Park;
- Hawthorne Park;
- Surrey Nature Centre & Heritage Services; and
- Bear Creek Park.

DISCUSSION

The pilot “Doors Open” event involved 32 venues and resulted in a total of 2,908 recorded visits to these venues. The Planning Committee is confident that participation rates will increase as the event matures. Richmond has been able to attract on average 19,000 people per year to their Doors Open event. The participation rates in Richmond vary by 15% to 20 % each year based on weather conditions, competing events and the number of venues that are involved in any particular year. Over the five years that Richmond has been hosting their event, they have also experienced an increase in non-residents visiting their City to explore the diverse venues.

Survey Feedback

Feedback surveys were sent to 31 of the participating venues with 16 venues providing a response. Similarly, feedback surveys were sent to 237 event attendees with 33 providing a response. Feedback surveys were also sent to 62 volunteers with 33 providing a response. The following is a summary of the feedback received through these surveys:

- 97% of attendees who responded would participate in the event again
- 93.9 % of volunteers who responded would participate in the event again
- 81.3 % of venues who responded would participate in the event again

Some reoccurring suggestions were present across all three feedback surveys:

- Marketing and communication related to the event should be increased and be started earlier;
- The “look of branding” of the event marketing and communications materials was well received;
- Marketing by venue is important to raise awareness about the event and draw participation to specific venues;
- Explore adding transit options, i.e. hop-on/hop-off shuttle buses between venues to make it easier for attendees to visit the venues; and
- Encourage venues to plan fun and interactive activities for attendees.

Future Doors Open Events:

The Community Steering Committee related to the pilot Doors Open event has met to discuss the event and the feedback that has been received in relation to the pilot event. The Committee developed the following list of suggestions in relation to holding a similar future event:

- Determine the geographic focus – repeat with City Centre and Newton areas or include a variety of localized route options with additional areas involved i.e., Cloverdale and South Surrey;
- Increase marketing and communications leading up to the event, particularly in print media and at venue locations;
- Work with marketing staff to increase clarity of the Doors Open message. The Committee suggested changing the tagline “Get connected. Explore your City!” to “Be a tourist in your own City!”;
- Narrow the focus in relation to the types of participating venues, i.e. choose a theme such as heritage and culture, art and nature, places of worship or unique food;
- Increase supervisor presence on the day of the event to ensure all volunteers and participating venues are well supported; and
- Evaluate transit or shuttle bus options in relation to accommodating travel between participating venues.

Planning for a Future Doors Open Event

Staff is beginning to work with a Community Steering Committee on planning a second Doors Open event to be held in 2013 and will be including a funding request in this regard for consideration by the Finance Committee as part of the 2013 budget approval process.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Doors Open Surrey assisted in achieving the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter; more particularly, Socio-Cultural action items SC4, SC5, SC12 and SC10, by encouraging cultural awareness in the community, providing ethnic and culturally appropriate services, opportunities and programs, facilitating volunteerism and educating the public about the City’s history, respectively.

CONCLUSION

With the City of Surrey being one of most diverse cities in Canada, opportunities to connect citizens with local businesses and community services should be encouraged. The Doors Open event offers such an opportunity. The Surrey Doors Open event also has the potential to be a tourist attraction. Based on the success of the pilot Doors Open event, staff is commencing the planning process for a second Doors Open event to be held in 2013.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture



CORPORATE REPORT

NO:
R143

COUNCIL DATE: **July 25, 2011**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **September 6, 2012**
 FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **8200-01**
General Manager, Finance and Technology
 SUBJECT: **Doors Open Surrey Event in 2012**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and the Finance & Technology Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve as a pilot, a “Doors Open” event in Surrey in 2012 and instruct staff to include \$50,000 in the 2012 Budget to support this pilot.

BACKGROUND

Doors Open had its origins in France where the first Doors Open event, *La Journée Portes Ouvertes*, took place in 1984. The idea soon spread to neighbouring countries and has since expanded around the globe. Toronto was the first North American city to follow the European lead and launch a high profile event showcasing built heritage, architecture and design as a millennium project in 2000. The City of Richmond has hosted a Doors Open event in each of the last 4 years and has expanded the event to include over 40 sites throughout the community.

The goal of *Doors Open Surrey* is to increase people’s understanding and enjoyment of public, non-profit and private facilities, buildings, services and destinations and to showcase Surrey’s diversity and cultural richness. ***Doors Open Surrey*** will involve a set of “Open City” branded advertisements that will alert interested citizens to opportunities by date and time for free access to visit, tour and use city as well as private and non-profit facilities and amenities. The program is intended to build awareness in the community about the range of facilities (private, non-profit and public) that are available for use and enjoyment.

DISCUSSION

A Community Steering Committee of volunteers from other City committees including the Social Planning Committee, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Heritage Advisory Commission will plan and co-ordinate the first *Doors Open Surrey* event. The Steering Committee will be chaired by Councillors Villeneuve and Rasode and will engage business, tourism, cultural and hospitality sector partners in opening doors and sharing the City's unique facilities, buildings, services and destinations with residents and visitors. The inaugural *Doors Open Surrey* event in 2012 will showcase a range of community venues and places of social, heritage, business and leisure interest as a means to encourage residents and welcome visitors to learn about and enjoy Surrey. The 2012 event will offer free access to over 20 sites highlighting the Newton and North Surrey town centres and the King George Boulevard Corridor. The date of the event is yet to be determined but consideration will be given to a time that does not conflict with other major City events.

Doors Open Surrey sites will include:

- designated heritage buildings, such as homes, farms, or businesses;
- churches and schools of community significance or architectural interest;
- unique places of industry;
- municipal buildings and cultural facilities;
- significant sites in the history of Surrey; and
- other natural heritage sites.

The City of Surrey's Volunteer Resources Program will support *Doors Open Surrey* by providing volunteers. New challenging volunteer positions will support personal development by allowing volunteers to increase their skills that will be transferable to employment opportunities.

An extensive marketing program will be developed to create awareness and excitement around this event. The Community Steering Committee will present sponsorship opportunities to local business, community associations and the Surrey Board of Trade.

Surrey is one of the most diverse cities in Canada. By encouraging groups to "open their doors" to share, educate and welcome everyone will add to the rich quality of life that the City of Surrey offers to its residents and visitors. *Doors Open Surrey* has the potential to become a significant regional tourist attraction, as well as a "Community Welcoming" initiative that builds bridges and promotes cultural exchange. By showcasing Surrey's diversity and cultural richness, *Doors Open Surrey* will enhance the City's profile as a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work, invest and play.

Budget Implications

Based on similar events held in other cities, it is estimated that it will cost the City \$50,000 to plan and implement a pilot "Doors Open" event in Surrey in 2012. This includes funding for a part-time coordinator to work on the project so that it reaches its full potential and funds for developing an appropriate advertising and marketing strategy for the program, among other things.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Doors Open Surrey aligns with the goals of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly, Socio-Cultural Action items SC4, SC5, SC12 and C10, by encouraging cultural awareness in the community, providing ethnic and culturally appropriate services, opportunities and programs, facilitating volunteerism and educating the public about the City's history, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve as a pilot, a "Doors Open" event in Surrey in 2012 and instruct staff to include \$50,000 in the 2012 Budget to support this pilot.

Laurie Cavan
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