

NO: **P002**

COMMITTEE **February 17, 2014**  
DATE:

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## POLICE COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE **February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014**  
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FROM: **Officer in Charge, Surrey RCMP**

FILE:

SUBJECT: **Community Consultative Group Update**

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

## INTENT

This report is to update Council and to provide information about the various District Offices engagement with the community on policing and public safety and issues currently facing these District Offices.

## DISCUSSION

### District 1 (City Centre – Whalley area):

#### **D1 Whalley Integrated Services Team (WIST) –January 2014**

WIST fully represents the community and performs a Community Consultative Group function. Residential interests are represented via the Block Watch Program representative's involvement and by representatives from local residential groups. Commercial interests are represented by members of the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association (DSBIA) and Surrey Central Mall/Simon Fraser University. The City is represented by the Bylaws, Parks, and Engineering Departments. Other community interests are represented by members of the Surrey Crime Prevention Society (SCPS), Fraser Health, Surrey Food Bank, Public Library, and other community service groups. Police are represented by RCMP and Metro Vancouver Transit Police (MVTP) members. WIST meets every month.

While WIST exchanges information about what is generally going on in the community, period, concerns noted that are related to law enforcement chiefly include:

- 1) **Nuisance Crime:** Persons loitering, using illicit drugs, and/or sleeping at or near commercial properties and thus deterring legitimate clientele, especially in the downtown core. Many commercial premises employ private security. Fraser Health deploys needle collection and outreach worker teams on most days. Fraser Health, via the Front Room,

can be contacted directly for needle pick up. The DSBIA has a fairly robust bike patrol which focusses its efforts in the downtown core. The RCMP likewise has core-centric resources deployed. MVTP and the RCMP are considering renewal of a very successful ongoing Joint Forces Operation in the same area. Citizens would like to see a lasting solution to this issue versus the current “revolving door” wherein the same persons are repeatedly a problem.

- 2) **Property Crime:** Commercial Break and Enter: Especially in the Flats and the downtown core. The Surrey Crime Prevention Society (SCPS) and the RCMP deploy extra resources to patrol/conduct enforcement in this area. Area businesses have ongoing access to significant crime prevention resources from the RCMP. The RCMP have also recently forwarded charges against several individuals directly involved such crimes in the area. RCMP Property Crime Target Teams have also been consulted. Citizens would like to see a lasting solution to this repetitive problem.
- 3) **Unlawful dumping/Unsightly Properties:** An ongoing issue throughout the District. Directly attended to by Bylaws and Engineering as requested. Daily on business days, Engineering joins with the RCMP to patrol 135A St between 106 Ave and 108 Ave (and the immediate vicinity) together in order to maintain the community standard in this particularly challenged area. Citizens would like to see swift and sure response to related Bylaw complaints. Citizens do not understand why it takes so long for the City to enforce its own by laws and why the City cannot hold responsible persons to account /clean up properties in a timely fashion.
- 4) **Graffiti:** A recent complaint. MVTP’s WIST member is a Subject Matter Expert in such matters and was instrumental in recently identifying a related suspect. In addition, the SCPS also has graffiti removal teams that can be directly requested as necessary. Citizens would like to see quick response in this regard by the SCPS in order to maintain community standards.

## **District 2:**

1. **Visibility of police in the community.** Far and away the most commented on concern. Comments range on wanting more community policing, more patrols and foot patrols. The vast majority asking for foot patrols, with some requests for bike patrols. District 2 Neighbourhood Liaison Unit (NLU) has been addressing this of late with foot patrols of the Guildford Town Centre area and meeting with and talking to the businesses along the 152<sup>nd</sup> Street corridor between 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 104<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Members of the community have expressed gratitude to the members on foot patrol, however these foot patrols are only able to be performed sporadically. Many citizens were concerned that there needed to be more members for the size and amount of crime in the City. People commented they would like foot patrols through parks, apartment complexes, school grounds, malls and at community centres. People believe that when police are visible the area will be safer.

2. **Tougher on Crime.** The lack of enforcing of “petty” crimes was raised at several meetings. The Community has concern that members ignore the small crime, and officers can’t be bothered to lay charges for things like small amounts of drugs or small thefts. In one instance the lack of enforcing ticketable offences was brought up and tied into known studies that show when police enforce “small” issues such as littering and J-walking crime rates overall are reduced. This goes along with comments that the community feels the judicial system is not holding criminals to account. District 2 NLU has attempted to address some of these issues and has adopted a strategic initiative to issue tickets to people for offences under the available provincial acts and municipal bylaws that have in the past been seen as too petty to be dealt with by the members of Surrey Detachment. In cases such as finding people with small amounts of drugs, members have also been encouraged to find alternate charges that can have tickets issued instead of just performing a no case seizure.
  
3. **Recovery Houses.** The issue of recovery houses has been consistent since 2011. The concern is that these houses are unregulated and they bring crime with them when they enter an area, thereby using up police resources. This problem has involved many aspects of local government; The City of Surrey By-laws department, City of Surrey Fire Department, the Surrey RCMP and the Landlord and Tenancy Branch. District 2 NLU has been communicating with local resources to work with the registered owner of the property to obtain a permanent solution to the problem. While still a major issue some headway is being made shutting some of these homes down, with Surrey Bylaws playing a major roll. The main issue with Recovery Homes in Surrey is lack of Provincial Guidelines which grants a “Free-for-all” approach for people who open these types of accommodations.
  
4. **Drugs/Transients.** The low-level drug dealing that occurs throughout Surrey is a major issue for the residents. They believe the “homeless” or “rough” looking people are generally involved in the drug trade, either using or selling. These people are also involved in other crimes, such as thefts and break and enter. The Community Consultative Group’s (CCG) believe these people are not being dealt with, which ties in with the tougher on crime issue. During the meetings it was voiced they want these people dealt with in some way, and wish they could be dealt with before they steal from the residents and businesses of the area. The people believe that both the police and especially the courts do not take these “minor” crimes seriously. These crimes seriously disrupt the lives of the victims and for thefts of relatively little amounts and up costing thousands of dollars to repair.

### **District 3**

The **Newton Integrated Services Team (NIST)** represents key service providers in the Newton Area. The NIST meets once a month and identifies key problems areas/issues in the Newton area. Once identified these problem areas/issues are presented to the team with the expectation representatives from each service provider with commit to take action to address the

problem. Action items are identified and acted on as soon as possible. These actions are tracked and reported back in real time (not waiting for the next meeting).

Evaluation by the NIST as a whole will take place at each meeting to establish a sense of ownership and accountability for any commitment to take action. Team participants include: City of Surrey Parks, Engineering, Bylaws, ICBC, Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy (CRS), SCPS, Options, Transit Police, Community Corrections, Probation, Translink/Coast Mountain Bus Company.

1. **Police Visibility in Public Spaces** - An ongoing issue is the perceived lack of police presence in high traffic locations in and around the Newton Bus Loop/Newton Civic Facilities. The level of police presence is linked by the community to a general feeling of lack of safety in the area as the public utilizes public transit and the many nearby civic facilities. Through feedback from community meetings, and the general user base in the area, D3 has engaged the support of City Departments such as Bylaw, Engineering, Planning and Parks as well as the Coast Mountain Bus Company and Translink Security/Police to find solutions. These key stakeholders have been engaged to find solutions to the underlying issues that lead to a feeling of lack of safety. A pragmatic approach has been taken to providing visibility/enforcement patrols for the greatest impact however the leverage of partnerships has been the main focus moving forward as other solutions to enhance the feeling of community safety are identified.

2. **Recovery Homes** - The issue of unregulated recovery homes in the Newton area remains a main issue of concern for residents. There are numerous ongoing examples of recovery home clients being linked to issues from nuisance crime to property/violent crime. D3 NLU responds to such issues with a coordinated approach using City and other regulatory groups. The D3 office coordinates incoming information through to City Departments (Bylaw, Fire, planning) to seek action addressing these issues. **NOTE:** the issues are well known about the lack of regulation and are undoubtable repeated in each District and as a result will not be repeated here.

3. **Opium (Doda)** - South Asian community members highlighted the concern that Doda was being sold in local stores with no regulation, nor public information about the narcotic/legal concerns. D3 NLU resources partnered with City of Surrey Bylaws, Surrey Fire Department, and Ministry of Finance, Federal Excise and Tobacco enforcement and Crime Prevention Victim Services (CPVS) resources for public awareness. In addition to public outreach, enforcement action by D3 NLU was taken in the form of numerous search warrants and the seizure of over 100kg of illegal Doda (Feem) and tobacco. Through their developed expertise in the area of Doda, D3 NLU members also support the CRS Substance Use Awareness Team.

4. **Problem Motels** - There were major ongoing concerns with multiple motels in the Newton area for the past few years. These motels included the Bollywood Motel, Beladean Motel and the Town & Country Motel. Issues in and around these properties were unsightly premises, overt prostitution, drug dealing and hotel logs not being kept accurately. The result was increase increased calls for service and community outcry. The Newton NLU team worked together with city of Surrey Bylaws and Surrey Fire department to conduct regular inspections and build a solid case that this premise was not safe for renting and the property was deemed unsafe. These motels have since been shut down and in the case of the Bollywood the owner was forced to tear this property down last year after a long battle.

5. **Banquet Hall Inspections** - Disturbances and violence in and around Banquet Halls in Newton have been a historical concern in Newton. D3 NLU members along with City of Surrey Fire Department, Ministry of Finance and Liquor Control and licencing branch, started an

initiative where they coordinated increased random inspections of the banquet halls that were hosting private events (where SOL's were approved by the RCMP). These random inspections have proven to be effective and are an ongoing measure as this issue continues to be monitored.

## **District 4**

- 1. Police Visibility in Port Kells** - An ongoing issue is the perceived of a need for increased police presence in the Port Kells area. The level of police presence is linked by the community to a general feeling of lack of safety due to the size and location of that neighbourhood and its proximity to the Langley area. D4 has engaged the support of City Departments such as Bylaw, Engineering, Planning and Parks to find solutions to make the area safer. These key stakeholders have been engaged to find solutions to the underlying issues that lead to a feeling of lack of safety. A pragmatic approach has been taken to providing visibility/enforcement patrols for the greatest impact however the leverage of partnerships has been the main focus moving forward as other solutions to enhance the feeling of community safety are identified.
- 2. Drug Homes/ Transients** - The issue of crack shacks attracting transients and criminals in the D4 areas remains a main issue of concern for residents. There are numerous ongoing examples of rental home clients being linked to issues from nuisance crime to property/violent crime. D4 NLU responds to such issues with a coordinated approach using City and other regulatory groups. The D4 office coordinates incoming information through to City Departments (Bylaw, Fire, Planning) to seek action addressing these issues.
- 3. Clayton Heights Community projects:** The lack of enforcing of "petty" crimes was raised at several meetings. The Community has concern that members ignore the small crime, and officers can't be bothered to lay charges for things like small amounts of drugs or small thefts and nuisance behaviors. In one instance the lack of enforcing ticketable offences was brought up and tied into known studies that show when police enforce "small" issues such as littering and J-walking crime rates overall are reduced. This goes along with comments that the community feels the judicial system is not holding criminals to account. District 4 NLU and General Duty Officers have attempted to address some of these issues and have adopted a strategic initiative to issue tickets to people for offences under the available provincial acts and municipal bylaws that have in the past been seen as too petty to be dealt with by the members of Surrey Detachment. In cases such as finding people with small amounts of drugs, members have also been encouraged to find alternate charges that can have tickets issued instead of just performing a no case seizure.
- 4. Problem Properties** - There were major ongoing concerns with multiple rental properties in the Port Kells area that are attracting criminal activities within the D4 neighbourhoods. These properties are large and located in isolated neighbourhoods where they can operate without risk of detection. Issues in and around these properties were unsightly premises, overt prostitution, drug dealing and stolen properties including theft of gas and metals. The result was increased calls for service and community outcry. The D4 NLU team worked together with city of Surrey Bylaws and Surrey Fire department to conduct regular inspections and build a solid case that this premise was not safe for renting and the property was deemed unsafe. Most of these residences have since been shut down and in the case of the 8138-188<sup>th</sup> street the owner was forced to make changes in his rental agreement.

## **District 5**

### **Drug Dealers in a Residential Community**

The community has clearly expressed a concern regarding drug dealers who rent houses in a residential neighbourhood. These houses are then utilized as a central location for the distribution of drugs. This activity negatively affects the residents and directly impacts their feeling of a safe community and safe homes. The D5 NLU/CRU has been pro-active in working with the local residents, Block Watch Program and Strata Councils in identifying these locations. Some frustration has surfaced as to the amount of time and co-ordinated efforts required to successfully deal with these locations. They fully understand the procedures required to tackle this issue.

The community is appreciated of joint enforcement efforts that have been conducted with the Surrey RCMP, the City of Surrey Bylaws and the Fire Department. Some community members believe that the Landlord and Tenancy Branch is shielding these occupants from these locations from a timely eviction.

### **Break and Enters & Thefts in Residential Communities.**

The community continues to complain of high number of thefts. Some of these are crimes of opportunity, where garage door openers are left in vehicle or garages are open. D5 has a large amount of theft from autos at various commercial locations as well as some residential complexes. The D5 volunteers do periodically attend specified areas to do lock-out assessments of vehicles in these high theft areas. Many of the theft from autos are not even being reported because the community feels that it is so common that they are too petty to report. Any time members of the community mention this they are reminded that they need to report it, because otherwise we don't know and it can't be analysed.

Several of the communities have complained about the Super Mailbox thefts. The Blockwatch groups in these areas have tried to remain vigilant. D5 NLU and the various community groups have been trying to work with Canada Post to obtain better boxes however implementation is very slow. D5 Crime Prevention has seen a large increase in the number of Blockwatch groups in response to the increasing crime in their communities.

**Youth Activity** – Blue Line/Semiahmoo Mall area. Community Social agencies have expressed concern of an increase in hard drug use amongst South Surrey Youth. In addition there has been a noticeable increase in youth related incidents in the uptown area, and kids hanging out in area of McDonalds, Subway Taco Del Mar. Semiahmoo Shopping Security has been consistent with having the youth move along, but they have expressed concern that they have not seen the police patrols as often as they have in the past. The Shopping centre keeps in regular contact with the South Surrey District 5 Office and is in the process of installing new digital cameras in areas. Officers continue to work with the Shopping Centre to address the youth activity. They have been working within the community running some well throughout programs that are engaging the youth such as Code Blue, and the skateboard park and new Longboard park and the Youth Space which are being developed to give the kids somewhere to hang out and be productive.

**SEMAIHMOO/CNRAIL/BNSF:** Concerns about ability of emergency services to reach Crescent Beach area, or if there is an emergency – such as a derailment evacuation plan. There are 2,000 people in area with only one entry/ exit point into the community. There will be an increase in the number of trains going through per day from 20 to 24; each running for 10-14 minutes. The Police are working with BSNF, CN and the City of Surrey. The same concerns have been addressed by Semiahmoo First Nation. With the increase of trains an Emergency preparedness plan will be looked into and running a “mock” scenario with the communities of Semiahmoo First Nation, White Rock and Crescent Beach will be considered. The High Rail program has been

running well and will continue run this summer.(Bylaws, traffic, open liquor, parties and fires have been addressed in the OPs plan)

**AT RISK SENIORS :** With the growing and aging population in the South Surrey area Community Social Agencies have expressed concern that they have seen an increase in senior victimization in Frauds and Scams, isolation, self-neglect and elder abuse. There has also been a number of traffic related incidents involving seniors who should be/have been recommended for a Superintendent of Motor Vehicles drivers re-test. Our Special Constable works closely with Peace Arch Hospital Elder Health and Geriatric Mental Health to connect at risk seniors with proper medical and home support, and offers support to these agencies with seniors that they observed as being victims' of Fraud or elder abuse. The Officer also provides support through educational programs which include Mature Drivers, Frauds and Scams/Identity Theft/Personal Safety and well-being visits

## **CONCLUSION**

Community Consultation will be address through further development of a separate representative CCG. A separate business community outreach process is also under development. Wherever required these groups will collapse on an issue however clear separate reporting lines are essential to ensure the interests and abilities of each group (service providers, residential /community group, businesses) are supported/leveraged.

There are differences in D3 to the approach D1 takes with the engagement of an "Integrated Service Team" vs a CCG or a business liaison process. The NIST does not function as a CCG in D3.

This is a work in progress in D3 as we move to establishing clear roles and expectations of each community engagement piece. Included in this process will be clear terms of reference and effective recording instruments to track action taken/results.

Community engagement and relationship building are critical to maintaining public confidence and trust in police, and ultimately, police effectiveness.

Bill Fordy  
Chief Superintendent  
Officer in Charge, Surrey Detachment