

NO: **P012**

DATE: **October 26, 2015**

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **October 26, 2015**

FROM: **Bill Fordy, Chief Superintendent
Officer in Charge, Surrey RCMP**

FILE: **7400-01**

SUBJECT: **Community Safety Village**

RECOMMENDATION

The Surrey RCMP recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Send a City of Surrey delegation comprised of representatives of Mayor and Council and City staff to see such programs first hand in other Canadian communities, particularly Waterloo, York, and Calgary.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide general information on the “Safety Village” concept based on experiences in other Canadian communities and on considerations for adopting a “Community Safety Village” in the City. The creation of a “Community Safety Village” would be keeping with the City and the RCMP’s efforts to engage our community and to enhance our efforts to proactively reduce crime and increase community wellness.

BACKGROUND

The “Safety Village” concept is about delivering interactive, hands-on educational opportunities to teach safety skills to children. While there are variations in the range of safety courses and programs offered across villages, all of them engage and teach children in a controlled environment that simulates safety hazards found in everyday life. Typically, Safety Villages have child-size buildings and cars, bicycles; detailed roadways; sidewalks; functioning traffic lights, crosswalks signals, and railway crossings, as well as classrooms with replicas of potential safety hazards in homes.

In Canada, there are currently at least 15 Safety Villages—9 in Ontario, 4 in Alberta, and 1 in British Columbia. Surrey RCMP conducted preliminary research and visits to select Safety Villages to gather information, learn from their experiences, and determine potential for adoption in the City. Preliminary data gathering covered four jurisdictions in Ontario (Waterloo, London, Windsor, Brantford and Brant County); meanwhile, visits were done to Safety Villages at Halton, Waterloo, and York in Ontario, as well as at Calgary in Alberta.

DISCUSSION

A “Community Safety Village” in Surrey

The “Safety Village” concept aligns well with the City of Surrey’s commitment to public safety. This initiative means creating a venue to consolidate, institutionalize, and scale safety training programs in the City starting with those around road and fire safety.

A “Community Safety Village” with a broader mandate than a typical Safety Village could further the potential impact of such an initiative in Surrey. Given other relevant community safety issues in the City, there could be significant value in considering the expansion of the typical scope of training programs to cover issues like drugs, domestic violence, and bullying. Furthermore, there could also be significant value in considering a broader demographic for such an initiative to cater beyond elementary school students (which is the norm for Safety Villages) and include the general public, especially subgroups like newcomers to Canada who can benefit from an interactive orientation on police, fire, and emergency services in the City.

Key Role of the City of Surrey

The City has a key role to play in launching and sustaining a “Community Safety Village”. From information gathered through experiences of existing Villages in other jurisdictions, the following are areas where the City can be instrumental in shaping the “Community Safety Village”: physical infrastructure, safety training curriculum, and resource generation.

1. Physical Infrastructure: Land, Buildings, and Roads

Most Safety Villages appear to operate within 1 to 5 acres of land, which are either donated or leased by provincial, regional, or municipal governments. The location of donated/leased land tend to vary, but recommendations from existing Villages suggest that the long-term sustainability of this initiative can be facilitated by annexing it to an existing facility, which could help minimize operating and maintenance costs (e.g., cleaning, utilities, insurance, etc.).

Meanwhile, the actual need for buildings (including classrooms), roads, and other infrastructure would depend on the requirements for delivering the overall safety training curriculum that will be developed for the Community Safety Village.

2. Safety Training Curriculum

The safety training curriculum of Safety Villages is delivered only by uniformed personnel from police, fire, and emergency services. For a Community Safety Village in Surrey, the City would be well positioned to help mobilize key resources and stakeholders around determining the scope of the overall training program and the responsibility sharing for its delivery.

3. Resource Generation

Fundraising would be necessary to initiate a Community Safety Village in Surrey. Based on experiences of other Safety Villages, such initiative could require an initial capital investment of at least \$1.5 million (depending on the scope of infrastructure requirements). The amount of time that others have taken for the planning, fundraising, and building of a Safety Village has ranged from 2 to 5 years.

Because safety training programs are typically offered with little to zero cost of attendance, staffing the Community Safety Village would be required especially for the purpose of ongoing resource generation.

From Surrey RCMP's research and visits, it is recommended for Safety Villages and interactive safety training programs sites in the following communities to be visited in exact order:

1. Waterloo, ON (www.waterlooregioncsv.com),
2. York, ON (<http://www.yrp.ca/en/community/community-safety-village.asp?mid=316>), and
3. Calgary, AB (<http://www.calgarysafetycouncil.com/CSCSafetyCityPedestrian.htm> and <http://www.youthlinkcalgary.com>).

CONCLUSION

Building a "Community Safety Village" in Surrey is presented for consideration given its potential contribution in promoting public safety in the City. To facilitate a better understanding of Safety Villages, site visits to see existing programs first hand are recommended for a delegation comprising of myself, representatives of Mayor and Council, and of City Staff. After having attended the Safety Villages with the delegation, a more fulsome strategy and report with respect to the creation of a "Community Safety Village" will be prepared.



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