

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, MAY 7, 2001

SAFE CITY COMMITTEE REPORT REGARDING A SAFETY REVIEW OF ALL CITY PARKS AND WALKWAYS

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services in consultation with the Director of Public Works, the Director of Recreation and Culture, the Director of Buildings and Facilities, the Director of Legal Services, the Manager of Urban Design, and the Manager of By-Law Enforcement recommends:

That staff continue to work with the Community Oriented Response Unit (COR) of York Regional Police to implement a coordinated patrol of parks, open spaces and community centre parking lots;

And that staff continue to work with York Regional Police's Crime Prevention Officer in order to identify potential park locations for review and recommendations regarding park re-design;

And that staff continue to contact the appropriate school board officials if it becomes apparent that there are problems in particular school parking lots after hours;

And that staff continue to use the design principles and guidelines as outlined by CEPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

Background

At its meeting of October 10, 2000, Council endorsed the recommendation of the Safe City Committee which in part stated "that the Commissioner of Community Services be directed to coordinate a staff report to address the recommendations of the Committee". The Safe City Committee had a list of eleven recommendations, which are included in the item attached as Appendix A.

Staff from Parks, Recreation, Buildings and Facilities, By-Law Enforcement and Urban Design has been working on various aspects of the recommendations that came out of the previous Safe City Committee. Meetings have been held with York Regional Police Community Oriented Response Unit (COR), and with their Crime Prevention Officer for this area. Urban Design staff has attended information sessions on CEPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design); and are incorporating the principles into new park designs. Parks staff has indicated various park locations to the Crime Prevention Officer for review. By-Law staff has worked out a coordinated strategy with the Police in order to provide coordinated parks patrols. Parks, Recreation, Facilities, and By-Law Enforcement staff has met with the City's security patrol company to ensure the roles and responsibilities are clear.

There have also been discussions with school board staff from both the Public Board and the Catholic Board regarding methods of reducing and controlling incidents on their properties in conjunction with the City. There is also an item on the agenda of the first School Board Liaison Committee to be held later this month, dealing with the issues identified by the Safe City Committee.

Parks and walkways are continuously being monitored in terms of lighting issues and "hidden corners" to try to improve the safety of users. Security cameras have been installed in one park and a second installation is scheduled for this year. Community Centres are being outfitted with security cameras at a rate of at least one facility per year. All new facilities have security cameras included in the budget.

At the initial meeting of the newly appointed Safe City Committee, the recommendations of the previous committee were discussed. It was decided that a future meeting would be held at the York Regional Police District 4 building, and, at that meeting the Crime Prevention Officer and representatives for the COR unit would be invited to speak to the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas
Commissioner of Community Services

Item 1, CW Report No. 77 – Page 2

6. That a time frame for completion of the project, the resources necessary to achieve the desired results and a schedule for annual review of the established and new park areas for compliance be established.
7. That the School Boards be encouraged to review remedies to trespass problems on School Board property.
8. That the School Boards through the City/School Board Liaison Committee be encouraged to post the appropriate signs that prohibit unauthorized activity on school board property at a time the school boards feel it would be necessary.
9. That the School Boards be encouraged to close parking lots of schools after school hours where loitering and disturbance to residents becomes problematic.
10. That the York Regional Police Force and the Police Services Board be requested to allocate more resources to the Police COR Units specifically to provide additional officers to patrol parks and other public areas during summer months.
11. That the possibility of establishing pay phones near remote City bus shelters so they become “safe zones” where the public would be able to make 911 calls in emergency situations be reviewed.

These recommendations involve a number of departments and agencies and require coordination for a complete review of the suggestions.