

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) – APRIL 1, 2008

STATUS UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND SECURITY

Recommendation

The City Manager and the Senior Management Team recommend that:

1. This report outlining the measures undertaken to-date to implement the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security be received;
2. That the City's existing Vaughan Safe City Committee be recognized as the lead with respect to addressing the outstanding recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety;
3. That the Vaughan Safe City Committee report back to Council with a revised mandate to reflect the additional responsibilities;
4. The Vaughan Safe City Committee be augmented by the appointment of three (3) additional members of Council to accommodate this additional responsibility;
5. Appropriate City Staff be consulted to provide input into the initiatives proposed by the Safe City Committee, prior to proceeding to Council;
6. The York Regional Police be requested to establish a Grow-Up Registry and that a letter be prepared to formalize this request.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from the adoption of this report. The on-going implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force may have implications for the future budgets of the affected City departments.

Communications Plan

Not applicable.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update on the actions taken by the City to implement the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security; and
- Assign responsibilities to the City's existing Safe City Committee rather than creating a "Community Safety Committee" as recommended by the Task Force.

Background – Analysis and Options

a) **Background**

On October 31, 2005 Council approved the creation of the Mayor's Task Force on Safety and Security in Vaughan. The purpose of the Task Force was to develop recommendations regarding safety and security by focusing on education, prevention and

community participation. Mr. Julian Fantino was appointed Chair of the Task Force, with the power to appoint the Task Force's members. The Task Force was also mandated to recommend Terms of Reference to Council.

A total of twenty-one people representing key stakeholder groups were appointed. The Terms of Reference, which were approved by Council on February 13, 2006, focused on the development of recommendations which would:

1. Supplement, assist and support the work of existing public safety authorities by addressing real or perceived public safety concerns.
2. Through a community based consultative approach, identify gaps and promote established community-based safety initiatives City wide.
3. Develop practical recommendations to be delivered to the Mayor and Members of Council for approval;
4. Assist in the timely implementation of the Task Force recommendations approved by Council.

The Task Force conducted a series of meetings, community consultations, surveys and research to assist in developing the recommendations. The Task Force focused on linked issues, that not only affect safety and security, but also impact on socio-economic conditions, traffic management, planning and the physical characteristics of neighbourhoods. Recommendations were developed in the following thematic areas:

- Awareness, Education and Communication;
- Building Neighbourhoods;
- Crime Prevention Through Social Development;
 - Children and youth
 - The vulnerable
 - The elderly
- Cyber Crime and Fraud
- Emergency Preparedness
- Engaging Business
- Environmental Design
- Hate Related Incidents
- Supporting Strong Political Leadership
- Traffic Safety/Management
- Quality of Life

The Task Force adopted the concept that, "community safety is everyone's responsibility, and crime prevention is everyone's business". This approach is consistent with Council's view and the Declaration of Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities approved by Council on February 28, 2005. The Task Force focused on the collateral issues that are linked to the cycle of crime (cause and effect) and public safety/quality of life issues. Four criteria were identified as necessary to achieving positive outcomes:

1. The cause of the problems that contribute to the erosion of community safety must be identified in order to define the appropriate community based solutions;
2. A community-based shared vision must be developed with strategies, including the allocation of resources, program implementation and the identification of measurable results;
3. Community-wide mobilization including the private and corporate sectors, schools, churches, governments and institutions must be achieved with all parties being committed to working together;
4. Dynamic and visionary leaders who are capable of leading, promoting and championing the dream, who reflect the diversity of Vaughan and who can lead, communicate and motivate the entire community.

On September 25, 2006 Council considered the Task Force's report, entitled, "My Safe Vaughan: Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety & Security". Council adopted the following motion:

1. That the attached submission from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security, dated September 18, 2006, be received; and
2. That Vaughan Council support and implement the eleven (11) recommendations contained therein.

On November 12, 2007, Council adopted a recommendation from Committee of the Whole that staff provide a report on the status of the recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security. This report is prepared in response to the request.

b) Recommendations of the Task Force

The full text of the Task Force's recommendations are appended as Attachment No. 1 ("My Safe Vaughan: Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety & Security", Submission to the City of Vaughan Council, September 18, 2006, pp. 20 – 31). The recommendations are listed below.

1. Institute a Community Safety Committee;
2. Hire a Full-Time Safety & Security Coordinator;
3. Enhance the Implementation and Support of Neighbourhood Centred Programs
4. Enhance Capacity of By-law Enforcement Officials
5. Establish a Grow-Op Registry
6. Enhance Community Safety and Crime Prevention through environmental or urban design
7. Establish a Community Safety Website
8. Encourage stronger relationships between neighbours
9. Undertake a Comprehensive Traffic Safety Study
10. Designate Drug Free Zones 1000 ft. Radius of Schools, Parks and Other City Owned Public Access Facilities
11. Encourage and Support Council to increase the presence of strong comprehensive youth, seniors and women's services delivered by not for profit organizations in Vaughan

c) City Initiatives Implementing the Recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force

York Regional Police have reported that from 2002 to 2006 York Region had the lowest rate of crimes against persons and properties and total criminal code offences in the GTA. The overall crime rate in the Region dropped 6.6% from 2006 to 2007, which is the fourth consecutive year that the crime rate had decreased.

Since Council's September 25, 2006 decision to implement the eleven recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Safety and Security the City has continued to work with York Regional Police and continued its efforts to improve community safety and security

measures through on-going upgrades to services and facilities and the work of the Safe City Committee.

In addition, Vaughan Vision 2020, the City's Strategic Plan, was approved by Council in December of 2007. Enhancing and ensuring community safety, health and wellness is one of the objectives of Vaughan Vision 2020. The plan provides for the creation of, "a long-term strategy to ensure citizens are safe and have access to safety education programs (partnership with York Regional Police as the support agency)".

Vaughan Vision's long-term strategy is consistent with many aspects of the Task Force's work, which provides for a systematic and enduring approach to citizen safety. Community safety and security is an important quality of life consideration. It affects people's sense of well-being on a day-to-day basis and it is a decision-factor in choosing a location to live, work and invest.

The City's initiatives are discussed below, with reference to the relevant Task Force recommendation.

i. Task Force Recommendation No. 1 (Institute a Community Safety Committee)

The City of Vaughan, the Enforcement Services Department and other departments are represented on a number of committees designed to solicit and share information with the public or staff on matters relating to community safety issues and programs. These include:

- City of Vaughan Safe City Committee
- York Regional Police 4 District Community Liaison Committee
- Council/School Board Liaison Committee
- York Region Lower Tier Municipal – Police Working Group

The Director of Enforcement Services is an active member of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police Crime Prevention Committee. Information that is available for distribution from this venue is forwarded to the Safe City Committee.

As noted, it is a priority of the City of Vaughan Strategic Plan (Vaughan Vision 2020) that Enforcement Services develop a long term strategy, in partnership with York Regional Police as a support agency, to ensure citizens are safe and have access to safety education programs. The development of this initiative is now in its early stages.

In order to proceed with the implementation of the Task Force's remaining recommendations, it would be desirable to work within a committee structure. The Task Force recommended the creation of a new Community Safety Committee. Currently, Vaughan has a Safe City Committee. It is composed of citizen representatives and members of Council, and its operations are supported by staff. The current membership is as follows:

Councillor Bernie Di Vona, Chair	Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco	Mr. Tony Alati	Dr. Raphael Awachie	Ms. Paula Mattiassi Biro
Ms. Angela Bucci	Mr. Ben Iammatteo	Mr. Atul Kohli	Mr. Anthony Lascala	Mr. Simon Lloyd

Rather than appointing a new Community Safety Committee, it would be appropriate to build on the existing framework provided by the Safe City Committee and include the implementation of the Task Force's outstanding recommendations under its mandate. This would be beneficial as it draws upon the Safe City Committee's expertise and experience

in this area. In addition, this approach would not require the additional time and resources that would be involved in establishing and supporting a separate new committee. It is also recommended that an additional three members of Council be appointed to the Safe City Committee to support the committee's work, broaden its representation and recognize the importance attached to issues of safety and security.

For the Safe City Committee to proceed on this basis it would have to address a number of governance issues. These include:

Amending the Safe City Committee's mandate: The committee's mandate and terms of reference would have to be amended to reflect the new responsibilities and additional membership.

Staffing/financial resources needed to run the Committee: As a result of the change in mandate, consideration should be given to the required staff or financial resources needed to support the work of the committee. Close consultation with staff will be important in order to investigate the financial and or staffing implications of any of the measures that are being considered.

Role of the Committee in the implementation of Vaughan Vision 2020: Consideration will need to be given to the role that the Committee may play in developing a long-term strategy to ensure that citizens are safe and have access to safety education programs. The Safe City Committee could be a participant in the plan's development. The outcome of this evaluation would need to be reflected in the Committee's mandate.

Will the Safe City Committee continue to be a Committee of Council or move toward a "Safe City Association" with a "Safe Community" designation under the auspices of Safe Communities Canada: While it is anticipated that it would continue to be a Committee of Council, it would be worthwhile examining the Safe Community model as a possible long-term objective. It has been adopted in 53 municipalities across Canada and it could also be the model that the Committee transitions to over time.

For maximum benefit, the City's community safety and security initiatives will need to be transparent, well-publicized and comprehensively planned and delivered. This would be an appropriate time to review the current situation and develop a more encompassing management structure for the future.

In order to move forward, it is recommended that:

- That the City's existing Vaughan Safe City Committee be recognized as the lead with respect to addressing the outstanding recommendations from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety;
 - The Vaughan Safe City Committee be augmented by the appointment of three (3) additional members of Council to accommodate this additional responsibility.
- ii. Task Force Recommendation No. 2 (Hire a Full Time Safety & Security Coordinator)

As outlined above, Enforcement Services staff are already represented on a number of committees. This role could ultimately fall within the mandate of a staff person with a Safe City Association. No funds have been allocated for additional staff resources at this time.

There is no direct link to Enforcement Services except for the fact that Enforcement Services is involved in delivering some community safety programs, such as, Park Ambassadors, Road Watch, Park Patrol, and School Board Liaison.

iii. Task Force Recommendation No. 3 (Enhance the Implementation and Support of Neighbourhood Centred Programs)

The City of Vaughan Strategic Plan has a priority for Enforcement Services to develop a long term strategy in partnership with York Regional Police as a support agency to ensure citizens are safe and have access to safety educations programs. This recommendation is similar in scope the Strategic Plan deliverable for Enforcement Services.

York Regional Police has ownership of these programs at a Regional level; there is sufficient interest to move forward with this initiative and its development the early stages.

iv. Recommendation No. 4 (Enhance the Capacity of By-law Enforcement Officials)

Enforcement Services operates on a 24/7 basis. After 4:30pm, until 11:00pm, call taking and dispatch services are undertaken by Public Works. After 11:00pm, calls from the public for Enforcement Services are transferred to an answering service. These calls are faxed to the department the following morning. There is no direct dispatching of calls. Extension of the dispatching services would require additional budgeted resources of approximately 2-3 FTE's

Enforcement Services' Special Enforcement Unit patrols parks and trail systems on bicycles and in 4X4 trucks. These patrols have the potential to locate members of the public in distress. In the past, these vehicles have transported individuals out of the open spaces or trails to emergency services waiting at a public access location. Enforcement Services and Vaughan Fire and Rescue are already in talks to place defibrillators in the Special Enforcement Vehicles, along with the associated training and communications strategies and protocols. This could be expected to be completed in 2008.

v. Recommendation No. 5 (Establish a Grow-Op Registry)

Although there is a requirement for Police Services to notify municipalities of the location of grow-ops, the police are the keepers of all the information and as such, they should be the agency to establish and maintain such a registry.

City of Vaughan investigates grow-ops reported by the police in a coordinated effort. The locations of these properties are entered in the Complaint Tracking System. Although not available for public viewing, members of the public can contact Enforcement Services, Building, or Fire and inquire as to whether a specific address was investigated as a grow op.

All involved departments place applicable Orders on title of the property, in order to provide information to prospective purchasers of the deficiencies discovered. These Orders stay on title until such time as the deficiencies have been remediated to the satisfaction of the departments involved. This is usually done through certificates from engineers, be it structural, electrical, or environmental.

It is recommended that York Regional Police be requested to establish a "Grow-Op Registry" and that a letter by sent formalize this request.

vi. Recommendation No. 6 (Enhance Community Safety and Crime Prevention through environmental or urban design)

Parking Enforcement takes an active role in attempting to reduce illegal on street parking, and all other parking violations on a 24/7 basis.

Enforcement staff does, from time to time, attend community meetings in respect of park concerns. These concerns can be related to designs, and recommendations are made from an enforcement point of view.

Recommendation 6 provides that Vaughan planners be trained in CPTED (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) and that there be consultation with the police with a view to incorporating additional design features in residential neighbourhoods. A number of steps have already been taken in this area.

In regard to CPTED training, all Urban Design staff members have taken the Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Level 1 Course at Sheridan College.

Staff from the Urban Design Division has prepared the policy entitled "City of Vaughan CPTED General Guidelines in The Development Application Review Process". This document was endorsed by City Council on April 10, 2007 and since May 1, 2007 staff has employed these Council approved CPTED guidelines to evaluate development applications.

It is not practice to circulate development applications to the York Regional Police as it is understood that a single officer provides assistance to all York Region municipalities on CPTED matters. Given that CPTED guidelines have been approved by Council and they are being used in the application review process, it is not practice to circulate to the police who are not sufficiently resourced in this area.

The Task Force is recommending the implementation of a policy requiring sidewalks on all residential streets to ensure the safety of pedestrians. Council has a comprehensive policy on the placement of sidewalks on streets. The policy was developed to identify which streets required sidewalks on both sides, on one side or not at all depending on pedestrian and traffic volumes and or walking routes to schools, parks etc.

Recommendation 6 also suggests that street widths be reviewed to determine if reduced widths contribute to congestion, which could result in safety issues. The City's street widths reflect alternative development standards that are well established and used in many municipalities in the province. The City has developed standards for various classifications of roadway to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for pedestrians and vehicles, to provide for adequate emergency vehicle access and for the City to conduct its snow ploughing and garbage collection operations. As rear laneways have proven to be problematic in conducting these municipal operations, the use of rear laneways is being kept to a minimum in new developments.

vii. Recommendation No. 7 (Establish a Community Safety Website)

The Enforcement Services Department created its own website in 2007. The City of Vaughan Strategic Plan has as a priority for Enforcement Services the development of a long-term strategy in partnership with York Regional Police, as a support agency, to ensure citizens are safe and have access to safety education programs. This website may play a role in the roll-out of this initiative.

A Vaughan Safe City Association would presumably have a website. That site could possibly be the host for information envisioned by this recommendation.

viii. Recommendation No. 8 (Encourage stronger relationships between neighbours)

The Task Force sees stronger relationships among neighbours as contributing to and increased sense of belonging and community ownership. Recommendation 8 suggests that community events (e.g. block parties/picnics) organized by ratepayer organizations be

encouraged by the waiving of permit fees. Council has eliminated the requirement for noise monitoring for street or block parties, therefore making them less expensive to organize.

ix. Recommendation No. 9 (Undertake a Comprehensive Traffic Safety Study)

City Engineering staff do review speed limits on an ongoing basis, both in response to inquiries and on a proactive basis. Speed limits are established in new subdivisions to reflect school locations and other conditions. Unfortunately motorists often seem to believe that when a speed limit sign is not posted there is no speed limit on the street. The Highway Traffic Act provides that the speed limit in urban areas is 50 km/hr and in rural areas is 80 km/hr unless otherwise posted. It should also be recognized that while the public may demand reduced speed limits on some roadways, the proliferation of reduced speed zones in areas where not warranted will detract from the importance of compliance with reduced speeds in areas where warranted (e.g. in school zones).

There are many unwarranted stop signs across the City which, while not recommended by staff, have been approved in response to demands from the public to slow traffic. Unfortunately, this approach causes some drivers to “coast” through stop signs and actually reduces safety in the area. The use of unwarranted stop signs is discouraged.

So as not to impact emergency vehicle response times and bus routes, Council has imposed a moratorium on vertical traffic calming devices (speed bumps, raised pedestrian crossings) and these are no longer being offered as alternatives in new traffic calming plans on certain streets.

Traffic signs are located in accordance with the Highway Traffic Act and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices so that the signs are placed in appropriate locations. If staff becomes aware that a traffic sign has been placed in an inappropriate location, staff either arranges for its relocation or instructs the developer to relocate the offending sign.

x. Recommendation No. 10 (Designate Drug Free Zones, 1000 ft radius of Schools, Parks, and other City Owned Public Access Facilities)

The City, through the Enforcement Services Department, takes the presence of illegal drugs in and around parks and community centres very seriously, and intervenes on every occasion where illegal narcotics are noted.

However, the City's authority to deal with drugs is limited.

The designation of “drug free zones” may imply that drugs are not as restricted outside of such zones. Provincial and Federal legislation would be required to influence sentencing in the courts.

xi. Recommendation No. 11 (Encourage and support Council to increase the presence of strong, comprehensive youth, seniors, and women's services delivered by not for profit organizations in Vaughan)

This recommendation states that the community must identify and seek to respond to the current and emerging needs of the vulnerable members of society. This includes children and youth, seniors and women who are victims of violence. The need for a women's shelter should be considered and supported.

On February 26, 2007 Council approved the recommendations of the final report of the Mayor's Task Force on Women's Shelter Needs. It determined that the needs of domestic violence victims were not being met and that the solution would be best addressed by establishing a shelter in the City of Vaughan.

Since February 2007, the development of the shelter has been led by private citizens. Progress has been made. In late summer of 2007 meetings were held between the organizers and staff to resolve issues relating to the conversion of an existing dwelling into a shelter use. In addition, the City Manager met with the proponent's consultant in December of 2007.

The required work was identified and the permit was applied for on January 10, 2008 and was issued on January 14, 2008. In addition, the City Manager has also offered to assist, if requested, should any meetings be necessary with the Provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with the following Vaughan Vision 2020 policy:

Enhance and Ensure Community Safety, Health and Wellness

- Create a long term strategy to ensure citizens are safe and have access to safety education programs (partnership with York Regional Police as the support agency).

Regional Implications

Not applicable at this time.

Conclusion

Community safety is a universal concern. It is an important consideration for municipalities and the City has been continually improving community safety and security measures through on-going upgrades to services and facilities and through the work of the Safe City Committee.

To move ahead with the outstanding recommendations of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security it is recommended that this responsibility be assigned to the Vaughan Safe City Committee. To further broaden the representation on the Safe City Committee, it would be augmented by the addition of three additional (3) members of Council. The Safe City Committee's mandate would be amended to reflect these changes and to address a number of related governance issues. The Committee would then report to Council at first opportunity regarding the implementation of the outstanding recommendations.

Task Force Recommendation No. 1 calls for the creation of a new Community Safety Committee. Rather than appointing an entirely new Committee, it would be appropriate to build on the framework provided by the Safe City Committee. It would also be beneficial to draw upon the Safe City Committee's expertise and experience in this area. Also, this approach would not require the additional time and work that would be involved in striking a new committee.

In response to Task Force Recommendation No. 5 it is also recommended that the York Region Police be requested to establish a Grow-Op Registry and that a letter be prepared to formalize this request.

On this basis, it is recommended that the recommendations provided above be approved.

Attachments

1. Excerpt from the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety & Security – Submission to the City of Vaughan Council, dated September 18, 2006: Full text of the "Recommendations" (pp. 20 – 31)

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Respectfully submitted,

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Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works

John Zipay
Commissioner of Planning

Recommendations:

The Task force presents the following recommendations for implementation:

RECOMMENDATION No. 1

Institute a Community Safety Committee:

There is a growing body of evidence that supports community initiatives as an effective strategy to build resilience to crime. The support for strength-based approaches speaks directly to the power of a mobilized and engaged community.

As any community grows, the increasing level of individual autonomy and the decreasing interpersonal relationships between neighbours work to increase a community's vulnerability to incidents of crime and risks to personal safety.

Current research speaks to the correlation between rapid and significant urban growth and the incidents of crime. Vaughan's rapid growth has outpaced the community's ability to form connections and relationships that are part of an established long-term neighbourhood's strengths and natural resiliencies.

Seniors who are isolated and autonomous are far more vulnerable to fraud and abuse than those who have daily interactions and relationships with their neighbours. Youth who have few if any opportunities to engage in meaningful activities, build relationships with adults and who lack a sense of community membership are far more likely to be at risk for violence and crime.

The Task Force understands that significant neighbourhood resiliency and strength is born of connections, multiple levels of relationships and a strong sense of membership among its citizens. If we also understand that these natural systems evolve over years, we then can conclude that there is a gap between the recent population and housing growth and the emergence of neighbourhood connectivity in the City of Vaughan.

The move to establish a Community Safety Committee is a strategy to expedite and foster the development of crime resiliency in Vaughan through facilitated and supported projects and initiatives.

By building the foundation of the Community Safety Committee upon the existing assets within our community and by focusing on what is positive and possible, we will build our capacity and confidence.

A Proposed Operating Doctrine for the Community Safety Committee:

It is only those initiatives that are driven and owned by those who will benefit from them that are most successful. The intent of the Community Safety Committee is to facilitate and engage citizens in actions that are congruent with the assets and skills of the community and that are led by and owned by its citizens.

The Mission

As approved by Vaughan Council,

The Community Safety Committee will work to enhance safety, security and quality of life in the City of Vaughan;

The Community Safety Committee will work within the context of community action in cooperation with the citizenship of Vaughan;

The Community Safety Committee will seek to support and complement the efforts of such agencies as police services, court systems, and local, provincial and federal government departments.

The Challenge

The Community Safety Committee will endeavour to continually advance the safety, security and quality of life of Vaughan's citizen by:

Building strong relationships with Vaughan citizens and community leaders;

Establishing ongoing best practices to gather information and knowledge;

Identifying and mapping community assets;

Securing resources and support;

Mobilizing and facilitating local planning and implementation.

Guiding Values

Strength and resilience within a community is born of common beliefs and common goals and needs. Our standards of conduct for ourselves and for others come from our values.



Our research, and our discussions with the citizens of Vaughan about their concerns and wishes for a safe and secure community, can all be linked to what has emerged as our shared principles and expectations for ourselves and our neighbours.

While each group we spoke to and each person we had the opportunity to engage presented us with a range of issues, each could be linked to a belief in the following values:

Trustworthiness
Respect
Responsibility
Justice and Fairness
Caring
Citizenship

This common ground of values gives context to the safety and security concerns of our community.

Planning Principles

The following planning assumptions will guide the work of the Community Safety Committee:

❖ **Focus on the positive and the possible**

Strong healthy communities are more resilient to crime. Investment in prevention and strength-building programs provide significant returns. As individuals, we are more motivated to adopt behaviours when the reward is positive and can be celebrated. The continuation and acceleration of action of a community is energized through the current and continuing successes of its individuals.

❖ **Forward recommendations that are for the common person**

The Community Safety Committee will build expertise in the area of crime prevention and community safety. However, rarely do we find a “how-to” strategy built into research models that are appropriate to a diverse and complex system such as the city of Vaughan. The challenge therefore is to create initiatives that are designed for everyone to understand and that are meaningful to the existing activities in their daily lives.

❖ **Forward a framework that delivers simple information and works with little to few new resources to support action at all levels of the community**

Successful community mobilization is based upon creating action and change from within the existing resources and skills base. The Community Safety Committee will pursue programs that will have the best success in building safer communities and that will be complementary to the existing systems, capacities and resources found within our community.

❖ **See individual community members as the key leaders and participants in strength-based safe neighbourhood initiatives**

Inasmuch as agencies such as Police Departments, Boards of Education and Health Departments provide significant and important roles in community life, safe community programs are best grounded by seeking to focus and engage residents and neighbourhood ownership. Key service agencies play a supportive role in many of the most successful initiatives.

❖ **Seek Action that fits in today's community**

With increasing separation between where we earn our living and where we choose to live, the nature and role of community life is changing. The opportunities and conditions that we used to engage and develop our youth and to watch over our seniors that were part of community life 25 years ago are no longer commonplace in today's neighbourhoods. Families are more autonomous, few people know the names of their neighbours and our obligation to our work lives often precludes participation in community activities. Any designed initiative that seeks to promote strength-building must stress the importance of finding new ways to engage our vulnerable members in ways that are congruent with current community life.

❖ **Celebrate Success**

The value of celebration is a key component to social structures and how we as community impart our values and beliefs.

RECOMMENDATION No. 2

Hire a Full-Time Safety & Security Coordinator:

In order for the City of Vaughan to ensure ongoing progress, coordination and consistency of effort respecting the implementation of the recommendations advanced by the Task Force, it will be necessary for City Council to seriously consider the critical importance of designating a qualified point person to lead, organize and oversee the overall implementation of the Task Force's and other like and complementary recommendations.

Task Force recommends the hiring of a full-time suitably skilled employee (Safety & Security Coordinator) with assigned duties and responsibilities as follows:

1. Be the City's point of contact and liaison for the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security, the newly created Community Safety Committee, York Regional Police, school boards, community groups and any other entity having an interest or responsibility for public safety in the City of Vaughan;

2. Have overall responsibility to develop a business plan to implement the Task Force recommendations as approved by Council;
3. Provide regular updates to the City Manager (CAO) and Council on the progress of the implementation of the plan;
4. Identify sources of funding for community-based crime prevention and social development programs that can be implemented in the City of Vaughan;
5. Develop and implement a robust communications strategy of public safety information materials and delivery mechanisms directed to the citizens of Vaughan;
6. Any other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned by the City Manager.

RECOMMENDATION No. 3

Enhance the Implementation and Support of Neighbourhood Centred Programs:

The Task Force stresses the importance of well organized and supported community-based programs that have proven to be very effective in achieving enhanced safety and security in neighbourhoods. Traditionally, such established programs as Neighbourhood Watch, Road Watch, Character Community, Park Ambassadors and others are the primary responsibility of residents' associations and other volunteer organizations that rely on the local police for leadership, training and support.

In many cases these programs lack the community-based commitment, are not properly organized, lack leadership and are inadequately supported. Consequently, such programs simply die off and a significant public safety opportunity is missed as a result. The Task Force strongly believes that community safety is everyone's responsibility, and crime prevention is everyone's business.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends that, through the efforts of the newly created Community Safety Committee with the leadership of the Safety and Security Coordinator and the support of the York Regional Police and other organizations, these programs must be supported and/or reinvigorated in the City of Vaughan.

RECOMMENDATION No. 4

Enhance Capacity of By-law Enforcement Officials:

Vandalism and disturbances in or near city parks are usually youth-related crimes. The Park Ambassador Program, which emphasizes the joint efforts of citizens and park officials, has been an excellent tool in promoting park safety and security. In 2002, complaints dropped from 600 calls to 350 calls and there was a significant reduction in vandalism. The implementation of a By-law enforcement van with a security camera has also been an excellent tool to address issues of youth crime. Currently, the By-law Enforcement dispatch service is administered through Public Works and ceases to take calls at 11:00 p.m. each night. This presents not only a safety gap, but also an unnecessary use of police resources after 11:00 p.m. Therefore, the Task Force recommends the implementation of extended dispatch service for such time as found to be necessary. Doing so would increase community confidence and sense of security and enhance the success of the existing programs.

By-law Enforcement 4x4 vehicles also patrol the trail system in large parks and conservation areas. The trail system is not accessible to transport Fire & EMS officials because the trails are too narrow for their vehicles and equipment. Many times the 4x4 park Unit Vehicles are the first and only vehicles able to access and respond to emergencies requiring defibrillators. The Task Force recommends that Council conduct a study on the advisability of installing defibrillation machines in City of Vaughan Park Unit Vehicles and providing proper training in the use of same, together with the development of a communication strategy.

RECOMMENDATION No. 5

Establish a Grow-Op Registry:

The Task Force is aware of the proliferation of "grow ops" in Vaughan and strongly urges Council to study the possibility of creating a "Grow Op Registry". The purpose of the Registry would be to create a public record, accessible for examination by the public during normal business hours, listing all buildings in Vaughan that have been raided and identified by Police as "Grow Ops". The Task Force feels it is important that the public be able to identify known "Grow Ops". The use of a premises as a "grow op" can and usually does result in the premises becoming a hazardous environment, in terms of the development of mould and the possible consequences resulting from the dangerous manipulation of electrical wiring.

RECOMMENDATION No. 6

Enhance Community Safety and Crime Prevention through environmental or urban design:

Crime and Personal Safety top the list of most important issues facing Vaughan residents according to the POLLARA Survey completed in March, 2006. Community Safety and Security concerns can be addressed, in part, through the implementation of environmental design features. While City Planners currently receive some form of training in safety design consideration, the Task Force recommends that this training be supplemented with crime prevention training and enhanced consultation with the police, with a view to incorporating additional design features in residential neighbourhoods to further address such concepts as "Eyes on the Street", improved lighting, and other burglar-proofing and safety features.

Road safety is another personal safety issue in residential subdivisions. The Task Force recommends the implementation of a policy requiring sidewalks on all residential streets to ensure the safety of pedestrians, especially young children. Reduced street widths and on-street parking on those streets with reduced widths should be reviewed with a view to ascertaining whether they are contributing factors to street congestion in residential neighbourhoods, resulting in safety issues, both vehicular and pedestrian, increased emergency response times and snow plowing and snow removal concerns.

Also, fire departments have been requesting legislation requiring the installation of sprinkler systems in all residential homes, thereby substantially reducing personal injury, death and property damage caused by fires in homes. The Task Force recommends the endorsement and support of any proposals requiring the installation of sprinkler systems in all new and retrofitted residential developments.

RECOMMENDATION No. 7

Establish a Community Safety Website:

The Task Force recognizes that a safe and secure community cannot be achieved without stakeholder participation. In order to engage the community, the City of Vaughan must promote an "Awareness, Education and Communication" campaign. This can most effectively be accomplished through the establishment of a community safety webpage on the City of Vaughan website. The webpage should, among other things:

1. provide links to York Regional Police, local school boards, Emergency Management Ontario, the National Crime Prevention Centre and the York Region Character Community Council and Emergency Management Ontario;
2. provide tips and updated information on the prevention of hate crimes, cyber crime, seniors' exploitation, child sexual exploitation, charge/credit/debit card fraud, burglary, domestic abuse and property crime prevention, etc.;
3. highlight community success stories and provide opportunities for other jurisdictions to share their success stories with the City of Vaughan, for example, Rev. Eugene Rivers and the "Boston Miracle";
4. provide instruction and up-to-date advice on emergency preparedness, allergy awareness, crisis assistance and addiction treatment facilities; and
5. promote a culture of safety and encourage tolerance and respect for ethnic diversity.

The Task Force recognizes that senior citizens may not have access to computers or may not be computer-literate, and accordingly suggests that an alternative method for delivering the "Awareness, Education and Communication" campaign be undertaken, such as the delivery of the information with utility bills, seminar presentations at senior citizen residences, etc.

The Task Force also recommends that the City of Vaughan encourage the local media to highlight community and/or York Region success stories in order to address real and perceived notions of community safety.

Lastly, in order to ensure citizen co-operation in police investigations, the Task Force recommends that the City of Vaughan, in consultation with the York Region Police, explore the establishment of new avenues of communication so that citizens can quickly and safely assist in providing police with information.

RECOMMENDATION No. 8

Encourage stronger relationships between neighbours:

Stronger relationships among neighbours inevitably lead residents to an increased sense of belonging and ownership in their own community. The Task Force supports all opportunities that engage residents together in social and recreational activities, and would encourage the City to review its policies to ensure the enhancement and encouragement of such community events. In order to support such events, the Task Force recommends providing incentives for residents to familiarize themselves with their neighbours by waiving permit fees for registered ratepayer associations who organize neighbourhood picnics and block parties. Further, the Task Force suggests the City review its fee schedules for public facilities to determine if costs discourage volunteer organizations from performing community services.

RECOMMENDATION No. 9

Undertake a Comprehensive Traffic Safety Study:

Traffic safety represents an issue of major concern to the citizens of Vaughan. It impacts everyone from children and the elderly who are forced to walk on the street because there are no sidewalks available to emergency responders who are impeded by the proliferation of speed bumps and restricted roadway allowances in neighbourhoods.

Many traffic safety problems, including the inconsistency of speed limits and signage, also create confusion, to the degree that driver behaviour then becomes an added aggravation.

In the spirit of recommending a comprehensive approach to meaningful problem solving, the Task Force considers traffic safety to be dependent on three primary considerations:

- 1) The availability and characteristics of vehicle and pedestrian access and transit routes;
- 2) The regulations that control the use of said routes; and
- 3) The behaviour of people: drivers and pedestrians.

The pursuit of enhanced traffic safety depends on much more than police enforcement, although the Task Force highly supports the efforts of the York Regional Police in this regard. However, it is felt that much more needs to be done to address the following areas that, in one way or another, diminish traffic safety in the City of Vaughan, namely:

- a) inconsistent and irrational speed limits on certain roadways;
- b) the proliferation of stop signs as a means to slow the movement of traffic, as opposed to facilitating the safe access and transit of vehicles and pedestrians travelling through intersections;
- c) the inappropriate use of speed-calming measures (speed bumps) that, among other problems, actually result in reduced response times for emergency response vehicles;
- d) neighbourhoods where the narrow road allowance along with related inadequate vehicle parking contribute to a very serious problem impeding the travel of emergency response vehicles (fire, police, EMS);
- e) inadequate provision of vehicle parking facilities, especially in many new neighbourhoods;
- f) no sidewalks, forcing pedestrians to travel on roadways among moving and parked vehicles, also creating added traffic congestion in school zones where children and parents would otherwise have to walk on the roadway;
- g) the proliferation of illegal advertising signage either obstructing the driver's view or actually defacing traffic control signs; and
- h) the unsafe placement of traffic signs.

The Task Force is cognizant of the fact that traffic safety issues are regulated by a combination of city, regional and provincial authorities.

However, the Task Force recommends that the City of Vaughan undertake as a priority a comprehensive traffic safety study/research intended to develop an overall and well- coordinated traffic management strategy that will address and improve existing problems, as well as incorporate a much more effective and robust traffic safety planning process respecting any new construction.

RECOMMENDATION No. 10

Designate Drug Free Zones 1000 ft, Radius of Schools, Parks and Other City Owned Public Access Facilities:

The problem of illegal drugs is very complex and one that impacts every sector of society in many different ways, by creating compromises to public safety and security, health problems, lost productivity and the inevitable degeneration of the overall quality of life in a community.

We know that young people are especially vulnerable to the tactics of ruthless drug dealers who target young people and the places frequented by them as fertile opportunities to market their illegal product. Such places as schools, parks and recreation centres represent such opportunities, which require an added measure of warning and prevention much like the traffic safety enhancements that provide for significantly increased penalties for infractions committed in designated community safety zones or highway construction zones.

We realize that much more is required on many social and economic fronts: education, prevention and treatment as well as dedicated law enforcement to effectively tackle the pervasive problem of illicit drugs in our society. However, every small step, especially those that focus on young people, must be considered a priority.

By declaring Drug Free Zones within a 1000 ft. radius of a school, parks and other designated City-owned public access facilities, along with a robust public communication strategy with highly visible signage, Vaughan Council can provide Crown Prosecutors and Judges with an added aggravating feature to be taken into account during sentencing of anyone convicted of possession or distribution of illicit drugs within a designated area.

Recommendation No. 11

Encourage and support Council to increase the presence of strong comprehensive youth, seniors and women's services delivered by not for profit organizations in Vaughan;

As our community grows, we must be vigilant to identify and seek to respond to the current and emerging needs of those who are vulnerable. The citizens of Vaughan are concerned with our children and youth, our seniors and women who are victims of violence.

By engaging our youth in meaningful ways within our community we are investing in a stronger, more engaged citizenship. The Community Safety Committee should work with Council to bring organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, and other mentorship, apprenticeship, and coaching programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, to high-need communities in Vaughan.

The Committee must recognize the isolation of seniors and their vulnerability to crime and crime activity, and must promote greater community activity, participation and relationship- building in order to increase resiliency to mitigate fraud and exploitation. The participation of strong, supportive organizations and agencies that can help to build support for our elders will bring needed resources to our City.

Our ability to support residents in crisis should be an area of inventory and review for the Committee. The need for a women's shelter should be considered and supported.
