

COUNCIL – JUNE 30, 2009

SAFE CITY SURVEY 2008

Recommendation

Councillor DiVona, Chair, Safe City Committee, recommends:

1. That this report be received for information;
2. That the City of Vaughan make this report and attachment available on the City of Vaughan website; and
3. That this report be forwarded to the York Region School Boards with a request that it be distributed to the School Councils.

Contribution to Sustainability

N/A

Economic Impact

There is no economic impact.

Communications Plan

A communications plan is not required.

Purpose

The Safe City Committee is requesting that Council receive this report for information, place the report on the City's website, and forward the report to York Region School Boards with a request that it be distributed to the School Councils.

Background - Analysis and Options

At the Safe City Committee meeting of June 22, 2009, the committee approved the final Safe City survey and recommended that the survey be forwarded to Council for information, made available on the City website, and forwarded to the school boards for distribution to the School Councils.

The Safe City Committee undertakes to conduct a questionnaire-type survey every 3 years to allow an opportunity for residents to express their personal opinions on the subject of safety and security. Feedback was also sought with respect to existing safety programs to determine whether or not the public is satisfied with the committee's efforts. The 2008 Safe City Survey was administered using local publications and newspapers, and was available on the City's website. Printed copies were distributed and available at all City community centres and libraries, and at the Civic Centre. The 2008 survey received 2, 141 responses.

The survey represents an accumulation of public opinion with respect to attitudes of the public towards 'acts of crime' compared against actual crime rates as provided by York Regional Police. The public opinion and attitudes may be consistent or inconsistent with the actual criminal activity within the City of Vaughan for various reasons. Depending on the objective of what is being measured and evaluation criteria, public opinion may either mirror or diverge from actual crime rates.

Surveys are useful because they are a form of two-way communication. The Safe City survey this year was focused on community Vandalism. It gave valuable feedback as to citizens' perceptions about this crime, and their level of involvement in preventing and or reporting acts of vandalism. This provided the committee with valuable information regarding awareness levels in the community and the education required to enhance community safety and residents' perception of their safety and security.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2007

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Conclusion

The Safe City Survey is before Council for their information and the Safe City Committee is requesting that the report be placed on the City's website and forwarded to York Region School Boards for distribution to the School Councils.

Attachment

1. Safe City Survey

Report prepared by:

Councillor Bernie DiVona

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Bernie Di Vona
Chair
Safe City Committee

**City of
Vaughan**

The City Above Toronto

You Make the Difference

Community Safety and Security in the City of Vaughan



City of Vaughan Safe City Committee
Vaughan Safe City Association
April, 2009



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Citizens' Charter of Rights and Responsibilities

Every citizen has a right to...

- Live, work, and play in a municipality that promotes community safety, health and wellness while safeguarding the natural environment.
- Live in a municipality in which all mandated services are delivered effectively and efficiently.
- Live in a municipality in which citizens receive value for their property tax dollar.
- Live in a municipality that plans and manages growth responsibly, including the building, maintenance, and renewal of appropriate infrastructure.
- Live in a municipality that attracts, retains and promotes productive and effective employees committed to their own on-going professional training and growth.
- Live in a municipality that enhances the quality of life of its citizens by providing services beyond those mandated by law.
- Live in a municipality whose government communicates effectively with its citizens.

Every citizen has a responsibility to...

- Avoid behaviour that threatens the safety, health and wellness of fellow citizens or the integrity of the natural environment.
- Acknowledge that municipal services are finite, to be shared fairly with fellow citizens.
- Acknowledge that our security and well-being is built on the willingness of each of us to seek the common good.
- Acknowledge that the orderly growth of our City depends on proper planning, which requires citizen participation.
- Acknowledge that the financial stability of our City and the services we expect it to provide depend in part on the taxes we pay, and that as a consequence new services and new infrastructure must be affordable.
- Acknowledge that staff is comprised of professionals, and citizens as well; that they deserve to be treated



as such; and that as skilled workers they are best retained by competitive salaries.

- Remember that communication is a mutual affair, and that voting is the most basic form of communication between citizens and their elected representatives.



Acknowledgements

The City of Vaughan Safe City Committee and the Vaughan Safe City Association are obliged to all those individuals who voiced their interests, concerns and recommendations in the City of Vaughan Safe City 2008 Survey. The response rate was such that the findings of the survey are statistically relevant and accurately reflect the concerns and interests the people of Vaughan have with the safety of their community.

The service of the City of Vaughan Safe City Committee members needs to be recognized: 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, Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco (Vice Chair) and Councillor Bernie DiVona (Chair).

In addition to the volunteer members of the Safe City Committee, excellent contributions came from some highly skilled and committed staff of the City of Vaughan: Domenic Colalillo, Programs Manager, Recreation and Culture; Albert Chan, Supervisor By-Law Enforcement; Jeff Childs, Manager Parks Services; and Rose Magnifico and Sandra Galassi, office of the City Clerk.

We would also like to thank those who served on the Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety and Security. Its final report was filed in 2007. Those who responded to the Safe City 2008 survey performed under the auspices of that committee

A safe and secure City 'happens' when all its parts work in harmony. Key in making Vaughan one of the greatest and safest places to live is the cooperation that exists here among all stakeholders including: York Region Public and Separate School Boards; York Regional Police; and the City of Vaughan. **One 'Turf', One client and One Purpose** unite these organizations as they carry on their distinct functions.

Various institutions in a City can provide services to enhance the safety capacity of the City, but it is the City's residents who make the City safe. **YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**

You make a difference by how you respect one another and how you treat the common areas and amenities we share. **You make a difference** by the effort you make in the formation of the children in your charge. **You make the difference** when you take the responsibility to report unsavory activities to the appropriate authorities.



Message from the Chair



Councillor
Bernie DiVona

Dear Reader;

“A city of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable”

-Vaughan Vision Statement

On behalf of the City of Vaughan Safe City Committee, Vaughan Safe City Association, Mayor and Members of Council, we wish to provide the “**YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE**” report on community safety in the City of Vaughan.

We hope this report opens a window for many of our citizens. We hope to show what is available to help them **make that difference** by showcasing the key safety services and programs.

It is our desire to show how citizens of Vaughan make a difference. We can work together to improve the level of safety and security in the City of Vaughan

These and future programs are created at many forums of collaboration, in many conversations between citizens and the City, among parents, students and the school boards, and between the City and the York Regional Police. By connecting with each other we become even more confident and proud to be citizens of Vaughan.

Respectfully Submitted,

Councillor Bernie DiVona
Chair, Safe City Committee
Chair, Vaughan Safe City Association



Mayor
Linda Jackson



Regional Councillor
Joyce Frustaglio



Regional Councillor
Mario Ferri



Regional Councillor
Gino Rosati



Ward 1 Councillor
Peter Meffe



Ward 2 Councillor
Tony Carella



Ward 4 Councillor
Sandra Yeung Racco



Ward 5 Councillor
Alan Shefman



Why A Community Safety Survey?

The City of Vaughan established the Safe City Committee in 1995. It is to proactively maintaining and enhancing safety initiatives through interactive participation with the entire community. The Committee has representation from local government, police, business education, and youth.

Since 1995 the Safe City Committee decided to reach out to understand WHO commits acts of vandalism and violence (acts of crime), WHERE they occur and WHAT are the perceived causes of acts of crime. We also sought feedback from the public with respect to existing safety programs to determine whether or not the general public is satisfied with our efforts.

The Safe City Committee initiated a survey, analyzed the results and undertakes to produce a report every three years. The goal of this survey and report is to:

- **Determine** community understanding and attitudes towards safety
- **Promote** communication among stakeholders by building awareness
- **Develop** community-based prevention programs based on community recommendations and research
- **Encourage** members of the community to “work together” to preserve, maintain and enhance community safety.

The questionnaire-type survey provides an opportunity for respondents/residents to express their personal opinions on the subject and make recommendations for consideration by the City of Vaughan Council.

The results of past surveys have been exceptionally well-received. They serve as an important baseline to understand the attitudes that exist and changes in attitudes over time in a growing and diverse community.

As with any survey or research paper, the ultimate intent is to improve the area of investigation.



“You Make the Difference” Introduction

Vaughan – A Safe City in Context

The “mean” or “average” level of income of households in Vaughan is high. But one indicator does not tell the whole story. We are one community within the Greater Toronto Area and are subject to similar social, economic and culture stresses and strains as experienced in neighbouring municipalities.

Children and youth in our schools face the same challenges of drugs, bullying and gangs as do children and youth in other parts of York Region and the GTA. Many of our immigrant families are under great stress. Finding one’s way and integrating one’s family while maintaining cultural identity in a fast-moving urban setting is difficult. It is even more demanding when both parents have to work shifts to provide food, shelter and clothing for their children with little time for anything else.

Police statistics and our citizens’ perceptions as expressed in our survey findings confirm that Vaughan is a safe city in which to work, play, and raise a family. Amidst the blur of mind-numbing change which is our time; however, no city can rest on its laurels. In a recent book, *Urban Nation*, Allan Broadbent identifies **the two key issues facing Canada, and the Greater Toronto area in particular as urbanization and immigration**. He argues that local municipal government is the best place for these issues to be tackled.

Broadbent concludes that if our municipalities don’t develop the tools they need to do so – financial, jurisdictional and so on – then the well-being of the entire GTA is at risk. With the current economic downturn the risk factors in our community are exacerbated.

Some of the findings in a research paper *Strong Neighbourhoods: Supporting the Call to Action Discussion Paper for Toronto Summit 2007* should be considered for application in the Vaughan context. In particular,

“Recognizing the knowledge and leadership inherent in local communities, as well as the fundamental need to align goals, strategies and resources in order to be effective, all three orders of governments and their civil society partners should commit to work with and support local community leadership and align their plans and resources accordingly to address the needs of disadvantaged communities.”

Becoming Engaged in Community Safety

As Vaughan continues to grow in population and complexity **you make the difference** which will determine future levels of safety and security enjoyed by all residents. We need to develop the capacities in our community to support our families through these difficult times so they can stay together.



We have to help one another grow in awareness of such problems. Together we can work to find solutions. The work of continually improving community safety and crime prevention is critical in this regard.

The City of Vaughan is committed to proactively maintaining and enhancing the “quality of life” through community safety initiatives with the participation and consultation from the entire community.



You Make the Difference

Executive Summary

- The most important issue to Vaughan residents is safety in our community
- More than 89% of Vaughan citizens feel safe in their city vs 80% respondents in the 2005 survey
- A majority (60%) of citizens are willing to get involved in helping to prevent crime
- The primary concern with “acts of crime” are related to road and traffic safety
- The public supports both “punitive” (fines) and education approaches to addressing community safety
- Interest in having the City taking an active role in environmental safety issues is on the rise.
- There is a need to increase awareness of the availability and accessibility of the programs that exist in our community to address community safety
- There has been a significant increase in concern with matters of personal safety and security among religious and ethnic minorities.
- The general public expressed a generally low awareness of community safety initiatives. However, they are aware of various programs that exist, e.g. “Roadwatch”, “cameras in the park”, etc.)



Survey Findings

Here's What You Told Us...

Q1. Do you feel you live in a safe community?

A1. More than 89% said yes in 2008 compared to 80% in the 2005 survey. The first question of the survey immediately addressed the fundamental question. Respondents had an opportunity to indicate if they feel they live in a safe community by responding “yes”, “no”, or “not sure”. Community safety tops the list in numerous studies and surveys as the top priority in deciding where to live and raise a family.

During the past decade there has been a significant increase in population in the City of Vaughan which reflects upon either a need or desire of many to move to Vaughan. This question, therefore, should have remained high and continued to have a high positive response rate as people move to where they feel safe.

Q2. Have you witnessed any “acts of crime” in your community?

A2. Thirty-eight percent said “yes” while 52% said “no” to having witnessed “acts of crime”. The results of the survey shows that witnessing such acts has fallen from 58% to 38% (2008 vs. 2005 results). This question was felt to be necessary to better understand if the attitudes or opinions of community safety in Vaughan was the result of predicted or actual experience, or was it based on reading the newspaper or watching television, talking to their friends, or any other reason. The result of the survey could also be skewed or distorted if those responding to the survey had a direct or personal experience. Based on the distribution of the responses, it is felt both those who have and have not witnessed “acts of crime” have felt they do live in a safe community. Another possible explanation is that there may be a change in expectation or standards. It may be that “acts of crime” may be more tolerated or regarded as the “norm”.

Q3. If so, did you report it to anyone?

A3. Fifty-eight per cent said “yes” and 30% said “no” with 12% “not sure”. The 2005 survey showed that a staggering 78% responded with a “yes” to reporting acts of crime.



The Safe City Committee felt this was also an important question. It required the respondent to reflect inwards as to whether or not they would take ownership with their safety and assist the authorities. Also, it is important to review any correlation between having witnessed an act of crime and the willingness to participate. The correlation between attitude and involvement has not improved as there has been now a decrease in those who have actually witnessed an act of crime.

Q4. What age group do you think is primarily responsible for “acts of crime” in our community?

A4. The major finding of the 2008 survey is that there is now a shift in identified age group from children to teenagers. The major problem is dangerous and aggressive driving. The intent of the survey was to determine if problems existed with elementary school age children, high school age children, or adults. By identifying the age group it would assist in understanding what are the perceived problems, where are the perceived problems, and what in terms of education and awareness can be done to alleviate the acts of crime. There also would be a relationship of “who” commits crimes with “where” and “why” crimes are committed.

Q5. Where do you believe “acts of crime” occur in our community?

A5. There has been a steady shift from park safety, school safety to road safety with 52% expressing a concern with the latter. Despite the shift the 2008 survey is consistent with the 2005 survey. It also concluded the most prevalent concerns respondents had was with road and traffic safety.

Q6. Why do you think “acts of crime” are committed in your community?

A6. The most significant factors identified include: need to improve infrastructure or transit; drug related crimes; lack of parental responsibility or discipline; boredom; peer pressure; lack of enforcement.

Each of the previous surveys on community safety indicated that the root causes of “acts of crime” were more closely related or embedded with the family and interpersonal relationships, “boredom”, “lack of parental discipline” and “peer pressure”.



Research/Survey Methodology

Vaughan's 2008 Safe City Survey

In 2008, Vaughan's Safe City Committee again coordinated the Safe City Survey and 2,141 responses were received from Vaughan citizens. The purpose of the survey was to:

1. Evaluate the significance of acts of crime within the community
2. Determine the level of community vandalism from both 'actual' and 'perceived' perspectives
3. Identify community interest and willingness to be involved with acts of crime prevention
4. Find out where community acts of crime take place
5. Identify perceived causes of community acts of crime.
6. Provide the public with the opportunity to voice their personal remarks and/or opinions.



2008 Safe City Survey – Summary of Results

Questions	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Do you believe we have a problem with community vandalism?	9%	89%	2%
2. Have you ever witnessed any acts of vandalism in your community?	38%	52%	10%
3. If yes, did you report it to anyone?	58%	30%	12%
4. What age group do you think is primarily responsible for acts of vandalism? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children (6-12) • Teenagers (13-29) • Adults 	25% 47% 28%		
5. Where do acts of vandalism occur in your community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks • Schools • Recreation Centres • Plazas • Private Property • Businesses • Roads 	37% 28% 31% 12% 10% 12% 52%		
6. Do you feel that acts of vandalism are being committed by persons living in your community?	59%	28%	13%
7. Why do you think vandalism occurs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons? 	boredom, peer pressure, self-esteem		
8. Do you have any recommendations or comments to reduce vandalism in your community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public education • Community pride and involvement • More security /police • Tougher laws and penalties • Community youth programs 		
9. Would you be willing to take an active role in preventing vandalism?	60%	30%	10%



How was the 2008 Survey Conducted?

The current 2008 self-administered survey used local publications and newspapers including The Vaughan Citizen/Liberal, Vaughan Today, and Vaughan Perspectives as print distribution channels. The survey was also available online at www.vaughan.ca. Printed copies were distributed and available at all City of Vaughan community centers, the Vaughan Civic Centre and Vaughan Public Libraries. (Those surveys that were received from the same location were reviewed to determine to see if there was duplication.)

The 2008 survey received 2,141 responses. This is considered accurate within 3.9%, 19 times out of 20. The survey was distributed during the same month in 2008 as in 2005 to ensure the same opportunity existed for comparable results.

The survey provides for a comparison between periods as an acceptable measure in evaluating programs that were introduced between the survey periods, and reflects the value changes in growth and demographics.

What is the Value of this Survey?

The survey represents an accumulation of public opinion with respect to attitudes of the public towards “acts of crime” compared against actual crime rates as provided by York Regional Police. The public opinion and attitudes may be consistent or inconsistent with the actual criminal activity within the City of Vaughan for various reasons. Depending on the objective of what is being measured and evaluation criteria public opinion may either mirror or diverge from actual crime rates.

For example, past research has shown that the identification of criminal activity by age group did not mirror the actual age distribution of those committing crimes. However, there was a correlation between attitudes as to priority and types of crime. Past survey results has concluded that vandalism and violence in parks and public spaces was regarded as a major concern.

Concurrently, “crime to property” closely reflected such attitudes. However, the survey did not conclude that those who were committing the acts of vandalism or violence were of a younger age. Questions contained within the survey as to age distribution with “acts of crime” and location of criminal activity helps us address the issue of program development.

Surveys are useful because they are a form of two-way communication. The Safe City survey this year was focused on community vandalism. It gave valuable feedback as to citizens’ perceptions about this crime, and their level of involvement in preventing and or reporting acts of vandalism.

This provided the committee with valuable information regarding awareness levels in the community and the education required to enhance community safety and residents’ perception of their safety and security.



At the same time through reaching out to people through the survey process, a key safety issue not asked about in the survey was raised by many. Two hundred and fourteen respondents stated they saw a need to review environmental safety issues including automobiles and the environment as well the safety of products purchased such as children's toys.

This response is indicative of the validity of a key principle behind our safe City surveys – that education and awareness works both ways. It is through education and awareness that community participation and debate is ignited. This leads to constructive action which is the fuel for prevention, community policing and other volunteer-driven programs.

When we have provided the opportunity through programs based on careful analysis of community feedback and actual crime statistics, Vaughan residents avail themselves of the programs and/or get involved in “a hands-on way” in such activities.

This survey then is one way the City helps determine the facts and ways to address those facts.

As a result, ***YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.***



Vaughan's Safety & Security Surveys 2006

Another recent survey prepared by the Pollara Group evaluated Vaughan residents' opinions and attitudes towards crime and safety in their community including:

- Public perceptions of community safety and crime in Vaughan
- Levels of concern about specific crimes and public safety issues, including hate crime, youth and gang violence, traffic safety, emergency and disaster preparedness
- Child exploitation, family violence, drug abuse, cyber crime, bullying, and vandalism

Pollara also did a survey among Vaughan business people to determine their opinions on crime and safety with respect to its impact on business.

Survey Methodology for Resident Survey

Telephone interviews were conducted with a representative sample of Vaughan residents 14 years of age and older between March 17 and March 18, 2006.

In total 5,502 interviews were completed, resulting in an overall margin of error of plus or minus 4.4%, 19 times out of 20.

At the data processing stage, the data were weighted back into their correct proportions using Statistics Canada targets for age, gender, and population distribution.

Survey Methodology for Business Community Survey

Questionnaires were handed out to Vaughan business representatives at the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Achievement Awards on April 5, 2006.

A one-page-self-complete questionnaire was distributed to all attendees in the evening's program.

A total 253 completed surveys were collected and analyzed.



"Have Your Say!"
Draft 2007 Citizen Survey Report of Findings

Question 2:

Indicate how important the following community issues are to you

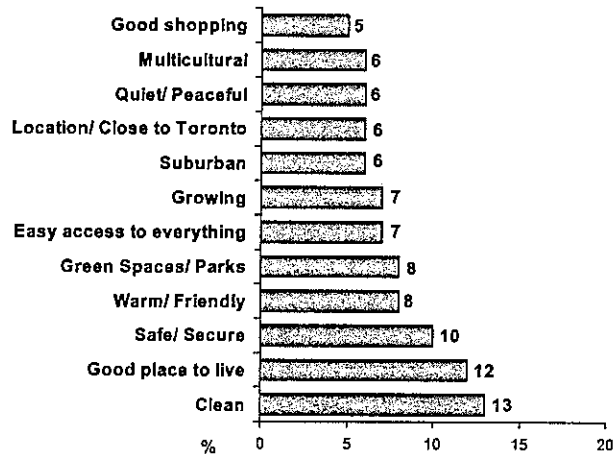
	Mail-In Survey "Very Important" Percentage	Telephone Survey "Very Important" Percentage
Safety in our Community	90.9%	92.0%
Access to health facilities	85.8%	85.2%
Quality of municipal services	80.5%	81.6%
Environment	73.7%	79.8%
Garbage, Recycling, Green Bin	69.4%	75.0%
Quality of the roads	72.8%	70.7%
Traffic congestion	82.0%	66.9%
The City having strong relationships with other levels of government	52.0%	61.9%
Parks and Recreation	50.5%	57.3%
The City communicating with residents regularly	53.0%	55.5%
Public transit	43.9%	45.1%
Issues related to growth	57.9%	44.1%



What You Told Us

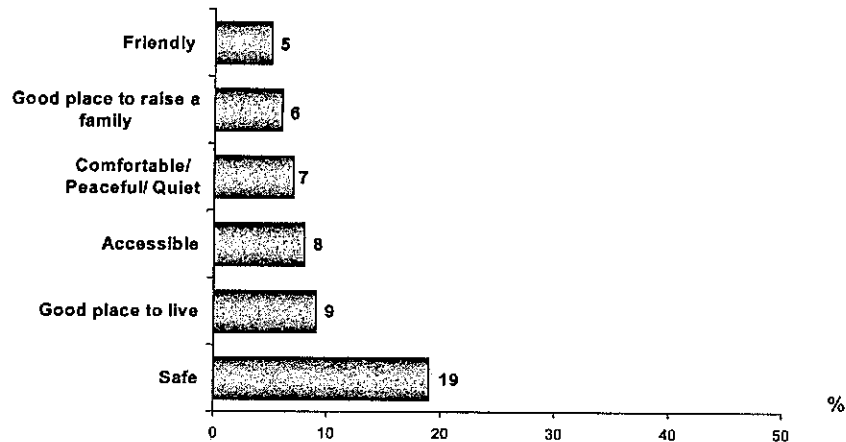
(Pollara Research Regarding City of Vaughan Rebranding, June 2008)

While the symbols and themes that residents associate with the city more are of a functional or rational nature – clean, good place to live, safe – the underlying themes are those of welcoming, comfortable, and comforting home.



POLLARA **Q. What are some of the words or phrases, or images you would use to most accurately portray the character of the City of Vaughan to someone who is not familiar with Vaughan? N=500** 20

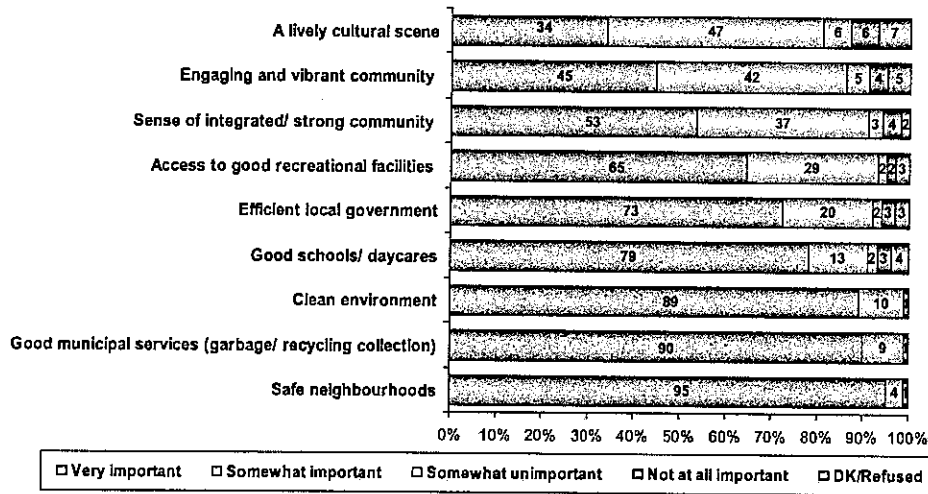
While the idea of safety as a strong foundation is important, the implicit theme common to all identified attributes are those of a comfortable, harmonious and welcoming place to live.



POLLARA **Q. If you were to give just one reason why someone should want to live in the City of Vaughan, what would it be? N=500** 24



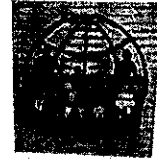
While all measured areas appear to be of importance, there is an opportunity to go beyond the fundamental needs of safety and cleanliness, and focus on building a integrated and engaging community many citizens care about.



POLLARA Q. How would you rate the importance of the following aspects of living in this city?

N=500

10



Conclusion: You Make the Difference

In summary, the major findings of the **Safe City Survey** and the **Vaughan Community Safety and Security Surveys**, when compared with actual **York Regional Police** statistics indicate that the perception and reality of Vaughan as being a safe City are congruent.

The key recommendations of both surveys conclude that the safety and security of the City can be enhanced by greater citizen participation in existing safety and security programs. These recommendations point to the key overall recommendation of this report:

“That the Safety City Committee work with City staff, school board and police officials in developing and implementing communication strategies to better inform residents of the breadth of safety and security programming and services that do exist in Vaughan. These could include regular email newsletters to all citizens, as well as a Facebook site to profile programs and get feedback on them.”

Concrete actions that Vaughan Citizens can take to improve community safety and reduce vandalism include:

1. Educate yourself and others about the cost of vandalism.
2. Become involved with groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and other resident groups.
3. Protect your house, apartment or business by using good lights and locking gates and garages. If a property crime happens to you, report and repair it as soon as possible.
4. Be a positive example for children of our community and be aware of your child's activities.
5. If you see anyone committing vandalism or doing something suspicious, report it to the police and if you see graffiti call the City's hotline.
6. Help keep parks and neighbourhoods clean, open, well-lit and in good repair.

Both positive and negative approaches address community safety. Improved infrastructure, public education and training are needed. Higher and stiffer fines and penalties, more police and full restitution to address acts of vandalism or other crimes will help.

The Critical Success Factor

The success of all such efforts relies, however, on something intangible we call community spirit. It is people helping people; people taking the care and responsibility to report crimes when they see them being committed; and people teaching the children in their charge their responsibilities and duties as law-abiding citizens. In the end, the answer to community safety is found in your hands as citizens of this City.

The City of Vaughan is responsible for removing graffiti found on all City facilities and on public property within the City road corridors, parks or trail systems. Examples include sidewalks, roads, bridges, traffic signs, and public buildings. City staff will report the graffiti to the appropriate organization if it is found not to be on City "property" (i.e. Canada Post boxes,



PowerStream boxes, Bell telephone, Provincial highway bridges and signs), and will coordinate the clean-up with these organizations.

If you want to report any form of graffiti, or you have questions regarding graffiti, please e-mail us at: works@vaughan.ca or parks@vaughan.ca.

Alternatively, call us at the **Graffiti Hotline**: After hours Hotline - (905) 832-2281 "Press 0" or call the Vandalism Hotline at (905) 879-4357.



BECOME A PARK AMBASSADOR



...the City of Vaughan is looking for individuals who are passionate about parks and recreation to help us promote and maintain our parks and recreation programs. Park Ambassadors are volunteers who help us reach out to the community and provide information about our parks and recreation programs. They also help us with various tasks such as organizing events, conducting tours, and providing information to the public. If you are interested in becoming a Park Ambassador, please contact us at [phone number] or [email address]. We would love to have you on our team!



News Articles

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JULY 17-23, 2008

Perspectives

GUEST COLUMN

Vaughan introduces City Watch safety program

By **Bernie DiVona** Ward 3 Councillor

As chairman of the City of Vaughan Safe City Committee, together with our partners in safety (the City of Vaughan, York Regional Police, York Region Road Watch and CUPE 905) we are proud to celebrate the launch of a new, and important advancement to community traffic safety and awareness program -- City Watch.

The City of Vaughan Safe City Committee and the Mayor's Task Force on Safety concluded the leading concern for the quality of life is road and traffic safety.

With this basic and essential recognition, the Safe City Committee embarked on a journey to introduce, advance and bring together key stakeholders towards the need and recognition that the safety we all seek and enjoy is a shared responsibility.

Our journey took us to an extremely successful and essential program that has gained respect and support throughout Ontario -- "Road Watch." This program empowers residents throughout Ontario to report acts of unsafe driving by completing a complaint form sent to their local police force.

When the City of Vaughan introduced Road Watch in 2000, we marked our commitment to the program by immediately enhancing

the program with a fully automated online complaint form. It was and is time to update a proven success story.

In 2004, Toronto Mayor David Miller introduced a set of priorities on safety goals including the City Watch concept. The City of Toronto program ceased in 2005, as the partners in safety had not come partnered with the City of Toronto.

In 2007 the City of Vaughan Safe City Committee completed a review of the City Watch program and recognized that the fundamental principle of the program is to obtain the support and buy in of our safety partners.

Vaughan council unanimously approved of the principle to introduce and advance the City Watch Program to expand and enhance Road Watch, an approved, operational, and highly successful program endorsed and supported by York Regional Police and, most importantly, by residents who submit a Road Watch complaint form whenever and wherever unsafe driving is witnessed.

Why is important about City Watch?

First, the foundation of City Watch is the proven, successful Road Watch program used throughout Ontario empowering residents to report acts of unsafe driving.

Second, it is built upon the prin-

ciple that we have a shared role with community safety.

Third, Road Watch is enforced with tremendous dedication and assistance by York Regional Police the single most important body we trust with our safety.

Fourth, it is strengthened by the support of the leadership here at the City of Vaughan council and management.

Fifth, and most importantly, City Watch has received the support of our employees through their union support. This constitutes a precedent setting partner is safety to complement and supplement the efforts of York Regional Police.

City Watch adds a new dimension to civil service for both management and union. On a daily basis 200 concerned City of Vaughan vehicles are out each and every day throughout the City now armed with a Road Watch form to report acts of unsafe driving not as a means to generate income but as a means to enhance the education and awareness of those found to drive unsafely.

City Watch is the means the City of Vaughan council, management and employees, York Regional Police, Road Watch committees throughout the Region are all committed to do our share for your road and traffic safety. We will be watching to keep our city safe.



VAUGHAN TODAY · February 29, 2008

Councillor wants help for pedestrians at intersections

COREY LEWIS
News

Tired of having to sprint across busy intersections before the pedestrian signal makes you talk to the big, amber hand?

Well, so is Councillor Bernie DiVona. And he intends to do something about it.

The Ward 3 councillor wants the city to request that the Region of York consider introducing pedestrian countdown signals at Vaughan's busiest intersections.

Vaughan's growth and swelling population has forced the city to evolve from the car-dominated expanse it's typically regarded as, said DiVona, who presented the motion to council at a committee meeting last week.

The city must be made safer for the people that will inevitably ditch their cars and spill out onto the city's sidewalks, he added.

"With the change of our urban landscape and with intensification, you're going to find that people will be using pedestrian walkways," he said last week.

The new countdown lights would inform pedestrians of whether they have ample time to cross, something existing traffic lights do not, DiVona.

"Some of the traffic lights out there at some intersections aren't pedestrian friendly," he says, pointing to the lights at Weston Rd. and Hwy. 7 as an example.

Those lights only provide five to seven seconds to cross the street, he said, adding, "even if you were a (track) runner, you couldn't make it."



The installation cost per intersection for the new pedestrian lights is estimated at \$60,000, DiVona said.

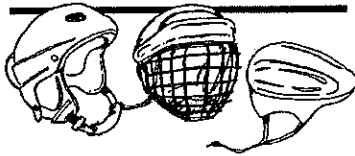
However, their hefty price tags might not dent taxpayers' wallets. DiVona says he would like to introduce the countdown-signalized intersections into the city's traffic standards. Developers could then absorb upwards of 90 percent of the installation cost as the city grows.

"As intersections have greater congestion and intensification as the result of growth, growth will start to pay for growth," DiVona said.



wear the right type of helmet for your activity

Activity	Type of helmet
Tobogganing/sledding	Ski, hockey, bike helmet
Ice skating	Hockey helmet
Skiing	Ski helmet
Snowboarding	Ski, snowboarding helmet
Hockey	Hockey helmet



Stay smart...
BE COOL!



HELMETS should be REPLACED when:

They have been in a crash: with the exception of hockey helmets, all winter sports helmets must be replaced after a single hard impact—check the manufacturers instructions to see when you need to replace your hockey helmet.

They are damaged: cracks, dents, broken or frayed straps.

You have had it for too many years: helmets lose their protective ability as plastics become brittle and pads wear down. Check the manufacturers instructions to see when you need to replace your winter sports helmet.

You have outgrown it: a helmet that does not fit well will not provide adequate protection.



HELMETS SAVE LIVES

Vaughan WAL*MART CANADA
The City Above Toronto

York Region

think first



prevention ahead

This brochure has been developed by the Vaughan Recreational Sport Safety Task force.

For more information contact
www.HelmetsSaveLives.org
www.thinkfirst.ca
or York Region Health Connection
at 1-900-361-5653

stay smart BE COOL!



Vaughan Citizen, Feb 22, 2009

Life-saving equipment could soon be in all public places

BY STERANIA LAMACCHIA
Staff Reporter

Ontario may soon see life-saving equipment in all public places.

That's because Councillor Bernice DiVona, chairperson of Vaughan's Safe City Committee, pushed for a recommendation to amend the current Ontario Building Code to make automated external defibrillators (AEDs) mandatory in all new and existing public spaces.

"Vaughan council can lead by example. AEDs have been proven

to save lives. They are affordable, easy to use, and when applied at the right time, survival rates are achieved," Mr. DiVona said.

The committee brought forward the suggestion in October 2008.

Although AEDs are currently purchased on a voluntary basis, each community centre within Vaughan is equipped with one.

But Mr. DiVona questions whether one is enough when it comes to preventing death.

Larger scale buildings such as Vaughan Mills and Royal Plastics

Group, both spanning over one million square feet, are places of greater concern, where a single AED may be too far from someone needing immediate attention, Mr. DiVona said.

The City of Vaughan Fire and Rescue Services currently runs under the 10-and-10 guideline, which calls for 40 firefighters within 10 minutes. Mr. DiVona said Vaughan only achieves this standard 80 per cent of the time.

"A review of emergency services showed that in York Region we

are the most underfunded by the Province of Ontario, with average response times for emergency services to be in the 13- to 14-minute range," he said.

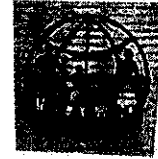
The average cost of a single AED is under \$2,000. With advancing technological improvements and greater reliability, Mr. DiVona is confident the prices for AEDs will decrease within the next decade.

The East Woodbridge councillor maintains Vaughan's approach can have a significant impact on business practices throughout the city.

"While this is gentle political persuasion and voluntary in nature, it can lead to the recognition as this being a standard of doing business in Vaughan," he said.

Given Vaughan's track record for safety success, this councillor is optimistic for the future of AEDs.

The Safe City Committee was the first municipality in Ontario to formally request the province make carbon monoxide detectors mandatory in all homes, Mr. DiVona said.



The VIBE

City of Vaughan

JULY 21, 2008

Vaughan Introduces a Safe Trails Program



The City of Vaughan has some new wheels for use in an effort to deter illegal activity in parks and open spaces. The City has acquired two motorized trail bikes for staff to conduct patrols.

"These trail bikes will be a welcome addition to our Enforcement Services," said Mayor Linda Jackson. "We are fortunate to have an abundance of open spaces in our community for the enjoyment of our residents, and this new program will ensure that they are safer for everyone to use."

The trail bikes are being provided by Kahuna Powersports for a six-week trial period, after which time the City will have the option to purchase them. Enforcement Services will be seeking funding through the budget process to make this a permanent patrol strategy. The total cost for the two trail bikes is expected to be around \$15,000.

"Complaints about illegal activities in parks and open spaces are an ongoing and growing concern in the City of Vaughan," said Ward 2 Councillor Tony Carella, who brought the idea to Council along with Ward 3 Councillor Bernie



The VIBE

City of Vaughan

JULY 21, 2008

Vaughan Introduces a Safe Trails Program

DiVona. "This new strategy will increase safety and awareness by giving our Special Enforcement Units the opportunity to go into areas that were previously inaccessible."

York Regional Police have a successful program with another municipality to patrol open spaces and want to duplicate it in the City of Vaughan. This would be an extension of joint initiatives the City already has with the police.

"The safety and security of our parks and open spaces is important to our residents," said Councillor Bernie DiVona, Chair of the City's Safe City Committee. "This new program will compliment our already successful patrol strategies, including the Park Ambassadors program."



CRIME STATISTICS
DISTRICT 4
JANUARY - DECEMBER (2006 - 2007)

	2006			2007			2006/07	
	Actual	Percent Cleared	Rate Per 100,000 Population	Actual	Percent Cleared	Rate Per 100,000 Population	Variance in Actual (%)	Variance in Rates (%)
Crimes Against Persons	1,759	81.5	780.48	1,698	77.3	691.85	-3.5	-9.0
Violations Causing Death	3	100.0	1.30	0	0.0	0.00	-100.0	-100.0
Attempt Capital Crime	5	43.0	2.16	2	100.0	0.81	-80.0	-82.3
Sexual Assault	68	78.5	29.40	66	89.7	28.29	-2.9	-8.5
Assault	1,002	87.3	433.29	937	84.3	381.78	-8.5	-11.9
Violations Deprivation Freedom	42	100.0	18.16	25	80.0	10.19	-40.5	-43.9
Robbery & Other Violent Violations	639	72.0	278.28	688	68.1	272.18	4.5	-1.5
Crimes Against Property	7,523	38.8	3,232.47	7,391	34.3	3,011.47	-1.8	-7.4
Arson	27	0.0	11.87	39	7.7	15.89	44.4	38.1
Break and Enter	842	13.2	384.03	822	9.8	334.93	-2.4	-8.0
Theft Over \$5000	868	13.8	375.27	911	11.2	371.19	5.0	-1.1
Theft Under \$5000	3,085	34.7	1,325.11	3,090	30.0	1,259.03	0.8	-5.0
Have Stolen Goods	1,022	101.1	441.85	911	100.5	371.19	-10.9	-18.0
Fraud	918	25.3	398.89	811	33.8	330.44	-11.7	-18.7
Mischief	781	24.7	337.88	807	29.0	328.81	3.3	-2.8
Other Criminal Code	875	71.9	378.29	835	79.3	340.22	-4.8	-10.1
Other Criminal Code (Part A)	715	509.0	309.12	658	80.0	287.29	-8.3	-13.5
Other Criminal Code (Part B)	160	75.0	69.17	179	78.5	72.93	11.9	5.4
Weapons Violations	187	75.4	72.20	189	72.0	77.01	13.2	8.7
Public Morals Violations	32	68.8	13.83	34	87.8	13.85	6.3	0.1
Prostitution/Public Morals	33	73.3	12.97	30	63.3	12.22	0.0	-5.8
Gaming and Betting	2	0.0	0.86	4	100.0	1.63	100.0	88.5
Total Criminal Violations	10,358	47.9	4,477.28	10,147	48.0	4,134.41	-2.0	-7.7
Drug Violations	653	98.3	282.32	745	98.7	303.55	14.1	7.5
Other Federal Violations	18	100.0	7.78	22	100.0	8.98	22.2	15.2
Total Criminal Code & Federal Violations (excluding traffic)	11,027	51.0	4,787.38	10,914	49.7	4,448.93	-1.0	-8.7
Traffic Violations	778	55.3	335.49	708	80.8	287.88	-9.0	-14.3
Dangerous Operation	104	91.3	44.98	128	98.1	52.15	23.1	18.0
Impaired Operation/Related Violations	231	100.0	121.49	288	100.0	108.38	-5.3	-10.8
Other Criminal Code Traffic Violations	391	13.8	169.04	312	13.1	127.12	-20.2	-24.8
Street Racing	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.00	N.C. ¹	N.C. ¹

¹ not calculable.

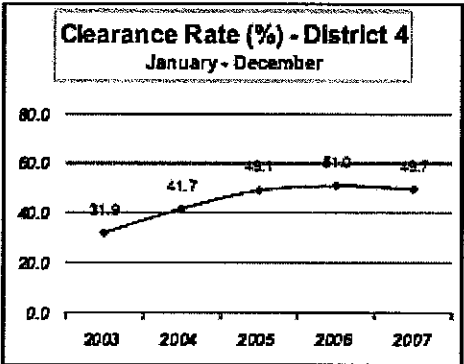
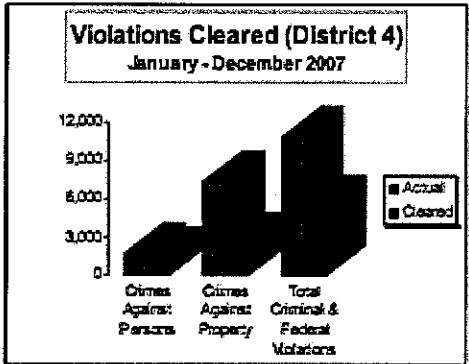
Note: District crime statistics may not equal regional figures due to investigations which occur outside York Region.



CLEARANCE RATE
DISTRICT 4
JANUARY - DECEMBER (2006 - 2007)

	2006			2007			2008/07
	Actual	Total Cleared	Cleared (%)	Actual	Total Cleared	Cleared (%)	Variance Cleared (%)
Crimes Against Persons	1,759	1,434	81.5	1,698	1,313	77.3	-4.2
Crimes Against Property	7,523	2,754	36.6	7,391	2,534	34.3	-2.3
Other Criminal Code	875	829	71.9	835	682	79.3	7.4
Weapons Violations	187	126	75.4	189	136	72.0	-3.5
Public Morals Violations	32	22	68.8	34	23	67.6	-1.1
Total Criminal Violations	10,356	4,985	47.9	10,147	4,668	46.0	-1.9
Drug Violations	653	642	98.3	745	735	98.7	0.3
Other Federal Violations	18	18	100.0	22	22	100.0	0.0
Total Criminal Violations (excluding Traffic)	11,027	5,625	51.0	10,914	5,425	49.7	-1.3
Traffic Violations	778	429	55.3	708	430	60.9	5.6

Note: due to rounding, figures may not subtract exactly to variance cleared.





Community Alert Program

York Regional Police is taking another step forward to ensure our community is among the safest in Canada by implementing a new public notification system called Community Alert. This system will allow York Regional Police to notify residents and businesses by telephone and email about community safety matters in their area. This could include a rash of break-and-enters, vehicle thefts or a missing child. The system will also be used to alert citizens in the event of an emergency.

York Regional Police is currently collecting information from members of the community interested in participating in this new and innovative program. If you are interested, please complete the information found at <http://www.police.york.on.ca/rev911/addressrecord.asp>

Be Net Aware

York Regional Police has launched a new, interactive and innovative Internet safety program called Be Net Aware.

Spearheaded by Child Exploitation investigators working in our Child Abuse Unit and implemented by the Community Services Bureau, this comprehensive program is geared toward protecting our children from Internet predators. It blends our operational units' knowledge about crime trends, criminals and victims with our Community Services Bureau's crime prevention initiatives in a seamless, easy-to-use strategy for parents, guardians and educators. **To use this program go to <http://www.police.york.on.ca/netaware.htm>.**

Bicycle Registration

Online Bicycle Registration is a program created by York Regional Police in an effort to safeguard the bicycles owned by all York Region residents. This program will greatly increase the chances of having your bicycle returned to you if it is lost or stolen.

Go to <https://onlinereporting.yrp.ca/BikeRegistration.html> to register



Project Lifesaver



Motto: Dedicated to bringing your loved ones home.

Project Lifesaver uses state-of-the-art technology to enhance police services abilities to locate lost or missing person. Clients who qualify are equipped with a personalized wristband that weighs approximately one ounce. It emits a silent and unique radio tracking signal every second, 24 hours a day. The battery in the wrist band is replaced every 30 days, although its life span is estimated to be 45 days. The technology works both day and night, during any weather, and on all terrains. Caregivers will only be charged a cost recovery fee for the transmitters and the replacement batteries.

The program is offered as a non-profit service offered through collaboration with Project Lifesaver International and York Regional Police.

If you are interested in obtaining more information on the program contact:

Project lifesaver email: projectlifesaver@yrp.ca

Victim Assistance Liaison Officer: 1-866-876-5423 Ext 6696

Fax: 905-895-4030

**17250 Yonge Street,
Newmarket, Ontario,
Canada L3Y 4W5**



Our Partners: The School Boards



With the purpose of **Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy 2007**

The York Catholic District School Board values learning environments that are safe, nurturing, trusting, positive and respectful - consistent with our Gospel values. The Board believes that all bullying (physical, emotional, verbal, electronic) is a particularly insidious form of violence and that all students and educators have the right to a school environment free from bullying, harassment, threats and violence.

What is bullying?

"...a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress, and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance."

-Policy Program Memorandum No 144 released by the Ministry of Education on October 4, 2007.

Bullying can be perpetrated by individuals or groups and can include many different behaviours, such as:

- physical assault
- verbal taunts, name calling and put downs, spreading rumours, gossip
- threats and intimidation
- cyber-bullying - spreading rumours, images or hurtful comments through the use of e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, internet website or other technology

- Exclusion from peer group
- Responding with avoidance or anger to any questioning
- Hostile threatening or obscene body language
- Stealing money and/or possessions, extortion
- Lack of empathy towards others

What are the markers of bullying?

- Intent to harm
- An imbalance of power
- Threat of further aggression
- Witnessing a victim's distress



Who is involved?

The person who bullies:
Boys and girls are equally likely to be bullies. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes.

The person who is bullied:
The one thing that all children who are bullied have in common is that they are specifically targeted.

The bystander:
Bystanders are those who aid the person who bullies by doing nothing. They stand idly or look away or they can become actively involved either verbally or physically. The bystander is key in the prevention of bullying. Encourage your child to report bullying when he/she sees it.



How can parents help?

Parents can be generally unaware of the extent of the bullying and victimization problems. For these reasons, you may be uncertain how to prevent bullying.

You are one of the most important persons in the prevention of bullying. Become aware and work on the problem with your child and the school.

Each child has the right to feel safe and respected at school. As a parent, it is important for you to know that your child is safe at school, free from fear, and that the school understands bullying issues and knows how to intervene when problems occur.

