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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neighbourhood Links is a project of Cowichan Women Against Violence Society's Safer Futures Program, conducted during 2002/3, in partnership with a wide range of community agencies and organizations committed to the development of a safer, healthier community in the James Street neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Links project believes that a defining feature of a safe community is the ability of all its citizens—regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, language or ability—to participate fully and freely in all of its environments. This requires that citizens both feel and are safe, and that they have meaningful opportunities to participate on local decision-making processes. We have developed a project that provides:

- a focus on working in the local community to define local issues and solutions.
- strategies, from environmental design measures, to social development programs aimed at reducing the risk (for victims and offenders) and increasing access to opportunities.
- a comprehensive approach to identify priorities and determining the best ways of coordinating actions.

The Safer Communities Approach

This project has followed the Safer Communities Approach, which recognizes the critical importance of prevention and the need to address factors of economic and social inequality that lie at the root of crime. Building safer, healthier communities for women and other marginalized groups ultimately builds better communities for everyone. And local governments—through their various roles as managers of community environments, employers, and as providers of recreational opportunities—can play a critical role in this process.

The James Street Neighbourhood

The James Street neighbourhood lies within the highest crime zone of the district of North Cowichan. The area has been subject to many complaints over the past few years regarding loitering, drug use and trafficking, theft, littering, vandalism and harassment. (Duncan/North Cowichan RCMP, 2000) These issues present problems for many people who live in the area, particularly for women and children, and other marginalized groups who face a multitude of barriers to participation in community life.

In June 2000, individuals and representatives of several Cowichan Valley community organizations and local government met to discuss and define a range of goals and objectives reflecting the community safety needs. As a result, the Call to Action project was developed to:

- identify and explore community safety and accessibility issues
- mobilize the local and broader community
- develop strategies for increasing safety and access

A consultation process involved over 1,200 individuals through surveys, focus group discussions, action events and meetings.

Interdependence of Safety Concerns Identified

The results of the consultation suggest that people using or living in the James Street area experience high levels of concern for their safety at home, at work and especially in public places. In response to these concerns, 53% of women and 29% of men restrict their use of the area due to concerns related to:

- violence and harassment
- threatening behaviour related to drugs and alcohol
- inadequate lighting
- unsafe traffic patterns in the area.

Further, where community safety is concerned, there is increasing recognition of the complexities and inter-relatedness of causal factors and outcomes. Research indicates that in general, poverty, unemployment, inequitable access to resources and opportunities, and violence in the home, alcohol and drug use, are also associated with people's vulnerability to crime¹. Consultation indicates that these underlying factors are indeed significant in terms of risk factors and vulnerability of residents and users of this area. Thus it has been critical to look at the James Street area, not just in terms of what crimes are being committed or peoples' fear of crime, but also in terms of how crime, victimization and fear are linked to the underlying issues.

The James Street Community Safety Strategy

At the end of the Call to Action project, the consultation findings were presented at a community strategy session in order to develop a comprehensive strategy for community health and safety framework for action. The framework is comprised of three broad components as a means to organize actions to achieve the aims of the strategy. These are:

Community and Social Development:

To improve the quality of life of residents through a variety of measures including:

- increasing access to opportunities and support systems that promote healthy lifestyles and development.
- strengthening individual and neighbourhood capacity to increase involvement and participation of residents in community life.
- Enhancing support for victims of crime and those who are vulnerable to violence
- reducing re-offending through increasing access to training and employment opportunities, community-based programs to promote accountability and provide diversionary activities.
- reducing the risk factors for children and youth associated with offending and victimization through supporting families and providing opportunities for healthy growth and development.
- reducing domestic violence through education and supports for both victims and families.

¹ Leslie Kennedy ed., Crime Counts - A Criminal Event Analysis. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993.

Planning, Design and Management:

- Encouraging development and design that will incorporate needs for safety and improve accessibility of neighbourhoods and services.
- Addressing needs for affordable and special needs housing.

Safety and security:

- Reducing vulnerability of individuals, their homes and neighbourhoods to crime and violence.

The James Street Community Health and Safety Strategy

The Neighbourhood Links Project utilized this kind of three-pronged approach to community crime prevention to ensure that the social, economic, and political factors that impact crime and victimization were addressed. It responded to the needs identified in the Call to Action consultation process utilizing the safer communities approach to crime prevention to:

- build a multi-agency task force and action groups
- implement a comprehensive community safety strategy
- create the community linkages and partnerships necessary for an integrated approach to implementing social development, design and management, and safety and security solutions

The following table outlines achievements during the past year, and indicates areas for inclusion into a second phase of the project.

The James Street Neighbourhood Community Health and Safety Strategy

1. COMMUNITY / SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Addressed	Actions Completed	Tabled for Phase II
a. Family Supports and Early Childhood Intervention			
Increase the availability of affordable, local daycare, particularly for single parents			✓
Enhance programs to identify at risk children and to provide support to parents	✓ Parent Support Circles	Support group started	✓
b. Opportunities and Services for Children and Youth			
Youth Centre			✓
Youth Outreach Worker	✓ Proposal submitted		
Intergenerational Activities		✓ youth-seniors project (various activities)	
Youth-led Community Enhancement Projects		✓ various—see report	
Youth Action Team		✓ with RCMP	
Programs to address young men's lack of safeguarding behaviour and to			✓

of safeguarding behaviour and to increase young women's sense of personal safety			
Programs to address children's safety concerns and teach safeguarding behaviour			✓
Role modeling and mentoring programs for elementary and middle school students	✓ two proposals submitted for youth anti-violence role modeling		
Leadership opportunities for high school youth		✓ various—see report	
c. Support Services and Networks			
Increase capacity and range of local programs to address gaps that have been identified, especially:			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alcohol and drug programs 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seniors' health care and outreach 	✓ partially addressed through youth seniors activities and plans to include seniors in community gardens programs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> programs for women, children and other vulnerable members of the community 	✓ support services for lesbians	✓ drop-in support group started	
Enhance community information networks:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop seniors' network that supports those who restrict activities due to health and safety concerns 			✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> coordinate efforts to distribute information about community programs to churches, businesses and community organizations 			✓
d. Build Alternatives for Accessing Food			
Mobile food bank to assist seniors and people with disabilities	✓ hampers and cooked meals delivered for seniors at Christmas		
Increase number of Community Kitchens in area		✓ new kitchens to address cultural diversity	
Provide additional pick-up points, for hampers, to women families and disabled individuals		✓ good food box program	
Connect young people to seniors through meals on wheels program			✓
Community Gardens Program	✓ Plans for garden at Kinsmen Park endorsed by municipality		

2. PLANNING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT	Addressed	Actions Completed	Phase II
a. James Street Revitalization			
Beautification of James Street Area	✓ banner campaign	✓ action group	
Create a Street Identity	✓ banner campaign		
Promote art and recreation themes and activities	✓ banner campaign		
Create vibrant community image	✓ banner/park revitalization		
Promote more positive attitudes towards youth through involvement in Street Identity initiatives	✓Canada World Youth	✓Research undertaken for flower box campaign	
b. Local Park Stewardship			
Facilitate community-based activities and social events in Kinsmen Park		✓music & community events	
Provide support and assistance to community groups to hold events and make park improvements	✓DNC parks and recreation department supports community events/improvements		
Work with youth to encourage stewardship	✓involve school/students in plans		
Connect youth with seniors and disabled individuals through park enhancement projects	✓ plans for community gardens		
c. Traffic Study			
Traffic calming			✓
Link transit plan to traffic plan			✓
Improved accessibility		✓wheel chair ramps to park	
Increase pedestrian safety			✓
Crosswalks			✓
Designated parking		✓ handicap parking Kin Park	
d. Housing and Shelter			
Provision of affordable and special needs housing such as second stage housing for women, supported independent living units for people with disabilities, subsidized housing for young families, and seniors housing	Recommendations OCP		
Designation of land uses and densities to support availability of land	Recommendations OCP		

Community Planning Recommendations:

Develop and implement land use planning policies and development guidelines that will serve to:

1. Encourage revitalization and redevelopment that will enhance the local area.
 - Encourage redevelopment by bringing in incentives for desired types of development (for example, reduce or remove Development Cost Charges).
 - Promote a healthy mix of commercial, residential and recreational development.
 - Encourage innovative commercial ventures such as coffee shops and markets, which would also serve to increase the flow of people to the area.
 - Highlight and enhance pedestrian access.
 - Encourage adequate levels of lighting as well as creative lighting.
(For example, mini lights were suggested for trees along James Street, to increase the level of lighting as well as work to beautify the area.)
2. Respect and preserve residential properties.
3. Respect and consider residential facilities and users (i.e., Open Door Program).
4. Promote and encourage affordable housing throughout the district to provide more and better options for families living in low-income situations.
5. Ensure Plan Policies incorporate provisions to encourage supportive management structures to support tenant involvement.
6. Ensure Plan policies provide for adequate provision of facilities and recreational services to support accessibility and affordability.
7. Adopt community planning policies and develop municipal guidelines which support crime prevention in future development. Elements:
 - Encourage layout and design of streets, buildings and open spaces to influence reduction of opportunities for crimes to occur (adequate lighting, elimination of hiding and entrapment areas and movement predictors, reduce isolation and increase awareness of surroundings).
 - Integrate security measures to reinforce both formal and informal surveillance, as well as access control of routes and entrances to increase security.
 - Implement a program of education, training and information for planners and developers on planning and design for safety.

3. SAFETY, SECURITY AND ACCESS	Addressed	Actions Completed	Tabled for Phase II
a. Physical Improvements/Repairs			
Sidewalks, crossings, curb cuts, signage, lighting Park facilities etc.	✓	Improved curb cuts, lighting, handicap washrooms, parking at Kinsmen Park Rearrangement of play equipment for improved parental supervision	
b. Post project Safety Analysis			
CPTED review and safety audit			✓
c. Improved Safety Communications			
Public telephones and signage	✓ attempt to secure telephone in Kinsmen park		✓

The James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force was initiated in April of 2002 to carry out the strategy developed through the previous consultation process. The committee included representatives from local government including the CVRD, the City of Duncan, and the District of North Cowichan, as well as a broad range of community organizations and representatives. The committee met as a whole on a monthly basis, and sub-committees or action groups met as required in order to tackle projects identified by the larger task force.

The task force identified and prioritized actions based upon members' areas of expertise, ability to influence decision-making, and time and resources. As well, short, medium and long term-objectives were organized so that the committee was able to gain small successes towards longer-term goals. These small steps and successes proved to be invaluable to the committee's staying power, sense of accomplishment, and overall satisfaction with the work undertaken.

Achievements

As outlined in the above table, many parts of the James Street Strategy were addressed during the project. In particular, the James Street Community Health and Safety Task force identified community and social development issues related to youth, food access, and Kinsmen Park revitalization as high priorities for the area—both because of the high need for these services in the local area, and because of the potential to achieve successes based on the abilities and available resources of task force members. Briefly, the accomplishments realized during project have included:

Community and Social Development

- Enhanced support to parents through assistance to begin a support group
- Assisted the youth outreach worker committee to develop a proposal
- Coordinated Intergenerational activities and youth-led community enhancement projects and assisted Youth Action Team with RCMP
- Coordinated leadership opportunities for high-school youth
- Assisted in development of youth anti-violence role modeling projects with SD 79 and SAVE
- Worked to address seniors' health and outreach objectives through youth seniors activities and plans for community gardens and coordinating hamper drives for seniors (with youth action team)
- Access to food was enhanced through the development of additional community kitchens to address cultural diversity, implementation of a good food box program, and plans for a community gardens in Kinsmen Park
- Worked to address needs of marginalized groups through development of support services for lesbians

Community Planning, Design and Management

- Revitalization of James Street was begun in 2001 through the painting of Cowichan Senior Secondary School which provided a major impetus to community improvements
- Initial plans for a banner campaign were developed with the goal of creating a street identity
- Community-based activities were coordinated in Kinsmen Park which involved a range of community organizations and youth
- A comprehensive plan was drawn up for revitalization of Kinsmen Park to include a community gardens concept. Improvements were made to the park through an addition to the washroom building for accessibility

Safety, Security and Access

- Safety, Security and access have been increased with more handicapped parking spots, accessible washrooms, accessible entrances to the park, improved curb cuts, lighting and sightlines in places, re-arrangement of play equipment in Kin Park, landscaping improvements around Cowichan Community Centre

Challenges

Understandably, some areas of the strategy could not be addressed and/or completed this year due to the timeframe of the project, the long term nature of some of the goals, cost and feasibility of some of the recommendations, barriers to involvement of some groups, the need for setting of priorities by the Task Force, and challenges or setbacks that came up along the way. As well, the committee felt that it was important to take small steps to build successes and then tackle larger, more complex issues. The results of this approach have presented some important lessons for this model and for future actions that will be required to address other areas and complete the James Street strategy.

The following areas will require further and/or ongoing efforts:

Community and social development

Enhancing family supports, including provision of daycare, providing a centre for youth, youth outreach worker, are critical for addressing root issues related to community safety and crime prevention. These are longer term objectives that will require coordination with broader health and community-based initiatives. Currently, some local efforts are being undertaken toward obtaining a youth outreach worker, as well as the development of family health centres in the central areas of the district. Effort needs to be made to link, coordinate and support health and social service organizations, to ensure that social development continues to be a strong component of community safety efforts.

Safety, Security and Access

Physical security and safety needs to be addressed through completing physical improvements identified in the safety audit of the area and followed by a post project safety analysis. This will require additional involvement of the DNC Public Works, local businesses, RCMP, Cowichan Community Centre and Cowichan High school.

Community Planning, Design and Management

During the past year, community planning efforts focused on neighbourhood revitalization, combined with community development activities to involve and engage the community in highlighting local assets and creating a positive image for the neighbourhood. These efforts were critical to stimulating interest and activity in the James Street area, and they must continue to be fostered. Comprehensive plans developed for park revitalization will require efforts by the District of North Cowichan beyond the timeframe of the project. The banner campaign that was planned experienced setbacks due to policies of BC Hydro. This initiative will need to be revived and continued to realize objectives for neighbourhood revitalization.

Addressing land use issues such as traffic and housing and shelter (which are also important social development issues) will be paramount to the success of the strategy and stability of the community. Possible future changes in land uses, such as the high school property and the Chevron property, present potential challenges to the stability of the local community and must be approached in a manner that supports and assists the neighbourhood. As well, linking the vision and goals of the James Street neighbourhood corridor with adjacent neighbourhoods such as the downtown area and Beverly to Coronation areas will be important.

Additionally, follow-up assessment should be undertaken to address challenges that resulted from the need to prioritize and implement some solutions without others. For example, many improvements have been made to Kinsmen Park, which have resulted in a significant reduction in problems in this area. However, some of the problems that were previously noted at Kinsmen Park are now being reported in other areas—such as Pioneer Park and downtown near the train station. It is possible that some of the problems have shifted to other areas where there are less community resources to safeguard facilities. This pattern is not surprising—because we have not yet been able to secure a youth outreach worker to address the root causes of the problems (youth loitering, drugs and alcohol), and have not yet developed corresponding strategies with neighbouring areas to reduce their vulnerability to safety issues. Any strategies that are developed in adjacent areas would benefit greatly from coordination and integration with the Regional Health and Safety initiative.

Impact of the Project

Despite the challenges noted above, as a result of the activities undertaken in the Neighbourhood Links Project a broad range of outcomes have been realized, substantial progress has been made and important groundwork has been laid. James Street is becoming more attractive with new retailers, art work displays, cleaner schools, parks and streets. A growing sense of community identity is emerging as a result of people coming to work together with a common vision. The successes that were realized, along with the challenges that were experienced, have provided important lessons and opportunities for moving forward.

Lessons learned / recommendations

Given the achievements that were realized during the past year and the feedback received from the Task Force and community, we can conclude positively that both the model and the process undertaken to implement the James Street strategy were successful. Critical to this success was the Task Force structure, membership and process, the individual and collective commitment of the group, combined with the ability of the organizations involved to take action and implement solutions through their respective roles in the community. In addition to the tremendous efforts of the community organizations involved, key contributions were made by local governing agencies – School District 79, the Pioneer Complex Committee, Cowichan Community Centre and the District of North Cowichan.

However, implementing a comprehensive community health and safety strategy takes more time than one year, and more funding than was available. Longer term objectives and projects must be given the time to develop and the structure and resources to reach fruition. A second phase is needed to enable the task force to build on the successes they have achieved and to look at some of the issues that were not addressed.

The James Street Task Force committee is planned to continue but it will need assistance and resources to enable it to continue to be successful. As well, the committee will need to be expanded to address remaining areas of the strategy. It will need to involve a greater number of residents in a more formal way, along with businesses and youth. Technical expertise, assistance and integration with goals and budget priorities of Public Works and Planning will also be needed in order to address critical land use planning aspects.

In the coming months, there will be new opportunities to work more closely with the CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee (CSAC) and other community groups that were originally identified as potential partners and leaders, but not involved this year (i.e. social planning committee). Additional support could be sought from the CSAC as it will be developing a regional strategy for community health and safety.

The leadership of the Task Force will be essential to maintain and foster a community-based process. As well, the leadership and involvement of the District of North Cowichan will be critical to ensure that future development occurs in a way that is respectful and consistent with vision and goals for health and safety in this neighbourhood. Indeed, one of the goals of the recently adopted Official Community Plan is to work to address neighbourhood disparities and develop neighbourhood plans to foster stronger neighbourhoods.

Phase II of the James Street Community Health and Safety Strategy should aim to continue and complete activities that were initiated during 2002/3, and to address sustainability of the vision for a healthy and safe neighbourhood through the development and adoption of

community planning policies and processes identified in the strategy. This could involve coordinating and integrating the existing vision and plan for a healthy and safe community within a formalized Neighbourhood Plan adopted by the District of North Cowichan. Such a plan would provide the necessary (formal) mechanism for facilitating both short and long term needs of the neighbourhood. It should be recognized that the development and integration of community health and safety objectives within a formal neighbourhood planning process would be a novel and progressive endeavour that would potentially be a model for other communities across Canada and elsewhere.

The development of a Phase II could be pursued cooperatively with the existing Task Force, the District of North Cowichan and CWAV Society. The distribution of this report and recommendations should be followed by a joint planning meeting to provide feedback and formulate the next steps.

2. PROJECT HISTORY

2.1. Background and History

The James Street Area

The Neighbourhood Links Project included James Street, between Duncan Street to the Trans Canada Highway, Alderlea and Garden Streets, Vian and Clements Streets, and parts of Ypres and Festubert Streets. This area is a mixed commercial, public use (recreation), institutional (school, community services) and residential area.

The diversity of the James Street area reflects an evolution from the sixties and seventies when large community schools and facilities were the standard and attracted small businesses and services that did not require a downtown location and higher overheads.

Today, the area's mixed use attracts many diverse groups to the area to live, work and access services. However, the area is in transition and there may be little incentive for new business to invest, while larger facilities must continue to allocate funds for upgrading. Many residents in the area move into other areas if possible, and those that do remain may not have the energy or the background to initiate and sustain work towards positive change.

Cowichan Senior Secondary High school is located at the southeast end of James Street and serves 1,000 students in grades 10 through 12. Many of these students regularly access the area's diverse services, businesses and recreational programs throughout the day and after school. The large student population in the James Street area is one important factor of the area's vibrant diversity.

Cowichan Community Centre and Pioneer Complex are major public recreation sites, comprising several acres on the eastside of James, and include the Community Centre building, a tennis court, a skate board park and ball fields. As well, the Community Centre's array of programs and services provide an integral component in the potential and quality of life around the James Street area. In fact, the James Street area offers the highest concentration of public recreation facilities, parks, amenities, programs and low cost activities in the Cowichan Valley.

Among the important community services in the area are the Cowichan Valley Basket Society (Garden Street), Cowichan Valley Association for Community Living (Clements), a youth group home on Ypres, and the Open Door Program on Festubert Street. These organizations provide support and resources to many individuals living in or using the area, who require assistance with various aspects of day-to-day living including access to food, health and safer living.

The Bread Basket Society serves over eighty meals each day to people who come from all over the Cowichan Valley, and the Central Vancouver Island Health Region's Open Door Program also provides approximately 630 meals to its members each month as well as employment, recreational and life skill opportunities for

people managing mental health issues. The Association for Community Living provides employment training through their Lunch On Clements Program to individuals with developmental disabilities as well as programs that support safe, independent living. Combined, these community organizations provide services that address the needs of the diverse range of people who access and live in the James Street area.

The commercial corridor of James St. contains several fast food outlets, restaurants, public recreation outlets (billiards, bowling), community services (C.V. Association for Community Living, Basket Society); nearby on Duncan Street are industrial locations and two fire halls.

Residential neighbourhoods surround the core commercial area on James and include Vian and Clements on the east side, and Alderlea and Garden to the west. There are two apartment buildings on Alderlea Street, which are adult and seniors oriented and approximately 50 single family detached houses. Residential population in the study area is estimated at 400.

As well as being a major destination area for all of the uses noted above, James Street itself is a major corridor for traffic and pedestrians surrounding neighbourhoods and downtown services and businesses. Residential streets of Alderlea and Garden also experience a fair amount of through traffic.

2.2. Crime, Personal Safety and Barriers to Access

James Street lies within the highest crime zone of the district of North Cowichan. The area has been subject to many complaints over the past few years from residents with regard to loitering, drug use and trafficking, theft, littering, vandalism and harassment, particularly with regard to Kinsmen Park on Alderlea Street. (Duncan/North Cowichan RCMP, 2000) These issues present problems for many people who live in the area, particularly for women and children, and other marginalized groups who face a multitude of barriers to participation in community life.

This area is home and destination to many seniors, people with disabilities, and young families who face a multitude of barriers just in terms of day-to-day living, and who lack the resources and energy to engage in neighbourhood development. This area has the lowest overall family incomes, the highest proportion of renter households spending over 30% of income on shelter, and the second highest rental rates in the district. (Statistics Canada, 1996)

Until recently, joint efforts of authorities to address crime and disorder have been limited to schemes around enforcement and deterrence. RCMP have worked with residents, the high school and parks authorities to monitor and enforce in this area; however, these singular strategies have not addressed all of the factors necessary for broad-based improvements. Efforts to mobilize residents to increase their ownership and control over the area (for example through creating a Neighbourhood Watch group) have not been successful.

On June 23, 2000, individuals and representatives of several Cowichan Valley community organizations, local government, School District 79 and Public Health, met to discuss the development of a comprehensive community strategy for safe, healthy and caring communities in the Cowichan Valley. They defined a range of goals and objectives reflecting a variety of needs both for the development of programs and supports, and for involvement of community members in defining and implementing solutions.

2.3.Call to Action Consultation Project

A community consultation project was developed in partnership with a number of local community organizations, local government and RCMP, to explore issues around community safety and accessibility, and to mobilize the local and broader community to develop strategies for increasing safety and access, and to improve overall quality of life for people living in and using the James Street area.

The consultation process involved over 1,200 individuals through surveys, focus group discussions, action events and meetings. The research was very comprehensive and indicated a multitude of factors and variables associated with crime, disorder and sense of safety of residents and users of this neighbourhood.

2.3.1. Safety Concerns Identified

Overall, the results suggest that people using or living in the James Street area experience high levels of concern for their safety at home, at work and especially in public places. Concern for safety in public places was reported by 85% of survey respondents, with Kinsmen Park, James Street itself and dark places such as alleys and parking lots comprising the most frequently identified locations. People's most common reasons for feeling afraid included fear of violence and harassment, threatening behaviour related to drugs and alcohol, inadequate lighting, and unsafe traffic patterns in the area.

- Over 60% of survey respondents (66% of women and 61% of men) said they are concerned for their safety at home. These percentages were highest for seniors and lowest for teens.
- Approximately 50% (57% of women and 47% of men) said they are concerned for their safety at work. These percentages were highest for the 40-59 age group and lowest for 19-24 ages.
- Just over 70% of men and 90% of women said they are concerned for their safety out in public in the James Street area. These percentages were highest for seniors and lowest for the 19-24 age group.
- In response to these concerns, 53% of women and 29% of men restrict their use of the area. Those most affected by safety concerns are women, and particularly women over 25 years of age.

Broader social issues figure prominently in the overall picture. Women, youth, aboriginal people, and people with disabilities identified twenty factors that affected their safety and access including:

- Economic conditions
- Racism
- Transportation
- Occupation
- Age
- Feeling Afraid
- Attitudes About Women
- Food and Nutrition
- Education
- Housing
- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Street Design
- Child Care
- Disability

As well, physical factors including design, layout and security elements figured as very significant to people's safety and sense of safety, and as important elements in addressing prevention of crime, accessibility, and overall quality of life in the area. In essence, while the physical environment does not cause criminal activity, it plays an important role in terms of creating opportunities for crime and disorder to occur, and in either promoting or detracting from people's quality of life.

For example, a neighbourhood park located next to a high school offers opportunities for drug use and trafficking, and results in intimidation of 'legitimate' users. At the same time, lack of facilities and poor design of the park limits opportunities for other users such as seniors, people with disabilities, women and children, whose presence could assist in deterring inappropriate uses. Over time, a cycle is created where more and more criminal activities pervade, and fewer and fewer people feel safe in the neighbourhood.

Issues identified with regard to physical layout, design and security elements in the James Street Neighbourhood include:

- design and layout of the neighbourhood park lends itself to inappropriate uses, detracts from accessibility for young families and seniors.
- places present hiding and entrapment areas (e.g., alleyways themselves, bushes, parked cars, adjacent parking lots, building alcoves and recessed entrances)
- lack of sufficient lighting in places

- obstacles to accessibility (crossing areas, entrances and exits to parking lots)
- litter and graffiti, as well as vandalism are an ongoing problem particularly in Kinsman Park.
- high levels of pedestrian traffic conflict with vehicle traffic (e.g., the high number of students walking through the area)
- security of public and semi-public buildings such as apartment buildings, the community centre (CVSF, 2001)

2.3.2. Barriers to Participation in Community Life

Because of their concerns, many people indicated that they avoid areas after dark, and do not go out at night to attend social functions, school or meetings because of potential risks. Overall, 61% of all adult respondents (those 25 years of age and over) indicated that they do in fact, restrict their participation in community life in order to safeguard themselves.

Not surprisingly, restriction of activities increases with age, especially among women. Women across all age groups restrict their activities more than men do, with 74% of female seniors indicating that they limit their participation in community activities.

However, because of their safety concerns and the many barriers they face to participation in community life, many people lack the ability to have their concerns heard and affect change within the context of traditional decision-making processes. These barriers effectively reduce people's ability to create change and increase their risk of victimization.

2.3.3. Interdependence of causal factors and outcomes

Where community safety is concerned, there is increasing recognition of the complexities, inter-relatedness and interdependence of causal factors and outcomes. Research indicates that in general, the primary risk factors associated with youth and adult criminality are: - poverty, unemployment, inequitable access to resources and opportunities, including education, violence in the home, alcohol and drug use.²

Many of these factors are also associated with vulnerability of people to crime. An examination of national crime trends indicates striking similarities for characteristics of offenders and of victims, and the social and environmental context in which people live.³

Moreover, segregation and concentration of risk factors in certain neighbourhoods highlights the issues and correlation between poverty, community capacity (community supports and family structure), and density.

² Leslie Kennedy ed., *Crime Counts - A Criminal Event Analysis*. Scarborough: Nelson Canada, 1993.

³ National Crime Prevention Council, *Picture of Crime in Canada*. Ottawa, 1996.

In other words, risk is not only individually concentrated, it is also geographically concentrated.⁴

Thus it is critical to look at the James Street area, not just in terms of what crimes are being committed, but in terms of how crime and victimization may be related to such things as:

- Income and employment conditions
- Housing and neighbourhood environments
- Lack of adequate support services for children, youth and families
- Lack of accessible and affordable opportunities for recreation

Indeed, the local research has revealed that all of these factors are inter-related, i.e., they simultaneously affect people's safety and access in their community. Similarly, the solutions that were defined were interdependent. For example: deterring inappropriate uses of areas like the neighbourhood park requires a combination of strategies aimed at deterrence through physical measures, increased access for other users through sensitive design and programming. It also means looking at developing alternative activities and supports for children and youth, and connecting youth with the very people who they intimidate, seniors and women. Finally, it is also necessary to examine community development policies and processes that will guide future decisions about development to ensure that they include considerations for crime prevention, safety and access.

The consultation process identified numerous solutions that come under three key components for overall strategy needed to address issues related to crime and violence in the James Street neighbourhood. These include:

COMMUNITY / SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Family Supports and Early Childhood Intervention Opportunities and Services for Children and Youth Support Services and Networks Build Alternatives for Accessing Food
PLANNING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT	James Street Revitalization Local Park Stewardship Traffic Study Housing and Shelter Official Community Plan
SAFETY, SECURITY AND ACCESS	Physical Improvements/Repairs Post project Safety Analysis Improved Safety Communications

⁴ Tim Hope, "Community Crime Prevention and Urban Deprivation." University of Manchester; Paper submitted to Analytical College on Urban Safety, October, 1993.

The combination of factors associated with issues around safety and access confirm the need to address the issues through a prevention approach. In order to successfully reduce crime, a more balanced approach is needed to:

- 1) -recognize the need for both physical security measures and social development programs to address the underlying issues and risk factors associated with both crime and victimization.
- 2) -recognize the interdependency of institutions- simultaneously they can prevent crime more successfully than the present sectoral approach, and that singular or sectoral-based programs and policies by themselves may be insufficient. For example,
 - A Headstart Program may fail to prevent crime in a community where children grow up with daily gunfire;
 - Arrest for domestic violence prevents crime in neighbourhoods with low unemployment and high marriage rates--but arrest increases crime in census tracts with high unemployment and low marriage rates.⁵

A major factor impeding progress in crime prevention, is the fact that many crime prevention efforts and initiatives are undertaken in isolation, resulting in an overall piecemeal approach which creates problems around efficiency of planning and implementation, monitoring, gaps in delivery, duplication, and sustainability.

However, single subject approaches mobilize planning around one primary topic or issue (substance abuse, youth violence, community development) and indeed, research has shown that individual sectoral projects may be singularly effective (i.e., in addressing specific objectives). However, the danger is that they can be too narrow and do not interweave with other issues and resources.⁶ Integrated planning and actions are necessary in order to address the full spectrum of needs for community safety and crime prevention.

Thus, programs must be implemented in several institutional settings simultaneously in order to find programs in any one institution to be effective. Moreover, such programs need to be working toward a common rather than singular aim.⁷

⁵ L.VV. Sherman, Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising. A Report to the United States Congress. Maryland, National Institute of Justice, 1998.

⁶ National Crime Prevention Council, Creating a Blueprint for Community Safety. Washington, 1998, p.45.

⁷ National Crime Prevention Council, Creating a Blueprint for Community Safety. Washington, 1998.

2.4. The Safer Communities Approach

The Safer Communities approach to crime prevention stresses a balanced approach that includes:

- a focus on working in the local community to define local issues and solutions.
- using a variety of strategies, from environmental design measures, to social development programs aimed at reducing the risk (for victims and offenders) and increasing access to opportunities.
- Multi-agency working - adopting a comprehensive approach which brings together a wide range of interests and abilities to collaborate and identify and define priorities for action and determine the best ways of coordinating these to meet a variety of needs.

Three broad components have been suggested as a means to organize actions and develop programming to achieve the aims of the strategy. These are:

Community and Social Development
Supportive Planning, Design and Management
Increasing Physical and Personal Security

It is important to understand that all of these components are connected, and that each will contribute to the overall aims. For example, improvements to physical security of homes and neighbourhoods will help to reduce the vulnerability of people and property through addressing opportunities for crime and violence. In the short term, these are effective ways to reduce incidences of crime. However, over the long term it will be important to ensure future development happens in a way that provides safety, accessibility and localized services to the neighbourhood. And finally, it is essential that we address the root causes of crime through prevention strategies that address overall quality of life, and provide supportive services opportunities for children, youth and families.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

3.1. Objectives

3.1.1. Developing a Coordinated Plan of Action

The overall aim of the Neighbourhood Links Project is to improve the quality of life of the people living in and using the James Street area through a comprehensive, partnership approach to reducing crime, violence and fear of violence, and increasing overall safety and accessibility. Implicit in the strategy are the need for community involvement and participation, and the formation of community-based collaborative structure and framework through which short and long term needs for reducing crime and improving community safety can be planned, coordinated and evaluated.

The goal of the project is to respond to the needs identified in the James Street consultation process and implement a Community Safety Strategy through working at the level of the community to carry out a process of outreach,

consensus building, awareness-raising, planning and network building, to facilitate the implementation of the strategy.

This project will provide the basis for a new approach to community development to deal with issues around crime and violence, and an opportunity to work in partnership with other sectors for an integrated approach.

3.1.2. Community and Social Development:

- To improve the quality of life of residents through a variety of measures including:
- increasing access to opportunities and support systems that promote healthy lifestyles and development.
- strengthen individual and neighbourhood capacity to increase involvement and participation of residents in community life.
- support for victims of crime and those who are vulnerable to violence, and
- reduce re-offending through increasing access to training and employment opportunities, community-based programs to promote accountability and provide diversionary activities.
- reducing the risk factors for children and youth associated with offending and victimization through supporting families and providing opportunities for healthy growth and development.
- reducing domestic violence through education and supports for both victims and families.

3.1.3. Planning, Design and Management:

- To encourage development and design that will incorporate needs for safety and improve accessibility of neighbourhoods and services.
- To address needs for affordable and special needs housing.

3.1.4. Safety and security:

- To reduce vulnerability of individuals, their homes and neighbourhoods to crime and violence.

3.1.5. Community Safety Strategy

The James Street Neighbourhood Community Safety Strategy

1. COMMUNITY / SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Potential Lead Agency	Potential Partnerships
a. Family Supports and Early Childhood Intervention	Provincial Ministries	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of affordable, local daycare, particularly for single parents • Enhance programs to identify at risk children and to provide support to parents 		First Call Regional Health Healthiest Babies Growing Together CYC
b. Opportunities and Services for Children and Youth	Children and Youth Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Centre • Youth Outreach Worker • Intergenerational Activities • Youth-led Community Enhancement Projects • Youth Action Team • Programs to address young men’s lack of safeguarding behaviour and to increase young women’s sense of personal safety • Programs to address children’s safety concerns and teach safeguarding behaviour • Role modeling and mentoring programs for elementary and middle school students • Leadership opportunities for high school youth 		Community Options Intercultural and Immigrant Aid Society Cowichan Spirit of Women School District 79 Cowichan Police Advisory RCMP Big Brothers and Big Sisters Cowichan Tribes—Youth Services
c. Support Services and Networks	Health Region	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase capacity and range of local programs to address gaps that have been identified, especially: • alcohol and drug programs • seniors’ health care and outreach • self defense programs for women, children and other vulnerable members of the community • Enhance community information networks: • develop seniors’ network that supports those who restrict activities due to health and safety concerns • coordinate efforts to distribute information about community programs to churches, businesses and community organizations 		Connections Drug and Alcohol Program School District 79 Community Centre Independent Living Resource Centre
d. Build Alternatives for Accessing Food		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile food bank to assist seniors and people with disabilities • Increase number of Community Kitchens in area • Provide additional pick-up points, for hampers, to women families and disabled individuals • Connect young people to seniors through meals on wheels program • Community Gardens Program 		Basket Society Association for Community Living Somenos Transition House Community Kitchens Local Churches Cowichan Spirit of Women Intercultural and Immigrant Aid Society Open Door

2. PLANNING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT	Potential Lead Agency	Potential Partnerships
a. James Street Revitalization	Task Force	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification of James Street Area • Create a Street Identity • Promote art and recreation themes and activities • Create vibrant community image • Promote more positive attitudes towards youth through involvement in Street Identity initiatives 		Cowichan Valley Arts Council Cowichan Community Centre Cowichan Secondary High School Residents
b. Local Park Stewardship	District of North Cowichan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate community-based activities and social events in Kinsmen Park • Provide support and assistance to community groups to hold events and make park improvements • Work with youth to encourage stewardship • Connect youth with seniors and disabled individuals through park enhancement projects 		Residents Cowichan Secondary RCMP Intercultural and Immigrant Aid Society
c. Traffic Study	Traffic Safety Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic calming • Link transit plan to traffic plan • Improved accessibility • Increase pedestrian safety • Crosswalks • Designated parking 		Traffic Engineer District of North Cowichan ICBC
d. Housing and Shelter	District of North Cowichan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of affordable and special needs housing such as second stage housing for women, supported independent living units for people with disabilities, subsidized housing for young families, and seniors housing • Designation of land uses and densities to support availability of land 		Health Region BC Housing Cowichan Women Against Violence Society Private Developers

Community Planning Recommendations:

Develop and implement land use planning policies and development guidelines that will serve to:

1. Encourage revitalization and redevelopment that will enhance the local area.
 - Encourage redevelopment by bringing in incentives for desired types of development (for example, reduce or remove Development Cost Charges).
 - Promote a healthy mix of commercial, residential and recreational development.
 - Encourage innovative commercial ventures such as coffee shops and markets, which would also serve to increase the flow of people to the area.
 - Highlight and enhance pedestrian access.
 - Encourage adequate levels of lighting as well as creative lighting.
(For example, mini lights were suggested for trees along James Street, to increase the level of lighting as well as work to beautify the area.)
2. Respect and preserve residential properties.
3. Respect and consider residential facilities and users (i.e., Open Door Program).
4. Promote and encourage affordable housing throughout the district to provide more and better options for families living in low-income situations.
5. Ensure Plan Policies incorporate provisions to encourage supportive management structures to support tenant involvement.
6. Ensure Plan policies provide for adequate provision of facilities and recreational services to support accessibility and affordability.
7. Adopt community planning policies and develop municipal guidelines which support crime prevention in future development. Elements:
 - Encourage layout and design of streets, buildings and open spaces to influence reduction of opportunities for crimes to occur (adequate lighting, elimination of hiding and entrapment areas and movement predictors, reduce isolation and increase awareness of surroundings).
 - Integrate security measures to reinforce both formal and informal surveillance, as well as access control of routes and entrances to increase security.
 - Implement a program of education, training and information for planners and developers on planning and design for safety.

3. SAFETY, SECURITY AND ACCESS	Potential Lead Agency	Potential Partnerships
a. Physical Improvements/Repairs	District of North Cowichan	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks, crossings, curb cuts, signage, lighting • Park facilities etc. 		Business Task force
b. Post project Safety Analysis	RCMP	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPTED review and safety audit 		Safer Futures Residents
c. Improved Safety Communications	Pioneer Park Committee	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public telephones and signage 		Telus District of North Cowichan

3.2. Activities

The development of the James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force was initiated in April of 2002. Contacts were made with local government and over 30 community organizations and representatives to raise awareness around the project goals and objectives for a coordinated crime prevention program in the James Street area. Background information about previous findings related to community crime prevention, such as the Call to Action project (2001), was distributed to stakeholders in an effort to help raise awareness around the issues. As well, informational letters and packages about the goals, objectives of the Neighbourhood Links Project were distributed (Appendix A).

3.2.1. Support From Local Government

Initial meetings and presentations were undertaken to help foster relationships and build momentum around the project. An important step in this process was to involve local government by informing them about the project's integrated approach to community crime prevention. The Neighbourhood Links project provided presentations to the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) (Appendix B) to foster partnerships and involve them in the process from the beginning.

The CVRD structure is similar to that of all regional districts throughout British Columbia. Encompassing 3,508 square kilometers, its regional board is comprised of elected municipal officials appointed by their municipal councils and independently elected members from nine electoral areas and four municipalities of Duncan, North Cowichan, Lake Cowichan and Ladysmith. Regional population is approximately 77,000, ranging from urban centres to small, rural and/or isolated communities. There are several First Nations Bands,

which comprise Cowichan Tribes. Approximately 6,000 First Nations people live both on and off reserve.

While the Cowichan region is similar in many respects to other small, rural and/or isolated communities in BC, it fares among the lowest 25 percentile in terms of Health Status Indicators of all BC communities.

Working with the CVRD Community Safety Advisory Committee during the Neighbourhood Links project in the James Street area sparked further dialogue about the potential to develop a coordinated regional approach to crime prevention. While recognizing the need to address physical, social, and institutional factors of crime in the James Street area, the committee also explored some of the challenges and successes of the work and how to share this experience with other regional communities. For example, the goal of moving toward more independence for local action and implementation (and thus sustainability) has been challenged due to the nature of working at the level of the individual community. That is, some communities such as the James Street area have been able to build upon the results of the safety audits and develop local initiatives independently. Others, however, have not had the capacity, resources, linkages, time, etc. to move forward in a meaningful way, and others have not had an opportunity to be engaged in this work at all, because of the nature of localized project work.

3.2.2. Building In Sustainability

Through this exploratory process the Neighbourhood Links project developed a strong partnership with the CVRD and the idea for an effective, permanent regional structure through which the safety issues of women and other marginalized groups can be prioritized, planned, coordinated, resourced and monitored (see Appendix C for Regional Strategy Proposal).

The new framework will enable communities, including the James Street area, to more actively participate in the process of identifying and addressing local needs, and in turn, will share the progress and outcomes of local efforts with other communities. It will reduce the limitations that rural communities experience when they encounter roadblocks because it will provide a mechanism from which all communities can draw upon for support in the form of information, resources, sharing of best practices and lessons learned. This exchange will mean that all communities will benefit from each other's challenges and successes, making all the Cowichan Valley Regional District safer and healthier for everyone and a model for other regions across Canada.

Goals and Objectives of the Regional Health and Safety Strategy:

- To work in partnership with local government to develop a regional strategy for community health and safety that can be used as a model for small, rural, and isolated communities.

The objectives of the strategy are:

1. Develop a coordinated, regional structure that recognizes, plans, coordinates and monitors women's safety issues in order to build safer communities for everyone
2. Work with individual communities to identify and prioritize issues, to develop and implement community action plans that will result in progress and outcomes that are feasible, trackable and measurable
3. Build capacity in communities throughout the Cowichan Valley Regional District and other communities in BC to develop a working crime prevention process through providing and sharing knowledge, best practice exchange, and networking that leads to collective action
4. Share this model's process with other communities around BC and across the country

Thus, we see that the Neighbourhood Links project played an important role in the development of long term planning for community safety throughout the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The Community Safety Advisory Committee provides a mechanism by which information about project success and challenges can be shared with other communities throughout the region. A representative from the James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force has been invited to sit on the regional committee to continue to provide information about the needs, issues, plans and activities in the James Street area.

3.2.3. Coordinating the Task Force

The first full meeting of the James Community Health and Safety Task Force was held in June of 2002. Over a dozen representatives from a broad range of community agencies came together to develop a work plan for the James Street neighbourhood. The committee began by acknowledging the broad range of safety concerns in the area and by addressing the recommendations of the community safety strategy outlined in the Call to Action Report. The committee recognized the need to look at short, medium and long-term goals to address the root causes of crime as well as the manifestations of it. The group agreed to prioritize the recommendations based upon feasibility of tasks given the available expertise and resources. The task force also articulated the importance of taking "baby steps" recognizing the need to set achievable goals and have small successes along the way to keep the group and the larger community motivated to continue to undertake the work.

The Task Force agreed to organize actions using the template set out in the recommendations for James Street. That is, they agreed to look at the issues as they related to three broad categories:

- Community and Social Development
- Planning Design and Management
- Safety, Security and Access

While the Task Force recognized that these areas would often overlap and intersect, it provided some boundaries by which to prioritize plans and actions.

3.3.Action Plan

The following is an action plan undertaken by the Task Force over the course of the project. The action plan and activities incorporate an integrated approach that recognizes the need for a broad range of community involvement, as well as the need to plan for short, medium and long-term outcomes.

3.3.1. Community and social development

Community and social development programs are mid to long-term strategies that promote healthy lifestyles. They focus on building individual and neighbourhood capacity for equitable participation in community life including training, employment and recreational opportunities. As well, community and social development strategies, work to prevent domestic violence, child and youth victimization and other crime, while supporting people who are affected by it.

3.3.1.1.Family Supports and Early Childhood Intervention

Enhance programs to identify children at risk and provide support to parents

The committee distributed information and handout packages about a new parent support group for families. This is a free support group, coordinated by skilled facilitators who assist parents through difficulties. A central location for the group was found at Volunteer Cowichan.

3.3.1.2. Opportunities and Services for Children and Youth

The impact of Cowichan Senior Secondary High school, which is located at the southeast end of James Street and serves over 1000 students, was acknowledged as a key component in developing an integrated approach to community crime prevention. Many of these students regularly access the area's diverse services, businesses and recreational programs throughout the day and after school. Moreover, previous local research (Call to Action, 2001) clearly identified a strong need in the James Street area for youth activities that provide alternatives to crime, fear of crime, drug and alcohol misuse, problems at home and other issues associated with unsuccessful community integration.

a) Youth Outreach Worker

The need to secure a youth outreach worker in the central Cowichan area was recognized several years ago and a sub committee of the Child and Youth Committee was formed to identify the issues and develop a plan to secure the position for the community. In 2001, a proposal was submitted to the Provincial government for funding, which was unfortunately, unsuccessful. As the funding proposal was not successful, the idea and momentum for the youth outreach worker dropped off.

As part of the Neighbourhood Links project, the Youth Outreach Worker committee was reinstated and began the process of garnering support from relevant stakeholders including organizations serving children and youth, the school district, the RCMP, the Cowichan Community Centre, and local government. Concerns about young people in the Cowichan region, and in particular, the central Cowichan region that the James Street area lies within include:

- the use of drugs,
- living on the streets, and a significant increase of younger youth (12-14) on the streets
- prostitution
- loitering and vandalism (see Appendix D—letter to Mayor and Council)
- increasing number of problems starting earlier--in the middle schools
- increasing numbers of youth not involved in any type of program or school
- schools not able to effectively help the youth that are not in attendance at the schools (for example, a youth was expelled from school until a court decision was made concerning an incident. The court process was very slow, so that youth was not allowed to go to school for some time.)
- youth have been removed from dysfunctional homes, put into foster care and they can still take off. An outreach worker is needed to get to them where they are on the streets.

The committee recognized the need to develop a comprehensive plan to address the complex issues facing high-risk youth in our community. The committee planned to undertake a broader consultation process to ensure that the youth outreach position meets the needs and concerns of the community. The committee agreed to develop a draft proposal for a needs assessment through the National Crime Prevention Centre to gather more data and information about the current issues, hold a broad community forum, and develop a comprehensive, long-term framework for a youth outreach worker position in the community.

b) Youth Initiatives

Intergenerational Activities

Local research undertaken by the Call to Action project in 2001 identified fears and stereotyping occurring between youth and seniors in and around the James Street area. Many seniors using the area voiced their concerns about seeing large groups of youth. Similarly, youth stated that they felt that seniors judged them without having an opportunity to get to know them. To help resolve some of these concerns, recommendations for the James Street area included the development of intergenerational activities designed to bring youth and seniors closer together and to learn from one another, thus reducing the likelihood of crime and fear of crime among these groups.

The BC Crime Prevention Association provided financial support to offset additional costs of materials, supplies, and community coordination for four events designed to support youth and seniors. The project aimed to bridge the gap between youth and seniors through training, strengthened partnerships and interaction between the two groups to encourage safer communities with reduced stereotypes and fear.

“Seniors and youth have a lot to give each other,” says Lori Iannidinardo, community partner (Community Kitchens). “This project focuses on activities that help them to do that.”

A youth/seniors steering committee was developed and was comprised of youth, seniors, local RCMP and representatives from community organizations who worked together to reduce intergenerational and cultural barriers through shared activities that fostered connection and community contribution.

The activities and events included a conflict resolution workshop, a wreath making event, a Christmas holiday hamper drive, an essay contest, and a dinner event with awards.



Youth Seniors dinner and award evening November 7, 2002

i) Herstories’ – Bridging the Gap: Essay Contest

Young women (aged 11 – 19) were invited to interview a senior woman and write her biography in two pages or less. The process aimed to build relationships between youth and seniors, strengthen communities and build community assets by capitalizing on skill and knowledge of both groups.

“This is a way to bring different generations together and to develop common ground and shared understanding,” says Iannidinardo. “Common goals and activities help to reduce some of the fear and stereotypes facing these groups.”

Two of the participants in this contest appeared in the New VI morning show on October 14, 2002. The contest was featured in several articles in local newspapers (See Appendix, E) and was advertised at all public and private middle and high schools throughout the region.



Winners of the 'Herstories' Essay Contest November 7th, 2002.

1st place winners in each age category received \$100.00 and 2nd place winners received \$75.00. 3rd place and honorable mentions received gift certificates from Volume One Books.

ii) Holiday Hamper Drive

Between November and December of 2002, the youth action team worked with Cowichan Senior Secondary and Mount Prevost Middle school to organize a food and toys holiday hamper drive. The team made and distributed posters, and involved student council, teachers and administration. The result was a phenomenal success. Over 1200 items of food were collected and dozens of toys were donated by the Lions Club. The team put together over 20 hampers that were distributed to women and their families over the holiday season (see Appendix F).

iii) Outreach to Palliative Care Patients

As well, the team attended a wreath-making event where they learned to make decorative arrangements and centerpieces. The team then delivered them to patients in the palliative care unit at the Cowichan District Hospital as well as to community organizations (appendix G).



Members of the Youth Action Team delivering holiday arrangements to the Cowichan District hospital, December 2002

As a result of these initiatives, many youth who had participated expressed their interest in becoming part of a Youth Action Team that would undertake community enhancement projects in the James Street and surrounding areas.

Over twenty youth are involved in the youth action team, which is co-sponsored by the Duncan RCMP and the Neighbourhood Links project. The group meets bi-monthly to explore, plan and implement community events.

Four of the group members recently returned from the BCYPN conference in Coulter Lake. While there, they worked on plans for a community enhancement project at Kinsmen Park. The project is anticipated to occur on May 15th 2003, as part of a larger community event being held there. The Youth Action Team plans to paint the new washroom/change room facilities in a theme developed by the team. Having youth paint park equipment and facilities has proven to be an effective way to reduce vandalism and graffiti at Kinsmen Park. Two such events have occurred within the last two years, creating lasting improvements to the area.

c) Leadership Opportunities for Youth

i) Project Prom

Many students at Cowichan High School come from families who are struggling to make ends meet. And the cost of graduation continues to climb each year. For many students, the cost of graduation excludes them from participating in this important life event, leaving some youth more isolated and vulnerable.

Project Prom is modeled after the Cinderella project that began in Vancouver in 1999 (Appendix H). The project provides young men and women with formal attire in which to attend their graduation. Grad council members at Cowichan High School worked with the Neighbourhood Links project, teachers, counselors and administration to undertake a similar initiative in order to (according to grad council organizers) make “grad night equally memorable for everyone.”

Students created a letter requesting cash to help cover the \$75.00 banquet fee as well as clothing and service donations for this event. Posters were displayed throughout the school so that families could donate or students wanting to take advantage of this initiative could confidentially contact the school counselor. The counselor then gets particulars of the student’s requirements and works with the Project Prom team to meet those requirements. When students select their attire, they will also be given information and encouragement for a safe grad night. The aim of this project will be to create an inclusive, safe grad night for all students.

ii) Participation on Community Health and Safety Task Force

As part of a recommendation made through the project’s evaluation process, youth will be invited to sit on the James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force—providing a valuable link between Cowichan High School and the broader community.

iii) Canada World Youth

Two participants in the Canada World Youth Program worked with the Neighbourhood Links project between September and November of 2002. During this time, they learned about the project goals and objectives and an integrated approach to community crime prevention. As part of the initiative for the revitalization of the James Street area, the two Canada World Youth researched the feasibility of installing flower boxes along James Street. The youth engaged in conversations with community organizations, businesses and also prepared a letter to the District of North Cowichan. The information was taken back to the James Street Task Force for consideration. The information provided by the youth assisted the Task Force in determining that the flower box campaign was a valuable undertaking to be considered for a subsequent phase of the project. The Youth left in the fall to Uruguay and hope to connect with the project when they return to Canada.

iv) Community Event at Kinsmen Park

The James Street Community Task Force identified Kinsmen Park as a vital area to the neighbourhood with many potential benefits to the

community. It was suggested that the high school could use the park for class activities and that the community should encourage more events in the park such as lunch hour fun tournaments between local organizations, agencies and residents. Walkways, flowers and benches were also recommended to increase the appeal and appropriate use of Kinsmen Park. As part of this initiative, the Neighbourhood Links project developed and enhanced linkages with Cowichan High School to promote more school-related, supervised activities in the park, such as drama classes and student council barbecues.

On May 15th, the High School students, staff and administration will come together with James Street area residents, community organizations, and local government for an afternoon of music and community spirit. Students from the high school band will perform, food will be served, and community organizations will display information about their programs and services. As well, newly installed park facilities will be painted by local youth, and plans for new park improvements, including the development of community gardens, will be unveiled.

d) Role Modeling and mentoring programs for elementary and middle school students

i) Anti-violence program for Cowichan High School

The Neighbourhood Links project worked with the S.A.V.E. program to develop a new proposal for an anti-violence program to be implemented in Cowichan High School. The model builds on the success of students at Frances Kelsey and aims to modify it to meet the needs of Cowichan High School's more urban setting.

ii) Together Against Violence Proposal to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General for a Youth-led anti-violence program

During 2001/2002, TAVN conducted an in-depth community safety needs assessment project, to gain a deeper understanding of issues related to crime and safety within the Cowichan Valley.

The community safety needs assessment illustrated the desire of Cowichan Valley residents to prevent violence and create safer communities through efforts aimed at education and awareness, increasing access to support services, resources and information, through workshops, publicity and a resource center. The results suggest that community residents are aware that in order to increase safety, the community must focus on root issues of violence – discrimination, racism, poverty, lack of support programs, bullying, etc. They also stress the community's concern for youth, and to address gender related violence such as sexual assault and harassment.

In responding to the needs identified through this research, TAVN began to address the need for promoting and supporting safer communities for youth.

The Neighbourhood Links project collaborated with TAVN to propose an innovative project to create awareness among youth about violence issues. The aim of the proposed project is to develop and deliver education and training to youth in the Duncan area, mobilize a youth-led production

designed to deliver pro-social, anti-violence messages, and increase accessibility and awareness of violence prevention materials and resources for youth.

Cowichan Senior Secondary High School is a key partner in this initiative and plans to involve their drama and CAPP students in the development of the youth-led anti-violence production should funding be secured.

iii) Safe Streets and Safe Schools Grant Program

As part of the Safe Schools Initiative, members of School District 79 expressed interest in developing a proposal for a “School and Community Crisis Response and Threat Assessment Training” (Appendix I). This training responds to the need for skills and protocol to effectively manage crisis situations such as those recently experienced in Taber, Alberta and Columbine High School.

The Neighbourhood Links project worked with school district 79 staff members in the development of a proposal to be submitted to the Ministry for Public Safety and Solicitor General. The aim of the proposal would be to have a train-the-trainers event involving up to 50 teachers, counselors, administrators representing middle and senior high schools throughout the district, as well as members of the RCMP, and Ministry of Children and Family Development. The training event would focus on developing an understanding of the behavioral indicators for violence using a four-pronged assessment model that includes personality of the student; school dynamics; family dynamics, and social dynamics. The training would also look at the development of a multi-disciplinary team that would respond and work together using standardized protocol and procedures.

3.3.1.3. Build Alternatives for Accessing Food

Research around food security issues in the James Street area indicates that many individuals in the area live below poverty and struggle to access adequate nutrition (Call to Action 2001, Barriers to Employment and Community Participation Draft 2002, See Appendix J). Food distribution centres such as the food bank and Salvation Army can not fully respond to the increasing numbers of individuals needing food. As well, some groups indicate particular vulnerability. For example, women and children and people with disabilities indicate that the existing programs are difficult to access due to fear of drug and alcohol related behaviors of some individuals using these services. Other barriers to accessing food resources include intimidation, food availability, criteria required to obtain food, lack of transportation, and shame. Moreover, survey respondents in the Barriers to Employment and Community Participation study (2002), indicate fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy are the food items most lacking in their diets.

a) James Street Food Program Development

As a result of the community consultation process, recommendations for food alternatives included: cooperatives and good food box programs, kitchens that work throughout the community to assist groups of individuals to prepare nutritious meals, opportunities to learn about nutrition, and a community gardens.

Members of the James Street Task Force reviewed the issues and recommendations and agreed to develop a sub-committee to address the scope of the issue comprehensively.

The committee met regularly throughout the project to organize small food-related community events such as the Holiday Hamper Drive, and the Youth/Seniors dinner, and to plan for a more comprehensive community nutrition program.

Representatives from women's organizations, public health, Cowichan Tribes, Community Kitchens, Providence Farm, Canadian Mental Health, Together Against Violence, the Disability Resource Center, and Healthy Lifestyles Diabetes Program worked together to develop a model for a food program in the James Street area. The group prioritized the need to create a safe location for women, children and other vulnerable people to obtain nutritious food with minimal obstacles for access.

The committee recommended that the food program for the James Street area be:

1. Focused on women, children and other vulnerable groups
2. Provide nutritional food (especially fruits, vegetables and protein)
3. Start small and preferably located within an existing program or agency
4. Create opportunities to access and build other resources for food
5. Provide educational information and support around nutrition

Neighbourhood Links met with Providence farm and other community organizations that were developing a good food box program. Good food boxes are prepared at Providence Farm by students enrolled in a Malaspina training program. Boxes contain assorted seasonal fruits and vegetables and are available at a cost of \$10.00. A drop location has been arranged for the James Street area at the Green Door Community Resource Centre in partnership with Canadian Mental Health and Together Against Violence Society. Women using services in the community such as Somenos Transition House, Cowichan Spirit of Women, Intercultural and Immigrant Aid Society and other can order good food boxes for their families once each month and then pick them up at the centrally-located Green Door Community Resource Centre.

Plans to run additional groups for Community Kitchens at this location are in progress subject to additional funding. The aim is to link women who are purchasing good food boxes to the Community Kitchen program that provides support to prepare healthy affordable meals, budgeting skills, recipes, nutritional information and social connection.

As well, the food committee is looking at ways to offer educational workshops on good food box pick-up days, to address a broad spectrum of nutritional needs including, infants, tots, teens, diabetes, and more. For example, the group has discussed creating a rotating schedule of information sessions provided by members of the food committee and other community organizations.

- b) Tse Wul Tun Health Application to VIHA for food program
The Neighbourhood Links project met with representatives of Cowichan Tribes Health Centre to help develop a model for a community food program. The group submitted a proposal to the Vancouver Island Health Authority for a \$20,00 grant to develop good food box program. The good food box program is up and running serving participants in many community programs including: Healthy Lifestyles, Healthiest Babies, Mom's Morning Out, Community Kitchen Groups and more
- c) Community Gardens Program

A community gardens program was recommended as a means to involve local residents and service users in the area in creating and maintaining alternative options for healthy food. The community consultation process undertaken in the Call to Action project identified the Kinsmen Park area as a potential location for such a project. The 1.8 acre centrally located park offers fields that are under-used and which could be converted to gardens for the purpose of growing food.

The recommendation for a community garden at Kinsmen Park was included in a landscape and program plan submitted to the District of North Cowichan Parks and Recreation department in August of 2002. The District of North Cowichan Pioneer Parks committee approved the recommendations in January 2003 and allocated \$5,000 to the development of a community gardens and reorganization of play equipment in 2004.

With space and funding now available for a community garden in the James Street area, residents, community groups and other stakeholders will begin to coordinate its implementation. Several community groups have expressed their interest in participating in this initiative as well as local residents and youth who reside in and use the area.

3.3.2. Planning design and management

Planning, design and management strategies to guide long term development that will incorporate safety, improve accessibility and integration with neighbourhoods and services.

3.3.2.1. James Street Revitalization

The maintenance and aesthetic features of a space affect sense of comfort, and give strong messages to people as to the level of safety they can expect. Further, it stands to reason that a person that feels safe will be inclined to stay longer and indeed return to that space. In contrast, garbage and casual litter, peeling paint and graffiti, and unkempt properties give a message that no one cares and that a place is subject to inappropriate uses. For these reasons, the James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force identified the revitalization of James Street as a priority in creating a safer neighbourhood. Several recommendations were reviewed by the Task force to determine their viability in terms of short, medium and long-term goals:

a) Street Pole Banners along James Street

The Task force identified a street banner campaign as a desirable, medium-term revitalization goal. A working group was created to explore the feasibility of a James Street banner campaign and to research the challenges and options for such an undertaking. The working group involved members of the Cowichan Valley Arts Council and other organizations in the area that provide services to women, youth, First Nations, and people with disabilities. The working group explored options about how to create the banners and how to secure support from local government and other authorities as well as researching information about other communities who have undertaken banner initiatives (Appendix K).

Representatives of the working group began by surveying the area around James Street to determine the number of potential light standards or poles from which banners could hang (Appendix L). Communication then began with BC hydro to gain permission to place banners on the existing hydro poles in the James Street area. Initial discussions with BC hydro were very encouraging, so the working group began to explore options for the banner campaign in terms of community involvement.

Under the guidance of the Task Force, the group determined that the banner campaign should involve the broadest sector of the community in order to create a theme for the banners that reflects the diversity of the area. Members from the Cowichan Arts Council expressed their interest in working with community members to develop a James Street theme for banners. As well, the Arts Council expressed interest in applying for grants available through the provincial government to work with community development projects.

Unfortunately, after initial research and steps towards developing the banner campaign took place, the Task Force received notice from BC hydro that placing banners on hydro utility poles is viewed as a hazard that contravenes Worker Compensation Board and BC Hydro regulations (Appendix M). In addition, subsequent surveys of the area indicate that most of the existing utility poles in and round James Street are owned by BC hydro.

The banner working group is now exploring whether there are any other viable options that may exist with BC hydro (as banners do hang from their poles in other communities). As well, other options for a banner campaign include: using the light standards at Kinsmen Park, Cowichan High School and the Cowichan Community Centre (not owned by Hydro) or exploring options of fundraising to install new fixtures along James Street.

b) General Improvements to the area

In addition to improvements directly related to the project activities, there have been other improvements to the area during the course of the Neighbourhood Links project. The changes in the area are part of the broader ripple effect that is being created through community consultation, government support, and actions to promote positive change.

Of particular note, new businesses have moved into the area, creating greater vibrancy. A trendy coffee shop moved in beside the high school, replacing a series of businesses including a pawnbrokers shop. The new coffee bar has also added an attractive, outdoor, enclosed patio for people to sit on James Street while enjoying cappuccinos or lattes. As well a popular women's gym has drawn many new people to the area.

Other noticeable changes to the area include the food bank finding new, improved space on Alderlea street. This has had a huge impact on the area because the food bank was often reported as an unsafe location due to the drug and alcohol related behavior of people standing outside it. Anecdotal reports of the new food bank location (still in the James street neighbourhood) indicate that there are fewer land use conflicts than before because the new space is not conducive to loitering on the street outside. Replacing the old food bank on James Street, is a new hockey equipment shop. Located across from the Cowichan Community Centre, where many youths go to play hockey, makes this a perfect location.

Located on the corner of James Street and the Trans Canada high way, Cowichan High School marks the entrance to the James Street neighbourhood. It is seen by the thousands of motorists and pedestrians who pass by each day in addition to the over one thousand students and staff who use it. In July /August of 2002, the high school was painted. This improvement has had a huge impact on the overall appearance and feeling of vibrancy in the area.

As well, other accessibility improvements include changes to sidewalks along the highway in front of the school to allow for scooters; landscape design improvements in front of CCC to reduce opportunities and increase visibility. In addition the Cowichan Community Centre modified criteria for its youth dances, to reduce parking lot congestion, overflow and loitering. The dances are now split into separate events for younger and older teens. This strategy, combined with media coverage to encourage parents to ensure their children actually attend the dance, has helped to reduce the number of youth engaging in unsafe activities outside the community centre.

c) **Kinsmen Park**

Kinsmen Park on Alderlea Street is a 1.84 acre neighbourhood park that has been an important resource and recreation area for the community for many years. The park is located adjacent to the high school and is bordered by apartment buildings and single family residences. Facilities include a wading pool, washrooms and change-rooms, two benches, and play equipment, including swings and an adventure playground. Kinsmen Park is owned and managed by the District of North Cowichan.

The park has a history of complaints about people feeling intimidated and reluctant to use it, particularly women, seniors and children. Kinsmen has been a popular gathering spot for young people during the day, as well as during the evening from spring to fall when the weather is mild. There

have been conflicts regarding inappropriate use (blatant drug use in the park, vandalism, etc.) and intimidation.

Consultation in the Call to Action Project (2001) revealed that for some children and youth, the park is a 'safe haven' and an important place to be. Thus, the issues need to be viewed in light of and with great consideration to the needs of children and youth for a safe place and for their overall health and well-being.

i) Working Towards Landscaping and Programming Improvements at Kinsmen Park

In June of 2002, Neighbourhood Links project met with the District of North Cowichan around recommendations for the Kinsmen park area. At that time, the municipality was looking at developing improvement plans and requested that Neighbourhood Links staff work with a North Cowichan Consultant to provide information, recommendations and feedback about potential changes to the park.

Key themes around safety and revitalization were discussed at length. Ideas for park improvements were developed with an integrated approach to community safety in mind. That is, park improvement recommendations involved changes to landscape and design (physical) as well as to programming (social) and government and community support (institutional) to maintain them.

The following is an excerpt of the report submitted to the District of North Cowichan:

MUNICIPALITY of *North*
COWICHAN

REPORT

Purpose

This report makes suggestions for general landscape and programming improvements at Kinsmen Park.

Summary

Kinsmen Park is a moderate sized park located near James Street and along Alderlea Street. The park is adjacent to Cowichan High School to the east. An apartment building, the tenants of whom are largely retirees, lies to the north. Significant effort on the part of community groups such as the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society has gone into studying the James street corridor and surroundings including Kinsmen Park. One of the stated goals of the "Safer Futures, Neighbourhood Links Project" is to see improvements and fresh ideas implemented at Kinsmen Park.

Kinsmen Park in its current form is poorly organized, rather unsightly and underutilized. Although the pool is used intensively during the summer months, there is clearly a lack of activity during the remaining portion of the year. As such, the park has attracted unwanted activities, not excluding illicit drug use. This is a fairly typical scenario for municipal parks in urban areas that do not have programmed activities and have never

been designed with safety, aesthetics and function in mind. This report will suggest improvements for the park that are aimed at addressing the issues of safety, appearance and vibrancy.

Recommendations

Figure 1 below is a proposed layout of Kinsmen Park. This proposal shows various interventions that are geared toward revitalizing the park. The organization of play structures is the first issue that should be addressed. Play structures, such as swings and climbing apparatus would be more suitably arranged if clustered in the southeast corner of the park. This would facilitate easier supervision of children using the equipment. Replacement of old or outdated equipment is also suggested with the exception of the “rocket” at the Alderlea Street entrance. If kept in its current location, this community *landmark* in the park would make an excellent entrance feature with landscaping and park signage around it. Since liability is a concern, the movement of the rocket structure could be eliminated and warning signage installed.

The lack of activity in Kinsmen Park, with the exception of the swimming pool in summer, is another problem that requires consideration. Several wonderful ideas have been proposed to increase the attractiveness of the park for a wider variety of user groups. These include community gardens (see Figure 2 for images), a youth oriented seating structure where teens can loiter while being easily monitored, a beach volleyball court that could be used by the high school for programmed tournaments and a lit walking circuit around the perimeter of the park. Furthermore, simple additions such as benches placed in interesting locations and trees along the eastern margin would significantly enhance the livability of the site.

Removal of the fence along the western margin of the park is an important change. This would eliminate the institutional feel that now exists. The fence could be easily replaced with large boulders lining the sidewalk along the west property line of the park (not shown in Figure 1).



Figure 1: Kinsmen Park Proposed Layout

With respect to implementing the proposed changes, the following chart suggests the order or priority in which the projects would best be completed:

Order:	Project:	Rationale:
1	Replace, relocate play equipment	Simple, relatively inexpensive change; will free up space for other changes
2	Lit pathway around perimeter of park	Recreation for seniors; added security; decorative lighting
3	West fence removal	Simple, inexpensive and dramatic change; rock from local quarry
4	East margin trees and entrance feature	Landscape improvements will enhance aesthetics and break up site
5	Volleyball court and seating structure	Programmed activities added in time
6	Community gardens	Programmed activities added in time



Figure 2: Community Garden Images

The report was submitted to the District of North Cowichan Pioneer Parks Committee for review in the fall of 2002. The District of North Cowichan endorsed the plan in January of 2003 and committed to improvements over the next 3-5 years. Initially, \$5,000 will be used to reorganize and replace play structures, and to develop the community gardens. A community event is planned for May 15th at Kinsmen Park to invite the community to see the plans for the park and to get involved in the community gardens initiative.

3.3.2.2. Official Community Plan

In July of 2002, the District of North Cowichan planning department requested staff from the Neighbourhood Links Project to review the draft of the Official Community Plan to provide feedback and recommendations around women's safety and the James Street area. Recommendations for the James Street area included:

- revitalization and redevelopment that will enhance the local area
- innovative commercial, residential and recreational development
- respect and preserve residential properties
- promote and encourage affordable housing throughout the area to provide better options for families in low-income situations
- design, layout of streets, buildings and open spaces to influence reduction of opportunities for crime to occur (adequate lighting, elimination of hiding and entrapment areas).
- integrate security measures that reinforce both formal and informal surveillance as well as access control of routes and entrances to increase security

Please see Appendix O for examples of recommendations related to the James Street area in the Official Community Plan.

In addition, in order to ensure long-term commitment to the safer communities approach, the James Street Task Force agreed to prepare a neighbourhood plan to attach as an appendix to the Official Community Plan (See Appendix O for recommendation of Neighbourhood Plans). The task force agreed to take on this work using research, activities, recommendations and outcomes identified in the Neighbourhood Links and Call to Action projects to guide its development.

3.3.3. Safety security and access

Physical improvements, along with personal and physical security services and programs are important short-term strategies to reduce the vulnerability of individuals, their homes and neighbourhoods.

3.3.3.1. Physical Improvements

The Task Force worked with the District of North Cowichan with the aim of implementing recommendations for physical improvements to the area.

Great strides were made in creating a safer environment in and around James Street. Some of the improvements to date include:

A gate was installed to close off the school access to the park during school hours. This physical change combined with increased enforcement, promotion of positive activities in the park, along with improvements to the appearance of the park have greatly reduced the number of youths using the park inappropriately. At a recent meeting with Neighbourhood Links, the high school, the Community Centre, North Cowichan Parks and Recreation, RCMP, and residents of the area, a senior who lives in the apartment building next to the park optimistically reported “It’s like night and day compared to two years ago.”

The park had additional lighting installed.

Fencing has been improved and murals have been added along the fences. Kinsmen park had two handicapped parking spaces added near the main entrance

In response to recommendations of the Task Force, the District of North Cowichan also constructed new handicap access washrooms in the fall of 2002 at a cost of \$20,000. Plans for the washrooms were reviewed prior to project completion (Appendix P) and individuals from the Disability Resource Centre conducted an on-site assessment with Neighbourhood Links and the District of North Cowichan staff. As a result of their input, changes to the space configuration of the new washrooms were implemented to provide more turning space for wheel chairs and scooters. As well, other recommendations for location of sinks were received prior to installation of plumbing. The end result is a wheelchair accessible washroom that exceeds building code and meets the needs of people with disabilities.



Christine Paisley from the Cowichan Valley Disability Resource Centre conducts on-site of handicap washroom under construction at Kinsmen Park

3.3.3.2. Improved Safety Communications

Public Telephones and signage

The Task Force, under the guidance of the Community health and Safety Advisory committee provided follow-up to a letter of request to Telus for the installation of a public telephone near Kinsmen Park (Appendix Q).

Unfortunately, Telus has informed the Task Force that the cost of installation and maintenance of a telephone in the James Street/Alderlea area would be prohibitive. The Task Force has agreed to pursue this issue with Telus given the high need for additional communication in the area. This item can also be referred to the Provincial Working Group on Women and Community Safety.

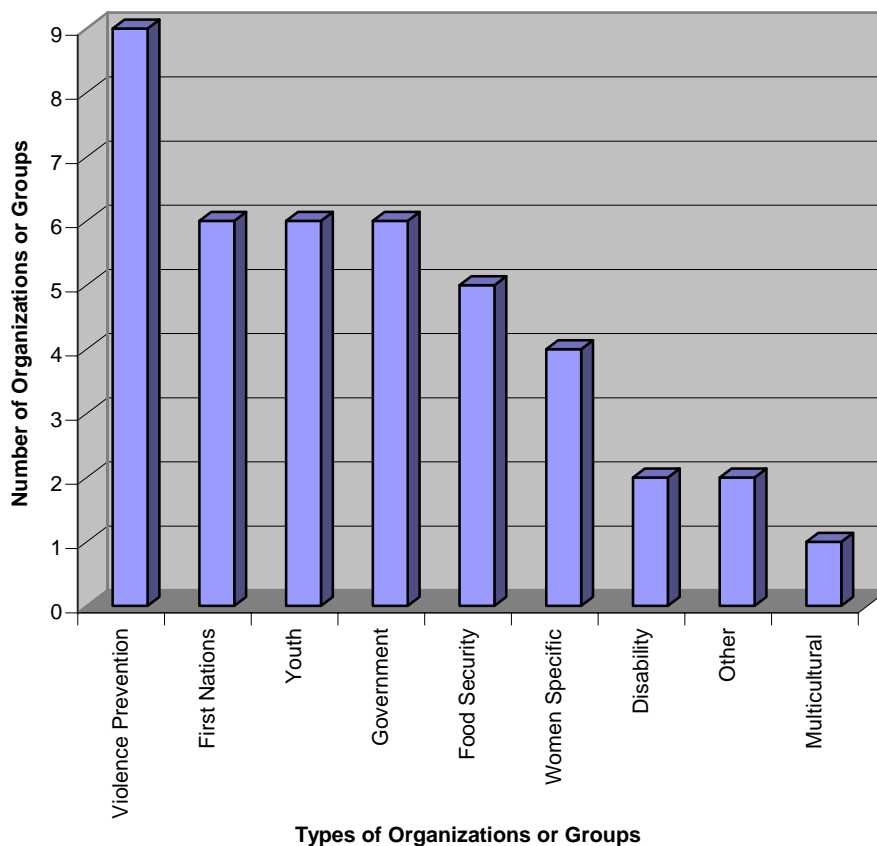
3.4. Evaluation of project objectives

3.4.1. Tables of objectives and results

Stated Objectives	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success	Actual Results
<p>1. Build community linkages and partnerships to support implementation of the James Street Neighbourhood Safety Strategy.</p> <p>Form a multi-agency Community Health and Safety Task Force that will direct and oversee the process.</p> <p>Form three Action</p>	<p>Three months: all relevant agencies and organizations are engaged and agree to and follow through with participation at the committee level.</p> <p>Community partners are engaged and informed, and in regular attendance.</p> <p>Community</p>	<p>Number and type of partners involved</p> <p>Attendance at meetings</p> <p>Satisfaction (participants' feedback)</p>	<p>Feedback gathered from evaluation session with the task force and interviews with 6 community partners. Italics indicate a direct quote.</p> <p>Diversity of organizations involved:</p> <p>Linkages and/or partnerships were built with 40 community groups and organizations. The diversity of involvement is illustrated in the chart shown on page #38.</p> <p><i>There has been a great attempt at diversity and very strong follow-up to provide opportunities for people to connect.</i></p> <p>Who else should be invited to participate?</p> <p>More James Street residents <i>We could invite people living in the seniors' apartment beside Kinsmen Park to participate.</i></p> <p>People who use the facilities in the area <i>For example, people who don't live in the area but attend the Community Centre, or families that use the park in summer.</i></p> <p>Students <i>I would recommend approaching Cowichan Secondary to see if students could participate in the task force as part of a</i></p>

<p>Teams for each of the strategy components (Community /Social; Planning/Design and Security).</p>	<p>partners are contributing to the best of their abilities.</p>		<p><i>self-directed study and receive credit for their time. Students bring fresh ideas – make such positive contributions.</i></p> <p>Parents Advisory Council <i>Members of the Parents Advisory Council should be invited; parents are always concerned about safety.</i></p> <p>More First Nations representation <i>We have one representative from Cowichan Tribes (on the task force) but it would be great to have more First Nations people involved.</i></p> <p>Seniors <i>Maybe we could invite someone from the Seniors Advisory.</i></p> <p>Businesses in the area <i>Commercial property owners could be engaged further – could get a better idea of the needs of this area.</i></p> <p>People with disabilities</p>
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Diversity of Participation in Task Force



Stated Objectives	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success	Actual Results
<p>2. Develop a plan, working process, shared vision, and technical assistance</p>	<p><u>Three months:</u> Specific action plans for implementation of solutions.</p>	<p>Consensus of action teams and task force on action plans.</p>	<p>The James Street Community Health and Safety Task Force and working groups have met approximately 25 during this 12 - month project. Average attendance has been 7 persons per meeting.</p> <p>Development of a working process and relationships: <i>We've been provided with support to move the process along. There is always something happening.</i> <i>I participate because I want to be there – it's a good working group. I have never felt pressured; I'm not made to feel guilty.</i> <i>I don't think this would have happened without Jen, Terri and the team. They have been the 'glue' that brought us all together.</i></p> <p>Shared vision, common goals: <i>We have a well laid out set of goals and procedures.</i> <i>Our goals are set out. Meeting only once a month means that progress is a little slower but when the call goes out – the people are there.</i> <i>For example, everyone showed up to support the event in the park.</i></p>

			<p>Technical and organizational assistance provided to the project has included:</p> <p>Organization <i>Providing lunch is a support to us - a way of making things convenient for us</i> <i>Everyone is clear on their jobs, for example, the food group and the celebration in the park.</i></p> <p>Communication <i>Communication is always good – Jen’s always in touch with e-mail – but because I’m not a great person with e-mail, she will phone me.</i> <i>Regular updates – If I miss something, Jen will take the time to consult me afterwards.</i> <i>Jen tries to draw the quieter people into the discussion.</i></p> <p>Connecting people <i>Good connections – everyone has done a great job of connecting with the school district.</i> <i>These meetings do a good job of connecting people. Because we all work in the service area – we are always trying to connect</i></p> <p>Other types of support that might be helpful: <i>It might be nice to have training for committee members.</i> <i>More tools/packages to share with other groups I meet with – maybe a leaflet, flyer or brochure.</i></p>
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3.4.2. Planned activities - Actual Activities

Planned Activities	Implementation Plans	Actual Activities
<p>Phase I</p> <p>Conduct outreach with relevant community agencies and organizations to provide information and invite participation.</p> <p>Organize and facilitate initial meetings/planning sessions with task force and action groups to define actions and confirm structure that will achieve goals of the partnership.</p> <p>Arrange and coordinate monthly meetings, scheduling and provide research and informational needs.</p>	<p>Employ a community coordinator who will:</p> <p>Contact and meet with at least 15-20 representatives of local government, community service organizations.</p> <p>Organize and coordinate approximately 20 meetings/working sessions of task force and action groups.</p> <p>Provide feedback and direction to committees and local organizations.</p> <p>Distribute minutes - provide</p>	<p>Jennifer Kyffin was hired as program manager April 2002.</p> <p>40 community representatives from local government and community organizations have been involved in the project.</p> <p>The task force and working groups have met approximately 25 times over the past year.</p> <p>Gave feedback and direction to committees and local organizations. i.e. information to Community Safety Advisory Committee, direction to</p>

<p>Coordinate and attend monthly meetings for each of the task force and action teams.</p> <p>Provide necessary communications.</p> <p>Dissemination of information.</p>	<p>requested information as needed.</p> <p>Write three press releases; produce project information packages.</p>	<p>District of North Cowichan Parks and Recreation and other community groups such as Tse Wulden health regarding the development of food programs</p> <p>Distributed minutes - provided requested information as needed. i.e. provided local research information about hunger in the James Street area</p> <p>Press releases/newspaper articles are attached in Appendix E,F,G and R Project information packages are attached in Appendix A</p>
Planned Activities	Implementation Plans	Actual Activities
<p>Phase II</p> <p>Work with the task force and action groups to review and assess recommendations to explore feasibility, costs, and prioritize timing of implementation of recommendations contained in the strategy.</p> <p>Determine short, medium and long term actions, responsibilities and areas of collaboration and partnerships. Develop a work plan.</p> <p>Identify resources and supports needed to implement solutions.</p> <p>Conduct research of possible financial assistance, and of existing programs that can contribute and respond.</p>	<p>The Coordinator will:</p> <p>Bring groups together for discussions and planning sessions.</p> <p>Produce and distribute documentation of work plans.</p> <p>Write letters of request for actions, proposals for assistance, resources.</p> <p>Contact relevant agencies and organizations to request assistance and support, and/or to respond through regular programming functions.</p>	<p>Brought groups together for discussions and planning sessions on regular basis.</p> <p>Produced work plans breaking goals and objectives down into social, safety and access, and planning strategies Wrote letters of request for actions to BC Hydro, Telus and provided assistance with proposals for at least three other projects</p> <p>Contacted over 40 agencies to request assistance and support through staff time at meetings, contribution to working groups such as research, expertise, and networking</p> <p>through our community contacts, we were informed of funding for a youth worker and coordinated a meeting to bring relevant agencies together assisted with two proposals for grants through the Ministry of Public Safety</p>
Planned Activities	Implementation Plans	Actual Activities
Phase III		

<p>Provide support for implementation of direct actions. (E.g., meet with public works staff on site to provide information on how repairs were indicated or installations were described).</p> <p>Provide liaison for linking people and appropriate resources. (E.g., BCCPA is doing a pilot project to link youth with seniors. We linked them up with the local youth to spark a project involving cooking with seniors using Community Kitchens).</p> <p>Provide coordination and support, networking and linkages.</p> <p>Assist with acquisition and distribution of resources to appropriate areas. (E.g., assist groups to research funding sources and assist with proposal development).</p>	<p>Contact and liaise with local government departments and private interests to encourage actions, and to provide consultative services (for example around design of parks, buildings).</p> <p>Take direct action to connect people and resources.</p>	<p>Met with District of North Cowichan Parks and Recreation staff to provide information about recommendations for Kinsmen Park landscape and program plans: an on-site assessment for handicap washroom facilities</p> <p>Linked local youth groups to District of North Cowichan for coordination of Kinsmen Park enhancement project</p> <p>Linked youth to seniors through several initiatives</p> <p>Linked Together Against Violence with drama department and students at Cowichan Senior Secondary</p> <p>Linked women and children to food through hamper drive and good food box program</p> <p>Linked lesbians to information and resources through support of new drop-in group</p> <p>Linked parents in need of support to Parent Support Circles</p>
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4. MEETING CHALLENGES

4.1. Problems and Solutions

The successes of this project are a result of the dedication and collaborative efforts of the James Street Task Force members and the participants of the project. Although none of the successes were completely unexpected, the extent of some of the successes and accomplishments of the project work—exceeded our expectations. For example, approximately two years ago, Kinsmen Park was an area of the James Street community riddled with crime, loitering, vandalism and drug use. The progress made at Kinsmen Park in terms of physical improvements and community involvement (especially Cowichan High School) surpassed what was optimistically anticipated to achieve.

The extent of youth involvement in the Neighbourhood Links project has proven to be far higher than anticipated. The partnerships and linkages forged with the High school students, staff and administration, and the District of North Cowichan is groundbreaking.

4.1.1. Unexpected Challenges – reasons, how the challenges were, or will be met.

Although not unexpected, individuals involved in the task group described the challenges they faced, the barriers to their participation in the project.

- Work commitments – all members are working people
- Being employed full time
- Shift work
- Time constraints
- Holding Meetings during school hours prevents the participation of students

4.1.2. Ways that the group has met the challenges:

- The meetings are usually short.
- A lot of the meetings are held at lunchtime; creative with food.
- There is flexibility. If I can't make it to the meeting I am encouraged to send a replacement and they are welcomed into the group.

4.2. Lessons Learned

4.2.1. What worked well in this project?

Feedback gathered in the project evaluation suggests that the following aspects of the project worked well. Information in italics indicates direct quotes from evaluation participants. Suggestions about 'what worked well' have been sorted and are presented in order of most frequently mentioned themes to least frequently mentioned themes or individual comments.

Practical, reachable solutions – small steps

All goals are reachable and there is a plan to get there. Some groups overwhelm local government with their plans. This group realizes that it will take time.

Sometimes it may seem like small steps – but those small steps are leading somewhere. The banner campaign has been slow – there were a number of obstacles to get through.

The initiative has been patient but persistent.

You see those small achievements – you want to show up again and stay involved. Unlike projects where dreams are big and nothing happens. I am sick of big grandiose goals.

We're building momentum through small accomplishments.

The strategy that works is 'baby steps', keeping realistic goals, talking about what could really be achieved.

Seeing little things happen makes you feel that people are listening – validating what you are trying to achieve. You see those small achievements – you want to show up again and stay involved. Unlike projects where dreams are big and nothing happens. I am sick of big grandiose goals.

A multi-sectoral approach – inclusion of diverse stakeholders

This project has been successful because of the number of players involved and the fact that no one player has been in charge – no one has a particular hidden agenda. In this project there has been a coordinator but it was the community that brought it all together.

Inclusion of all groups works well.

Involving lots of people works.

Having a youth action team involved – after all – youth are the primary users of the park.

Leadership

The group has achieved tremendous credibility.... the task force has established itself, has stood out as a credible group with agencies and ministries. It's seldom you have a group that is held up in that way.

A group taking ownership – this has meant that it (the project) happened.

Jen and Colleen deserve "A"s for the communication, the callbacks, and their dedication. They are right on the e-mails and Colleen always reports back with good minutes. They make you want to "shine" along with them. They are calm – they involve everyone in the partnership – it's not just one person spinning the wheel.

The effort put into meetings.

Action focus with small victories early on

The action focus – there is always something happening.

Small victories - it is important to have some victories early on like our first day at the park – getting the politicians to buy-in was a good start – a victory. There was some initial resistance if you look back 3-5 years.

I'm a bit picky about what I get involved in. You don't want to waste your time. I want to see results – with this project we have a shared vision and we do something. You can see results, like the day at the park. Things have been done.

Solution-focused approach

The solution focused approach works. The old style of fixing things would have been a call for more enforcement.

Good Timing

The timing is right. Although groups in this area can be territorial, over the past few years we have learned the value of working together. With funding shortfalls we have found ourselves competing for the same dollars so when our focus is similar we partner.

Community Events

Art in the Park (the paintings are still there), the day of celebration in the park, the Italian dinner, youth and seniors getting together

Friendship

I enjoy the group. Even if I'm short of time, I try to slip in for the hour.

4.2.2. What would make the project more successful

Evaluation participants were asked to describe how things might be been done differently and/or what would make the project more successful.

Display of a picture or model of the vision

I think it might be a good idea to have a placard or sign in the Kinsmen Park explaining the project and in particular, the plans for the park. There could also be an invitation for people to get involved – after all we need to know what people who use the park really want there.

We need to create a model or picture of what the area will look like in the end – maybe an artist's concept. Then we take small steps to that end.

Publication of the task force vision, the collective vision, should be put in a format that can be posted in the community. Telling people about the plans is great but we need to reach all three types of learners: auditory, visual and

kinesthetic. This would refocus people and encourage them to make a commitment to get involved.

More representation of the people living in the area

We could broaden the participation in planning – more people who live in the area should be involved in the planning.

Professionals, leaders and people representing organizations are involved – but there is not much representation of the people living in the area. There was consultation previously but they are not involved in the task force.

More funding

More funding would help.

The Cowichan Community Centre receives a small percentage of the proceeds from the Ryans' vending machines located in their lobbies. The funds are currently being used to subsidize places in programs for people who could not otherwise participate – maybe those funds could also be used for community development projects in Neighbourhood Links that involve youth.

A more active role for local government

There needs to be a more active role for local government in financially supporting social development. Which model are they going to go with in that respect? At the forum in May a social planning group was formed. They will be choosing a model. There could be a role for the social planning group to partner with the task force. The task force has stability and the two groups have common goals.

Succession Planning

The people at the table are the same people that are involved all over the community – what if they burn out? We need to ensure ongoing participation.

5. PROJECT IMPACT

Impact of the Project – Information collected in the Project Evaluation

Evaluation participants were asked: What difference has it made that you have done this work? Please share examples of the project's achievements and their impact? Many comments described improvements to the physical environment.

5.1. Increased accessibility

“There have been immediate changes to accessibility at the park and at the Cowichan Community Centre”.

“Better accessibility for people with disabilities – handicapped parking spots, accessible entrances to the park, the handicapped washroom (at a cost of \$20,000).”

“I've noticed a lot of changes around wheelchair access and visibility.”

5.2. A more attractive neighbourhood

“Painting the high school helped so much – it put a brighter face on the street – there is less vandalism when a school gets a facelift.”

“The park looks better. There are great plans for Kinsmen Park. We’ve been looking into teenage-sized play equipment. However, this is most suited to middle school aged students. We’re looking at a creating a destination park – the kind of park that you drive to. Nanaimo has 2 or 3 parks like this”.

“Art in the park – the paintings are still there – people must value the project.”

5.3. Increased visibility - safety

“Lighting in the area is better. Cutting back the shrubs around the community centre looks better and increases visibility - it feels safer.”

“There has been crime prevention through environmental design.”

Participants shared a general sense that “things are getting better in the area.” Several comments related to the less tangible changes; changes in relationships, increasing awareness and a growing sense of neighbourhood identity.

“Things are getting better in the area – the area has changed. Not all changes are directly attributable to the project but things are getting better. The change of location of the food bank helped to keep clashing user groups apart. The new businesses have helped (hockey shop and coffee bar).”

5.4. Increased involvement – improved relationships

“We’ve developed a better dialogue with the high school.”

“Bridging – bringing individuals and groups together to create a more united front.”

“Although we recognize the need for community development, lack of resources and competing priorities has limited the amount of work we can do. The Neighbourhood Links project has helped us to reach out to people who might not have participated in the community.”

“The project has pulled everyone together. We get off topic sometimes but the project pulls us together and helps us network and increases our understanding of what other groups are doing.”

5.5. Changing perceptions – increased awareness

“The activities of the group have changed people’s perceptions – generated interest in the area.”

“Awareness has been raised amongst residents and students.”

5.6. A sense of community identity

“The James Street neighbourhood is a diverse area – an area in flux. It includes residential, commercial, school, community centre, resources for people with disabilities and recreational areas. The project helps to create an identity for the neighbourhood. When people have a sense of that identity – they can work to accomplish that identity.”

Other outcomes identified by evaluation participants included: an attachment to the Official Community Plan that pertains to the James Street Neighbourhood and the possibility that the project has created a model/approach that can be used in other communities in British Columbia.

“We are looking at developing an attachment to the Official Community Plan.”

“We can share this project as a model for use by other communities. We can also learn from what other communities are doing.”

5.7. Developing Partnerships

The Neighbourhood Links established and enhanced many partnerships to deal with local crime prevention issues. The James Street Community Health and Safety Task force is a multi-sectoral group that represents a broad range of the community including city planners, local government, women’s organizations, RCMP, schools, First Nations, youth and seniors. Together the group is able to identify and address crime prevention through a wide lens that is inclusive of many perspectives. This inclusive approach means that solutions are developed together, providing everyone with an opportunity to contribute to the successes.

As well, the project helped to develop the framework for sustainability by collaborating with the Cowichan Valley Regional District to develop a regional strategy for community crime prevention. The new strategy will mean that community crime prevention will be coordinated among communities throughout the regional district with the support and guidance of the CVRD. This new, integrated approach to community crime prevention will help to ensure that communities receive resources, feedback and direction through a supportive network that coordinates efforts to reduce crime throughout the region. In this way, isolation of rural communities will be reduced and exchange of successes and best practices will be increased.

5.8. Public Awareness

The community profile of the James Street Task force is very high and the high level of involvement from local agencies, organizations, schools, and government helps to increase public awareness about the integrated approach to crime prevention. As well, the project’s emphasis on action events such as the Kinsmen park improvements, Youth/Senior projects, and involving the local high school and other youth groups, helps to keep the project in the forefront of public awareness.

5.9. Building capacity in the community

The project helped to facilitate the new partnerships and alliances previously described. As well, the development of a Regional Strategy for community crime prevention will provide a sustainable mechanism for increasing community capacity through the inclusion of communities throughout the region in a coordinated approach to crime prevention. Combined with increased awareness and changing policies and planning (as evidenced in the New Official Community Plan) the project served to increase the overall capacity of the James Street and broader community.

5.10. Priority Groups/Issues

Youth

- The Neighbourhood Links project worked extensively with youth through initiatives to:
- participate in community enhancement projects that directly improve the James Street area,
- link youth with other groups such as seniors to promote understanding and reduce stereotypes
- create opportunities for youth leadership projects such as those slated for Kinsmen Park and Project Prom.

Aboriginal people and communities:

- The James Street Tasks Force worked closely with representatives from aboriginal communities to develop social and community development programs aimed at increasing alternatives to accessing food.
- Women's personal security: The James Street Task Force worked with the entire community to address issues and recommendations related to community crime prevention through the safer communities approach. The integrated approach to community crime prevention recognizes that women and children are especially vulnerable to crime and that if we make communities safer for women, we make them safer for everyone.

6. NETWORKING AND PARTNERSHIPS

6.1. Who were the Participants

Participants in the project included women, youth, seniors, RCMP, community organizations, women's organizations, the school district, and local government (for more complete list, please see acknowledgements section).

6.2. New Players

The Neighbourhood Links project encouraged broader community participation in crime prevention issues through project initiatives aimed at including a broad sector of the community. New links were formed with Cowichan High School through several project initiatives such as the holiday hamper drive and Project Prom.

6.3. Community Relationships

The Neighbourhood Links Project presented at the UBCM conference at Whistler in September of 2002 to increase awareness and acceptance of the need for community crime prevention among municipal governments throughout the province.

As well, the project worked to create a partnership with the Cowichan Valley Regional District in the development of a regional strategy for community health and safety.

7. REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Report has been submitted separately.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

8.1. Next Steps

With the completion of the Neighbourhood Links project, several follow-up steps are planned.

The James Street Task Force will continue to meet regularly to address the issues and recommendations for the area.

The Task force will prepare and submit a James Street Neighbourhood Plan to the District of North Cowichan to be attached as an appendix to the Official Community Plan.

A representative of the Task Force will be appointed to the Cowichan Valley Regional District's Community Safety Advisory Committee to be part of the new Regional Strategy for Community Health and Safety and to report on the area's progress.

8.2. Future Funding

The James Street Task Force has agreed to continue the work in the neighbourhood, providing resources and expertise to move the aims forward. As well, funding applications to meet recommendations set out in the project (i.e. a youth outreach worker) have been sought by Task Force working groups. Additional funding and resources to continue the work will be sought in conjunction with the Community Safety Advisory Committee's Regional Strategy for Community Health and Safety.

9. SHARING RESULTS

Results of the project and its activities were shared with the community through local media, newspaper articles and Task Force meetings and strategy sessions. In addition, the final report will be disseminated to all community stakeholders including community organizations, RCMP, the school district, students, residents, and local government. As well, the results will be shared with provincial crime prevention projects including the BC Crime Prevention Association, and The Women and Community Safety Project Network.

10.APPENDICES

Please request copies of any of the appendices from Jennifer Kyffin