



Downtown Duncan

SAFETY AUDIT

prepar ed by:

cowichan val ley safer futur es

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SAFER COMMUNITIES

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Safer Futures / Cowichan Women Against Violence Society

SUMMARY

The Safety Audit of the Downtown Duncan business area was facilitated by Cowichan Valley Safer Futures, a regional initiative sponsored by Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, whose purpose is to address personal safety of women and children through fostering supportive planning, design and social programming.

This audit was initiated in response to a request by the City of Duncan. It was also sponsored by the Downtown Business Improvement Association, who provided support and assistance through advertising the process in their community newsletter, developed press releases to local media, and through the direct participation of staff and members, in the audits and review process.

The purpose of the audit was to examine community environments and identify obstacles to personal safety of women, children and other vulnerable groups in the downtown area of the City of Duncan, and to make recommendations for improvements.

National and local research has explored concerns of people around their personal safety in public places and has demonstrated the relationships between physical and social environments and the ability of people to participate in community life. This project focused on gathering input through informal discussions with local business owners and staff in the downtown area regarding their experiences around personal safety. Three evening walks were conducted with community volunteers, members and staff of the DBIA, as well as City Council representatives, through the downtown core between November, 1998 to March, 1999, to examine a variety of areas for issues and obstacles to safety.

The audits focused on downtown streets, sidewalks, parking lots, alleyways and open spaces. A range of broad safety issues were identified, as well as site specific aspects that present obstacles to safety and accessibility. Among the factors that were identified were isolation, inadequate or inconsistent lighting in some areas, areas that present hiding or entrapment spots, areas and sites that contain litter and/or require maintenance. Participants also identified a range of needs for supporting safety through such things as availability of public telephones and security, activity and event planning that incorporates strategies to support safety.

A number of recommendations have been made to increase safety and access in physical environments, as well as for such things as community activities, events and crime prevention activities. A number of long term planning considerations have been suggested that may assist the City of Duncan to ensure that future developments incorporate safety and accessibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Cowichan Valley Safer Futures - Safer Communities Program

The Cowichan Valley Safer Futures - Safe Communities Program is a regional initiative carried out in partnership between Cowichan Women Against Violence Society and the Cowichan Valley Regional District. This is a community-based violence prevention program which works cooperatively with many community organizations, RCMP and local governments for a multi-level and collaborative approach to prevention of violence. The project is guided by input and direction from the CVRD Women's Safety Advisory Committee, a fifteen member standing committee of the Board, comprised of individuals, elected officials and service organizations around the region (Appendix A).

The overall purpose of this project is to address personal and public safety issues affecting women and children at the local level through the design and management of community environments. This program follows the Safer Communities Approach, which recognizes the need for a variety of strategies to reduce opportunities for violence and harassment and to increase accessibility and opportunities for social involvement, work and recreation.

The Safe Communities Approach is rooted in the belief that:

- prevention of crime and violence is most effectively achieved through promoting safer and more equitable communities;
- the most effective place to begin tackling the issue of violence is at the local level, and that to be successful, the whole community has to be involved; and
- local leadership is essential to provide the energy and direction needed.

Across Canada, many municipalities are developing strategies to address violence through "Safer Communities" approaches to crime prevention. While each area is different, in general, the goal of enhancing community safety involves improving the quality of life for people by reducing crime and fear and providing the support which people who are vulnerable to violence need to feel safe and secure in their living environments.

The focus of building safer communities considers the relationship between violence, fear and the built environment. This approach recognizes that, while design of spaces such as neighbourhoods, commercial areas, streets, buildings and parks do not, in and of themselves, cause crime and violence, they can be an important factor in prevention of crime and violence.

Because so many aspects of the community environment affect women's safety, building safer communities requires the involvement of all sectors, both public and private. Safer communities approaches to crime and violence prevention stress integration of all components - law enforcement, social development, and environmental design strategies - in order to effectively reduce crime and violence. It is essential to work cooperatively and to foster partnerships and coordination between and among all sectors including planners, citizens, community groups, police and local government.

Over the past three years, Cowichan Valley Safer Futures has worked to explore issues around women's and children's personal safety in their community environments and to bring about changes to increase safety and accessibility.

The project has worked at both the community level and with decision-makers to:

- examine issues for women and children around their safety, at home, work and in public places;
- work to improve existing community environments to make them safer;
- develop long term planning policies and processes that will foster safer community environments over the long term; and
- increase awareness and encourage participation at all levels about the issues and ways in which communities can work together to foster changes.

1.2. Safety Audits

The purpose of a Safety Audit is to address personal and public safety of women and children through examining community environments from those perspectives and recommending solutions to reduce opportunities for crime/violence and enhance safety.

Safety audits have evolved as an important tool in community approaches to crime prevention. Safety audits were developed by METRAC (Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children, Toronto). They are based on extensive research, both nationally and locally, which has documented the impacts of violence and fear of violence in terms of people's ability to use their community environments.

1.3. Why focus on women and children?

Safety audits focus on safety of women and children. This focus is not meant to ignore or minimize the incidence of violence experienced by men. Rather, it is meant to highlight the unique situations of women, their higher risks of certain kinds of crime

and violence and the resulting limitations on their use of and participation in community environments.

Violence and the resulting fear of violence has unique and significant implications for women's and children's lives, both as individuals, and in the way they publicly use their communities. Knowledge of risks and perceptions of safety play an important role in determining if and when people will use a particular space and participate in community activities. A 1993 survey of Canadian women found that the majority alter their behaviour in some way to safeguard against violence, and over half take safety into account in planning how they will get somewhere (refer Appendix C for selected statistics).

Statistics show that over half (57%) of all women restrict their activities out of concern for their safety, including work, education, recreation, and many seemingly routine activities.¹

1.4. Safety Concerns

Many people, particularly women and children, have concerns about their safety in all day to day realms: both public and private environments - at home alone, walking alone in our neighbourhoods after dark, going out at night to meetings, waiting for and using public transportation, at our places of work, and school. The issues are mirrored in local surveys and focus group discussions that involved over four hundred women during 1996-8.²

In particular, we know that women's experiences and perceptions of violence and their fear - at home, at work, and in public spaces - play a major role in their ability to participate in their communities - in work, recreation, education, shopping to volunteerism.

There is a growing body of research that indicates a strong relationship between building and community design and opportunities for crime. Characteristics of environments which are often identified in conjunction with safety concerns include inadequate lighting, isolation, places which offer potential entrapment sites, design elements such as lack of signage or emergency services, inadequate security, obstruction of sightlines and poor maintenance.

¹ Statistic Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, Ottawa, 1993.

² Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, CV Safer Futures Project Final Report, March, 1999.

For example, research on public places where sexual assaults have occurred has found that a number of features are often present - ability of an offender to predict time and path of a potential victim, the presence of an ambush site, an attack site which is often enclosed on three sides, poor visibility and an escape route for the offender.³

Rural communities offer many benefits and a positive lifestyle. Although rural women face obstacles to safety that are similar to those of women living in urban areas, these are often exacerbated by issues particular to rural living such as: geographical isolation; lack of essential and / or accessible emergency services such as crisis centres, medical clinics, social and police services; long distances to work and recreation and lack of public transportation systems.

Factors that enhance both safety and sense of safety are those that:

- reduce isolation and provide for awareness and clarity of the surrounding environment, provide for clear visibility, access to emergency services, and
- foster a sense of ownership and hierarchy of space.

Just as important however, women identify the context of an area and its people, and societal attitudes as significant to their sense of safety. Familiarity with an area and the people, social norms about women's appropriate use of space, (i.e., the attitude that women should not go out at night alone), knowledge of crimes that have occurred in a place or in similar places, are all part of how a place may be perceived, and factor into decisions about appropriate use of those places.

Thus, it should be stressed that there are both physical and non-physical factors involved in personal and public safety and solutions need to incorporate a range of factors. Local community surveys have provided information about a range of solutions which are required to enhance safety and security, including changes to the physical environment, but also education, information and other cooperative community strategies.

³ Frances Stokes, 1985.

PLACES WHERE SAFETY IS A CONCERN

PLACES	CONTRIBUTING FACTORS
Home:	Isolation, being alone, inadequate security Knowledge of crime and violence in an area
Work: At work. Going to and leaving work in the morning and at night.	Isolation (Especially at night when few staff are on duty) Inadequate security
Public places: Parks, trails, pathways Parking lots Highways and secondary roads Streets & lanes Side streets and alleyways Commercial areas Areas used as hangouts Bus stops, stations Public and other communal buildings (entrances, hallways, stairways, elevators, laundry rooms and washrooms)	Isolation (Being alone) Inadequate security Poor lighting Poor visibility due to various factors including bushes, trees, high fences, sharp corners Entrapment and hiding spots Lack of signage Inadequate access to emergency services (e.g., telephones) Derogatory graffiti People in the area perceived as threatening Dogs and Wildlife

How Does Crime and Fear Affect Communities?

Crime and fear of crime undermines people's sense of safety and leads to withdrawal from community life. Moreover, the social and economic implications extend beyond the individual to the whole community. When the ability of women and children to use and enjoy their communities is restricted because of crime and fear of crime, it affects the quality, vitality and texture of communities.

In addition to the effects on social and economic fabric of communities, crime and fear of crime exacts broad economic costs. The estimated annual costs of violence against women and children in Canada are \$4.2 billion for social services, education, criminal justice, labour and employment losses, health and medical costs.⁴

1.5. Property Crime and Personal Safety

⁴ National Crime Prevention Council, "Costs of Crime in Canada", Ottawa, 1995.

Safety Audits focus primarily upon issues of personal safety which are generally set apart from issues related to property crimes. Research suggests that when women identify their fears of violence, they are commonly associated with fear of assault or bodily harm.

Research suggests that both property crime and crimes against persons share similar opportunity factors (darkness, isolation, etc.). Moreover, many women are concerned about the potential for assault in conjunction with property crime.

Therefore, this audit does not attempt to distinguish between fear of property crime and personal crime. Recommendations then, for reducing opportunities of property crime are also recommendations for increasing one's perception of personal safety.

The recommendations put forward in this audit draw on the citizen's expertise in assessing an area for its "sense" of safety and "feeling" of security. It would be prudent to draw further on police expertise to assess the proposed recommendations for actual crime resistant or reductive measures.

1.6. The Role of Business in Safer Community Initiatives

*"A safer community is a prosperous community... Crime and the fear of crime are critical to business and employment."*⁵

The small business sector, as a community resource, has a great deal to offer with respect to crime and violence prevention initiatives. Local businesses reflect the character of a community - from the aesthetics of the storefronts themselves, to the level of interaction and participation in public events. Proactive participation in initiatives that reduce crime and address fear help build a safe and healthy community which in turn results in a vibrant, loyal and local economy.

⁵ Thames Valley Partnership Newsletter, July, 1994.

2. DOWNTOWN DUNCAN SAFETY AUDIT

2.1. Background

The Downtown Duncan Safety Audit was initiated in response to a request from the City of Duncan Council for a safety audit of the municipality. The designation of the focus on the downtown area was based on past research on safety issues done in 1997 with women from various community organizations and service groups in the Cowichan Valley.

This audit was carried out in consultation with the CVRD Women's Safety Advisory Committee which includes a City of Duncan Council Member. The Downtown Business Improvement Area Society (DBIA) was also a primary partner and active association in this endeavour.

The DBIA is an active and organized merchant's group mandated to improve commercial activity in the downtown core. The goals and objectives of the society are certainly complimentary to the goals of a safer community initiative; for example, encouraging activity, attractive lighting, well lit stores and streets at night, activities that reflect a sense of community; development and maintenance of green space, will be conducive to both safety and attractiveness of an area.

2.2. Purpose of the Audit

The main purposes of this audit were to:

- identify areas where people feel concerned about their personal safety,
- examine those areas for obstacles and other factors which detract from safety, and
- make recommendations for actions that will help to improve safety, both for the short and the long term.

It is important to note that while the purpose of an audit is to examine critically the aspects of a community that detract from safety, the downtown area has many positive qualities.

The downtown core of the City of Duncan is the major commercial centre serving the City of Duncan, the District of North Cowichan and surrounding areas of the CVRD. The downtown area is primarily commercial, but in recent years, developments have seen increasing residential uses.

Downtown Duncan has numerous positive features, including many buildings with historical architecture; trees line many of the streets, and the area is decorated seasonally, with hanging flower baskets in summer and beautiful lighting in winter. The downtown area also boasts cooperatively hosted events in summer and winter, which attract many people. It is also of importance that Duncan is known as one of the more accessible communities on Vancouver Island.

It is hoped that the information from the audit will assist the City of Duncan in identifying areas for improvement as part of its ongoing commitment to personal safety, as well as in consideration of future community planning and development. Further, it is hoped that this information will assist the DBIA in their efforts to implement strategies that will continue to build a vibrant downtown area. Finally, it is hoped that individual businesses will benefit from this work by providing information on personal safety concerns that may assist in developing programs intended to keep merchants, staff and their customers safe.

2.3. The Audit Process

i. Background Information and Consultation

a) Research on Safety Concerns

As mentioned previously, information about personal safety concerns and factors has been compiled from consultation processes and site specific audits conducted in the Cowichan Valley since 1996, and from ongoing contacts with community organizations over time which have resulted in extensive anecdotal information. From the national studies in particular, random sampling and survey methods have determined differential effects, relationships and reactivity with regard to safety concerns of women. We may assume therefore, that there is a reasonable amount of external validity and that findings from those studies may be generalized to other settings and subjects.

b) Statistical Information

Statistical information on reported crimes over time for the City of Duncan was obtained through the Duncan/North Cowichan RCMP Detachment (Appendix B).

c) Survey

Information was sought for this process from the business community in the downtown area. The process involved distribution of a survey through the DBIA newsletter which invited people to respond to four open-ended questions:

- *Are there places in your community where you feel unsafe?*
- *Please name these places.*
- *What is it about these places that makes you feel unsafe?*
- *What would help you to feel safer in your community?*

The survey resulted in several telephone interviews during February and March, 1999.

d) Discussions - Anecdotal Information

Safer Futures staff also spoke with many business owners and staff about the project and requested input as to their safety concerns, if any. The process involved an introduction to the project and overview of safety goals, and invited discussion about experiences and perceptions about safety, as well as issues and needs.

The aims of the discussions were to initiate dialogue about safety concerns, to encourage involvement, and to provide information, education, and validation and support about general safety matters. Anecdotal information on experiences and perceptions were collected and recommendations that were offered by the individuals, were recorded. Because of the need to enable people to speak freely and maintain privacy, names were not collected and stores were not identified unless permission was given.

ii. Audit Walkabouts

Three public audits were held on separate evenings, one in November, 1998 (at the beginning of the Christmas shopping season), and two in March, 1999.

Each walkabout involved a tour of a section of the downtown core to examine various aspects and make observations. Collectively, the three audits covered the entire downtown core as identified in Map A.

Procedures for these audits were based on standard audit processes developed by METRAC:

- i. For each audit, the process involves a discussion of issues and objectives, and a walk-about to examine the area for factors that detract from safety. The process is designed to be as informal as possible, to encourage comfort of all participants, and to allow for various means of expression and discussion.
- ii. A checklist of questions (Appendix D) provides a reference for examining aspects with respect to personal safety and the physical/social environment.
- iii. The basic questions addressed in an audit are, "*What about this place makes me feel unsafe and what would help to address these concerns?*"

Factors which are commonly examined are isolation, access to emergency services, lighting, signage, movement predictors, hiding places, entrapment sites and maintenance.

Accessibility factors are also important in examining a place for safety. In short, if a place presents obstacles to access, transportation or movement, it can have significant implications for that person's personal safety. Questions include:

“Does this place or route present obstacles and related safety issues for someone who lives with a disability, to someone who is mobility impaired, does not have access to a vehicle or who uses a wheelchair or scooter?”

- iv. A follow-up discussion period provides further opportunities for comments.
- v. Observations and suggestions for solutions are recorded by staff throughout the process.
- vi. In this project, audit participants filled out surveys before and after the audit to aid in further determining their needs and concerns, and to help evaluate various aspects of the audit process.
- vii. A draft report is prepared and circulated to participants and other relevant agencies for comments.
- viii. A final report is prepared with attention to the review process and comments, and submitted to all.

2.3.1. Limitations

There are numerous perspectives from which to assess an area for personal safety, and in general, the more diverse perspectives included, the better. The audit groups were representative of a wide range of users and age groups, and therefore perspectives.

However, it should be noted that the audits did not directly address questions from the perspective of cultural and language differences, or a comprehensive assessment for accessibility factors. During the review process however, input was given by a community member on aspects of accessibility, and is now included in this report.

Finally, this audit did not involve a comprehensive and random survey process, a procedure which can be helpful in informing and confirming issues and number of people affected. However, as mentioned previously, existing data on safety issues through victimization studies is considered to be sufficient for external validity. The process then, focuses on second stage research which goes beyond demonstrating “is safety a concern” to examining the area for obstacles that are common to many environments.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Group Consultation and Primary Concerns

Initial discussion with the various audit groups highlighted a number of objectives and safety considerations with regard to the downtown area.

Objectives and priorities for safety included:

- Safety of women and children using public washrooms
- Safety of staff working alone on Sundays and evenings
- Management strategies, for example, tenancy agreements, that support personal safety
- Places for youth to gather safely

Main Issues Identified:

- Isolated parking lots
- Poorly lit parking lots
- Safety issues around walking from or to one's car after dark
- Unlit alleyways
- Too few public phones

Generally, participants agreed that downtown Duncan is a safe and attractive place. Indeed, several women were adamant they had never experienced any level of fear in the many years they had operated their respective businesses.

However, those who had contrary feelings, had much to say. Several women who worked in the downtown core said they worked night shifts reluctantly and often in absolute fear. Reasons identified were the poor lighting in both downtown lots and the free parking lots located on the periphery of the core, the recent murder of downtown resident Margaret Newman, the low level of activity in the evening and on Sundays, and the low level of police presence.

Citizens or customers pointed out a number of safety issues, noting they felt unsafe in the core due to factors which contribute to isolation, detract from accessibility and aesthetics, including the "garbage", poor sidewalk conditions in some areas, low level of activity, poor lighting, and vacant storefronts.

3.2. Observations

This section covers observations and suggestions made during the audit walkabouts, as well as from discussions with individual owners and staff. It considers comments and suggestions from previous discussion groups and surveys, and anecdotal information collected over time through contacts with service providers and community organizations in the Cowichan Valley. We also note relevant comments submitted through the review of the draft, such as those noting actions and policies of the City of Duncan.

3.2.1. General

a) Isolation

Activity inspires a level of security by providing passive surveillance and reduction of crimes of opportunity. Outside standard business hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the streets in the core are often very quiet. Participants used language like “ghost town” and “spooky” to describe the atmosphere after shops close. Some participants said they would be more inclined to come downtown after hours to “window shop” if there was such a tradition.

Solutions Identified

- Work with local merchants to develop a unified commitment to hours of operation. Cooperatively advertise the extended hours of operation.
- Encourage and assist businesses that do chose to open late recognizing this as a valuable “service” to the entire downtown community.
- Encourage downtown activities by inviting groups, organizations, individuals to hold their events or meetings downtown, encourage street entertainment, coordinate events for youth

Planning Considerations:

- Create public activity sites - green space, walking malls, event commons.
- Promote live-work zoning in the Downtown Core; for example, provide incentives to landlords to create residential suites.

“Now that the Skateboard park has been built, the boarders have all but disappeared - this makes pedestrians happier and drivers more relaxed, but it has taken away a much needed level of activity.” (Audit Participant).

b) Lighting

Lighting is a primary concern identified by women as a factor that affects the perceived level of safety. Inadequate or inconsistent levels of lighting were a common theme throughout the audit tour of the downtown core. During the time of the audit walks, many lights attached to awnings, overhangs and exterior wall sconces were noted to be burned out or broken. Lighting that was considered warm and inviting was the lighting found in window displays and the white string lights that several stores use. Appendix E provides a list of locations and site specific descriptions regarding lighting in the downtown area.

Solutions Identified:

- Inform merchants about the procedure for reporting burned out street lights.
- Encourage merchants to leave ambient light on in their shops at night or have lit window displays*.
- Encourage landlords to replace or repair lights as identified in the audit.
- Let merchants know that white string lights were identified by participants as creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the downtown core.
- Ask landlords to light vacant store fronts in the evening.

* B.C. Hydro estimates the cost of electricity for two 50 watt bulbs shining an extra 12 hours a day is approximately 57 cents per month.

Planning Considerations:

- Ensure adequate levels of lighting for nighttime uses through ongoing attention to installing streetlights where issues are identified.
- Develop a city wide policy on lighting continuity, so that parking lots eventually all have lights similar to the new lights installed along the Train Station parking lot.
- Incorporate policies into the Official Community Plan and adopt corresponding by-laws to ensure future development contains adequate provisions for lighting.

The City of Duncan is currently installing decorative and functional lighting in the downtown core.

c) Accessibility

Accessibility is an important element of community safety, particularly for people with disabilities, and in general, for people to be able to access areas and buildings without risk or fear. Obstacles posed by sidewalks, crosswalks, streets and buildings are common issues around accessibility.

Examples may include:

- broken pavement and potholes,
- inadequate space along sides of roads, sidewalks which present obstacles for people in wheelchairs and scooters, and parents with children in strollers;
- lack of curb cuts, inadequate design and placement of curb cuts;
- buildings that are not designed to accommodate wheelchairs and scooters, or strollers.

“As a woman who walks with considerable difficulty,....I have had too many close calls almost tripping on broken curbs and uneven pavement...” INTERESTED BYSTANDER

The City of Duncan has a commitment of working toward accessible areas and buildings and has a Handicap Advisory Committee which provides input regarding accessibility in design. The City recently incorporated design aspects to increase safety and access into their public washrooms which are currently under construction.

Appendix E contains a list and description of locations in the downtown core that have been pointed out for obstacles to accessibility for people who use scooters and wheelchairs due to needs for curb cuts in places, hedges that block sightlines and paths, blocked pathways on sidewalks.

Solutions Identified:

- Address needs for locations of curb cuts (as identified in Appendix E).
- Address trimming of hedges in locations identified.
- Increase awareness among businesses to ensure tables do not block pathways for people who use scooters and wheelchairs.
- Continue and enhance ongoing attention to obstacles to accessibility in design, construction and maintenance of sidewalks, streets and other open spaces.
- Ensure future design of streets, buildings and open spaces includes provisions for access for people with disabilities, parents with small children.

d) Public Telephones

Public telephones have been consistently identified through surveys and focus groups as items that contribute greatly to the feeling of security in an area. The Downtown core appears to have only two public phones, and many people do not know their respective locations. Several business owners said their phones are available to the general public, but it cannot be assumed the public will feel comfortable asking to use a private phone even in the event of an emergency.

Public telephones in the downtown area are commonly vandalized. Recently, BC Tel. has installed newer “vandal resistant” phones which hold promise of more consistent working order. One comment about the new telephones however, is that they could be more accessible through design that assists people with visual impairments and people whose first language is not English, through providing instructions using symbols. (Currently, instructions are given on a computerized screen.)

Solutions Identified:

- Work with B.C. Telephone to install more public telephones in the core.
- Businesses willing to offer their phone to the public might post a sign offering this service. The DBIA could offer its membership these signs as a service.
- Post a Public Phone (symbol) sign on the exterior of businesses that have public phones inside their premises.

Planning Considerations:

- Study the economic feasibility of installing emergency call boxes.
- Ensure future developments incorporate access to public phones.

BC Tel has initiated a plan to place more telephones in the downtown core.

e) Signs, Directions & Information

Awareness of surrounding environments contributes significantly to one’s sense of safety. Signage can help to provide information and direction and lend to overall sense of safety. At the same time, it is important to draw a balance between information needs and the potential for cluttering, particularly with respect to merchants’ who are often requested to display posters in windows.

Participants comments indicated priorities for directional signage - where to locate restrooms, telephones, parking and other significant public utilities. A recurrent comment was that very few people even know the names of the streets in town, thus giving verbal directions to visitors is often frustrating.

Solutions Identified:

- Determine several downtown locations where a sign could be stationed identifying various utilities, significant buildings and sites.
- Invite merchants to post directional signs or maps on their storefronts.

The DBIA has plans to install plinths located on the west side of City Hall and Charles Hoey Park south of the Train Station.

f) Aesthetics

The maintenance and aesthetic features of a space affect sense of comfort, and gives strong messages to women and other vulnerable groups as to the level of safety they can expect. It can also be reasoned that a person who feels safe may be inclined to stay longer and indeed return to that space. Participants noticed efforts made by downtown businesses to provide warmth through ambient lighting, planters or a well kept ivy trellis. In contrast, some areas or sites were observed to contain overfilled garbage bins and casual litter, overgrown bushes, peeling paint and graffiti. Participants also observed damaged or broken curbs and sidewalks.

Suggestions Identified:

- Keep storefronts swept, collect cigarette butts at end of day.
- Install window boxes, hanging baskets, flower beds where possible.
- Install bicycle stands and comfortable benches.
- Maintain buildings with fresh paint.
- Provide ashtrays where smokers gather.
- Report any damaged, broken or dangerous sidewalk and road work to Public Works.
- Develop a policy for window treatments of vacant leasehold premises.

- Install comfortable wooden benches possibly sponsored by citizens with memorial plaques.

The City of Duncan notes that litter is attended to on an ongoing basis. With regard to wooden benches, the City notes issues of vandalism require the use of metal benches.

g) Graffiti

The presence of graffiti is commonly identified as a sign of ‘urban decay’ and abandonment which creates a feeling of isolation and unease amongst the general population. Commissioned graffiti work that reflects the diversity of a community is quite capable of creating just the opposite effect by making an urban centre appear current, exciting and welcoming to youth. Commissioned graffiti is usually respected as art and very infrequently damaged or vandalized.

Solutions Identified

- Create City policy/bylaw for timely removal of non-commissioned graffiti.
- Commission graffiti works projects.

The City of Duncan has a graffiti removal policy which encourages reporting and prompt removal of uncommissioned graffiti. The City notes a commissioned graffiti project in Centennial Park.

h) Commissionaires & Security

The City Commissionaires were identified as a valuable resource as they offer an opportunity to reflect the spirit and friendliness of the downtown merchant’s community and provide surveillance and security in the evening. Most merchants were pleased to have commissionaires checking for unlocked premises after closing. However, no one was aware of commissionaires’ hours of duty, or how to get in touch with them after City Hall closed.

A couple of merchants identified an interest in the downtown merchants collectively commissioning a private security company. Hummingbird Security was specifically identified due to the company’s current awareness campaign. Particular aspects of the security service offered, that were of interest to merchants, include: affordability, visibility (bicycle security) and potential to be treated as the company’s only client

(downtown merchant community) as well as an opportunity to develop a unique security program.

Other merchants felt that the security responsibility lies with the commissionaires and the police, and that any other expense is not effectively utilizing existing services.

Solutions Identified:

- Provide Commissionaires with a comprehensive list of contacts for each business in case of emergency.
- Keep list current through annual Business License renewal.
- Post after hours contact *In Case of Emergency* or *To Report a Concern* on store front.
- Consider a feasibility study or survey of interest for collectively hiring a private security business.

The City of Duncan reports that Commissionaires will be provided with a list of business owners who can be contacted in the event of a problem.

i) Level of Crime, Police Presence

Conflicting perceptions were expressed regarding the level of crime in the downtown core. Some participants felt that Duncan was unsafe not only because it felt isolated but because of the number and frequency of crimes. Others commented that the number of crimes in the downtown core is infrequent and is on the decline. Most merchants did not want to resort to barricading their storefronts making them obviously crime resistant, but instead preferred more subtle but effective techniques for protecting their businesses.

Several business owners expressed frustration at the low level of police presence in the downtown core. Common complaints ranged from police not responding to calls either quickly enough or at all, police being inaccessible due to the station's hours of operation and reliance on a (911) Nanaimo-based police dispatch.

These concerns were offered to the RCMP by Safer Futures staff for comment, with the following feedback:

According to the RCMP, reported crime has not increased in the region, although the Duncan Detachment does not have statistics that break out crime in the commercial centre only. (See Appendix B)

Police Bicycle Patrol begins in early May. This year, ten officers have been trained in Bike Patrol which represents a significant increase from only 2 bike patrols last year.

RCMP are available to merchants to help develop strategies that will reduce “smash and grab” and various other property crimes. For example, RCMP recommend marking high end products for ease of recovery, chaining merchandise together etc.

Although most of the Constables are long time residents of the community, it is difficult for officers to keep up with new business start-up and relocations. The detachment relies on the merchants to keep them informed.

RCMP offer a basic Women’s Self Defense course upon request.

Community liaison officers will develop a workshop for a group of merchants based upon the requests.

Solutions Identified:

- Provide RCMP Duncan Detachment with frequently updated map and merchant location with after hours contact list.
- Identify merchants who would benefit from a seminar on business safety and crime resistant measures they can implement.
- Organize with RCMP a Women’s Self Defense course that focuses on techniques for staff working alone.

j) Parking and Parking Lot Safety

For many people, and particularly for women, parking is a primary safety issue. Parking lots have traditionally not been designed with personal safety as a priority. Common issues include isolation, poor lighting and the presence of hiding and entrapment areas. These issues were noted for several parking lots in the downtown area. Site specific observations and suggestions are included in Section 3.2.2.

“I will drive around and around until I find a spot that is directly under a light.”

AUDIT PARTICIPANT

Opinions regarding provision of parking space in and around the downtown core were quite diverse. Most participants agreed that merchants should not be taking up street parking - nor should office staff. However, many staff who work after dark insist, for safety reasons, on parking as close to their respective work places as possible. It is common for staff to move their cars at day’s end and before dark from an outlying parking lot to nearby street parking.

Participants commented on the importance of preserving free downtown parking, with one merchant pointing out that Downtown is in direct competition to the convenience a

Mall provides. Another merchant commented that some businesses don't consider daily fines enough of a deterrence to those insistent on parking all day on the street.

Solutions Identified:

- Ongoing reminders to businesses not to park in the core.
- Discuss feasibility of encouraging city to increase fines to vehicles that are frequent offenders. (City of Victoria issues towing orders to outstanding offenders).
- Negotiate with the City to provide free parking stickers to merchants and staff for outlying parking lots.
- Provide a Safe Walk service, especially during extended Christmas hours, to staff designated parking lots - utilizing Commissionaires, student fundraising groups, volunteers, private security.
- Complete a comprehensive study on the parking needs of the downtown commercial centre to provide accurate information, and develop an effective planning strategy that will build confidence and reduce aggravation.

The City of Duncan issues reminders to businesses and repeat vehicle offenders. It tows vehicles with ten outstanding summons.

k) Public Washrooms

Public washrooms are often cited for safety and accessibility issues by women and other vulnerable groups. Design of public washrooms should therefore be given the utmost consideration. General consensus during the audit revealed a concern around washrooms being housed in a separate building as it may duplicate the conditions of the washrooms over by the Mound. Concerns also included the potential for a building situated in the proposed Train Station parking lot to offer hiding spots and pose safety concerns for what is currently an open and well lit space - one of the few and therefore valuable central parking lots. Several participants preferred to have washrooms available in an existing building where other businesses could provide casual surveillance.

Some universal principals to public washroom design are as follows:

- Washrooms should not be located in isolated areas of buildings.
- Women's washrooms should be located a significant distance from men's washrooms to avoid loitering and reduce vulnerability.

Solid doors should have a sound grate installed to allow for sound to carry **OR** glass doors to washrooms, if design permits privacy, can be used to reduce isolation and vulnerability.

- Designs integrating a two door entrance way are not favoured by women, especially those with mobility challenges, or carrying children. A design option may include a windowed first door and swing corral doors for privacy at the second entrance.
- Lighting should be sufficient, especially over the stalls, and well maintained.
- Where sightlines are obscured, convex mirrors should be installed.
- As both men and women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable members of society, handicapped washrooms should have access to emergency alarms.
- Ensure garbage cans are sufficient and effective so as to reduce garbage spillage and overflow.
- Colours should be warm and graffiti removed regularly.
- Encourage installation of baby facilities in women's washrooms and family facilities for men who have male and female children.
- As homeless citizens will be frequent users of the public washroom facility, representatives from this community should be consulted to assist in a design that will ensure their specific safety issues.

The City of Duncan recently requested assessment of design plans for its proposed public washroom facilities by Safer Futures, and notes it will be incorporating a number of suggestions from the report, including provision of a unisex facility and baby changing facilities.

I) Events Planning

Downtown Duncan is well known for its collective efforts in putting on public events in the core business area. Taking steps to promote public safety will assist people to attend public events. In surveys and focus groups of other audits, several recommendations were made that could apply to events planning in Duncan.

Suggestions:

- Provide a designated area for childminding and play.
- Reserve nearby parking for people with disabilities.

- Coordinate events with Public Transit Commission where appropriate (i.e. - increased service, reduced or free fare, altering bus stops, etc.)
- Provide a central information booth that provides directions, lost and found, childfind, emergency phone and first aid.
- Reserve canopied viewing areas (parades, stage sets) for people with disabilities and/ or seniors.

m) Designated Safe Place

Some businesses are unofficially known as a safe haven for people in distress. This may be due to their friendliness and level of interaction with customers or perhaps their extended hours of operation. One participant reported that some communities have formalized this service by identifying (through a sign or sticker in the window) that the particular business is part of a “safer communities” initiative, and will assist citizens in distress. Posted signs that, to some, may state the obvious, can help get an important message across to the public: that there is a level of awareness, care and concern amongst the merchant community.

Solutions Identified:

- Develop a program for downtown merchants to participate in a campaign that identifies their shops as a “safe place” or “safe haven”.

n) Building on the downtown community spirit

It is evident the downtown merchants have a highly developed sense of community. This spirit is a tremendous asset. The more that spirit is evidenced by visitors, shoppers and workers, the greater the draw will be for people to make the downtown area a destination, tourists to stay longer and enjoy walking about and workers to choose to make their purchases within “their community”.

Recommendation Identified:

- Organize a campaign that gets the word out to the larger community about the “extra” services small businesses provide.

For example, Liliput’s Daycare offers: downtown visitors a Diaper Change Room for Moms and Dads in distress; kid friendly band-aids for the first-aid

emergencies; a local child find registry currently with over 3000 names registered.

o) The Homeless

Homelessness is a product of poverty and other issues including drug and alcohol addiction which is often most apparent in the downtown core of a city. Many cities are facing the problems associated with street life at a crises stage. Innovative initiatives can be drawn from these other cities as programs are documented. Business owners can be apart of these larger community issues in order to ensure their economic vibrancy by taking a leading role to address the underlying issues.

Communities that rely on legislation to eradicate “unsightly” street life suffer frustration and do no service to their community. Initiatives that work to eradicate poverty, address drug and alcohol addiction with programs and services, will serve to improve the quality of life for every citizen.

Solutions Identified:

- Support food banks and Meal Banquets financially and in-kind, and by helping them to advertise their service.
- Work with agencies to create safe spaces for citizens who are homeless.
- Report any violence immediately to the police.
- Support drug and alcohol programs wherever and in whatever capacity possible.

“Usually the presence of people makes me feel safe, but if I think someone is on drugs ... well I can tell you I know intimately the level of their desperation. I am terrified they will flip out...they can be so unpredictable.”

AUDIT PARTICIPANT

3.2.2. Site Specific Observations

a) Parking Lots

#P1 Kenneth Street - Participants identified what they felt was a lot of garbage and recycling out back of the stores facing onto Craig Street, making the parking lot seem unsafe both at night and in the day.

#P2 - Craig Street - The high hedge bordering the lot from the City Hall Fountain creates obstructions to sightlines and offers hiding spots.

#P3 The Mound - The Mound lot, although convenient to some merchants and their customers, is not a favourite parking place in the evening. Recently, the owners of the land upgraded the west section of the parking lot with lighting, pavement and concrete barriers defining the property. Although the lot is now used more frequently, the concrete barriers do not provide entrances into the lot from the crosswalk opposite H.W. Dickie. The barriers bordering Allenby Road do not leave much room between traffic and pedestrian walkways.

#P4 - LetterBox Lot at Government and Canada Ave. - This lot houses the City of Duncan sign, and is the gateway to the Downtown core. Participants felt the parking lot detracted from a positive first impression for visitors. Participants noted that the lot contained litter, that it was dark, and the buildings that back onto the lot have very little lighting, which further decreases the level of safety in this area of town. The neighbouring lots are also poorly lit and have garbage bins in the open, occasionally seen with garbage bags piled up next to the bins.

Suggestions Identified:

#P1: Kenneth

- Build structure to conceal garbage area, organize and sort recycling. *

#P2: Craig

- Remove of hedge and replace with canopied trees, low lying shrubs **OR**
- Reduce height of hedge if pruning permits.
- Create designated areas at the rear of buildings for tidy garbage disposal and organized recycling.

#P3: Mound

- Relocate concrete barriers to provide a pedestrian walkway along perimeter of parking lot and create pedestrian entrance into the lot from the crosswalk.

#P4 Government / Canada

- Landscape the perimeter of the lot with low lying shrubs and flowers and canopied trees.
- Enclose garbage and recycling receptacles. *
- Provide and service garbage cans at the corner of Trunk and Canada Ave.
- Install spot lighting to highlight buildings.
- Repair existing lights.
- Install white string lights in businesses where windows face parking lot.

* The City of Duncan notes that enclosures for garbage bins have been tried in the past, but have resulted in inappropriate uses. Due to feasibility issues, further exploration of solutions would be needed.

b) City Hall Area

The vicinity of City Hall was noted as dark and isolated in the evening hours.

The Alley way between City Hall and the Canada Building was observed to be very clean but extremely dark and uninviting.

Suggestions Identified:

- Improve lighting by replacing existing lights on City Hall building, install spot lights for alley way and statue.
- Install spot lights on VIP Beauty building.

The City of Duncan has installed a floodlight behind City Hall; a floodlight will be installed in the alley behind City Hall and the Canada Building.

c) Alley Ways

There are an abundance of alley ways in the downtown area, and although time did not permit covering every alley in detail, overlapping principles can be applied to each site such as:

- keep areas clear of garbage and debris
- ensure entire alley is well lit
- remove or reduce shrubs, objects or gates that create hiding spots
- ensure alcoves of buildings are well lit
- use convex mirrors where sightlines are obstructed

The following observations highlight specific alleys included in the audit.

Alley #A1 - Next to Anytime Anywhere - was noted as very dark, however the lattice was considered to create a feeling of being well cared for.

Alley #A2 - Next to Choices - was noted as very dark. Participants noted an overgrown bush blocking sitelines, and a gate/door was ajar which created a hiding spot.

Alley #A3 - Next to Gossips - was described by participants as “awesome” as it was well lit, clean, clear of debris.

Suggestions identified:

- #A1 - Lower gate for visibility.
- #A2 - Trim overgrown bush.

d) Canada Building

The boulevard in front of this building has low shrubs but they are overgrown and at the time of the audit contained garbage and broken bottles. Participants’ immediate response was that this area was not safe for children as there could be needles left behind.

Suggestions Identified:

- Replace existing shrubs with low maintenance flowering planters that will create less an opportunity to hide litter.

e) The Train Station & Green Space

The Train Station and adjacent green space on Canada Avenue are of particular historic and aesthetic value for the downtown area. The site is also the central bus stop for local public transit, as well as for the daily passenger train. It is often a very active area. The building and area are particularly well-maintained.

However, safety issues pointed out by participants included:

i) Congestion: buses stop in between two side walks (vehicles are not supposed to park within 6 meters on each side of a sidewalk) and presents safety issues for this intersection. It was noted that City Council has attempted to rectify the problem by

directing public works to construct a barricade on the South West Corner at the Midland Walwyn Building, with the purpose to direct pedestrian traffic away from the centre crosswalk. Participants felt that the barricade would only create more pedestrian danger as people will walk around it, into the street traffic. Further, restrictions in pedestrian traffic routes may be perceived as a reduction in escape routes.

ii) Inadequate lighting for nighttime uses - Participants felt that the park was very dark at night. In addition, the hedge that borders along Duncan Street is high and blocks visibility. The sidewalk which follows along the perimeter of the park, along Canada Avenue toward Trunk Road is particularly narrow.

Further observations and recommendations for the area extending from the Train Station to the Capris Cinema were made during a separate audit by the Cowichan Spirit of Women. Copies of that audit are available upon request through the Safer Futures office.

Solutions Identified:

- Widen sidewalk along park on Canada Ave heading towards Trunk Road.
- Install landscape lighting in park to highlight trees and improve overall visibility at night.
- Ensure lighting shines directly on Gazebo.
- Continue lighting along the length of the park as installed in the Train Station parking lot.
- Lower bordering hedge along Duncan Street to increase visibility.
- Move the bus stop up further to a well lit area along Canada Ave - perhaps the parking lot.

The City of Duncan notes the following:

- *that the most southerly crosswalk has been eliminated,*
- *that moving the bus stop is not feasible as the present location is the only area that will accommodate tour buses, and*
- *that trimming of the hedge would compromise its health.*

3.3. Planning Considerations

Several recommendations from the previous sections have implications for future planning and development. They include:

1. Create more public activity sites - green space, walking malls, event commons.
2. Promote live-work zoning in the Downtown Core; for example through providing incentives to landlords to create residential suites.
3. Ensure adequate levels of lighting for nighttime uses through ongoing attention to installing streetlights where issues are identified.
4. Develop a city wide policy on lighting continuity, so that parking lots eventually all have lights similar to the new lights installed along the Train Station parking lot.
5. Incorporate policies into the Official Community Plan and adopt corresponding by-laws to ensure future development contains adequate provisions for lighting.
6. Ensure future developments, where appropriate, incorporate access to public phones.

Incorporating considerations for personal safety into planning, design and management of communities into process that guide development, can be an important component of crime prevention. Research suggests that safety and security in public places can be enhanced by design and management of the physical environment that seeks to minimize or eliminate opportunities for crime and concurrently, increases people's sense of safety.

Municipalities can integrate personal safety and accessibility into Official Community Plans and other by-laws that guide and regulate development. There are several examples of how safety audit recommendations and general principles for planning and design have been incorporated into Official Community Plans, zoning by-laws and Development Permit Area by-laws in the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Electoral areas and municipalities that have adopted safety conscious principles into regulatory mechanisms include the District of North Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith, and Electoral Areas A, C, and E. The CVRD recently adopted a regional public safety policy making personal safety a priority for future development (refer Appendix F).

A comprehensive guide for incorporating safety and accessibility into design and management of areas is provided in "Planning for Safer Communities," produced

jointly by the Safer Futures Project and the CVRD. Appendix G provides an excerpt from the guide outlining processes for assessing development design and management. The following is an example of policy that can be adopted to ensure safety is a part of decision-making processes.⁶

To promote communities where all people can freely use public spaces, day or night, without fear of violence, and where people including women and children and persons with special needs, are safe from violence,

- a) ensure that all programs and policies support personal and public safety, and
- b) adopt development guidelines respecting issues of safety and security and apply those guidelines in its review of Official Community Plans and development proposals.

To encourage public safety and security for all persons, but with particular attention to women, children and persons with special needs,

- a) encourage improvement in public safety and security in approvals of buildings, streetscaping, parks and other public and private open spaces;
- b) encourage the design and siting of new buildings to provide visual overlook and easy physical access to adjacent streets, parks and open spaces and to allow clear views to parks and open spaces from the street;
- c) encourage appropriate lighting, visibility and opportunities for informal surveillance for buildings and open spaces;
- d) encourage improvement of existing streets, buildings, parks and other publicly accessible areas, where existing conditions do not promote public safety and security.

⁶ Adapted from C.V.R.D. Public Safety Policy, 1999.

3.3.1. Principles for Addressing Safety Through Planning, Design and Management

The following are general principles for planning and design of the community environment to support safety.

1. Provide for awareness and clarity of surroundings

- General design and layout of an area or building should provide for ease of navigation, clarity of surroundings and visibility. An area or building should “make sense” and be easy to get around in, contain adequate directional information, emergency outlets (e.g., public telephones). Considerations should include aspects such as clear sightlines and well-lit pedestrian pathways.

2. Provide for adequate visibility and opportunities for casual surveillance

- Provide adequate lighting (level, intensity, angle).
- Reduce or eliminate obstructions to sightlines, movement predictors (for example, solid hedges in landscaping or high solid fences adjacent pedestrian pathways)
- Locate and place buildings, including entrances, and windows that overlook pedestrian walkways.

3. Reduce isolation

- Encourage a mix of land uses (e.g., residential and commercial).
- Encourage visibility in placement and design of buildings, landscaping.

4. Provide access to emergency outlets and services

- Public telephones.
- Informational and directional signage to tell people how and where to access help.

5. Provide for accessibility

- Promote safe and accessible public transportation.
- Consider accessibility needs of people with disabilities with respect to building design and location of services.

6. Include Management Policies and Practices to support safety

- Managers of places should be aware of women’s safety issues and concerns, and be encouraged to provide services to promote safety of staff and the public.
- Managers can include everyone from parks staff, to building and shopping centre managers, to personnel managers of government offices and businesses.

4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation	Suggested Area of Responsibility
3.2.1.	
<p>a) Isolation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universalize downtown business hours. 2. Encourage, assist and recognize businesses that choose to have extended hours. 3. Cooperatively advertise the extended hours of operation. 4. Encourage downtown activities. 5. Create public activity sites - green space, walking malls, event commons. 6. Promote live-work and urban residential zoning in the Downtown Core. 	<p>DBIA DBIA DBIA DBIA / City of Duncan DBIA / City of Duncan City of Duncan</p>
<p>b) Lighting</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report burned out streetlights. 2. Encourage merchants to leave ambient light on in their shops at night or have lit window displays. 3. Replace, repair or install vital lighting on buildings. 4. Communicate positive comments re: white string lights in store front windows. 5. Encourage lighting for vacant store fronts at night. 6. Develop a city wide policy on lighting continuity, so parking lots eventually all have lights similar to the new lights installed along the Train Station parking lot. 7. Work with new development applications to ensure lighting is congruent with public lighting. 	<p>DBIA/Merchants Merchants/Landlords Merchants DBIA / Landlords DBIA/City of Duncan City of Duncan City of Duncan</p>
<p>c) Accessibility</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Address needs for locations of curb cuts (as identified in Appendix E). 2. Address trimming of hedges in locations identified. 3. Communicate to businesses re: needs for adequate space along pathways for people who use scooters and wheelchairs. 4. Continue and enhance ongoing attention to obstacles to accessibility in design, construction and maintenance of sidewalks, streets and other open spaces. 5. Ensure future design of streets, buildings and open spaces includes provisions for access for people with disabilities, parents with small children. 6. Continue and enhance ongoing attention to obstacles to accessibility in maintenance of sidewalks, streets and parks. 	<p>City of Duncan City of Duncan DBIA / City of Duncan City of Duncan City of Duncan City of Duncan City of Duncan</p>

Recommendation	Suggested Area of Responsibility
7. Ensure future design of streets, buildings and open spaces includes consideration for access for people with disabilities, parents with small children.	
d) Public Telephones 1. Installation of more Public Telephones in the core. 2. Post signs in businesses where private phones are available for use. 3. Make phone signs available to merchants. 4. Install Public Phone signs on the exterior of businesses that have public phones inside their premises. 5. Further study the economic feasibility of installing emergency call boxes. 6. Ensure future developments, where appropriate, incorporate access to public phones.	BC Tel Merchants DBIA BC Tel DBIA City of Duncan
e) Signs & Information 1. Determine several downtown locations where a sign could be stationed identifying various utilities, significant buildings and sites. 2. Post directional signs on storefronts.	DBIA/ Safer Futures Merchants
f) Aesthetics 1. Ensure clearing of cigarette butts & litter. 2. Promote aesthetics: install window boxes, hanging baskets, flower beds where possible. 3. Install bicycle stands and comfortable benches. 4. Maintain buildings with fresh vibrant paint colours. 5. Provision of ashtrays where smokers gather. 6. Report any damaged, broken or dangerous sidewalk and road work to City of Duncan Public Works. 7. Develop (volunteer) policy for window treatments of unleased premises. 8. Install comfortable benches.	Merchants Merchants City of Duncan / Service Clubs Landlords Merchants Merchants DBIA/Landlords City of Duncan / Service Clubs
g) Graffiti 1. Create City policy/bylaw for timely removal of non-commissioned graffiti. (In existence) 2. Design commissioned graffiti works project.	City of Duncan / DBIA
h) Security 1. Provide Commissionaires with a comprehensive emergency contact list for each business.	DBIA

Recommendation	Suggested Area of Responsibility
2. Keep list current through annual Business License renewal. 3. Post after hours contact <i>In Case of Emergency</i> or <i>To Report a Concern</i> on store fronts. 4. Consider feasibility study or survey of interest re: collective hiring of private security business.	City of Duncan DBIA DBIA
i) Policing 1. Provide RCMP Duncan Detachment with updated map of businesses with after hours contact list. 2. Offer seminar on business safety and crime resistant measures for merchants. 3. Provide Women's Self Defense with business & staff focus.	DBIA DBIA/ Chamber of Commerce RCMP
j) Parking 1. Develop information program for reminders to businesses not to park in the core. 2. Discuss feasibility of encouraging city to increase fines to vehicles that are frequent offenders. 3. Provide free parking stickers to merchants and staff for outlying parking lots. 4. Develop SafeWalk service for staff and customers. 5. Effect comprehensive parking needs assessment City of Duncan.	? DBIA City of Duncan City of Duncan DBIA City of Duncan
k) Public Washrooms 1. Carry out a Safety Audit on Public Washroom plans, and a follow-up site audit once construction is complete. (In progress)	City of Duncan
l) Events 1. Provide a designated area for childminding and play. 2. Reserve nearby parking for people with disabilities. 3. Coordinate events with Public Transit Commission. 4. Provide a central information booth. 5. Reserve canopied viewing areas for people in need. 6. Seek input during planning from community group representatives.	Event Coordinators
m) Designated Safe Place 1. Develop "safe place" or "safe haven" program for Downtown.	DBIA

Recommendation	Suggested Area of Responsibility
<p>n) Community Spirit</p> <p>1. Advertise “extra” services small business provide.</p>	DBIA
<p>o) Social Issues / Homelessness</p> <p>1. Support local initiatives that work to relieve suffering and end poverty. 2. Work with agencies to create safe spaces for citizens who are homeless 3. Report any violence immediately to the police. 4. Support drug and alcohol programs wherever possible and in whatever capacity.</p>	DBIA/ City of Duncan Merchants Merchants DBIA / City of Duncan
<p>3.2.2.</p>	
<p>3.2.2. (a) Parking Lots</p> <p>1. #P1: Build garbage and recycling structures. 2. #P2: Removal of hedge and replace with Canopied trees or low lying shrubs OR reduction of hedge height. 3. #P2: Designate areas at rear of buildings for tidy garbage disposal & recycling. 4. #P3: Adjust concrete barriers to create a better pedestrian path along perimeter of lot (Allenby) and create an entrance near the crosswalk. 5. #P4: Landscape perimeter of lot with low lying shrubs and flowers or canopied trees 6. Enclose garbage and recycling receptacles . 7. Provide and service Litter Receptacles at the corner of Trunk and Canada Ave. 8. Install spot lighting to highlight buildings. 9. Repair existing lights. 10. Install white string lights in businesses where windows face parking lot.</p>	Merchants Public Works Merchants Cowichan Tribes Landowner / City of Duncan Merchants City of Duncan Landlords Landlords Merchants
<p>3.2.2 (b.) City Hall Area</p> <p>1. Improve lighting on City Hall building. 2. Install spot lights for alleyway and statue. 3. Install spot lights on VIP Beauty building.</p>	City of Duncan City of Duncan Owner / management
<p>3.2.2 (c) Alleys</p> <p>1. Keep areas clear of garbage and debris. 2. Ensure entire alley is well lit. 3. Remove or reduce shrubs, objects or gates that create hiding spots. 4. Ensure alcoves of buildings are well lit. 5. Install convex mirrors where sitelines are obstructed.</p>	Merchants / City of Duncan Duncan “ “ Owners

Recommendation	Suggested Area of Responsibility
6. #A1 - Lower gate for visibility. 7. #A2 - Trim overgrown bush.	Owners Owners / merchants
3.2.2 (d.) Canada Building 1. Replace existing shrubs with low maintenance flowering planters.	Owner / management
3.2.2 (e.) Train Station Park 1. Widen sidewalk along park on Canada Ave heading towards Trunk Road. 2. Install landscape lighting in park to highlight trees and improve overall visibility at night. Ensure lighting shines directly on Gazebo. 3. Continue lighting along the length of the park as installed in the Train Station parking lot. 4. Lower bordering hedge along Duncan Street to increase visibility. 5. Move the bus stop up further to the parking lot.	City of Duncan City of Duncan “ “ CVRD Transit Commission

3.2.3. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
<p>To promote communities where all people can freely use public spaces, day or night, without fear of violence, and where people including women and children and persons with special needs, are safe from violence,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensure that all programs and policies support personal and public safety, and b) adopt development guidelines respecting issues of safety and security and apply those guidelines in its review of Official Community Plans and development proposals. <p>To encourage public safety and security for all persons, but with particular attention to women, children and persons with special needs,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) encourage improvement in public safety and security in approvals of buildings, streetscaping, parks and other public and private open spaces; b) encourage the design and siting of new buildings to provide visual overlook and easy physical access to adjacent streets, parks and open spaces and to allow clear views to parks and open spaces from the street; c) encourage appropriate lighting, visibility and opportunities for informal surveillance for buildings and open spaces; d) encourage improvement of existing streets, buildings, parks and other publicly accessible areas, where existing conditions do not promote public safety and security.

5. CONCLUSION

A safer community is a more prosperous community - which is why many communities are becoming more involved in crime prevention initiatives. There are many ways to address community safety; the key is to bring people together to identify the issues that need to be addressed, and how all of the sectors can work together to achieve a common goal.

This report has outlined observations for safety audits conducted in the Downtown area of the City of Duncan. Recommendations stemming from these audits are intended to reflect input and suggestions from the community participants, and provide other information that may be helpful for planning future developments. Safety audits are a “snapshot in time,” and should be considered as an ongoing question for the whole community. There are no doubt, other items that could be explored from a diverse range of perspectives.

The Safety Audit process is a tool for gaining broad community involvement in building a healthy and safe environment. This report, and the process around it’s development, is intended as a starting point for engaging the community, including people who are not usually included in decision-making processes, to offer their experiences and input which lead to appropriate, thoughtful and inclusive decisions.

The starting point for this Safety Audit was to explore women’s experience of downtown, with the understanding that when measures are taken to reduce women’s fear of violence, the wider community benefits.

“ ...issues (raised by women’s experience of fear) also affect some men and equally, people with disabilities, elderly people, the young, less mobile and parents with children. Shaping towns and villages that meet women’s needs can help create an environment that works better for everyone in society.”

(Royal Town Planning Institute, Advice Note No 12, June, 1995).

Several men showed their commitment to making the downtown area safer for women by participating in the safety audit. Their observations and recommendations were invaluable to the process and are recorded throughout this report.

Not surprisingly, many of the recommendations for improving the sense of safety in the “built” and “social” environment of the downtown core mirror initiatives and objectives already identified by the merchants in the Downtown Business Improvement Association. It is hoped that this report and the recommendations in it will serve to assist the DBIA in achieving the common goals of a safe and economically vibrant downtown core.

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APPENDIX A:

C.V.R.D. WOMEN'S SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Area A	Shannon Breeze
Area B	David Pope
Area C	Wendy Knapp
Area H	Director Mary Marcotte, Chair
Area I	Lois Gage
City of Duncan	Councillor Ernie Moon
District of North Cowichan	Councillor Glen Ridgway
Town of Lake Cowichan	Mayor Jean Brown
Town of Ladysmith	Cynthia Anderson
C.V. Independent Living Resource Centre	Maryatta Breuhan
C.V. Intercultural Society	Demy McEvoy
Duncan/North Cowichan RCMP	Constable Tracey Rook
Cowichan Spirit of Women	Carol Jaspersen
Cowichan Women Against Violence Society	Kathleen Skovgaard
Cowichan Valley Regional District Staff	Cheryl Wirsz

APPENDIX B:**SELECTED REPORTED CRIME STATISTICS
FOR DUNCAN DETACHMENT, 1995 - 1998**

**DUNCAN
REPORTED CRIME STATISTICS 1995 - 1998**

	1998	1997	1996	1995
Common Assault	533	545	559	591
Sexual Assault	91	82	79	102
Aggravated Assault	1	6	3	1
Murder	2	2	0	
Robbery	31	23	27	29
Theft Under \$5000	709	855	786	913
Theft Over \$5000	3	2	8	7

APPENDIX C: SELECTED STATISTICS ON VIOLENCE AND FEAR

- Using definitions from the Criminal Code of Canada, one out of every two women in Canada since the age of 16 has been physically or sexually assaulted by a man at least once.
- Most assaults on women are perpetrated by someone known to them. One in three BC women is assaulted by her husband or partner. However,
- An estimated 2.5 million Canadian women have experienced physical or sexual assault by a stranger. Many assaults take place in the victim's home and homes of people known to them; however, about 68% of stranger assaults occur in public places, almost one third in streets or parking lots.
- *Only about 6% of sexual assaults are ever reported to police. Of these only about 16% make it to court.*

Nationally, of women in the following situations:

- 55% are worried about walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark,
- 76% are worried about waiting for or using public transportation after dark,
- 83% are worried about walking alone to their car in a parking garage,
- 40% are worried about being home alone at night.

- Women are eight times more likely to forego an evening activity due to concerns for their safety
- About one half of women do not use public transit or parking garages due to concerns for their safety.
- Women are twice as likely as men to carry something to defend themselves
- About two thirds of women who are fearful of walking alone after dark say they would do so if they felt safer.

(Statistics Canada, Violence Against Women Survey, 1993)

COWICHAN VALLEY:

Between 1994 - 1997, Somenos Transition House accommodated about 6,000 bed-stays for women and children.

During 1997, the WAVAW crisis line receive about 1,200 calls.

APPENDIX D: SAFETY FACTORS and CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

The Safety audit checklist used in the safety audits was adapted from the METRAC Model. The checklist and discussions included the following questions:

General Impressions/Overall Design

*What words best describe this area? How does this place feel at night, in the day?
Is it easy to find your way around the area?
Is the area (building) accessible? Is it served by transit?
Would you know where to go for help? How accessible is help?*

Isolation

*How far away is the nearest person to call for help?
Do you know who to call for help?
Are there many people around the area?*

Lighting

*Is the lighting bright enough, even and in good repair?
Are walkways, directional signs or maps sufficiently illuminated?
Can you see someone at night 20 metres away? Can you see into the back of your parked car?
Is lighting obstructed by trees or bushes? Would you be able to identify someone from a distance?*

Sightlines, Movement Predictors/Entrapment Sites

*Are you able to see clearly what is up ahead?
Are there small, confined areas where you (or others) could be hidden from view?
How easy would it be to get away if you were threatened?
Could someone predict your movements? Is there an alternative route for escape?*

Maintenance

*Does the area feel cared for or abandoned?
Is there (offensive) graffiti or vandalism present?*

Signage

*Are there signs or other information that tell you about the area?
Can they be seen and read easily? By someone with a disability?*

APPENDIX E: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

With thanks to Anne Douglas, Cowichan Spirit of Women
August, 1999

INTERSECTIONS		
Location	Description of Problem	Recommendations
Queens / Duncan Intersection	Existing ramps on Queens require scooters crossing over Duncan St. to travel out into traffic to access sidewalk.	Add curb cuts for Duncan Street portion of crossing. (City of Duncan)
Canada Avenue / Ingram Street	Same as for Queens / Duncan. For crossing over Ingram on north side, scooters must travel into vehicle traffic.	Add curb cuts on Ingram Street portion of crossing. (City of Duncan)
Canada Avenue / Trunk Road	South crossing (entrance to Si allum Lelum) ramps again direct people into vehicle traffic.	Add curb cuts for Si al lum Le lum crossing. (City of Duncan)
Evans / Jubilee Intersection	North side of intersection lacks curb cuts. There is no alternative access for scooters as there are too many obstacles along Evans on the south side.	Add curb cuts for the Evans / Jubilee crossing. (City of Duncan)
Evans / Tyee	No curb cuts.	Add curb cuts for both sides of intersection. (City of Duncan)
SIGHTLINES		
Corner of Evans and Jubilee	Hedge on private property blocks sightlines.	
First Street (between Jubilee and Canada Way)	Tree/hedge on private property blocks sightlines.	
BLOCKED PATHWAYS		
General	Blocked pathways on sidewalks. Tables, chairs, signs and animals on sidewalks (also telephone poles in the centre of crosswalks) sometimes block the paths of people on scooters. Examples given: Craig Street and Station Street; York Road at Ken's Grocery; Saan's.	Request businesses to ensure their activities leave enough room for scooters and wheelchairs to pass by safely. (City of Duncan; District of North Cowichan)
General	Lack of sidewalks and sidewalks that end abruptly. Examples given: Trunk to Cowichan Lake Road	(District of North Cowichan)

APPENDIX F: LIGHTING OBSERVATIONS

LOCATION	EXISTING LIGHTS	SUGGESTIONS
CRAIG STREET Mercantile Building/corner CIBC 100 Block Craig St.	No lighting on. Business sign and Teller sign not lit. Awning not lit	
STATION STREET Whittome Building Scott's Toys Midland Walwyn Building Train Station/Bus stop Park Open space next to Greenhaven building		Building spot lights Window lighting Spot light to brighten corner, highlight totem. Install lighting in gazebo. Landscape spot lighting. Building lights would illuminate the area and eliminate shadows.
KENNETH STREET Alley near Choices Alley near Sassy Lion Volume I Apartment entrance Red Balloon Building/lot Vision Quest Ariel Dobson's 191A Kenneth Pots and Para Building Alleyway near Anytime/A Bead Heaven Rainbow Cafe Rembrandts Coleman Clinic Lot	Dark Store and wheelchair ramp unlit. Burned out recessed lighting. Unlit alcove. Lot clean but dark. String lighting available. Motion sensor on building not on. Awning lights not on. Dark alcove and stairwell. Building sides dark. Dark.	Building lighting. Repair/replace. “ “ “ “ “ “ Spot lighting.
JUBILEE STREET Good Rock Cafe	Interior dark.	
CITY SQUARE Lois Lane/Gallowglass	Ext. light not on.	

APPENDIX G: C.V.R.D. PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY



PUBLIC SAFETY POLICY

1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE AND PURPOSE

The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognizes that violence is an insidious problem with devastating costs that affects all residents and that violence against any person is unacceptable. Moreover, the District recognizes that one of the groups most at risk of being abused is women and that among women, the most vulnerable groups are visible minorities, aboriginal women and women with disabilities. The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognizes a need to demonstrate leadership to achieve equality and end violence, and commits to ongoing efforts to prevent violence in our community.

2. GOAL STATEMENT

It is a goal of the Board to promote communities where all people can freely use public spaces, day or night, without fear of violence, and where people including women and children and persons with special needs, are safe from violence. Accordingly, the Board shall;

- a) ensure that all CVRD programs and policies support personal and public safety, and
- b) adopt development guidelines respecting issues of safety and security and apply those guidelines in its review of Official Community Plans and development proposals.

3. POLICY

The Cowichan Valley Regional District shall promote safety and security in public places, including streets, parks and open spaces, schools, public transit and public parts of buildings. To encourage public safety and security for all persons, but with particular attention to women children and persons with special needs, the Board will;

- a) encourage improvement in public safety and security in approvals of buildings, streetscaping, parks and other public and private open spaces;
- b) encourage the design and siting of new buildings to provide visual overlook and easy physical access to adjacent streets, parks and open spaces and to allow clear views to parks and open spaces from the street;
- c) encourage appropriate lighting, visibility and opportunities for informal surveillance for buildings and open spaces;

- d) encourage improvement of existing streets, buildings, parks and other publicly accessible areas, where existing conditions do not promote public safety and security.

4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Address:

Ongoing implementation of safety audit recommendations, planning and development

review, policy within the CVRD structure.

Provision of ongoing education and information for staff and program development.

Provision of information to the public.

Ongoing support and partnerships with violence prevention organizations.

Determine:

Staff responsibilities, material requirements such as:
Administrative Co-ordination and Assistance

Planning and Technical Assistance

Human Resources (employment practices, staff training)

Communications, Public Information

Materials and Resources (information kits, brochures)

Options for Funding and Community Partnerships

e.g. National Crime Prevention Council/Safe Communities Initiative

APPENDIX H: CHECKLISTS FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT



ASSESSING DEVELOPMENTS

The following checklist suggests some steps and questions to ask about proposed developments, Official Community Plan development and reviews, by-laws and zoning regulations. It is followed by a Safety Checklist which outlines design and management factors that may be relevant to development proposals.

1. Process Considerations

1. Introduce and ask questions about safety issues and concerns at the beginning of a process.
2. Provide information to applicants on safety and security issues, and design and management solutions.
3. Include a process for referral and suggest community contacts to provide input. (In the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Women's Safety Advisory Committee has been established with a mandate to review development proposals for safety.)
4. Suggest a women's safety audit of the local area.

2. Questions to Ask

1. Context of the area / development:

- a) Are there any existing safety issues that need to be addressed? Has a safety audit been done to determine existing and potential problems?
 - Is the area known for vandalism, thefts, assaults?
 - Is it perceived to be unsafe for / by women, children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities?
 - Is the area isolated, dark, poorly maintained?
 - Is it known for traffic or pedestrian issues?
 - How might the proposed development affect or improve the area in terms of safety?

b) Who are the present and proposed users?

Are there any potential conflicts for example, between neighbouring land uses?

Examples might include:

- A vacant lot next to a proposed housing complex, a school next to a farm, mall, video arcade, a liquor store next to a bus stop, industrial complex next to a park.

2. How do/will women and children use this area both day and night and what might their safety concerns be? Day? Night?

Examples might include:

- A neighbourhood park that will be used by women and children whose safety concerns might be around using washrooms, or need for emergency outlets, possible alcohol/drug use in the park.
- A proposed neighbourhood in a rural area where children and youth would need to walk to school and recreation?

Have all needs/views been considered/solicited?

- Has the developer contacted people who may be the most vulnerable and/or who are not able to come out to public meetings? Have parents, women, seniors, people with disabilities. been specifically asked for their views?

3. Does the development consider design elements which support safety?

**See the Design Safety Checklist.*

- Does layout and design of the proposed development (interior and exterior) maximize opportunities for casual surveillance, minimize potential entrapment areas, hiding spots?
- Will there be adequate lighting, signage, accessible pedestrian routes, transit, security, emergency services and outlets? (How has this been determined?)
- What provisions are there for accessibility?
- Again, has consultation been done to determine the concerns of people who are the most vulnerable, and does design incorporate those needs?

4. What are requirements or considerations for management to support safety of staff and the public?

- For example, will store owners, building managers be made aware of women's safety issues (and how) and will there be programs/policies to support safety of staff, residents, patrons?

5. What is the potential impact on community services?

- Does the development provide for or augment existing community services?
- Will there be adequate access to public transportation?
- Does the proposed development target a specific group, for example seniors? If so, will there be adequate access to services for people who may be mobility impaired, require medical attention?
- What might the impacts be for recreation opportunities, school grounds safety, traffic safety for children? Have school parent groups been contacted for their views?

DESIGN CHECKLIST



*The following questions have been drawn and adapted from **Safety Audit Checklists** regarding design of places related to personal safety.*

1. OVERALL DESIGN

Is it easy for someone who is not familiar with the area to find their way around?

Is there adequate signage and other information that tells people where they are and how to find services, who to call in an emergency?

Is information provided visible and legible to someone in a wheelchair, someone who is visually impaired?

Is the area/building accessible?

Is the area served by public transportation? If so, does transit meet the needs of users? If not, what other assistance is available?

Are buildings, sidewalks, streets and crossing areas well-placed and accessible, particularly for people with disabilities? How has this been determined?

2. ISOLATION

Is / will the area, building (or parts of the building) be subject to isolation? If so, are there practices in place to enhance personal safety and security of people who must use the area during those times?

Isolation Cont'd:

Do the surrounding land uses encourage people to be there?

How far away are the nearest emergency services?

Is the area patrolled by security, police, neighbourhood watch?

Would someone hear a call for help?

3. VISIBILITY

Does layout of the site and building(s) provide for maximum visibility of the street and parking areas, paths and walkways?

Does the building interior contain sharp corners, isolated areas?

Are there any structures, landscaping, vegetation, corners, ditches, vehicles, signs that would impede visibility?

4. LIGHTING

Is the lighting adequate? How has this been determined?

Is the lighting bright enough (without being too bright or causing glare), is it evenly spaced and unobscured by landscaping or fences?

How well does lighting illuminate parking lots, pedestrian walkways, sidewalks, directional signs and maps? Is lighting adequate for someone to see another person 20 metres away?

DESIGN CHECKLIST CONT'D:

5. SIGNAGE

What signage is planned? What signage is needed to serve all users? Does it provide necessary information?

Does signage direct people with disabilities to accessible entrances?

Is it located properly? (e.g., so that it is visible to someone in a wheelchair?)

Is the lettering large enough to read, easy to understand? Visual symbols?

Are transportation points clearly indicated? (Taxi stands, bus stops, paratransit?)

Are security staff and building managers aware of personal safety concerns for women and children?

Where buildings are used by businesses and services, are there safety measures and programs in place?

How far away is the nearest emergency service? (alarm, personnel, emergency telephone)

Are there areas that should be locked, fenced or barricaded?

6. MOVEMENT PREDICTORS AND ENTRAPMENT SITES

Are there small, confined areas, such as alcoves, solid staircases, between garbage bins, alleys, lanes, parking spots where someone could hide or be hidden from view?

How easy would it be to predict someone's movements along a route?

Is there more than one main route/ exit through well-traveled areas, into buildings?

7. MAINTENANCE

How will the area/building be maintained?

Who will be responsible for removing graffiti, repairing vandalism? Will this be done promptly?

Will there be information posted to tell people how to report problems?

8. MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

How is the area or building monitored? (police, security staff, etc.)