

KERRY PARK RECREATION CENTRE

SAFETY AUDIT

prepared by:

cowichan valley safer futures PROJECT

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Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Project

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SUMMARY

The Safety Audit of the Kerry Park Recreation Centre was facilitated by the Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Project, a regional initiative sponsored by Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, funded by the Cowichan Valley Regional District and Ministry of Women's Equality.

The purpose of the audit was to assess the centre facilities for obstacles to personal safety of women and children and to make recommendations for improvements and planning considerations.

Nine women participated in the audit, representative of a range of facility users and the Area Representative of the CVRD Women's Safety Advisory Committee.

A broad range of safety issues were discussed, ranging from the need for safety and accessibility of the facilities for people entering and leaving the centre, including seniors and people with disabilities; safety of people using the facilities in terms of the physical layout of areas such as hallways and dressing rooms and factors such as lighting and signage; and the need for cooperative safety strategies to support safety of patrons and staff.

A tour of the facility was done to examine with the participants, various factors relating to their safety objectives, and brought about a number of recommendations for physical improvements, such as lighting and signage, both inside and out, to provide better visibility and information, design considerations to provide increased safety and access for a diversity of users, and management strategies to enhance communications and security.



*We would like to express our thanks to Centre Manager Bruce Tilbury
for requesting this safety audit.*

*We would like to express special thanks and gratitude to the Audit Participants
for their valuable time and contribution. Thank you to:*

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Cowichan Valley Safer Futures Project

Safer Futures, sponsored by the Cowichan Women Against Violence Society, operates the Cowichan Valley Safety Audit Project - a regional initiative funded by the C.V.R.D. and the Ministry of Women's Equality which is currently in its third year of operation.

The 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.

1.2. Safety Audits

Safety audits have evolved as an important tool in community approaches to crime prevention. 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.

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.

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. 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: 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. Appendix 1 provides selected statistics on experience and worry about crime and violence.

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.

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.²

Conversely, 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.

It should be stressed that there are both physical and non-physical factors involved in personal and public safety. Indeed, 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.

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

² Frances Stokes, 1985.

1.5. Small and Rural Communities

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.

1.6. Safety and Accessibility of Recreational Facilities

Community and recreation centres are, by design, intended to serve a diverse population and therefore must include a range of needs in both their services and facilities.

Community Centres across B.C. are actively working towards increasing the number of people accessing their facilities and programs through the More Than an Open Door Initiative. This program asserts vibrant, sustainable, and pertinent, recreation services and programs need to appeal to and be accessible for women and children in all aspects, including policies, physical facilities, schedules and programming.

2. KERRY PARK RECREATION CENTRE SAFETY AUDIT

2.1. Background

The newly appointed manager of the Kerry Park Recreation Centre has experience with Safety Audits at his previous appointment, the Lake Cowichan Sports Arena. Mr. Tilbury's first job at his new post was to oversee a significant renovation project and to facilitate the design of an facility expansion over the coming years.

A great deal of consideration for women's experience was integrated into the renovation plans from the outset. Following upon recommendations contained in the Mill Bay - Malahat Safety Audit report of 1997, overgrown vegetation was replaced with open landscape; newly constructed dressing rooms were given thoughtful consideration; lighting was improved, and improved signage is being prepared for the entire building, both inside and out.

2.2. Purpose of the Audit

The audit of the Kerry Park Recreation Centre was done to assess the current building design and management procedures for potential obstacles to personal safety of women and children.

The information from the audit will assist centre management to make improvements to enhance women's and children's personal safety and to make the centre as accessible as possible. It will also provide information for proactive consideration of women's and children's safety into future development and expansion plans for the centre.

2.3. Procedures

A group of nine women, representatives of a range of user activities, was formed at the request of the centre manager. (Representation included women's hockey, women's curling, minor hockey, figure skating, youth, and night staff.) As well, the Mill Bay Malahat representative of the CVRD Women's Safety Advisory Committee has a keen understanding and interest in the youth in the outlying areas who access the arena.

1. An initial group discussion was held to determine types of safety concerns and areas/aspects where safety is a concern.
2. From this discussion, site parameters were set and priorities determined.
3. Participants filled out surveys before and after the audit to aid in further determining their needs and concerns, and to help determine the effectiveness of the audit process.

4. A tour of the centre was done to examine various aspects and make observations. A checklist of questions (Appendix B) provided a reference for examining aspects with respect to personal safety and the physical/social environment.

The basic questions addressed in an audit are, *“What about this place makes me feel unsafe and what would help to address those 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?”

5. A follow-up discussion period provided further opportunities for comments.
6. Observations and recommendations were recorded by project staff.
7. A draft report with recommendations for improvements to enhance safety was circulated for review to provide an opportunity for assessment and feedback from participants, and incorporated into a final report prepared for the centre.

2.3.1. Audit 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 group was representative of a wide range of users and age groups, and therefore perspectives. Based on knowledge and research of women’s experiences and perceptions of places, the current representation provides a fairly comprehensive picture. While the audit included consideration on a range of accessibility issues, people with disabilities were not directly represented. Additionally, this audit did not directly address questions from the perspective of cultural and language differences.

Should Kerry Park Recreation Centre wish to obtain a broader community-wide perspective, and/or perspectives of specific groups, a general community and / or user groups survey and audit would assist the process.

3. THE AUDIT PROCESS

3.1. Group Consultation and Primary Concerns

Initial discussion with the audit group highlighted a number of objectives and safety considerations with regard to both design and management of the facility.

Objectives and priorities for safety included:

- Safety of women and children using dressing rooms
- Safety of staff and the public entering and leaving the building, and using areas during times of isolation
- Accessibility of the building and parking areas
- Accessibility of facility programs to children and youth in general and youth living in outlying areas
- Safety of the public in accessing the building / grounds from the highway
- Parking lot safety
- Supportive working environments
- Supportive policies and procedures to facilitate safety and community involvement

Although the building exterior and grounds were not originally intended to be included, participants included this in their list of initial concerns and objectives.

Generally, participants agreed strongly that the centre promotes a safe environment, particularly inside the building which was described as being “run like a tight ship.” It was noted that centre staff are vigilant about monitoring centre activities and do not tolerate inappropriate behaviour.

Recent renovations received positive comments in terms of making the building feel very welcoming, well maintained and cared for. In particular, improvements to the lobby area and new change rooms were felt to be positive contributions.

3.2. OBSERVATIONS

3.2.1. Building Entrances and Exits

a) General Safety and Accessibility of Building Entrances

Concerns were voiced that more and more seniors are moving into the area and using the facilities either actively or as audience members for their families. Participants related difficulties experienced by people with disabilities and/or mobility impairments during event and festival times, including unclear exterior access points and accessible seating.

There is an indicated handicapped parking space on the west side of the building and patrons with accessibility needs can enter and leave the building (at the entrance toward the back) on this side upon request. However, in order to do so they must first go in the front entrance to request assistance. In addition to this being somewhat inconvenient, this area is isolated; lighting was also considered to be inadequate and vegetation along the wall presents barriers to visibility.

Solutions Identified

- Install additional lighting on the building exterior on the west side.
- Trim or replace vegetation to reduce opportunities for hiding.
- Install signage to inform people with mobility impairments how to access the building (including how to find staff assistance)
- Signs outside the building should be placed at a low enough height to allow for visibility; they should be illuminated (through lighting or reflective materials) and located strategically on the front face of the building as patrons look straight on, and against the walls of the alcove for side view visibility.
- Ensure event planning includes consideration for accessibility.
- Ensure there is a designated staff person who can be easily accessed for assistance to people who need to enter or leave the building during early morning and evening hours when the facility or parts thereof is locked.

Planning Considerations

- Ensure future developments incorporate accessibility in design and management.

b) Curling Lounge Entrance

This entrance is generally used by staff. One reserved parking space is located close by. Several factors were noted to detract from personal safety for staff entering or leaving during times when the centre:

- The location of the entrance is somewhat isolated, which in itself, could leave a single staff person at risk when arriving or leaving the building.
- Visibility and sightlines are minimized by the building layout (corner/alcove) and existing shrubbery next to the entrance which also offers a hiding spot. There are no windows on this side of the facility to contribute to natural surveillance.
- It is visible only from the side parking lot, and isolated also in terms of hearing distance (a generator next to the entrance makes sufficient noise to drown out other noises).
- Lighting over the entrance may be adequate, although at the time of the audit, one of the two existing exterior lights on the overhang above the door was burned out.
- Staff who arrive when nearby parking spots are in use must park further away from entrances.

Solutions Identified

- Increase visibility:
 - Repair burned out light; install additional or increase brightness of exterior lighting; trim (or replace) existing shrubbery
- Increase the number of reserved staff parking spaces near to this entrance
- Arrange alternative parking arrangements, for example, at the front entrance, which offer greater safety in terms of location and activity
- Ensure supportive staff environment which promotes sensitivity to these safety concerns, adopt policies for support of safety such as accompaniment to vehicles
- Enhance the ability of staff who work in isolation to be able to access and communicate with other staff - possible measures could include intercom systems, pagers, regular check-in procedures

Planning Considerations

- Ensure future development considers the above; increase opportunities for natural surveillance through placement of windows (prioritize the curling lounge facing the parking lot) and attention to activity nodes.

c) Front Entrance to Ice Rink

The front entrance to the Ice Rink was considered to feel fairly safe as it is generally a high activity area and the lighting is good.

Inside the entrance to the rink there is a public telephone in full view; however, it was noted that it is frequently out of order and therefore cannot be relied upon in an emergency. It is not apparent or widely known where an alternate phone can be found.

Solutions Identified

- Ensure regular, daily checks are made on the operation of the existing phone.
- Request BC Tel's cooperation with regard to prompt repairs of the existing telephone.
- Install signage to indicate location of alternate telephone.

Planning Considerations

- Future plans should consider safety of entrances in terms of lighting, visibility as well as security. Plans for the centre expansion include having one main entrance designed with glass; this concept is preferable to the two existing entrances. It should also provide better visibility into and out of the centre.

d) Highway Access

It was noted that Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road is poorly lit, and that both entrances to the centre have inadequate visibility for drivers. As well, for people who need to access the centre by bus, the bus stops located on the corner of Wilkinson Road are inadequately lit.

Solutions Identified

- Install streetlighting at or near the two site entrances on Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.

e) Rear entrance - lower floor

Located on the lower floor in the vicinity of the change rooms, the rear exit is accessed at the end of a narrow corridor which turns left again before the door. While this exit is indicated by an illuminated sign, it is not directly visible from the main corridor, and the alcove leading to it was dark. As such, it provides a hiding and entrapment spot. At the time of the audit, the exit door was open.

Solutions Identified

- Increase lighting in the lower corridor near the rear exit.
- Ensure exit doors are kept locked at all times.
- Install convex mirror at the corner to the exit alcove.

3.2.2. Parking Lots

While there have been improvements to lighting and removal of vegetation that posed barriers to visibility in parking areas, it was felt that more could be done to provide optimal levels of safety.

It was also noted that the main parking area is sometimes used as a gathering place by youth. Concerns revolved around safety of youth, the potential for involvement with alcohol and drugs and potential violence, and also raised issues around people feeling safe when coming to or leaving the arena.

Participants were very concerned about the needs of the youth and were concerned about any strategies that would simply displace activities; discussion included the need to recognize that not all kids are athletic, and that there is a long term need to develop activities which can support youth.

Solutions Identified

- Install additional lighting (and/or improve existing building lights) for both upper and lower lots. Consult with Mill Bay Community League with regard to lower lot lighting levels
- Integrate creative community programming for youth to encourage and support non-athletic and alternative forms of recreation
- Explore ways to provide monitoring of the area to support safety and sense of safety, but avoid simply displacement of people.

Planning Considerations

- Ensure future planning and design integrates needs for visibility and natural surveillance through attention to activity generators, placement of windows to overlook parking areas.

3.2.3. Washrooms

Washrooms were not examined in detail; however, it was noted that groups of youth sometimes gather in washrooms in the east section (Curling rink side). This is difficult for staff to monitor and control, particularly when there are limited staff available in the area.

Solutions Identified

- As for i) b) staff support and communications, emergency assistance procedures:
- Ensure supportive staff environment which promotes sensitivity to these safety concerns
- Enhance the ability of staff who work in isolation to be able to access and communicate with other staff - possible measures could include intercom systems, pagers, regular check-in procedures

Planning Considerations

- Location and design of washrooms should integrate needs for monitoring and security

3.2.4. Lower Level Hallway

During the tour, maintenance room doors were checked to see if they were locked. Some were found to be unlocked or open, including the Ammonia and Ice Makers room. Maintenance and storage rooms are potential hiding and entrapment areas, and when they are located in isolated areas, should be kept locked. Participants agreed that locked doors contributed significantly to their sense of safety and safety for their children.

Solutions Identified

- Ensure maintenance and storage rooms are kept locked at all times
- Install signage to provide emergency contact information
- Provide regular monitoring of the area

3.2.5. Lower Change rooms

Currently there are four change rooms on the lower floor of the facility, grouped into two connected sets. Each set is designed with shared shower facilities located between changing areas. Showers and toilets do not have doors. Each set of changing areas contains locking doors at the room entrance and at the entrance to shower and toilet area.

In general, the location of the change rooms is in a relatively isolated part of the building, which presents difficulties with regard to hearing a call for help, as well for surveillance and monitoring.

Currently, the arrangement for use of these change rooms is that opposing teams are assigned separate rooms. This practice is based on solid principles for safety and designed to reduce opportunities for clashes. However, because of this practice, there are times when girls are assigned adjoining change rooms to boys. The result is lack of privacy for changing or showering (due to both proximity and design with open showers and toilets).

Concerns were raised around the practice of locking change rooms to secure equipment and belongings. Again, while necessary from a property security perspective, the result is the ability to lock someone in the shower area either unwittingly or on purpose - both circumstances were recalled. In addition, the present 'hasp and staple' systems allow for an object such as a hockey stick to be used to secure the doors from the outside.

Solutions Identified

- Examine management policies and practices with respect to assignment of change rooms
- Examine security practices with respect to locking of doors during times of use and otherwise: children and youth should not be locked outside if they are late; require the area to be double-checked to ensure no one is present before lock-up
- Change the current 'hasp and staple' lock system to deadbolt system
- Install door grills to increase the level of noise which can travel from inside out
- Ensure policies and procedures for prevention of violence and harassment are in place and strictly enforced
- Provide information and education to managers, coaches and recreational users regarding safety regulations and violence prevention
- Explore ways to increase supervision and monitoring, for example, through parent volunteer programs
- Post information on emergency assistance and contacts

Planning Considerations

- Prioritize these change rooms for improvements that will increase privacy and security
- Ensure future development integrates needs for personal safety. Ensure a process for involvement and input prior to design

3.2.6. New Change rooms

Recently constructed change rooms on the upper floor adjacent to the ice rink were considered to be an extremely positive addition to the centre. Their location is generally much less isolated than lower floor rooms.

Positive design features also include separate shower stalls, enclosed toilet areas. Because shower areas are located at the far end of the rooms, we examined them for hiding and entrapment areas. It was observed that while partitions were constructed with solid material and could potentially hide someone, further examination resulted in consensus that there would be insufficient space. It was further suggested that the doors on both far end stalls (near outside walls) could even be eliminated as the design itself promotes privacy.

However, it has been noted that size of the change room designated specifically for women and girls is insufficient to accommodate teams of over 10, both in terms of the length of the change room, and storage space for gear. An additional 2 metres would have provided the ideal length.

It is understood that the far change room facility, which is larger, is designated for Junior B teams, and can be used by other teams when Junior B do not need it. However, it was not known if this general understanding is a formal policy, or if it is widely known.

Solutions Identified

- Enhance communication of practice and policies regarding use of change rooms.

Planning Considerations

- Planning for specific needs should entail consultation with user groups prior to design and construction of new facilities.

3.2.7. Administration / Lobby Area

This section drew praise for recent changes (renovations, painting and additional bulletin boards) which have brightened the area significantly, and create a welcoming atmosphere.

It was noted that existing signage identifying the rooms is helpful and contributes to a sense of safety. New signs are being ordered for the building's exterior and interior. Participants agreed that consistent signs describing rooms and directions to the lobby, the administration office and other activity areas would contribute to women's sense of safety and lend confidence of accessing help in the event of an emergency.

Solutions Identified

- Ask for input from arena users to evaluate new signage

Planning Considerations

- Ensure signage is located and designed to provide directional and service information. Interior signs should identify location of washrooms, telephones, administration, maintenance and emergency protocol, including how to access a staff person.

3.3. SERVICE PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

3.3.1. Facility and Program Accessibility

a) Transportation

Kerry Park Recreation Centre serves a substantial area of the south end, from Cobble Hill to Malahat. It was noted that because transit services do not extend to the Malahat area, access for children and youth residing in the Malahat area depends entirely on adult assistance to drive and pick up.

It was suggested that accessibility could be increased through community-based efforts to provide transportation. Suggestions included designating the use of a facility-owned vehicle for transporting to and from Malahat on Tuesday and Friday night skates.

b) In Kind Support

A representative raised concerns regarding the current practice of requiring a \$250 damage deposit for groups using change room facilities and noted that this presents difficulties when a group lacks funding reserves.

c) Children and Families

Currently there is no designated area in the building to accommodate parents with toddlers. While this was not considered to be a pressing issue, participants suggested that future planning seek to incorporate a space in or near the lounge area designated for toddlers and children. Such a space should be separated by distance and 'buffered' from main lounge activities (particularly smoking) but sufficiently connected both locationally and visually to allow for adequate supervision.

d) Community Information and Support

Similar to providing adequate directional and informational signage, a community recreation centre can serve as a centre of information to contribute safety of patrons and the general community. Currently, the centre provides a table for community information brochures and flyers.

Solutions Identified

- Increase access of youth in outlying areas to facility programs through provision of transportation services to activities.
- Explore means to support groups with limited or no formal funding with respect to requiring a damage deposit, perhaps through a community service fund. Ensure information on policies and practices is communicated to all users.
- Ensure facility planning include provision of social space to accommodate parents with young children.
- Provide information (likely through signage) to indicate access routes between the two building sections.
- Provide additional space, located to provide for visibility and access, for community information flyers and brochures. Include information on community crime and violence prevention services.

3.3.2. Community Involvement

Participants indicated overall satisfaction and appreciation of the opportunity to provide input around design and management of the centre. However, it was noted that this and other processes for community consultation and involvement could be improved to provide more clear information as well as appropriate timing.

Solutions Identified

- Ask for input as early as possible; i.e., don't wait until a project is underway - rather, ask users before hand what they want and need - this will help to avoid having to make corrections later, and conveys a message of cooperation.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing means of input, for example, through a "Community Suggestion Box," a "How are we doing" questionnaire, newsletter.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Improvements to visibility and lighting

1. Install additional lighting on the building exterior on the west (rink) side to increase visibility in parking areas and around entrances.
2. Increase lighting in the interior lower corridor near the rear exit.
3. Consider a convex mirror for the corner to the lower rear exit alcove.
4. Install additional lighting (and/or improve existing building lights) for both upper and lower parking lots. Consult with Mill Bay Community League with regard to lower lot lighting levels.
5. Trim or replace landscaping / vegetation bordering the building with a combination of ground cover and canopied trees to reduce opportunities for hiding.
6. Repair burned out light at the Curling Lounge exit; install additional or increase brightness of exterior lighting; trim (or replace) existing shrubbery to increase visibility and reduce hiding space.
7. Install streetlighting at or near the two site entrances on Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.

Information and Signage

8. Install signage to inform people with mobility difficulties how to access the building (including how to find staff assistance).
9. Signs outside the building should be placed at a low enough height to allow for visibility; they should be illuminated (through lighting or reflective materials) and located strategically on the front face of the building as patrons look straight on, and against the walls of the front alcove for side view visibility.
10. Install signage to indicate location of alternate telephone.
11. Install signage and post information to provide emergency contact information.
12. Provide information (likely through signage) to indicate access routes between the two building sections.

13. Provide additional space, located to provide for visibility and access, for community information flyers and brochures. Include information on crime and violence prevention services.
14. Ask for input from arena users to evaluate new signage.

Reduce Isolation

15. Increase the number of reserved staff parking spaces near entrances.
16. Where staff parking spaces are in full use, arrange alternative parking arrangements, for example, at the front entrance, which offer greater safety in terms of location and activity.
17. Enhance the ability of staff who work in isolation to be able to access and communicate with other staff - possible measures could include intercom systems, pagers, regular check-in procedures.
18. Work to reduce isolation in lower changerooms; possible measures include install grills in change rooms doors/walls to increase the level of noise which can travel from inside out.

Community Access and Service Provision

19. Ensure event planning includes consideration for accessibility needs.
20. If there is not already, designate a staff person who can be easily accessed for assistance to enter the building during early morning and evening hours when the facility (or parts thereof) are locked.
21. Integrate creative community programming for youth to encourage and support non-athletic and alternative forms of recreation.
22. Increase access of youth in outlying areas to facility programs through provision of transportation services to activities.
23. Explore means to support groups with limited or no formal funding with respect to requiring a damage deposit, perhaps through a community service fund.

Management, Communications and Security

24. Ensure regular, daily checks are made on the operation of the existing phone and request BC Tel's cooperation with regard to prompt repairs of the existing telephone.
25. Ensure rear and side exit doors, and maintenance and storage rooms are kept locked at all times.
26. Explore ways to provide monitoring of parking areas to support safety and sense of safety, but to avoid simply displacing activities.
27. Examine management policies and practices with respect to assignment of change rooms.
28. Examine security practices with respect to locking of change room doors during times of use and otherwise: children and youth should not be locked outside if they are late; require the area to be double-checked to ensure no one is present before lock-up.
29. Change lock systems from the current 'hasp and staple' lock system to deadbolt /key system, or find suitable alternative to meet personal safety needs.
30. Provide regular monitoring of the lower hallway and change room area; explore ways to increase supervision and monitoring in change rooms, for example, through parent volunteer programs.
31. Ensure policies and procedures for prevention of violence and harassment are in place and evaluated regularly. Provide information and education to managers, coaches and recreational users regarding safety regulations and violence prevention. Ensure supportive staff environment which promotes sensitivity to safety issues, and prevention of violence and harassment.
32. Continue and wherever possible, enhance efforts to facilitate ongoing communication, information-sharing, community involvement and consultation.
 - a) Suggestions included asking for input as early as possible; i.e., don't wait until a project is underway - rather, ask users before hand what they want and need - this will help to avoid having to make corrections later, conveys a stronger message of cooperation.
 - b) Provide opportunities for regular communication and input, for example, through a "Community Suggestion Box," a "How are we doing" questionnaire, a newsletter to provide information on "What's Happening"

posted in main areas to provide facility users with information on practices and plans.

5. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Design and management of buildings and public spaces that promotes safety and security can and should be an integral component of development processes and policies.

Public safety should be important considerations in development and maintenance of public buildings and other facilities. Location and design of buildings and facilities should provide for a range of opportunities and maximize personal and public safety and accessibility through attention to layout, design and provision of emergency outlets (refer Appendix C).

Development proposals should be evaluated with respect to their provisions for personal and public safety with respect to design (lighting, sightlines, accessibility, landscaping, etc.) and other provisions for safety of staff and facility users.

Specific recommendations identified during the audit process:

1. Ensure future development integrates needs for personal safety and accessibility in design and management. Ensure and provide for clear and open lines of communication and information-sharing, involvement and consultation.
2. Ensure facility planning include provision of social space to accommodate parents with young children.
3. Prioritize lower change rooms for improvements that will increase privacy, personal safety and security.
4. Location and design of washrooms should integrate needs for monitoring and security.
5. Ensure signage is located and designed to provide directional and service information. Interior signs should identify location of washrooms, telephones, administration, maintenance and emergency protocol, including how to access a staff person.
6. Ensure future planning and design integrates needs for visibility and natural surveillance through attention to activity generators, placement of windows to overlook parking areas.

5.2. Additional Planning Considerations for Public Facilities³

General Principles

1. Encourage building location and design that maximizes surveillance of the facility in general and of communal areas, including hallways, entrances, parking lots in and around the facility.
2. Where possible, encourage a variety of uses for both day and night.
3. Avoid creating isolated areas, entrapment spots and barriers to visibility. Where sightlines are or may be obscured by barriers or corners, install convex mirrors.
4. Ensure provision of adequate lighting in all areas, with special attention to entrances, exits, and isolated areas. Where problems exist with respect to maintenance, install protective covering on lighting.
5. Encourage placement of windows in elevators, hallways and stairwells to increase visibility and surveillance.
6. Ensure provision of adequate directional and operational signage with particular attention to information about emergency access and facilities for people with disabilities.

Washrooms

As above where applicable, and

1. Washrooms should not be located in isolated areas of buildings.
2. Lighting should be sufficient and maintained.
3. Where sightlines are obscured, install convex mirrors.
4. Encourage installation of baby facilities, also for men's rooms.

Management Considerations

Facility managers, coaches of team sports, etc., should be aware of, sensitive to, and be able to deal with personal safety issues and concerns of staff and the public.

1. Public facility managers should be provided with information about personal safety of staff and public.
2. Institute personal safety programs such as accompaniment of staff and patrons to cars at night.
3. Encourage regular communication between departments, programs with respect to personal safety concerns to ensure safety needs are being met.

³ Excerpted from CWAWS/CVRD, "Planning for Safer Communities," 1997.

6. CONCLUSION

The Kerry Park Recreation Centre Safety Audit has entailed consultation and site assessments to identify safety issues and provide information about solutions to maintain and enhance personal safety of people who use the facility. The process included consideration of a range of personal safety and accessibility issues, including the physical layout and design of the facility, and of ways that staff and management can work cooperatively to create and maintain a safe environment.

This report has attempted to bring forward concerns, suggestions for improvements arising from input, and recommendations for actions to the CVRD and centre management.

Safety audits encourage and provide a forum in which to discuss safety issues and concerns that affect women and children in particular - concerns which may not be a regular part of traditional processes. This process aims to focus on needs and concerns of individuals and groups who are the most vulnerable to violence and work to promote accessibility in decision-making processes.

As such, safety audits are a *tool* to define concerns and achieve changes. It is important to understand that Safety Audits should not be approached as a one time event but rather as an ongoing process. It is hoped that this audit has helped to initiate a process for ongoing consideration of safety.

7. REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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APPENDIX A: SELECTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 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 B: 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 C:

Principles for Addressing Safety Through Planning and Design⁴

Incorporating considerations for personal safety into planning and design of communities is 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.

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 Adapted from City of Toronto, "Guide for Planning and Design of Urban Environments Excerpted from CWAWS/CVRD, "Planning for Safer Communities," 1997.