



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: Project Civil City Commissioner, in consultation with Vancouver Police Department and General Manager of Community Services

SUBJECT: Implementation of Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Initiative

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. That Council approve the creation of a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, including a regular full-time project co-ordinator position, at an annual cost of \$110,000; Funding in 2008 of \$75,000 to be provided from the Social Responsibility Fund and in 2009 and beyond to be added to the Operating Budget without offset.

The position is subject to review and classification by the General Manager of Human Resource Services;

- B. That Council instruct staff to report back in one year on the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program's progress, achievements and specific outcomes, with recommendations for future program development;

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Vancouver is one of the few major municipalities in British Columbia that does not have a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program currently in place. Previous attempts to establish the program did not have the support of a dedicated project co-ordinator to support the program

for a sufficient length of time for it to become established and demonstrate benefits. The City Manager supports the recommendation of the Project Civil City Commissioner that a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program be established with an annual budget of \$110,000.

COUNCIL POLICY

In December 2006, Council approved the Project Civil City initiative which supports projects that will enhance safety in neighbourhoods, increase civic pride, and build partnerships among citizens, businesses and government.

PURPOSE & SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, and demonstrate how the program can assist police, City staff, and rental property owners, while empowering residents to impede crime in apartment communities. The program aims to prevent crime, decrease demand on City services, and reduce 911 and non-emergency calls to emergency services. This supports safer streets, neighbourhoods and communities as called for in the Project Civil City initiative. This report seeks Council approval for the implementation of the 2008 program at a cost of \$75,000 and an on-going annual cost of \$110,000, to be conducted in several neighbourhoods within Vancouver, with a report back on program evaluation, progress and outcomes in one year.

BACKGROUND

On April 17, 2007, Council requested staff to report back on Crime Free Multi-Housing pilots conducted in the City of Vancouver, the results of these programs in other BC municipalities, and opportunities to implement Crime Free Multi-Housing in Vancouver.

Crime Free Multi-Housing was first developed in 1993 by the Mesa, Arizona police department to address crime and disorder concerns specific to apartment building communities. The program is a solution-oriented crime prevention initiative designed to help apartment owners, managers, residents, police and other agencies work together to keep illegal and nuisance activity away from rental property. It creates safer residential communities for law-abiding residents by advocating a proactive approach to dealing with crime and nuisance behaviour.

Crime Free Multi-Housing is a proven crime prevention program that has been implemented across North America. Over time, programs have shown to effectively reduce crime in multi-residential apartment communities, with the added benefit of reducing the number of residential calls for police and city services. A Crime Free Multi-Housing Program does not mean that crime will be entirely eliminated, but it does demonstrate to criminals that apartment communities will not tolerate criminal behaviour from residents, guests or others.

The City of Vancouver is one of the last municipalities in the Lower Mainland to implement a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. To date, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department have conducted two pilots based on the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. They are: the Housing Order Maintenance Enforcement Safety (H.O.M.E.S) Program and Crime Free

Multi-Housing. These two demonstration projects took place in 1998 and 2006 in the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood. Both pilots had excellent results with high engagement rates for building managers, owners and residents. These pilots, however, did not materialize into a fully functioning Crime Free Multi-Housing Program due to the lack of consistent funding to support a dedicated full-time program coordinator. Vancouver Police Officers had conducted the program “off the side of their police car”, in their belief that Crime Free Multi-Housing helps to prevent crime by empowering community members through education and training on crime prevention techniques.

DISCUSSION

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program emphasizes the reduction and elimination of illegal and nuisance activity in apartment buildings, through education and training. The program builds relationships and trust among apartment owners, managers, residents, police and city departments. Crime Free Multi-Housing is a problem-solving initiative that is both resident-friendly and effective in reducing the demand for police and city services in communities.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Objectives

- Facilitate a cooperative effort and positive relationship among apartment owners, managers, residents, police and other agencies to keep illegal and nuisance activity away from rental properties.
- Create a safer and more habitable environment for residents through a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to crime and nuisance behaviour.
- Train apartment owners, managers and residents on what they can do now, fairly and legally, to solve illegal and nuisance activity on their rental properties.
- Help owners and managers know how and when to utilize city services as an effective means of preventing, reducing and eliminating crime and nuisance activity.
- Reduce calls for service to apartment communities to free up police resources for other duties and emergencies.

The program will build partnerships among City departments, the VPD and Community Policing Offices, and allow for problem-solving around issues that create large numbers of public calls on similar, related or recurring incidents. Crime Free Multi-Housing aims to decrease calls for service by educating and empowering apartment owners, managers and residents on how best to use police and City services. This will increase a sense of safety among residents and decrease use of valuable police resources that could be better used elsewhere.

The program moves enforcement from being reactive or incident-driven to a proactive model that allows staff to identify the underlying issues that cause residents to call for assistance and develop long-term solutions. Police and City staff can use this opportunity to increase the knowledge and skills needed for effective crime prevention. For a detailed overview of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program please see Appendix A.

Previous Crime Free Multi-Housing Initiatives in Vancouver

To date, the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department have conducted two pilots based on the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood: Housing Order Maintenance Enforcement Safety (H.O.M.E.S.) Program and Crime Free Multi-Housing. These short-term demonstration projects took place in 1998 and 2006, and can be summarized as follows:

Housing Order Maintenance Enforcement Safety (H.O.M.E.S.) Program:

In 1998, the Neighbourhood Integrated Services Teams (NIST), in collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department and Community Policing Centres (CPC), started the Housing Order Maintenance Enforcement Safety (H.O.M.E.S.) Program, a program based on the San Diego and Portland Crime Free Multi-Housing models. H.O.M.E.S. was a multi-agency and multi-departmental program that aimed to produce safer apartment communities through enforcement and compliance with City by-laws and regulations. The program, like Crime Free Multi-Housing, was comprised of landlord training, safety and security site inspection, and resident crime prevention training, with the added layer of enforcement. On completion of all three phases, the building and manager received certification as a H.O.M.E.S. participant. In order to retain status in the program an annual renewal was required. The program was holistic in its approach to property maintenance issues; however, it was discontinued in 2000 because it required a substantial amount of staff resources. As well, the program failed to meet the prevention requirement of Crime Free Multi-Housing as it was centered around issues of enforcement rather than on educating and empowering building owners, managers, and tenants of apartment communities.

Crime Free Multi-Housing Pilot Project in Mount Pleasant:

From June 14, 2006 to December 15, 2006, a pilot project was developed and operated in the Mount Pleasant area by Vancouver Police Department. The police constable responsible used some of her patrol duty time to run the pilot with support from a police sergeant. As well, the pilot was supported by the BC Crime Prevention Association and volunteers at Collingwood Community Police Office.

The project was promoted on a word-of-mouth basis and all participation was voluntary. At that time, no public media or internal promotion occurred. Property owners and managers in the neighbourhood showed support by participating in workshops. Some then implemented policies and upgrades based on what they learned. The community demonstrated a clear support for this kind of program.

Twenty-nine participants attended the workshops. Two buildings were certified, having completed the required three phases of training. One building completed phase 2 training and neared certification standards by BC Crime Prevention Association.

Both of the above pilots demonstrated excellent results with high engagement rates for building managers, owners and residents. These pilots, however, failed to materialize into a fully functioning program due to the lack of consistent funding to support a dedicated full-time program coordinator. However, the pilots and experience elsewhere demonstrate that Crime Free Multi-Housing Programs reduce the number of emergency and non-emergency service calls, thus saving the City money.

Crime Free Multi-Housing in Other BC Municipalities

There are approximately 20 Crime Free Multi-Housing Programs underway in BC. While evaluation of each program is ongoing, early indicators have shown that, when correctly implemented with proper funding, they have decreased the demand for police and City services in apartment communities. Three municipalities that have demonstrated proven results are described below:

i) New Westminster

New Westminster has had a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program since 1995. The municipality has approximately 300 apartment communities, of which 57 have completed all three phases of the program. An evaluation of the program indicates that Crime Free Multi-Housing has been successful in reducing calls for police service by 20 - 90 per cent for participating apartment buildings. To date, 90 per cent of the property managers who have completed the training have made changes in management to rental properties that have proven successful in reducing crime.

ii) Surrey

The City of Surrey's By-law and Licensing Services Department began its Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in 2004. The program differs from other municipalities in Canada as it is the first city to have its Crime Free Multi-Housing Program housed outside of its police department. Surrey City Council felt the By-law and Licensing Services Department had more power to intervene than its police service with respect to rental businesses. As in Vancouver, Surrey's by-law and licensing officers have the power to shut businesses down and revoke business licenses. Surrey has approximately 339 rental apartment buildings: 255 are involved in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program; 24 have completed phase one; 184 have finished phase two; and 47 are fully certified. On average, and depending on the area, calls in service have decreased by 9 - 13 per cent.

iii) Victoria

In 2006, the City of Victoria's police department started its Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. The city has approximately 555 rental apartment buildings. During its year of operation, the program has been instrumental in decreasing calls for police service by 38 per cent for the 27 participating apartment buildings.

Crime Free Multi-Housing in Vancouver

Project Civil City goals include an increase in the level of public satisfaction with the City's handling of public nuisance and annoyance complaints by 50 per cent, as well as enhancing safety in Vancouver's neighbourhoods. While Crime Free Multi-Housing targets only those residents living in apartment buildings, significant strides towards these goals can be achieved through the implementation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in Vancouver. With proper funding and support, Crime Free Multi-Housing will empower residents living in apartment communities to problem-solve crime and safety concerns. If proven successful, consideration could be given to expanding the program to include multi-residential units in row housing, co-operatives and duplexes.

The cost of criminal activity related to rental properties is paid for by landlords and residents alike. Apartment owners and managers may experience other losses: to property value; to

rental income due to eviction or repair costs; property damage due to abuse, retaliation and neglect; disruption and fear in the lives of their tenants; and a rise in complaints. Although participation in the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is voluntary, it has the added benefit of reducing costs to owners for building maintenance and upkeep over time. Crime Free Multi-Housing benefits the City as it aids in the reduction of nuisance and complaint calls, reducing demand on staff time. The program assists police and cities by setting minimum standards for all buildings. Overall, the program builds a liveable community environment.

The cost to property owners is minimal: a modest fee for workshops and improvements to buildings to meet minimum requirements set out by the security assessment. The investment pays for itself through lower maintenance and repair costs and increased property values. It also saves money by ensuring less resident turnover for apartment building owners and managers.

Program Implementation

In consultation with various departments, it is the recommendation of the Project Civil City Commissioner that a program coordinator be hired in the Licenses and Inspections Department to start and implement Crime Free Multi-Housing for the City of Vancouver. The program coordinator will work closely with Vancouver Police Department and the City's Licenses and Inspections Department. The position will initially be located at the Vancouver Police Department in order to access the Police PRIME technology. The coordinator will report to the Deputy Chief License Inspector of the Licenses and Inspections Department in order to access PRISM and DOMINO information systems. In addition, the coordinator will liaise with Engineering, Planning, Social Planning and Environmental Health. Through location in the VPD, the coordinator will promote full integration among City services, the VPD, community policing centres and community agencies. For a detailed breakdown of the expected duties of the coordinator please see Appendix B.

Oversight Committee

A project Oversight Committee will be established to provide direction and support to the program; assist the program coordinator in facilitating linkages with key departments; approve guidelines for data collection and analysis; and, ensure documentation and reporting of outcomes.

The Committee will be comprised of members from:

- Project Civil City
- Vancouver Police Department
- Community Policing Centres
- Licenses and Inspections Department
- Engineering Services
- Other City Departments (as needed)

The Role of Departments and Agencies

The success of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program depends on partnerships that facilitate community building in apartment communities and across neighbourhoods. In Vancouver, the lessons learned from the first two pilots revealed that for the program to be successfully implemented, partnerships among key City departments, police, community policing centres, resident associations and other agencies is necessary.

The work of these groups is complementary, and each adds a different lens. Departments such as Licenses and Inspections, Fire, Engineering, Health, and Social Planning provide different perspectives on the needs of each apartment community depending on their knowledge and perspective. Police are essential as they provide information regarding which apartment buildings generate an unacceptable demand on services, while Community Policing Centres are better able to identify areas and buildings that experience higher than average illegal and nuisance activities. Neighbourhood groups are also valuable partners in this enterprise as they can advise and recommend changes to buildings that benefit communities.

In 2006, the Crime Free Multi-Housing Mount Pleasant pilot demonstrated that Community Policing Centres provide an integral role to the development of Crime Free Multi-Housing "on the ground". The Community Policing Centre was able to identify apartment buildings for the program, provide information to residents about the program, and draw on their volunteers to assist in the operation of the program.

Targets and Outcomes

Crime Free Multi-Housing is a voluntary program. At its initial stage, the program coordinator has to engage apartment property owners, managers and tenants and provide education on the value and benefits of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program in order to convince them to sign up for the program and attend training. After the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is set up, the coordinator will launch an aggressive recruitment campaign and organize training programs. The target for the first year is to have 20-25 apartment buildings participate. The Oversight Committee will work with the coordinator to identify "hot spots" and locations where recruitment should take place. The Committee will also provide guidance on data collection, analysis and how to report out on outcomes. It is anticipated that much higher target numbers will be set for the second year of the program since process and procedures will be well defined. Most important, the values and benefits of this crime prevention program will have been demonstrated and well documented.

Financial Implications

It is recommended that a full-time project coordinator be hired for the development and implementation of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. Upon consultation with Vancouver Police and City staff, it is recommended that initially the coordinator should be located in the Vancouver Police Department, with a reporting relationship to the Deputy Chief License Inspector of Licenses and Inspections.

The annual cost for the creation of a permanent Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is estimated at \$110,000: an annual staff salary of \$80,000, including benefits (position to be subject to Human Resources review and classification); plus program expenses of \$30,000.

For 2008, the cost is estimated at \$75,000 with eight months of staff salary at approximately \$50,000, plus office set up cost of \$8,000, and program expenses of \$17,000.

The hiring of a permanent full-time coordinator for the initiative is necessary for the success of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. The coordinator acts as a liaison with apartment managers, residents, City departments, police, fire, health and other community agencies. While the annual cost for this program is \$110,000, in the long-term it is anticipated that the City will be able to reduce calls both to the Police and other City service departments, provide a safer environment for our citizens, and improve public order.

The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program will report back after the one-year period with documented results, specific outcomes and recommendations for future program development or expansion. If this program is successful, City Council may want to consider its expansion.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program will benefit residents living in apartment communities, the City and the Vancouver Police Department. This is a proven crime prevention program that has been shown, at times, to dramatically decrease demand on City services and reduce 911 and non-emergency calls for service. Reductions in other municipalities range from 9 to 90 per cent, and a similar outcome can be projected for Vancouver. In other jurisdictions, the program has also proven to be effective in reducing illegal and nuisance activity on rental property by engaging the community in problem-solving. This initiative will support Project Civil City goals of enhancing neighbourhood safety, reducing nuisance and complaints, and maintaining civic order in Vancouver's neighbourhood by engaging local residents.

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Appendix A: Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Elements

There are three key elements to the Crime Free Multi-Housing program: (1) Management Training, (2) Property Security Assessment based on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), and (3) Resident Training.

1. Phase 1: Management Training

Apartment owners and managers attend an eight-hour workshop developed and delivered by the B.C. Crime Prevention Association. The workshop is designed to educate managers on how to manage rental properties through effective and consistent business practices such as:

- tenant screening achieved through sound interviewing practices and reference checks;
- the use of leases; Crime Free Multi-Housing lease addendum; various pieces of legislation; and the Resident Tenancy Act (RTA);
- Rights and obligations of tenants and management.

Such business practices have been found to effectively stop the spread of illegal and nuisance activity on rental property while improving the quality of life for the apartment community. On completion of the workshop, managers are awarded with a certificate indicating the successful completion of the program's first phase.

2. Phase 2: Property Security Assessment

Once a building manager has been certified in the first phase of the program, a property security assessment can take place. This assessment is based on CPTED, a proven crime prevention strategy that assesses and ensures such requirements as:

- Correct installation of dead bolts and eye viewers;
- Adequate security lighting;
- Trimmed back landscaping allowing for natural surveillance of the property;
- Proper access controls in the building;
- Well maintained building presentation (i.e. graffiti is removed within 72 hours and garbage/litter is cleaned up).

These measures are simple to implement and create the "eyes and ears" mentality particularly useful for crime prevention in apartment communities. Once this phase has been satisfied, the building receives a certificate acknowledging that the building meets CPTED requirements.

3. Phase 3: Resident Training

Once the first two phases are complete, building managers invite all residents to a 'safety social' where the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program is explained. City and police personnel are invited to educate and train tenants on crime prevention, general safety principles and building security requirements. The 'safety social' is a networking event, introducing tenants to one another and teaching them how they can best work with owners, managers, police and City staff to be the "eyes and ears" in their apartment community. Safety socials are held annually to ensure that buildings retain their status and certification in the program. On completion of the third phase, the apartment building has earned the right to display the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program logo.

Upon successful certification, the building is still required to have annual inspections by the program coordinator in order to maintain its status in the program. The annual re-certification helps community members continue to meet program requirements and crime prevention goals.

Appendix B: Responsibilities of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Coordinator

Position Title: Program Coordinator, Crime Free Multi-Housing Program

Department/Division/Section: Position in Licenses and Inspections reporting to Deputy Chief License Inspector and to be located in Vancouver Police Department

1. Major Purpose / Function:

In consultation with various stakeholders, to implement (start-up) the City of Vancouver's Crime Free Multi-Housing Program, in accordance with the basic principles set out by the B.C. Crime Prevention Association.

2. Major Areas of Responsibility:

All areas of responsibility are addressed in consultation with the various stakeholders. The stakeholders include the City of Vancouver Police Department, Licenses and Inspections Department, Social Planning, Vancouver Fire Department, Community Policing Offices, Neighbourhood Policing Officers, neighbourhood resident groups and associations, the Rental Owners and Managers' Association of BC (ROMA), and other community groups.

- Initial project design, including creation of the organizational structure, goal-setting, schedule coordination, communications plan drafting, results assessment and sustainability plan creation.
- Initial implementation and day-to-day management of the three stages of the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.
- This responsibility includes:
 - Coordinating key City of Vancouver departments and Vancouver Police Department personnel (police officers, City staff and volunteers);
 - Coordinating and overseeing recruitment of volunteer personnel for the project under the guidance of the Vancouver Police Department's Community Policing Coordinator;
 - Regular networking with stakeholders;
 - Acquiring and managing required office equipment;
 - Establishing a data collection system suitable for result analysis;
 - Establishing standards to ensure that the program goals are being met;
 - Completing regular reports to document the above; and
 - Communication with key City of Vancouver departments to ensure coordination of enforcement and community response where appropriate.
- Potential for direct enforcement action, depending on the development and evolution of the program.

3. Candidate Profile:

General

The candidate will possess strong project management skills with the ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the various stakeholders, which include Vancouver Police Department personnel (including volunteers), City of Vancouver departments and staff, elected officials, and various representatives from the business and residential tenant communities.

Priority Criteria

- Ability to design and manage a community crime prevention project.
- Superior communications skills, including the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the various stakeholders and the media.
- Ability to maintain a professional demeanor under varying degrees of work pressures.
- Ability to problem-solve with minimal supervision.
- Familiarity with the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program as set out by the BC Crime Prevention Association.
- Familiarity with the BC *Residential Tenancy Act*
- Familiarity with relevant City of Vancouver By-laws

4. Other Qualifications

Education

- Post-Secondary Certificate in crime prevention, planning, project management or business administration preferred, or an equivalent combination of education, training and experience.

Functional Abilities, Skills and Knowledge

- Strong written communications skills
- Superior oral communications skills (presentations to groups)
- Strong interpersonal skills (ability to work well with volunteers)
- Knowledge of current project management theory, office procedures and equipment
- Competent computer skills relating to word processing, spreadsheets and presentations (Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint preferred).

Experience

- Previous successful experience with crime prevention among community groups with an emphasis on a police-community liaison role.
- Previous experience with residential tenancy/property management groups preferred.
- Previous experience as a police officer or regulatory enforcement officer preferred.

Special Requirements

- Required to obtain a security and criminal record check.
- Required to obtain level one CPTED certification.
- Required to sign an attestation of confidentiality.