



CITY OF VANCOUVER

A11

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 24, 2008  
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: July 8, 2008

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Project Civil City Commissioner in Consultation with the General Managers of Community Services and Engineering Services, the Director of Legal Services, and the Chief Constable, Vancouver Police

SUBJECT: Project Civil City - Progress Report

### ***RECOMMENDATION***

THAT Council receive for information the six month Project Civil City Update Report, attached as Appendix A, and endorse the report as a framework for continuing Project Civil City work.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager notes that Project Civil City work has now been integrated more fully into a number of aspects of City work thereby increasing the collaboration which is necessary to achieve Project Civil City goals.

### ***COUNCIL POLICY***

In December 2006, Council adopted the Project Civil City initiative. There are a number of Council policies and bylaws on topics such as housing, regulation of properties and streets that pertain to Civil City work.

### ***PURPOSE***

This report provides Council with a Progress Report, attached as Appendix A, on recent work undertaken by Project Civil City. The progress is categorized under the broad Civil City directions of supporting homeless and vulnerable people; achieving public order and fostering citizen engagement.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2006, Council adopted Project Civil City and its four goals:

- Increase housing opportunities and eliminate homelessness, with at least a 50% reduction by 2010.
- Eliminate the open drug market on Vancouver's streets, with at least a 50% reduction by 2010.
- Eliminate the incidence of aggressive panhandling, with at least a 50% reduction by 2010.
- Increase the level of public satisfaction with the City's handling of public nuisance and annoyance complaints by 50% by 2010.

The Project Civil City Commissioner was appointed in May 2007. Council received a Progress Report in November 2007, outlining progress on benchmarking the Project Civil City goals and on a number of initial actions underway under the broad categories of supporting homeless and vulnerable people, achieving public order and citizen engagement.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Project Civil City Progress Report - June, 2008, attached as Appendix A, outlines progress on various Council directions on specific items such as the Crime Free Multi-Housing and the Ambassadors Program, as well as initiatives undertaken since November 2007.

Over the past six months, Project Civil City actions have focused on the need to raise awareness and convene government, community and business partnerships to address underlying social issues. The Commissioner continues to be actively engaged with a number of City departments to find ways to more effectively deal with public disorder issues and respond to citizen concerns.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

In December 2006, Council allocated \$300,000 in the 2007 Operating budget for Project Civil City work. Program costs for 2007 amounted to approximately \$295,000, including recruitment costs, Commissioner's salary, research and office support, and office supplies. A projection of \$300,000 for 2008 program costs has been incorporated into the 2008 Operating Budget report.

## **CONCLUSION**

In order for Vancouver to be one of the most liveable cities in the world for all its citizens, there are important social issues that must be addressed and citizens must be engaged in taking responsibility for the city's civility. The role of Project Civil City is to serve as a catalyst to achieve these goals.

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# Project Civil City

## Six Month Update Report: Moving Vancouver Closer to a Civil City

June 2008



## LETTER FROM GEOFF PLANT, PROJECT CIVIL CITY COMMISSIONER

A civil Vancouver, as I outlined in a recent Vancouver Sun special edition, is a vibrant and diverse community of individuals adhering to the basic standards necessary for life together in a crowded place: social order, mutual respect, and responsibility for one's fellow citizens. Project Civil City has been working to help create a more civil Vancouver by facilitating new ways of approaching, and inspiring, programs and initiatives that enhance civil order.

The progress report and agenda for action submitted to Council in November 2007 outlined specific actions to be taken by Project Civil City, following an approach emphasizing three distinct, but inter-related themes: (1) support to homeless and vulnerable people; (2) citizen engagement; and (3) achieving public order. In this progress report I will outline specific initiatives undertaken and supported by Project Civil City over the past half year. During that time, several reports have come before Council and been approved: DVBIA Ambassador Program - Funding Proposal for Expansion (Dec. 11, 2007); Implementation of Crime Free Multi-Housing Program Initiative (Feb. 28, 2008); and the Enforcement Review Report and attached By-Law Enforcement and Enhanced Civil Order report (March 11, 2008). This report provides updates on the status of these and other initiatives, all of which build on the three Project Civil City themes endorsed in last November's Council report and are intended to achieve Council's targets for 2010 and beyond in the four areas of homelessness, aggressive panhandling, the open drug market, and public nuisance and annoyance complaints.

It is difficult to summarize all the work of Project Civil City in a single report. I have continued actively to develop the project's role as a convener of stakeholders, initiator of forums and action plans and advocate for legislative change and funding. Across the different levels of government, and in the world of community, service and business organizations, people work hard every day to help make Vancouver a better place. Bringing these people together in new forms of coordination and collaboration adds value to their efforts and helps achieve Council's ambitious goals. Our work seeks to balance an effective framework for compliance and enforcement with support for innovative, compassionate responses that provide sustainable solutions for the causes of social disorder.

The progress made by Project Civil City during the past six months has been considerable. With many initiatives well underway and further changes likely, I look forward to seeing yet more progress during the coming six months.



Geoff Plant  
Project Civil City Commissioner

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Project Civil City Six Month Update Report:  
Moving Vancouver Closer to a Civil City

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Project Civil City Six Month Update Report:  
Moving Vancouver Closer to a Civil City  
July 2008

## Introduction

In November 2007, Council endorsed the Project Civil City Progress Report and Agenda for Action as a framework for future Project Civil City work. In addition to recent reports back on individual initiatives, this report summarizes the activities of Project Civil City over the last six months. Initiatives are organized under the three Project Civil City themes which appeared in the November 2007 report: Support to Homeless and Vulnerable People; Citizen Engagement; and Achieving Public Order.

## I) Support for Vulnerable People

The focus of this theme has been Project Civil City's participation in, and advocacy for, the development of solutions for vulnerable people including the homeless, panhandlers and those with mental health and addictions problems. The work here has developed from the proposals outlined in the November report and is directed at achieving Council's objective of eliminating homelessness.

### Collaboration for Change

Project Civil City has initiated and leads an innovative collaboration among a broad range of Vancouver's institutional and community stakeholders committed to addressing the urgent situation facing some of our most vulnerable citizens: those with mental health and addictions problems who are also homeless or living in acutely substandard conditions. This project is called the Collaboration for Change.

From the outset of this work, it was acknowledged that what we see on the streets represents the most acute instances of marginalization, and is only part of a larger world of problems. There is a need to ground policy responses in a framework that embraces and respects the true magnitude of the issues while incorporating a vision that looks to achievable solutions today for those who most urgently require help.

The Collaboration for Change process has helped build momentum among key government, community and business organizations, rooted in a shared consensus that addressing the issues of mental health, addiction and homelessness in Vancouver requires a sustained commitment to action and new approaches to service delivery.

The Collaboration for Change process to date has included:

- Establishment of an Oversight Committee including key community leaders and individuals who are agents for change within their respective constituencies.
- Establishment of an Expert Working Group to provide advice on strategic initiatives that have the potential to effect systemic change.
- Development of draft documents to guide the work of these groups.

- Holding a two-day Forum on Mental Health, Addictions and Homelessness in Vancouver April 28 and 29. The public session on April 28 featured a presentation by the Chair of the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Honourable Michael Kirby, and presentations by community members with direct experience of addictions, mental illness and homelessness. The invited dialogue session on April 29 included presentations that addressed the work being done to develop a national framework to reduce harms from drug use; outlined the work done in City of Victoria by Mayor Alan Lowe's Task Force; summarized a wide range of provincial initiatives, and provided the perspective of Perry Kendall, the Provincial Health Officer. The Forum included opportunities for dialogue with all participants, including the public.

Currently, a document is being prepared which will form the basis of the next stages of the Collaboration. This document will describe the work to date and summarize what we learned at the Forum. It will provide an overview of the important work done by other agencies, including what is now known about such questions as:

- the scope of the homeless population with substance use and/or mental disorders in Vancouver
- the evidence-based services and supports required by this population
- the services and supports that are currently available, as well as gaps in services and supports.

The next steps in the Collaboration for Change process will focus on the need for transformative systems change and the three key elements needed to achieve it:

- political leadership to drive cross-sector collaboration and support integrated service delivery
- community engagement, oversight, and implementation
- a concrete action plan with defined objectives and accountability for outcomes.

### **Project Civil City Panhandling Survey**

From the perspective of the Project Civil City theme of support to the vulnerable, the question of panhandling, broadly speaking, is about why it takes place and how best to respond to it. Project Civil City wanted to better understand the circumstances of panhandlers, their life situations and the challenges they face, in order to inform program and policy responses. Accordingly, as indicated in our November report, we undertook two surveys in collaboration with two social service agencies. A separate summary of the Project Civil City Panhandling Survey and draft recommendations will be sent to Council shortly.

In summary, approximately two hundred panhandlers (separated into older and younger groups) were surveyed. The information was analysed, stakeholder meetings to discuss survey results were held, and feedback solicited. The results of the surveys provide a rich and valuable source of data that enhances our understanding of why people panhandle, and informs solutions that, if implemented, should reduce the incidence and duration of panhandling. Based on this work, we have developed a series of draft recommendations that focus on the key areas of income, housing, employment, education and health services. These are premised on the fact, as the survey results made clear, that panhandlers are typically isolated, marginalized and vulnerable.

The recommendations focus on the need for:

- Targeted outreach
- Increased opportunities for social enterprise/low-barrier employment
- Skill building
- Support with respect to linkages to housing, addictions and mental health services.

All recommendations are aimed at long-term, sustainable support for those involved in panhandling. In the next stage of this work, Project Civil City will follow up on these proposals with relevant ministries, city departments and social service agencies.

### StreetoHome Foundation

The StreetoHome Foundation initiative builds on recommendations contained in the Dobell/Fairbairn report, *Vancouver Homelessness Funding Model: More than Just a Warm Bed*, presented to City Council in the spring of 2007. That report called for the creation of two new entities -- a limited partnership focused on generating capital dollars to build supported housing, and a foundation focused on augmenting and improving available housing supports. Although the tax changes needed to establish the limited partnership have not yet been achieved, our view is that there is nonetheless a real need for a community-based foundation to address the issue of homelessness in Vancouver. Accordingly, over the past several months Project Civil City has been an active participant in the work of establishing StreetoHome.

In general terms, the role of this new foundation will be to establish mechanisms that will engage the broader community and private sector philanthropists in supporting initiatives to address homelessness, including facilitating the development of supportive housing; funding service improvement initiatives; monitoring and reporting on progress; and serving as an arena in which stakeholders involved in homelessness issues can collaborate together.

The StreetoHome Foundation is currently being constituted. The three founding members, Faye Wightman (Vancouver Foundation), Geoff Plant (Project Civil City Commissioner) and Virginia Greene (BC Business Council) have identified an initial Board of Governors and Executive Committee, which include senior leaders from the business, government and philanthropic communities in Vancouver. They have also hired a part-time Executive Director/President to launch the Foundation. An orientation for the Board of Governors and Executive Committee is scheduled for July 2008, with a public launch to follow shortly thereafter.

StreetoHome will be closely aligned with Project Civil City's Collaboration for Change described above. In this regard, Project Civil City has participated in discussions with the Mental Health Commission of Canada about the Commission's potential investment in projects in Vancouver.



## Housing and SROs

Project Civil City's long-term goal of eliminating homelessness encompasses the so-called "Housing First" policies and programs adopted in other jurisdictions, in which the provision of safe and secure housing is regarded as a necessary first step in the stabilization and treatment of individuals who require help dealing with chronic addictions, mental illness and other barriers. In this regard, Single Room Accommodation is a critically important part of the supply of affordable housing in Vancouver. Unfortunately, much of the existing stock is deteriorating and some of it is poorly managed. Project Civil City has initiated the development of a plan for stabilizing the privately run Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel stock in the DTES. The study is investigating the following:

- Hotel accommodation supplements to landlords to cover costs of maintenance, cleaning, pest control, and 24 hour management and supervision of the premises
- Comprehensive guidelines to SRO operators outlining criteria for acceptable safe and healthy living conditions
- Further development of SRO management training, and investigation of training as a requirement for licensing or receipt of hotel accommodation supplements
- Greater inspection and enforcement to maintain standards in SRO hotels
- A coordinated and integrated health care team to deliver critical care to SRO hotel residents
- A tenant advocacy position for SRO hotel residents
- A more suitable application of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) or a similar small grant program for upgrades to SRO hotels.

## II) Citizen Engagement

The theme of citizen engagement speaks to the shared responsibility of all residents in the project of improving civil order. Examples of engagement intended to build awareness of Project Civil City issues and encourage this responsibility include the Project Civil City website, the Vancouver Sun guest editorship and meetings with interested groups and citizens. Between November 5, 2007 and April 30, 2008, there have been 44 meetings with community, business and other groups. These have been with local community representatives, as well as provincial and federal officials. In addition, there have been 28 meetings with City staff and officials during the same time period, as well as seven presentations on the work of Project Civil City to various organizations, including the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association and the University Women's Club of Vancouver.

There are also activities and initiatives underway intended to engage communities and neighbourhoods in finding local solutions for disorder issues.

### Community Policing Centres Pilot Project

Project Civil City has been actively engaged in working with local communities to explore and identify concerns and collaborate around solutions to neighbourhood level disorder. In this regard, a partnership is being developed with Community Policing Centres (CPCs). The model for this engagement is based on the experience of the Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre. A 10-year update survey on crime, safety and quality of life taken by the

Grandview-Woodland Community Policing Centre and assisted by the Canadian Urban Research Studies at Simon Fraser University was recently released.

Research confirms that while neighbourhoods often experience the same issues and concerns, they prioritize them very differently; each neighbourhood is unique in its level of tolerance depending on the issue. Accordingly, through a process of community consultation involving CPCs, and by using existing data and additional surveys, the top three issues of concern are being identified in three pilot neighbourhoods. Project Civil City along with the three pilot neighbourhood CPCs are planning to co-chair a community-based response team that will look for solutions to the issues identified. The intention is to continue the process with all CPCs. Interest amongst CPCs to date has been substantial.

This engagement will provide an opportunity for communities to bring to the City's attention their main concerns while identifying ways that the City can be involved in responses. The engagement will also be tied in to the reorganized NIST work.

In addition to strengthening neighbourhood engagement, this process will also be used to measure public satisfaction with City's responses. The level of satisfaction at the beginning of the process will be compared to that when the engagement process is well underway. This addresses the fourth goal of Project Civil City: a measurable increase in public satisfaction with how public complaints are handled.

### **BC Hydro Partnership with Project Civil City**

In an effort to involve the community in a creative response to graffiti, Project Civil City assisted in the development of a partnership with BC Hydro in an initiative that will add painted artistic designs to various pedestal mounted transformers in Vancouver along identified Olympic banner corridors. The partnership will work with community centres through summer camp programs that engage youth. Youth will be encouraged and supported in coming up with designs capturing the themes of environmental sustainability and liveability. The City's Graffiti Management Program is helping to identify artists registered on the City's Graffiti Management Mural Program to transfer the community designs on to the kiosks. This will be a BC Hydro and Project Civil City jointly sponsored project: funding will be provided by BC Hydro and the City will hire artists and engage youth through community centres.

### **Seeing is Believing**

Seeing is Believing is the name for a tour organized by the Canadian Business for Social Responsibility (CBSR). CBSR seeks to engage business and business leaders with social issues so as to motivate increased social responsibility. Tours allow business and community leaders to come face-to-face with pressing social issues, support agencies in the field working to address them, and make a commitment to longer-term engagement in helping to address the issue.

The Project Civil City Commissioner participated in a Seeing is Believing tour in 2007. More recently, on June 26 the Commissioner led a tour with the theme of homelessness. Kevin Bent of the Pacific Newspaper Group was a co-leader of the tour. The tour engaged 14 CEOs of companies interested in pursuing CBSR objectives and in learning about the issues and solutions regarding homelessness. The tour involved visits to four agencies, starting with breakfast at the Potluck Cafe, and comprehensive stops at United We Can, Coast Mental

Health Resource Centre and the Urban Native Youth Association. The tour provided an opportunity for Project Civil City to engage the business community in discussing innovative solutions to the complex issue of homelessness.

### **Staff Engagement**

Project Civil City staff have led a number of presentations and discussions with City staff. For example, the Commissioner presented highlights of Project Civil City during a February 11 Brown Bag lunch talk. A second Brown Bag lunch for staff was hosted on March 27 by Project Civil City and featured the Honourable Judge Thomas Gove and Alison MacPhail of the Ministry of Attorney General speaking on the Downtown Community Court project.

### **Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams**

Vancouver's long-standing and highly successful Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NIST) program is currently undergoing some changes in response to the new 311 service and the recognition that the issues which NIST responds to have become more complex over time. Objectives shared by NIST and Project Civil City reside in the commitment to community-based engagement and action as the most effective way of identifying and resolving local neighbourhood disorder. Accordingly, Project Civil City targets and approaches are being integrated with the next generation of Neighbourhood Integrated Services.

A goal of the reorganized NIST program is to create a clearer understanding of service and disorder issues facing each individual community. NIST serves as the 'eyes and ears' of the community in which they operate, having current knowledge of trends related to the demographics, quality of life issues, and infrastructure and their impacts on services. Neighbourhood public disorder issues identified by Civil City, the neighbourhood, or information generated by COV management information systems (e.g. 311, claims data, etc.) will be followed up on by City staff.

### **Great Beginnings: Old Streets, New Pride**

The Province is investing \$10 million over three years as part of its BC150 celebration (the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the mainland Crown Colony) to celebrate the history, heritage and culture of Vancouver's first urban areas. The aim of the program known as Great Beginnings is to bring renewed pride to the city's oldest neighbourhoods, for everyone who lives and works in, or visits, these important places.

An early meeting involving Project Civil City, City planning staff and businesspeople helped inform discussions about the development of initiatives that could help to revitalize the "street feel" of Vancouver's historic neighbourhoods - the Hastings corridor, Chinatown, Gastown, and Strathcona (Japantown). In due course Council approval was given to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding for Great Beginnings.

Physical improvements undertaken or supported by this initiative will include removing graffiti, painting murals on buildings, extra cleaning of streets and alleys, and restoring the facades of heritage buildings. Cultural improvements could include banner programs, public art, celebrations and street festivals, and outdoor patios and cafes. Great Beginnings will support Creative Pathways that animate public spaces and are organized by community groups.

City staff will work with community partners to ensure this provincial investment has a lasting and positive effect. Wherever possible, there will be low-threshold (easy to obtain) employment opportunities for locals from the DTES in Great Beginnings projects. (Such employment opportunities have already been implemented in the street-cleaning initiative that has been underway in the Hastings Street corridor for several months). Community capacity building is key to all activities related to Great Beginnings.

## **Media**

There has been considerable media attention on Civil City initiated projects. The Commissioner has responded to numerous media outlets on such issues as the expansion of the Ambassador Program, the Enforcement Review and By-law Change Recommendations reports, Crime Free Multi-Housing, Collaboration for Change and the situation of homelessness. He was also asked to be a guest editor for a Vancouver Sun special weekend feature on what makes a civil city. In addition, the Commissioner has appeared as a special guest on the Bill Good Show and CBC Radio's Early Edition. Project Civil City has been featured in The Vancouver Courier. GVTV, the City's in-house video production unit, have broadcast talks brought to Vancouver by Project Civil City including the Honourable Michael Kirby (the relationship between homelessness and mental health) and Judge Gove (Downtown Community Court).

## **III) Achieving Public Order**

Effective law enforcement is a necessary element of any plan for a safe and secure city. Over the past six months Project Civil City has led and supported a variety of initiatives to improve the tools and processes used to respond to street disorder. Street disorder refers to "any activity or circumstance that deters or prevents the public from the lawful use or enjoyment of the City."

### **By-Law Enforcement Review Follow-up**

The Enforcement Review and By-Law Enforcement and Enhanced Civil Order reports discussed at the March 11, 2008 Council meeting examined a range of proposals, including reforms to by-laws and provincial legislation, with the goal of improving compliance with Vancouver's public order bylaws.

Following Council's approval of the recommendations in the Project Civil City reports, endorsement was sought and obtained for the recommended provincial legislative changes from the Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMGLGA). The same process of endorsement will be followed for the upcoming annual meeting of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

The Commissioner formally notified the Provincial government of the City's request for changes to Provincial legislation as outlined in the Enforcement Review report. Provincial officials have since confirmed their support for a process to explore ways to enhance by-law enforcement with a particular focus on community safety and repeat offender problems. The City's proposals will be included in these discussions, and other options and proposals may be considered. A legal expert is being hired to work with the City and the Province to proceed with the legislative changes recommended in March. This work will take some time as many of the recommended changes have Province-wide implications.

A report on expansion of the use of Municipal Ticket Informations will also be coming before Council shortly.

### **Co-ordinated By-law Enforcement Workshop**

At the initial meeting of the Enforcement Advisory Committee it became clear that bringing different City departments together for the purpose of discussing the process of by-law enforcement could yield useful proposals. With the objective of building on this early success, Project Civil City sponsored a Co-ordinated By-law Enforcement Workshop for City staff, which was held in June, 2008.

Over 40 staff, at both the management and operational street levels attended from a number of City departments including:

- Community Services Group
- Licences and Inspections: (including Property Use Inspectors, Building Inspectors, Graffiti Inspectors and staff of the Co-ordinated Enforcement Division)
- Engineering: (including Building Sites Inspectors, Street Use Inspectors, Parking Operations and Enforcement, Anti-Graffiti Coordinators, Sanitation Operations, and Solid Waste Management)
- Legal Services
- Vancouver Police Department
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Parks and Recreation

The half-day session informed participants about the work various departments are doing in the field and brain-stormed ways to improve co-ordination around by-law enforcement.

Themes that emerged from discussions included:

- The value of sharing information between departments about each other's responsibilities and the number of successful partnerships between departments that already exist;
- The legislative and operational changes that would be needed to implement a more co-ordinated approach;
- The need for better communication between departmental employees and how improved IT support could help with this; and
- The need to engage the public in the enforcement of bylaws and maintenance of public order.

Feedback from the participants was very positive and indicated the need for more and on-going opportunities to bring the staff groups together. Project Civil City will be following up on specific actions needed to support the themes and actions noted by the group.

### **Entertainment District**

Following the initial discussions with the Project Civil City Commissioner, VPD and Barwatch, there has been some progress in bringing civil order to this area. The year has seen the introduction of closures to vehicle traffic for the Entertainment District in the 900 and 1000 blocks of Granville Street. Closures have occurred on 13 consecutive weekend days since May 16, 2008. The Vancouver Police Department reports that the closures to traffic have been positively received by people coming to the area for entertainment, citizens who live in the area, the bars and other businesses and the members of the VPD who are assigned to police the closure. Other activities have also enlivened the street including the C-Fox remote broadcasting van and the possibility for additional entertainment activities.

The bars and nightclubs report that a more positive and cooperative crowd has come during the closure, resulting in fewer problems in the licensed premises. The tension and tenor of violence that was so common in the area has been greatly reduced by the visible police presence and closure.

Although it is very early in the project to provide statistics with regard to crime and disorder reduction, one senior sergeant stated that on closure nights there appears to be fewer calls for service in District 1 as a whole since police have been able to give more attention to areas outside of the Entertainment District. This sergeant reported that on one particular evening there were 40 per cent fewer calls for service in the District than on the same evening without closures in 2007.

In addition to reducing crime and improving community safety, the closures have also moved Civil City closer to achieving the objective of increasing the level of public satisfaction with the City's response to nuisance and annoyance complaints.

### **The Safer Parking Initiative**

Project Civil City is a supporter of the Safer Parking Program, a pilot project being developed as a collaborative effort between the Vancouver Police Department, Engineering Services and various stakeholders including parking lot operators. The aim is to ensure that parking lots meet a specified crime safety standard that provides both comfort and security for users. The Vancouver Police Department is currently running the Safer Parking Program from the Granville Street Community Policing Centre. This program originated in the United Kingdom and is based on the British Safer Parking Scheme.

The program's goal is to have 15 lots certified by the end of 2008. Currently, there are six lots certified, most of which are downtown. Thirteen more lots have expressed interest in being certified and are expected to do so in the next few months. Advertisements, a website (SaferParkingVancouver.com), and continuing discussions with parking lot operators and owners have helped promote the initiative. Discussions are underway with Tourism Vancouver to provide visitors to Vancouver with information about the program. Using Vancouver Police Department figures as a benchmark, reviews of break-ins will be conducted on a regular basis to assess success.

## **Property Cop**

Property Cop Property Registration and Recovery Society, also known as Property Cop, is a non-profit organization that operates a property registration and recovery database. The organization encourages people to register serial numbers of important possessions on a database that is then made available to law enforcement officials through a fully operational (24-hours a day, 7 days a week) call centre. When a police officer finds property in suspicious circumstances, he or she has the option of contacting the call centre, finding the registered owner of the property, and then taking appropriate action to recover the property and/or investigate for possible criminal offences.

Property Cop is a crime prevention tool that provides a free service to property owners. It has the support of a number of municipal police departments (including the VPD) as well as RCMP detachments in BC.

To date there are some 2000 registrants. Canadian Direct Insurance is offering a discount on household insurance policies to people who have registered their property. Project Civil City will work for opportunities to raise the profile of this very useful program and link it to other community-based work.

## **Update on DV/BIA Ambassador Program Expansion**

Following Council's April 2008 approval of the DV/BIA Ambassador Program's downtown expansion, Business Improvement Association (BIA) Program staff under Project Civil City engaged the remaining BIAs in a stakeholder consultation process to develop criteria for contracts between the City and BIAs to provide Ambassador or other similar programs. Representatives from all 19 BIAs participated in the stakeholder consultation which included a facilitated half-day workshop to receive input on eligibility and selection criteria. Workshop discussions centred on developing an approach to contracting in BIA areas depending on the needs.

Fifteen BIAs have indicated their interest in participating in the patrol expansion initiative by undertaking the required needs assessment. Seven BIAs have completed and submitted their needs assessment, with the remaining eight currently working towards completing assessments. The four BIAs that chose not to carry out needs assessments have indicated a possible interest in taking part in the patrol expansion program next year.

Staff will submit a report to Council shortly with recommendations for contracts with eligible BIAs and funding approval.

A contract for the Council-approved expansion of the Ambassadors' downtown expansion is currently in process.

## **Crime Free Multi-Housing**

In February 2008 Council approved the creation of a Crime Free Multi-Housing Program. The Crime Free Multi-Housing Program helps apartment owners, managers, residents, police and other agencies work together to keep illegal and nuisance activity off rental property. This unique three phase program has been proven to reduce the incidents of crime while maintaining a resident-friendly environment for tenants. Council approved \$75K from the Social Responsibility Fund to support the program.

The full-time project coordinator that was approved by Council as part of this program has been posted. The City, along with the VPD, will review applications and fill the position in July. Staff will report back in one year on the program's progress with recommendations for future program development.

### **Positive Ticketing**

Project Civil City has been working with the VPD, Parks Board and Vancouver Active Communities to explore the concept of positive ticketing, based in part on an initiative launched in Richmond, B.C. by the RCMP. The idea is to reward positive civic behaviour by providing tickets to sports or cultural events to youth who "follow the rules" in respect of such issues as skateboarding, bicycling, and other safety-related practices.

The group working on implementing positive ticketing felt it would be helpful to move the initiative beyond ticket distribution into a broader context for youth interaction. This was facilitated by working with Kids Up Front (KUF), a non-profit organization with a history of providing tickets to youth for various events. The partnership already developed with the VPD and Parks Board will be augmented to target youth that lack opportunities to go to events and to provide positive reinforcement. Initially, the distribution and use of tickets will be tracked. Police and youth workers will be involved in this work. Project Civil City will explore expanding the program to involve other partners, including those in the private sector.

Council has approved a grant application submitted by KUF under the Social Responsibility Fund. The funding is needed for KUF to broaden their network and create tracking mechanisms.

### **Noise Control By-law Update**

The Community Services Group Property Use Division took over administration and enforcement of the Noise Control By-law from Vancouver Coastal Health on April 1, 2008. The City is now responsible for training inspectors, responding to complaints, processing requests for exemptions, developing policies and procedures, meeting with contractors, waste haulers, etc. and initiating enforcement action when appropriate.

All of the inspectors have now been trained in Community Noise Enforcement.

In April, 2008, the Property Use Inspection Division set up a Noise Complaint Hotline (604-873-7753) and an e-mail address for noise concerns/queries ([noise@vancouver.ca](mailto:noise@vancouver.ca)). The hotline is averaging 20 complaints each day. The complaints fall into three groups: construction; garbage pickup; and general. A tracking system has been set up to monitor repeat offenders, the nature of the complaint and the timeframe for resolution.

Staff are in the process of establishing a comprehensive program to mitigate construction noise issues and are looking at some well-established processes in other city jurisdictions (i.e. Seattle, Washington).

New complaint forms have been created and computer codes are being developed. All Building Permits are now being issued with the condition that "construction must be carried out in compliance with the provisions of Noise Control By-law No. 6555". Meetings are underway with the Chief Building Official to address needed by-law and charter amendments



and process changes. Applications for exemption (for construction hours) are submitted daily by the construction industry and other City departments.

On problematic sites, staff have convened meetings with the prime contractor, Certified Professionals and the Building Inspection Branch to discuss the rationale for exemption requests and to convey concerns regarding noise outside of approved working hours.

To date, staff are finding that they are achieving compliance through meetings, phone calls and site visits. Enforcement action has only been required at one site.

One specific area of noise control that Project Civil City will move forward on is motorcycle exhaust noise. The Urban Noise Task Force in 1996 identified motorcycle noise as a significant issue for the residents of Vancouver. Much work has already been done on this issue.

### **Conclusion**

Much progress has been made on all three themes within Project Civil City. Over the next six months, PCC will build on this momentum and will continue to work on community-based initiatives such as Collaboration for Change and the Community Policing Centre partnership. PCC looks forward to moving ahead on the by-law enforcement reform process, the DVBI Ambassador Program expansion and other initiatives that have moved us closer to our goal of improved public order. Pursuing initiatives linked to all three themes allows PCC to achieve a balance between an effective framework for enforcement and support for innovative, compassionate, and sustainable solutions to the issues of social disorder. And, with this balance, all Vancouverites benefit from a more civil city.