

City of Nanaimo Public Safety Engagement Session Final Report

Date: March 28, 2018

Background

The City of Nanaimo, with the support of graduate students from Vancouver Island University's Master of Community Planning Program, conducted a Public Safety Engagement Session on February 28th, 2018 at Beban Park Auditorium.

The session was held using a modified World Café method with assigned topics on 12 tables. This method was selected as it encourages conversations among participants instead of the one-way flow of information characteristic of a public hearing or town hall-style event; this is a method best used to scope out issues or discuss a range of potential solutions.

Students staffed each table as facilitators and note takers, and also served as the lead facilitators for the event. The table themes/topics included:

- City Bylaws
- Emergency Management
- Future of the Community Policing and Services Office (this theme was established before recent decisions were made on this location)
- RCMP Priorities
- Public Safety Education
- Home Safety
- Empty and Derelict Buildings
- Public Disorder.

There was also a "Wild Card" table that was intended to attract participants who were interested in discussing topics outside of those identified for the event.

The event was divided into four timed segments: the first two (approximately 20 minute) segments sought to identify *issues* relating to each table topic, while the second two segments related to discussing potential *solutions*. Participants were invited to join a first table discussion and were then free to move to any other topic or to stay at their original table.

Approximately 65 individuals attended the event, which was also supported by staff from the City of Nanaimo as well as representatives of Island Health, the RCMP, various social agencies, and members of Nanaimo City Council. These expert attendees were stationed at the various tables and were available to respond to questions from the participants.

The event was video recorded, and can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/7NddTdDXxbM>.

Findings

Appendices 1 and 2 detail the findings from the table discussions and the facilitated reporting back to the plenary at the end of the event.

A key word/phrase analysis was conducted for each of the topics/themes from all of the findings (note that Home Safety is not included as there were no participants at that table).

Attendees cited the following issues:

Identified Issues	
City Bylaws	Enforcement, training, security, mental health issues
Emergency Management	Sharing information/getting information out as soon as an issue is happening, school safety, involving the public
Future of the Community Policing and Services Office	Define the mandate of the site, better branding, draw more uses into the site
RCMP Priorities	Crime prevention, increase in street drugs, inter-relationship of issues
Public Safety Education	Dangerous driving, poor signage, keeping public informed of issues
Empty and Derelict Buildings	Need to secure buildings, consider new ways to occupy buildings, concerns with vandalism, safety
Public Disorder	Safety, protection for schools, mental health, ongoing assessment, focus on downtown
Wild Card	Homelessness, safety, drug use, inter-related issues

And the following solutions:

Identified Solutions	
City Bylaws	Revitalize downtown, consistency in approaches, focus on education and positive approaches
Emergency Management	Increasing neighbourhood presence (Neighbourhood Watch), access all forms of communication, education
Future of the Community Policing and Services Office	Address a wider range of issues, make the building more accessible to a wider audience
RCMP Priorities	Address homelessness, public safety, harm reduction, public presence
Public Safety Education	Improve infrastructure (lighting), education in schools, outreach across community
Empty and Derelict Buildings	Create new bylaws, incentives for building owners
Public Disorder	Security, public safety, safe housing
Wild Card	Lighting, holistic systems, education

Conclusions

There was general discussion at many of the tables indicating that the issues identified were not going to be resolved at a two-hour event. It was also noted at several tables that many of the issues are interrelated, and any solutions will have to consider the range of potential impacts that could result from implementing changes. Overall, there were positive comments on the format of the meeting and support for holding future events that encourage exchanges of ideas over more adversarial meeting methods.

Recommendation

1. That the findings from this event be provided to the Public Safety Task Force for review and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix 1
February 28 Public Engagement Session
Notes from Tables

Public Disorder

Round 1

Illegal Grow Operations
Youth on street
 Busy streets safety concerns
Inebriated individuals in public realm – frightening/offensive
 Not criminal behaviours but raises safety concern
 Education to comprehend mental illness
Quesnal (?) Square – Epicentre in downtown core
Collaboration with businesses/amenities for upgrades
“Hot Route”

Round 2

Schools
 Increased incidents compared to prior years
 More frequent disorder – drug paraphernalia
 Increase security on school grounds – reduced traffic?

Public Areas
 Where do homeless/drug users go?

Resistance to leave public areas
 Using throughout day to continue high

CPTD
 Many opportune areas to hide
 Lack of day programs
 Safe injection site open certain hours
 Alternatives
 Where do homeless go?
 Some prefer to be on street – pets
 Need long term treatments
 Start mandatory mental health assessments in high school

- Solutions
 - Long-term *affordable* treatments
 - Safe housing
 - After care
 - Supportive housing
 - Facilities that address specific needs
 - Preparing Community for Treatment Centres ie. Chase River

- Education
 - Neighbourhood meetings
 - Testimonials
 - Security Guards – provides reassurance
- Mental Health & Addictions outreach for short/long term
- Feedback from peers to adjust behaviours
- Central registry for new comers
 - Money?
- Safe consumption sites and Regulations
 - Mobile safe injection side?
 - How to find it?
- Needle deposit program
 - Similar to bottle return
- School Security
 - A “No-Go” zone

RCMP Priorities

- Policing – prevent crimes
- Homelessness population rising
 - Remaining on streets
- Crime prevention
 - Finding housing
- Youth
 - Crime prevention early
- Traffic
 - 11 fatalities 2 years ago - 6 last year
 - Improving
 - Does traffic policing take away from other areas?
- Concern of Downtown being unsafe/uncomfortable
 - Diana Crawl Plaza
 - No RCMP during night
- Engage with people on street
- Prolific offender management
 - Mental health liaison
- VIHA for help
 - Work alongside
- Drug concern
 - Fentanyl
 - Marijuana grow ops becoming legal
 - Marijuana stores emerging issues
 - Grow ops and fire concern
 - Undercover?
 - Appear to not be catching/prosecuting
 - Crime prevention – Hells Angels
- Solutions
 - Cyclists & Road Space

- Road for Cars
- Jay walking as an issue for safety
- Distracted driving
 - Stiffer penalties
- Harm reduction and Drug enforcement
 - Fentanyl
 - Education
 - VIHA
 - Mental Health
 - Drug & homelessness
 - Drug team
 - Target whom is bringing it in/moving through community
- Priorities for RCMP
 - Presence in community
 - Undercover
 - More officers – population growth
- Increase of homeless persons/drug users
- Increase first responders
 - Police, Medic, and Fire
- Homelessness as 1st solution
 - Increased funding for housing
- Prolific offender management
 - VIHA
 - Liaison
- Mental health not a police matter, law is, but work together for prevention
- Advocating for children/youth safety
 - Addiction and Safety
 - Giving out needles – VIHA
 - Public works to clean needles

Round 2

- Youth
 - School liaison
 - School development
 - Youth empowerment and prevention
 - Build confidence
 - Pedestrian Safety
 - Parent and children relationships
 - Prolific Offender
 - 80/20 Rules
 - Gang Association
 - Problematic lower mainland
 - Adult bullying
 - Crime free multi-housing

- Making buildings safe
- Safe by design

Emergency Management

- Educating public
 - Youth engagement
 - Work with Red Cross and NGO's
 - Visit primary schools
 - Kids will inform parents
- Advertisements
 - Facebook Ads
 - YouTube
- Familiarity with Voting areas
- Accessibility
 - Are Emergency meeting areas fully accessible?
 - What about homeless or blind/deaf people etc.
- Phone lines
 - Dedicated to personas with disabilities
- Persons associated with a group or non-profit? Are they accounted for?
- Neighbourhood level communication
 - Sign up for emergency contact
- Learning from previous disasters
 - Avoiding misinformation
- Igniting Discussion
 - Neighbourhood level
 - Crime watch
 - Use city mail outs
 - Survey or questionnaire
 - City Garbage to relay information
 - School notice system

Bylaws

Issues – Session 1

- Snow Clearance on sidewalks
 - Hazardous, cyclists
- Lack of bylaw enforcement
 - Limited staff
 - Few officers
- Secondary Suites
 - Lack of parking space on narrow streets
 - Accessibility problem
- Loitering
 - Drug related, disorderly conduct

- No response to bylaw inquiries from City (confidentiality)
- Safety within retail stores
 - New bylaw needed?
 - Building code
 - Abandoned shopping carts

Session 2

- Bylaw Officers responsibilities
 - Not only parking tickets
 - Mental health issues
 - Dealing with new issues
 - Highly unpredictable people
 - No Weapons
 - RCMP training – no formal training
 - Have radios
 - Vacant building bylaw in process for commercial/residence
 - Fees for inspection
 - City enforcement
 - Camping in public
 - Homeless offered help
 - Not compliant
 - Mental health & training bylaw?
 - Crime increasing
 - Mall Security
 - Centralized Communications System for Security
 - Bar Watch
 - Road blocks for enforcement
 - Bylaws outdated
 - 11 for 90,000 people
 - Not revised
 - Marijuana/vaping
 - Dogs on leashes
 - 2 animal control officers
 - Solutions
 - No more taxes
 - Educate people on bylaws
 - Learn your responsibilities
 - Consistency/jurisdiction of bylaws
 - Unnecessary permits
 - Update Bylaws
 - Business licence
 - No regulation for air bnb
 - Prevention costs
 - Legal non-conforming building
 - Close streets during Summer
 - Commercial St., Gordon St., Terminal St., Wharf St.

- Bring in community/culture
- Improve signage bylaws
- Downtown improvements
 - Unique features
- Re-Design Diana Krall Plaza
- Revitalize downtown
 - Markets
 - Festivals
 - Restaurants
- Cruise ships
 - Business open
- Stronger local leadership

Public Safety Education

- Issues
 - Driving safety
 - General driving etiquette
 - Speeding in school zones
 - Running stop signs
 - Not signalling
 - Following too close
 - Sidewalks
 - Safety for pedestrians
 - Street lights
 - City is too dark
 - Roadways poorly marked
 - Need painting
 - Better understanding of in-home safety equipment
 - Knowing when and how to test
 - When to replace
 - Landlord vs. Renter responsibilities
 - Commercial spaces
 - Ensuring safe practices in stores
 - Parking on bike lanes (uplands drive)
 - Speeding and parking in City Parks & Facilities
 - Needles and Disposal
 - Hell's Angels
- Solutions
 - In-school driving training
 - Stronger penalties for driving infraction
 - More lights along pathways and parks
 - Prevention education and care facilities for addiction

Wild Card

- Clean streets creating safe place for children
- We need to help!
 - Facilities/Housing
 - Assessment
- Trail/Walkway Safety
 - Pedestrian path ways – lack of connectivity
 - Negative impact – “hangouts”
- Increase lighting
 - Convert to LED
 - Opportunity to “catch” criminals
 - More lighting on medians
 - Dark road signs
- Lack of shelters
 - Increase of homelessness
- Need variety of social housing locations
 - Near bus routes
- Improved public washroom infrastructure
- Access to Health supporters
- Charity transparency
- Solutions
 - LED lighting
 - Long life span
 - Cut down on light pollution
 - Program dedicated to keeping city lit
 - Homelessness
 - Housing
 - Chase River declined
 - Why?
 - More Education
 - Peer Council
 - Shortage of detox facilities
 - Holistic system
 - Supportive of low income individuals/families
 - Stigma education

Empty and Derelict Buildings

- Target empty buildings
 - convert into shelters
 - Convert to affordable housing
- Secure derelict buildings - safety
- Scout Hut
 - Can hole be patched?
- Provide variety
- Tax owners unwilling to use vacant buildings
 - Larger tax

Round 2

- Occupy buildings
 - Incentive- new businesses
- Tax exemptions for xx amount of years
- Penalty for vacant buildings
- Enforcement for vacant derelict buildings – complaint driven
- Owners not compliant
 - City forces demolition at owner's expense
 - Cost rises for each year building is vacant
- Create bylaw for unsightly buildings
- No Standards for what is 'Derelict'
 - All complaint driven
- Building has to be considered a "nuisance" to be City control
 - Nuisance calls to City – Owner is charged
 - Need more action
 - Bowen property has over 100 calls

Solutions

- New Bylaw re: Vacant buildings
- Fines/higher taxes
 - Long-term vacant buildings
- Address Community problems
- Incentive for new owners to rebuild/renovate in-line with community plans
- City pro-active
 - Buying lots/buildings
 - Partnering with social agencies to provide market housing
 - City exemptions to occupy buildings
 - Tax exemptions
 - Housing for homeless
 - Research other communities - what's working for them

Public Disorder

Issues:

- Drug paraphernalia throughout parks and schools
 - Affected parks accessibility
 - Increasing
 - Children are vulnerable
- Homelessness
- Public Parks have lost their purpose
- Pauline H. School has no playground
 - Uses City property
 - Used by homeless
- Needle disposals not being emptied
- The “Do no Harm” Dogma
- Justice System failing

Solutions

- Gate and lock affected areas
- Proper lighting in public spaces
- Treatment centres
- Specifically designate areas for children and families
 - Restrict entry
- 24 hour injection sites
 - Provide Wi-Fi
- Facility for homeless
 - Sports activities etc.
 - Boot Camps
- Accountability!!!
- Education
- Mental Health

Appendix 2

February 28 Public Engagement Session

Report Back Summaries

Future of the Community Policing & Services Office

Issues:

- Misunderstanding of original mandate
- Confusion of why the office is there?
- What is the purpose of building?
- Lack of Community Policing out of office
 - Office is not designed to be for policing
- Policing on window – confusion

Location:

- Does money need to be focused elsewhere to keep building?
- The building is not secure
 - Does not support Community Policing
- Health care crisis
- Hours of operation – need to be marketed better
- Why is this building here?
- The larger issues are not the building
 - Poverty, Mental Health, Homelessness etc.
- What is the purpose?
 - Does it make downtown attractive

Solutions:

- Re-Brand
- Bust use of the building
- More Community Policing
- Make building Community service
- Keep building as a focal point
- Outreach (crime prev) (resources)
- “Community Services”
 - Re-Brand- Informational Building
- Have a more visible front/active
- More volunteer/information
- Part-time bike police and part-time in office
- Make building attractive
- Partnerships to keep building open
- Private security form

- Ambassador program
- Comfort Building
 - Day place- get homelessness off of street
- Walking service
- Working Centre
 - Have building open for service other than policing
- Professionals
 - VIHA, Mental health Etc
 - Walk-ins
- Take building cost/operating monies and give to RCMP
 - More Bike RCMP Officers
- Have a physical RCMP Officer walk in streets
- Relationships

Public Safety Education

Issues and Solutions

- Driving – Generally not following rules
 - Parking in bike lanes
 - Running through stop signs
 - speeding
 - Mandatory lessons in school
 - Higher penalties
 - Pedestrian friendly – more sidewalks
- Pedestrian Safety
 - More lights
 - Prioritize certain areas
 - Trees on lights
 - Sidewalks
 - Street lighting
- Drug Paraphernalia/Homelessness
 - More support for people
 - More prevention/housing
 - Education
 - More safe injection sites
 - Decentralize
 - Spread out downtown to let other areas absorb the issues

Public Disorder

- Grow operations
 - Youth on the street

- Education of Mental Health illness – real and perceived threats
- Public Spaces
 - Issues for schools – more frequent drug use
- Solutions
 - Long term treatments
 - Alternative spaces – drop in spaces
 - Facilities that address peoples specific needs
 - Central registry top understand which services are need

Wild Card

Session 1 - Issues

- Homeless
 - Homeless camps
 - Fire Safety
 - Drug paraphernalia
 - Needles on school grounds
 - Pollution/Debris
 - Wasted materials
 - Safety/Wellbeing
 - Lack of shelters
 - Low income housing
 - Inadequate toilet facilities
 - Human fecal matter on sidewalks/public areas
 - Pure Involvement
 - Treatment for mental health
 - Promote safety – clean needles
 - Disease
- Lack of housing
 - Community building
 - Property prices too high
 - Bus transit?
 - Who is responsible?
 - Levels of government
- Public Safety
 - Women safety at Westwood
 - Pedestrian pathways not effective
 - Promotes crimes
 - Theft
 - Drug use
 - Public indecency

- Issues of Transparency and Spending
 - Matters of spending
 - Too much transparency
 - Lighting
 - Wages of workers
- Lighting in City of Nanaimo
 - Street lights far apart
 - Vision limited during dark hours
 - Promotes crimes?
 - LED lighting
 - Easier maintenance
 - Less power consumption
 - Less light pollution
 - Less collisions
 - Dark Signs
 - Better signage
 - Security
 - Loiterers
 - Effects tourism
- Archive
 - Better platforms
 - Better promotion
 - Safe place for communication
 - Fear of communication
 - How to participate
 - Social Media
- Buy Property
 - Homelessness
 - Reconciliation area
 - Facility to promote recovery
- Solutions
 - Safe Injections
 - Personal Collection Boxes
 - Education
 - Impeded by safety/Security
 - Distribution of clean needle cites
 - Form Community
 - Pass information from person to person
 - Peer users information
 - Uplands block
 - Supportive Housing
 - Housing programs with supportive systems
 - Counselling/group sessions
 - Chase River

- Supply areas for upward transition
- Comprehensive Housing Projects focused on Food/Heath
 - Supportive housing: Supportive systems and housing
 - Provide both long term and short term housing
- Housing First Aid
- Cost Benefit Analysis
 - Keep people on the streets vs. housing people

Bylaws

- Snow/Sidewalks
 - Over 1000 kms
 - Call public works
 - Sidewalk plows
 - Parkway / E&N
- Building Division Safety
 - Public Safety
 - Dog safety

RCMP Priorities

- Traffic issues
 - Distracted driving
- Youth Engagement
 - Children safety
 - Youth empowerment
 - Safety on streets
- Solutions
 - Prevention
 - Presence
 - Interactivity with the public
 - Police presence
 - Growing population
 - Work in collaboration
 - Health Authority
 - RCMP in high schools – liaison

Emergency Management

- Large program
 - Immediate need
 - Staff are interested, inter-agency
 - Who's really prepared?
 - Major cities will concern themselves first
- Populations as a whole
 - Associations & Non Profit on us on themselves

- Locations
 - Schools, Beban, Bowen, Oliver Woods
- Questions for Community
 - How to get information to community
 - Where to go?
 - How to get there?
 - Do we have the resources?
- Youth Engagement
 - Work with Red Cross Etc.
 - Visit schools – Primary and Kindergarten
- Accidents Occurring
 - Whose jurisdiction is clean up of oil, broken glass etc.
- Accessibility
- How to get people to take this seriously
 - Neighbourhood scale discussion
 - Capitalize on awareness during global incidents
 - Get children involved
 - Creative use of social media
 - YouTube, Facebook Ads

Empty and Derelict Buildings

- Why aren't empty buildings targeting low income housing
 - Working poor
- Derelict buildings must be secure to fire code
- Property maintenance bylaw
 - Looking for compliance – then ticket
- Vacant buildings structurally unsound
 - Inspected by Inspector
 - City can take action for owner to remove or bring into compliance
- Mould issues unaddressed
- Scout Hut building damage patched
- Buildings with free Wi-Fi
 - Homeless congregate nearby
- Bylaw Officers complete 2 person sweep daily
- What appropriation power does Municipality have?
 - Taxation powers for owners unwilling to use space
 - AB & Sound building

Public Disorder

Session 1 – Issues

- Drug Paraphernalia in parks
- Homeless
 - Housing project rejected
 - Needs to go somewhere
- City vs Government
 - Who's responsible?
 - Jurisdiction issues
- Pauline H.- no playground
 - Playground is on city property
- Bowen Park
 - Children picking up used needles
- Downtown unenjoyable
 - Vulnerable area
- Public not seeing benefit of housing
 - Public speaking events
 - People need to attend – educate people

Session 2

- One housing unit approved, another not
 - Timing with election\
- Neighbourhood/community engagement
- Closed/Gated schools at night
 - Not affordable long-term
- Treatment solution
 - Mental health care
- Scouts hut
 - Lack of proper lighting
 - Usage agreement between Scouts and City?
- 24 hour safe injection site
 - Public Wi-Fi
- Exchange system

Session 3

- Disposal sites
 - Empty more frequently
- Supportive Community
 - Nursing home facility for example
 - Food, clothing, community kitchen
 - Supervised injection sites
- Reality therapy

- Holding people accountable/responsible
- Outward bound camps Vs. prison
- Justice System
- Positive activities
 - Sports
 - Positive experiences
- Needs not being met
 - Loaves and Fishes

Session 4

- Crime prevention
 - Penalties
- Harm Reduction
- City wants new injection site/ VIHA doesn't
- Education/Training