



Youth Strategy West Division 2007

For Public Release

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Background

The *Top Neighbourhood Concerns 2006/2002 Survey* identified several areas of concern. When the results of this survey were broken down divisionally ***B & E's was the number one concern of the community in West Division*** in 2006. This issue is being addressed in a focused manner through another District initiative and now attention must turn to the other concerns **Speeding, Vandalism, Theft from Vehicles**, and Bicycle Theft. **Youth Crime** followed at a very close 6th position at 49%. Speeding will be addressed from a District Traffic perspective.

Each year managers of West Division have attempted to address the ever-increasing summertime youth disorder issue by focusing resources (which included other City partners' resources) on the problem. Unfortunately resources have not always been available to maintain a sustained effort throughout the summer months due to annual leave and competing priorities. In addition there were no performance measures identified nor was there a tracking mechanism in place to determine where resources should be focused. At year-end no one could accurately gauge our success or failure and each agency had their own statistics that could not be correlated because we all had different goals.

From an Ottawa Police Service West Division perspective the top 5 parks in all of 2006 were Nepean Sportplex, Britannia Park, 101 Centrepointe, John Young PS and Stittsville Arena. The top 5 over the summer of 2006 were Britannia Pk, Andrew Hayden Pk, Stittsville Arena, 101 Centrepointe, and Bridlewood Core Park. John Young was a close 6th. These locations will be will be the starting point for 2007.

This year West Division began planning early and engaged community partners to come to the table and discuss their plans in order that there would not be a duplication of efforts. There was agreement amongst all parties that information must be shared and acted upon in a timely manner. Finally that there needed to be an awareness raising amongst the community itself. Parents needed to ask questions of their children and question the veracity of the information they received. It is a known fact that youth are risk takers but they must understand that there are consequences to any actions they take. 2007 will mark the year where parents and their children are held accountable. **It is time for the community to take back their parks and open areas. The final outcome of this initiative of cooperation and collaboration of all the named agencies and public will be a community with fewer crime and disorder problems.**

Recognizing that there are no simple solutions to the problem of crime and disorder in City parks, the following are a number of initiatives that have been and continue to assist in addressing this problem:

The City's *Youth on the Move* Program is a popular program with teams of two outreach workers who will focus on working with teens to direct their energy towards more productive and healthy choices. They will not be in a position to enforce any by-laws but will liaise with Police and By-Law to identify problematic areas. They will begin at the end of June and run until the end of August. Most of their patrols in parks are done on bicycles and on foot.

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bicycles and on foot.

2. Major park problem areas are added daily to Patrol briefing log so that zone officers on patrol will pay particular attention to the problem areas when they are available during the regular course of their patrol duties. West Division received two additional Patrol Officers in January 2007 with the realignment of patrol zones based on workload, travel time and natural boundaries.
3. School Resource officers in High Schools regularly provide education on Youth and the Law, including consequences of committing criminal activity and the student crime stoppers program is promoted. In 2007 “Tequila Sunrise” warning letters were sent home and provided to the media to garner attention to this annual problem. SROs will educate school staff on graffiti strategies and possible indicators (i.e. extensive drawings on books, permanent ink on body, backpacks full of markers/paint cans)
4. Patrol and District officers have recently been educated on the curfew provisions of the Child and Family Services Act that stipulate the offence of allowing a youth less than 16 years out after midnight. Officers have been directed to issue warnings and charges to parents who breach this section of the act. It is punishable by up to a \$1,000 fine.
5. Patrol and District officers have also recently been given refresher training on the Parental Responsibility Act. It holds parents financially responsible for property loss, and damage or destruction intentionally caused by their children who are under 18 years of age. It allows property owners, renters and lessees whose property has been intentionally damaged, destroyed or stolen by minors, to bring a claim to a maximum amount of \$6,000.00 against the parents through small claims court. This amount includes costs incurred by the victim such as lost wages or profits and car rentals costs arising from property damage or loss. *The police will be providing victims information on this legislation.*
6. District staff has received training on **graffiti** from successful Orleans project members. Training includes profile of taggers, and the 4 E’s of graffiti:
 - **Eradication** –Removing graffiti quickly and efficiently
24-hour city responses to remove hate, racist and offensive graffiti
centralized reporting through the City Call centre (3-1-1)
 - **Empowerment**- Maximizing the use of available resources and relationships
Community involvement in prevention and removal (kits available)
 - **Education**- Building awareness about how to prevent and remove graffiti
Sharing info on costs, prevention methods, OPS brochure & City website
 - **Enforcement**- Applying municipal and penal codes when necessary
Enhanced vigilance assists with apprehension of graffiti vandals,
5 Ottawa by-laws make reference to unsightly markings
Proposed by-law for owner responsibility for removal

CPCOs will work with City staff to identify tagging sites and document for database
Which may be used for later prosecutions.

7. The Youth Section of Ottawa Police delivers Parent Info Sessions in many communities upon request. It is a brief presentation on the issues and trends related to youth and street drugs and the impacts felt by community are highlighted. Behavioural indicators and patterns are identified in relation to clandestine labs and adolescent substance. Trends associated to auto theft, youth gangs, juvenile sex trade and youth crimes are discussed. Additionally, there is an overview of parental rights and responsibilities with discussion on how community service providers can address issues as a collective in a collaborative fashion with Ottawa Police as the catalyst.

Key Improvements For 2007

There are also a number of key improvements that have been made to address the challenge of disorderly youth. For example:

- Increasing and improving consistency of the assignment of Officers throughout the summer;
- Increased focus on holding parents accountable for their children's actions through the enforcement of curfew and restitution for damage caused by youth;
- Improved tracking mechanism of calls for service resulting in more strategic deployment of resources;
- Development of performance measures;
- Earlier planning & coordination involving more city partners;
- Enhanced information sharing amongst key partners;
- Specific training for OPS District members on youth and parks related issues such as graffiti, Parental Responsibility Act, Child & Family Services Act, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

Goals

- Respond in a timely manner to concerns voiced by members of the community concerning youth crime and disorder problems
- Document interactions with youth in order to appropriately address the "problems"
- Develop an effective communication strategy to effectively share information amongst partners and focus appropriate resources on appropriate locations
- Facilitate a multifaceted approach to the issue (parks and recreation, police, by-law, corporate security) to offer solutions to youth issues that may be arising in parks and other areas where youth congregate. (Note: all areas will be referred to as parks throughout this document although other areas may be the target i.e. wooded areas, schools, parking lots)
- Foster respect between youth and the communities in which they live through positive, proactive engagement with community leaders and law enforcement
- Raising awareness of youth issues and youth culture through dialogue with community members and media contact
- Maintain contact with City Councilors to ensure timely information is received
- Produce a comprehensive report which outlines best practices and effectiveness of strategies employed

Partner Agencies--

Alcohol & Gaming Commission - AGCO
City of Ottawa – Youth On The Move--- YOM
City of Ottawa- By-law Enforcement
City of Ottawa- Corporate Security
City Councilors Wards 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,14,16,21, 22, 23
OC Transpo Security
OC Housing
OCDSB & OSSB area principals
OPS Neighbourhood Officers (NHO) School Resource Officers (SRO) & Community Police
Centre Officers (CPCO) (different roles for each)

Techniques

Employ officers with previous knowledge of youth in the community

Maintain a consistent team who interacts with our partners

Assess each identified area based on call type, age of participants, and risk to non-police members and deploy as per risk model.

Employ various methods of intervention-on foot and bicycle.

Contacts with youth must be documented and actions, including warnings must be tracked. Follow-up with parents must occur.

Community awareness will be essential to obtaining parental support and calls for service.

Communicate with community any positive actions

Develop standards for information gathering and sharing amongst key partners

Develop a crime analysis tool that is easily accessible to front-line and is updated on a weekly basis

Conclusion

By sending a strong message starting May long weekend, youth and their parents will understand what the expectations are for the rest of the summer. Based on preliminary feedback from key partners there will be an increase in communication that will have a positive impact on effective resource allocation. Each agency has a limited number of resources that must be focused on their own mandate while continuing to share information about areas that must be addressed. At the end of the summer a clear picture of youth crime and disorder issues should be painted so that in coming years appropriate resources will continue to be assigned.