



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### REPORT TO COMMITTEE

**TO:** Community Services Committee  
**FROM:** Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services  
**RE:** **Safe Meeting Places for Youth in Richmond**

**DATE:** November 27, 2000  
**FILE:** -

(00-019)

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. That staff be directed work with the Richmond School District #38 and in consultation with youth and other stakeholders, to develop a proposal for additional late night activities for youth in Richmond.
2. That \$5,000 be allocated from the city Casino Grant provide additional staffing resources to complete this.
3. That a proposal be developed, outlining the late night program needs and funding requirements. This proposal is to examine all potential funding sources, including additional funding through the City Casino Funds.

Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services

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CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER

## STAFF REPORT

### ORIGIN

At the May 24, 2000 meeting of the Council/School Board Liaison Committee, the School Board brought forward a resolution that had been passed at its meeting of September 20, 1999:

"That the Board of School Trustees investigate the possibility of a joint School Board/City task force to explore how young people can be provided with 'safe' meeting places, including outside the regular hours of community centres and after park/school site closures;

AND FURTHER THAT the task force membership include students from the Richmond School District, out of school youth and staff from the City and District".

The above resolution was endorsed by the Joint Council/School Board Liaison Committee and on June 12, 2000, City Council adopted the resolution "That the establishment of a joint School Board / City Task Force to explore how young people can be provided with 'safe' meeting places, be endorsed, and that the City host the initial meeting."

### ANALYSIS

An initial meeting was held in September to explore the potential role of the Task Force and appropriate representation on the Task Force. Representatives from School District #38; R.C.M.P; Recreation and Cultural Services Department and the Parks Department attended the meeting. At this meeting, there was some concern expressed by the various agencies that the establishment of a "Task Force" may not be the best way to approach the issue, but there was consensus that there was definitely much more that could be done in Richmond to ensure that youth have "safe meeting places" and to ultimately work towards creating a "youth friendly community". It was felt that prior to establishing a Task Force, some further information should be gathered to determine:

- what kinds of late-night opportunities already exist in the community,
- what kinds of activities would be of interest to "youth", understanding that there are a number of target groups we must consider within this broad age category. This would involve consulting with youth in a variety of different settings.
- what are some of the "community" concerns about late-night youth opportunities and how could these concerns be positively addressed
- what is the gap between the existing late-night opportunities and what specific program strategies could be pursued

The City Strategy for Youth Services provides a framework for Youth Services in Richmond. The guiding principles emphasize the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for youth input and involvement. Since the Strategy was adopted, a number of very successful initiatives have been undertaken to improve the opportunities for youth and to ensure the benefits of involving youth are realized. One of the initiatives undertaken is the city's Night Shift program, which offers late night opportunities at the Thompson Community Centre each Friday. Weekly there are 50-60 basketball drop ins, with another 20-30 youth participating in unstructured activities such as graffiti art, DJ, breakdance, videos, poetry reading and jam sessions.

Dedicated music nights feature local musicians and can easily draw over 150 youth. In addition to this, a variety of programs are offered through the various community centres.

While there are an increasing number of opportunities available for youth in Richmond, there is still a need to provide more late night activities in a safe environment. The School Board has indicated a willingness to work with the City to identify what activities would best meet the needs in the community and they have also indicated a willingness to investigate access to schools which have 24 hour caretakers.

The City Youth Services Coordinator, working with the Community Centre Youth Coordinators, School District staff, youth and other stakeholders, is best positioned to lead a process to review what the needs are and to identify strategies for providing additional late-night youth activities. Programs of this type typically involve costs such as facility space, cost of supervision, promotion and program expenses.

In developing the strategy, appropriate funding sources will have to be identified. City Council has endorsed Youth as one of the focus areas for Casino Funding. Once the program needs have been confirmed, there is an opportunity to utilize casino funding to meet these program needs. Other funding sources, such as the National Crime Prevention Program can also be pursued in order to initiate these programs.

#### FINANCIAL IMPACT

Phase 1 – In order to implement a consultation process with Youth to determine the appropriate late night opportunities \$5,000 be allocated from the City Casino funding.

Phase 2 - Once the program needs have been fully developed, Casino funding should be considered to fund additional late night youth activities across the city. It is anticipated that this would require approximately \$50,000 annually.

#### CONCLUSION

There is a growing recognition that by creating a safe environment for youth to participate in activities that are meaningful to them, there are immense benefits to both the youth and the community overall. Investing in our youth is a good investment for the community.

  
per: Kate Sparrow  
Director, Recreation & Cultural Services