

### 3. TOWARD A LIVEABLE COMMUNITY

#### KEY DIRECTIONS

*Strengthen the sense of community and neighbourhood quality by building around local needs and retaining the human scale; concerns relate particularly to quality of life, health and safety, especially for women and children. There is strong support for the social principles that form the basis for this Chapter.*

#### A. SOCIAL PLANNING

Victoria's physical setting suggests a 'quality of life' superior to that of most Canadian cities, but making a city a desirable place to live involves more than just land use planning. It means creating a community people want to live in through encouraging social equity, diversity and opportunity. Social planning is concerned with promoting the overall well-being of the community. It involves identifying the social consequences of physical development and other changes in a community, consulting with citizens and service providers to identify community needs and issues, seeking solutions and developing strategies to address community issues and monitoring their effectiveness. Social planning functions, such as community development, education, liaison, coordination and advocacy, impact directly on the quality of life in a community. In Victoria, social planning through the *Social Planning Development Guidelines* helps to guide development of the community, the neighbourhood, or project level regarding how residents live, work or play.

The content of this chapter reflects the considerable work completed in recent years by City Council, the Social Planning Advisory Committee and City staff. This includes the Mayor's Task Force for Young Children (1991), the *Neighbourhood Development Policy*, and the 1993 and 1994 Social Planning Advisory Committee workshops. The results of this work are incorporated in the ensuing objectives and policies.

The City affirms the values of personal and community health and well-being, which are seen to include personal safety, a sense of belonging, freedom of expression, freedom from intolerance and fear, and the related values of harmony in multi-cultural diversity and positive quality of life for all. In support of these values, the City shall:

- aim to promote equitable access to shelter, community services and facilities, education and employment;
- develop social planning policies that will reflect and embody these values, and in doing so, will set the tone for an *Official Community Plan* that will be responsive to the needs of the citizens, sustainable and fiscally realistic.

The social principles should influence planning policies, processes and programs for the City.

#### TOPIC A – SOCIAL PLANNING

##### OBJECTIVES

- (a) To promote equitable access to shelter, community services and facilities, education and employment.
- (b) To ensure personal safety and freedom from intolerance and fear.
- (c) To foster social interaction and community development to create a sense of place and neighbourliness, and a sense of belonging.
- (d) To promote diversity of opportunity for a range of people to live, work and play.
- (e) To accommodate a population diverse in age, culture, income, ability, and family status.
- (f) To develop a safe secure, healthy and accessible environment.
- (g) To promote a range of human services.

##### POLICIES

##### THE CITY SHOULD:

- (i) Develop, adopt and revise as required, *Social Planning Development Guidelines* to be used as a working document which can assist all the parties with development in the City through:

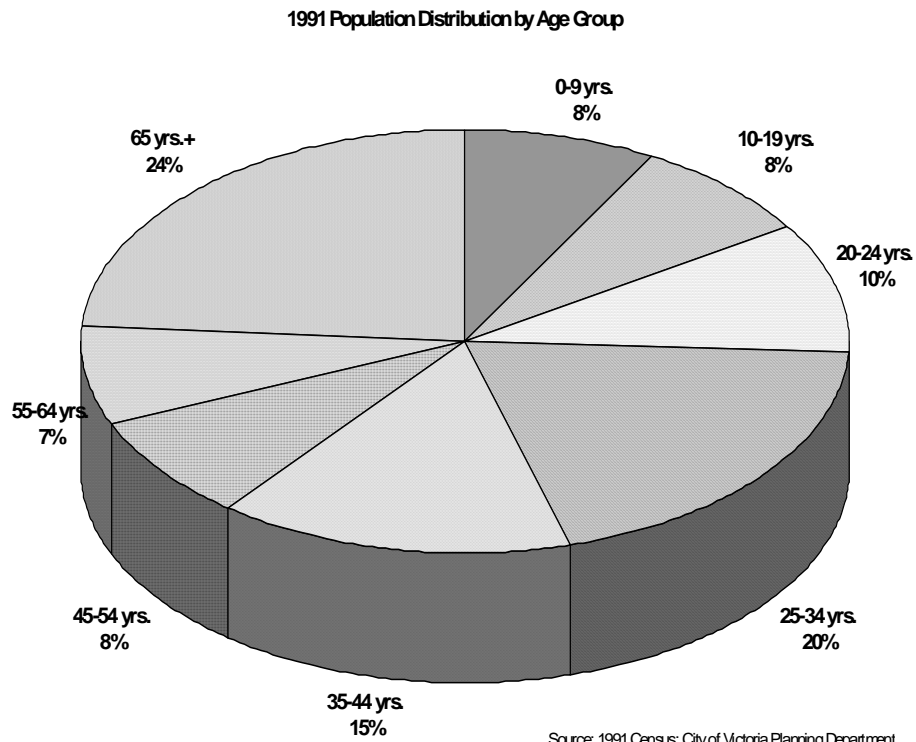
- (a) developers and other stakeholders working with the City's social planners to develop practical *Social Planning Development Guidelines*,
- (b) community groups checking the elements outlined in the Guidelines to develop standards in local area planning and community development,
- (c) City staff employing the Guidelines in planning updates and in reviewing development proposals.

## B. SOCIAL PROFILE

The demographics help to define the social character of the community. A database and analysis provides opportunity for an assessment of social needs based on demographic and social trends in the community, monitoring and evaluating the changing social needs and emerging social issues and managing the social impacts of change on a planned basis through the development of policy options.

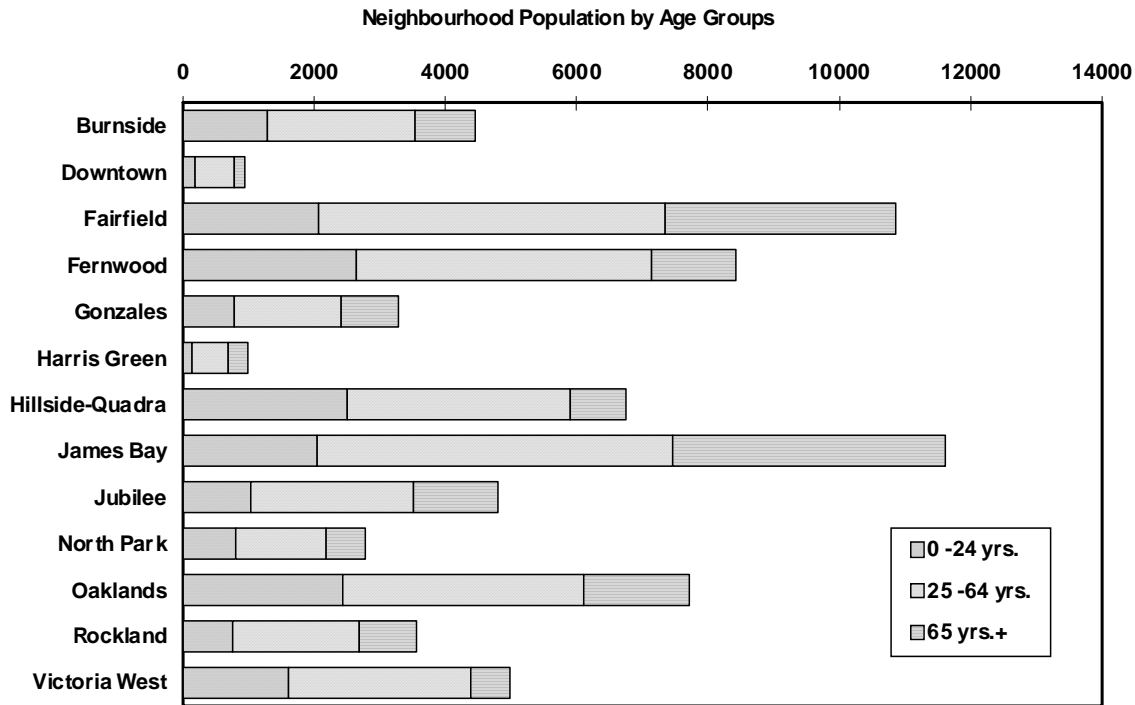
Demographic trends in Victoria reflect provincial ones. British Columbia is more stable demographically than the rest of Canada.

The population is not only growing, with an increasing number of young people moving to the province for quality of life and employment opportunities, it is also aging.



Historically, Victoria has been perceived primarily as a community of retirees. Although there is a slight decline, from 25.3% in 1986 to 23.9% in 1991, of residents aged 65 years and over, the City has the highest proportion of population aged 65 years and over of any major Canadian city. A quarter of the population is in this category, and this proportion will increase as baby boomers age.

for families, youth and children. While family size in the City of Victoria is below the average for Metropolitan Victoria, certain neighbourhoods, such as Hillside-Quadra, Oaklands and Springridge, with a higher percentage of children living at home, are family oriented.



Source: Statistics Canada, 1991 Census information; based on Neighbourhood Boundaries adopted by Council May 9, 1995.

Consequently, Victoria has the opportunity to be in the vanguard of serving an aging population and meeting the challenges of providing social and community services for this group

Within the younger age groups, the 1991 data show increases in all groups over the 1986 figures. The 1991 Census data shows 15.1% of the population in the 35-44 years age group, compared with 11.8% in 1986. The 25-34 and 45-54 age groups show similar trends of smaller magnitudes, suggesting an increasingly younger element within the overall population. The growing element of younger population should be considered in developing planning policies

There is an increasing awareness of certain groups who have special support needs, such as those with disabilities. In fact, the elderly and the disabled represent an increasingly significant component of the overall population. Close to half of those over 65 years have a disability and 35-40% of those with a disability use a wheelchair. There is a need to ensure that the community's environment is accessible and also that a variety of accessible housing units are available. Another group with special social needs are the street youth, who are attracted to life in Downtown Victoria and the sense of community it offers to them.

There is growing visibility and awareness of the need for more services and supporting policies and programs for Victoria’s youth population generally, both in schools and the neighbourhood centres.

Also influencing the demographic pattern is the growing proportion of immigrants. The city is becoming an increasingly multi-cultural community. Within Victoria, 9% of the population is a visible minority, and just under 20% of the City's population is non-English speaking, with the latter likely to increase.

Average family income in the City was the lowest in the region in 1990. Also characteristic of the low-income population is the fact that 66% of the households in the City of Victoria are renters (1991 Census).

These, and all demographic characteristics, have implications for social planning and community development.

## TOPIC B – SOCIAL PROFILE

### OBJECTIVES

- (a) To respond effectively and proactively to demographic changes.
- (b) To create a user-friendly, barrier-free community environment.
- (c) To address the needs of recent immigrants.
- (d) To address the needs of youth.

### POLICIES

#### THE CITY SHOULD:

- (i) Ensure that the City has a database for social needs analysis to develop policies responsive to the social needs of citizens and the changes in social mix within the neighbourhoods and the City at large.

#### THE CITY, SENIOR GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES SHOULD:

- (ii) Strive for full accessibility and use of public facilities and services for citizens of all ages with physical and communication disabilities.
- (iii) Work with other government and non-profit agencies that provide service to immigrants.

#### THE CITY AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES SHOULD:

- (iv) Work with youth serving agencies, community organizations, and established youth groups.

### C. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Victoria is a city of neighbourhoods, each with its own physical and social identity. Map 5 shows population projections for each neighbourhood.

When neighbourhoods were asked to characterize themselves, the following responses were given:

- **Oaklands:** *“unique and good neighbour, Hillside Mall; one of the smaller sized communities with many parks; compared to other communities - more young families with school-aged children; close to all amenities.”*
- **South Jubilee:** *“a vital, varied and family oriented community served by lively shopping district along Oak Bay Avenue; concerned with preserving the current character and mix of owner-occupied and rental housing and minimizing the intrusion of traffic.”*
- **North Jubilee:** *“strong residential mix of housing and commercial/institutional services; a variety of shops and services within walking distance; some major arterial transportation routes run through the area.”*

Neighbourhoods which have a clear physical and social definition, and which foster social interaction through community gathering places, give the residents an identity within the overall City environment. Neighbourhoods with a clustering of services, including shopping, jobs, community services and public places, provide communities with ‘hearts’. Strong, viable neighbourhoods offer residents a full range of lifecycle options to respond to their changing social needs, including housing, through life. This is achieved through an integration of policies. The gathering centres facilitate opportunities for meeting and social interaction, shopping, recreation, learning, health, employment and transit. This is the mixed use concept discussed in more detail in the chapter, *Toward a Viable Community*.

**WHAT RESIDENTS SAID:**

- *Improve liveability of communities .... preserve the "community ethic.*
- *Retain character of neighbourhoods.*

In 1993, the City adopted a *Neighbourhood Development Policy*. Neighbourhood development is a process that involves local residents in the continuing determination of those decisions, policies, and programs that affect all their lives. Neighbourhood development is a shared process in which the City and neighbourhood work together to satisfy neighbourhood needs and aspirations in the context of overall City goals. Families are important to building strong, stable neighbourhoods. The Mayor's *Task Force Report for Young Children* recommended that the city needs "...to be more liveable to attract and retain young families who can contribute to local economic development as job holders and taxpayers". Another major recommendation of the Task Force was to establish a position for a Child and Youth Advocate for the Greater Victoria Region.

**TOPIC C – NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES**

- (a) To encourage the development of strong neighbourhoods.
- (b) To facilitate effective linkages between the City and the neighbourhoods it serves.
- (c) To create "Victoria: A Family Friendly Place".

**POLICIES****THE CITY SHOULD:**

- (i) Under the *Neighbourhood Development Policy*, develop a partnership process in which the City and the neighbourhoods work together to satisfy neighbourhood needs and aspirations in the context of overall City goals, building on the local area planning process.
- (ii) Help facilitate support and coordination between existing neighbourhood community associations.
- (iii) Through public awareness and education, pursue the development of nurturing environments for all people, including those with disabilities, throughout their lives.

**D. DOWNTOWN**

Downtown is a residential and commercial neighbourhood with diverse social characteristics and needs. The character of the neighbourhood reflects the many stakeholders, including businesses, residents street people, and visitors. In recent years, the City has been working cooperatively with a variety of social agencies to respond to identified needs. Some of these include Cool Aid Society (Streetlink Shelter), Salvation Army, Gateway, Swift House, Upper Room, Open Door Drop-in Centre, Mustard Seed, Youth Empowerment Society, Victoria Housing Registry, and the Victoria Street Community Association, which emanated from the Downtown Victoria Community Development Project (1993).

These social agencies also work on projects in cooperation with the Downtown business community represented by the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Victoria Association, the Victoria Business Improvement Association and Tourism Victoria. The Victoria Downtown Youth Outreach Project is an example of such a project. It is designed to team a youth outreach worker with a community police officer to seek out and assist youths 'at risk', defuse confrontations, build trust and seek solutions to social and not criminal problems.

**TOPIC D – DOWNTOWN****OBJECTIVES**

- (a) To continue to develop policy responses to meet the particular social needs of the Downtown community.

**POLICIES****THE CITY SHOULD:**

- (i) Monitor social needs, and identify trends and issues.

**THE CITY, IN COOPERATION WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD:**

- (ii) Prepare policy responses.

**E. COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS: HEALTH, RECREATIONAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL**

An appropriate level and mix of community services to meet the needs of all ages in the population is part of planning for a liveable community. This includes programs related to child care, social services, health clinics, recreation and community centres and schools.

With rising land costs and fiscal constraint, the retention and use of institutional sites should be encouraged for public and community use with a multi-purpose role where possible. There is growing demand for community facilities, and, within budget constraints, consideration is being given to the designation of select schools for this use. As part of this direction, the City and the School District are working on a partnership agreement which could result in more effective use of City-owned and School District facilities. There is also a trend in providing and supporting the provision of day care facilities in schools throughout the School District, in conjunction with provincial assistance.

Accessible health services for various age groups and needs should be provided in association with the Capital Health Board. These include home care support services for seniors and disabled persons to support independent living and to provide the level of care needed; special support services for others, such as youth and the disadvantaged.

The City provides parks, recreational programs and a variety of community centres and leisure facilities and should encourage barrier free access to allow full use of the facilities by all residents. There is a need to overcome the problems of mobility and communication and to integrate language and culture to enrich the quality of services being provided throughout the City. Community sports and recreation activities are important to all citizens as part of our emphasis on active living and healthy lifestyles. The location of parks, schools, institutions, community and seniors' centres and open space is shown on Map 2.

Culturally, there are many opportunities provided through Victoria's heritage, multi-culturalism and the arts for festivals, entertainment and public art exhibits.

**TOPIC E – COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS: HEALTH, RECREATIONAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL**

**OBJECTIVES**

- (a) To promote the social welfare of neighbourhoods and the City.
- (b) To encourage multi-purpose use of institutional sites.
- (c) To identify and eliminate those barriers which limit access to community services and facilities.
- (d) To provide recreational and cultural services to meet the needs and resources of all City residents.
- (e) To encourage community sports programs and recreation activities for all age groups.

**THE CITY, CRD, SCHOOL DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD:**

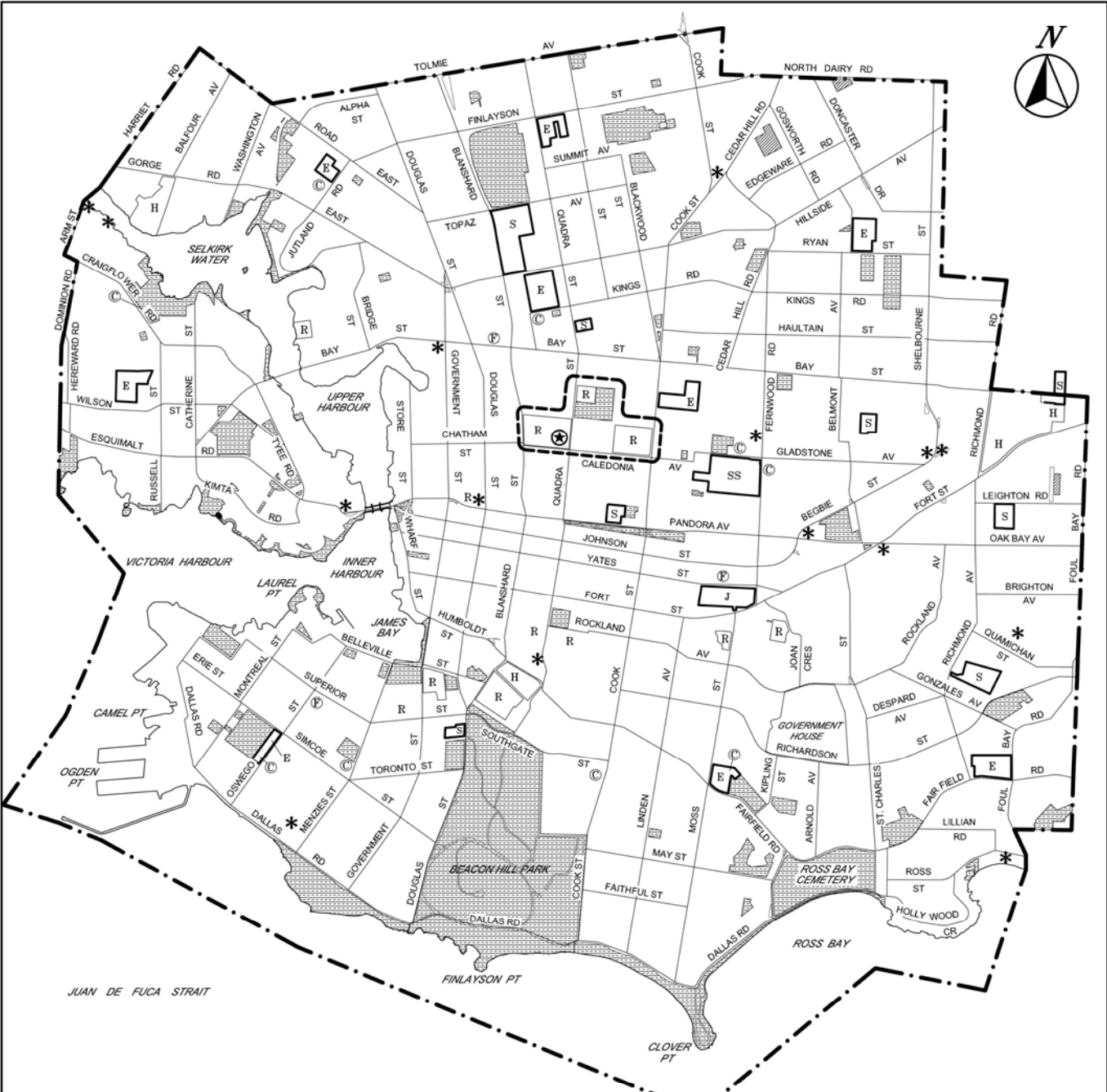
- (i) Develop an overall community services plan to meet health, recreational, social and educational needs for the City.
- (ii) Investigate ways to maximize community use of existing institutional space.
- (iii) Eliminate physical and communication barriers that limit access to municipal buildings and services.
- (iv) Encourage barrier-free facilities.
- (v) Ensure that all citizens have reasonable access to essential community services and facilities, and facilitate access where there is an inability to pay.

**THE CITY SHOULD:**

- (vi) Sustain neighbourhood recreation programs to determine necessary changes and improvements and how these might be accomplished.
- (vii) Require private developers to incorporate recreational facilities within major residential projects.

**THE CITY AND ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD:**

- (viii) Continue cooperation to provide comprehensive library services to the urban community.




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# OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN, MAP 2

## Parks, Schools, Institutions, and Open Spaces

### LEGEND

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Parks & Public Open Space | H Hospital  |
| * Greens Or Small Park  | R Cultural Service/<br>Institutional & Recreational |
| S School  | ★ Main Police Station                               |
| SS Senior Secondary School  | --- Leisure Complex                                 |
| J Junior Secondary School   | ⊙ Community Centre                                  |
| E Elementary School   |   |
| ⓕ Fire Hall   |   |



## F. ARTS AND CULTURE

The need for a stronger statement on arts and culture within the *Official Community Plan* was advocated, given the role this area plays in both the quality of life within the community and the economy.

The arts and culture play a vital role in determining the quality of life of the community and in building a strong sense of community identity. Facilitating the provision of opportunities for a wide range of experience is seen by the citizens as an important role for the municipal arm of government.

The economic importance of the arts and culture to the tourist economy and the contribution that arts and culture make to the character of the harbour is discussed elsewhere in the *Official Community Plan*. In discussing a 'Toward A Liveable Community', emphasis is being placed on the arts as they affect quality of life issues.

Current policies which promote the creation of art work for public spaces support the desire to retain the human scale, enhance our urban space and express the vibrancy of the City. Our artists help us define our humanity and, with art in public places, residents can share a sense of common social goals and community identity.

The provision of facilities for both the recreational and the professional artist will enhance the quality of life in the City. There is agreement that most professional arts activity should be accommodated in the Downtown core and the need for major arts facilities is documented in the *Greater Victoria Arts Facilities Study*. Among the priorities given are a Community Arts Centre, a major performing centre and a new art gallery. While much community arts activity is decentralized in recreation and educational centres within neighbourhoods, there is a role for a Community Arts Centre which would provide rehearsal and exhibition space, artists' studios, workshop and educational areas in or near the Downtown core. To be fiscally responsible, professional and community groups should work in cooperation with the City to investigate funding through a public/private partnership arrangement.

Policies should be developed to encourage access, both physical and financial, for all residents to participate in arts and culture programs, whether in performance halls, art galleries, museums, educational and recreational settings or in public spaces. Relevant information should be readily available.

### TOPIC F – ARTS AND CULTURE

#### OBJECTIVES

- (a) To acknowledge the role of arts and culture in enhancing the quality of life in Victoria.
- (b) To design strategies to make arts and cultural programming available, accessible and affordable to all citizens.
- (c) To expand the number of available spaces for arts and culture use, allowing decentralization where appropriate.
- (d) To maintain current arts facilities.
- (e) To increase opportunities for the placement of works of art in public parks, buildings and spaces.

#### POLICIES

##### THE CITY SHOULD:

- (i) Establish a mechanism to increase the number of outdoor venues for arts performances.
- (ii) Support competitions for works of art in City spaces.
- (iii) Encourage private sector public art projects through policies such as density bonus.
- (iv) Encourage the development of arts programs for defined audience groups in diverse City facilities.

##### THE CITY, IN COOPERATION WITH THE ARTS INTERMUNICIPAL COMMITTEE AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES SHOULD:

- (v) Revisit the priorities of the *Greater Victoria Arts Facility Study*, with a view to the provision of adequate arts facilities.
- (vi) Develop a formula for contributing support to a Capital Fund for the provision of major, regional professional facilities in the Downtown core.
- (vii) Maintain the McPherson and Royal Theatres as viable performance venues for the community and professional arts activities.

**G. SAFE CITY**

Every effort must be made to maintain Victoria as a safe city; a liveable community where people can safely use public spaces, day or night. Neighbourhoods should foster a personal and collective sense of security, both in the home and on the street. Within the community, some people are more at risk than others and fear for personal safety restricts their lives. Steps must be taken to address the sources of fear.

Maintaining a safe city involves assessing and auditing the design of the urban environment and its social characteristics. Through the application of the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Program*, as a component of a multi-disciplinary approach to urban design, the City can influence the design of urban development to reduce crime and nuisance problems. Another way to influence design is through safety audits which can be used in two ways. First, they can be used as a tool for identifying unsafe places and second, as part of developing initiatives to counter crime, to identify why people feel unsafe and insecure in an area. The safety audits may be compared with police data on crime in the area, and safer neighbourhoods created through redesign. Also, in the area of public safety, the City is working with neighbourhoods to involve the public in community-based policing projects.

Education programs on personal safety can raise awareness for individuals and for those with special needs, as well as women and children experiencing domestic violence. Child health and safety is an important consideration in this policy area. School/child safety programs such as the *Safe Route to School Plan* and *Safe Crossings*, and the creation of pedestrian networks/greenways are concepts supporting safer neighbourhoods. *Safe Route to School* surveys have been effective for several schools in not only educating students and parents about traffic safety, but also in identifying and prioritizing traffic problems. Policy on the Greenways Program is dealt with in the chapter on *'Toward A Well Serviced Community'*.

**TOPIC G – SAFE CITY****OBJECTIVES**

- (a) To promote safety in design.
- (b) To improve unsafe places.
- (c) To increase police presence.
- (d) To promote education and awareness.
- (e) To provide safe refuge.

**POLICIES****THE CITY SHOULD:**

- (i) Promote the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Program* (CPTED), through the integration of personal safety and security considerations in its overall planning process, and ensure that all new developments meet standards of personal safety and security.
- (ii) Develop and implement a Safety Audit Program, by identifying places that are unsafe, as well as places that are perceived as unsafe and plan remedial action.
- (iii) Continue to involve the public in police services through community-based policing, where appropriate, as a means of ensuring greater personal safety and security.
- (iv) Continue to promote advocacy work for the children and youth through youth initiatives.
- (v) Continue to provide outreach to disadvantaged groups.
- (vi) Promote education and awareness of personal safety and security issues by developing initiatives directed to the general public, developers, designers and businesses.
- (vii) Encourage the provision of safe refuges for victims of domestic violence.

**THE CITY, THROUGH THE ADVISORY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, IN COOPERATION WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT SHOULD:**

- (viii) Determine and implement *'Safe Route to School Plan'*.

## **H. TOLERANCE**

The City should promote greater awareness and a better understanding of cultures and values held by various groups, in order to reduce or eliminate fears held by some members of the community. It should also provide leadership by encouraging the participation of constituent groups in civic affairs.

A tolerant society is defined as one “which actively develops the people who belong to it, brings out their gifts and enriches their lives because it values their diversity.”

(Source: Commonwealth Day, 1995, *Theme of Tolerance* from the Queen’s message)

### **TOPIC H – PROMOTE TOLERANCE**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- (a) To provide leadership in promoting tolerance.

#### **POLICIES**

##### **THE CITY SHOULD:**

- (i) Deal with discriminatory barriers, including sexism, disabilities, racism and homophobia and promote the full and equal participation of all citizens in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the City.
- (ii) Liaise with the Race Relations Committee and with representatives of groups experiencing discrimination.
- (iii) Promote change in attitudes and reduce fears regarding discriminated groups by working with all groups in the population.