

NO: R203

COUNCIL DATE: October 21, 2024

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **October 16, 2024**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture** FILE: **0350-01**  
**General Manager, Engineering**

SUBJECT: **Our City - 2024 Campaign Summary**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department and Engineering Department recommend that Council receive this report for information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the second year of the Our City Campaign (“Our City”) that ran from April to September 2024.

## BACKGROUND

Our City is an initiative to inspire and empower residents to take an active role in enhancing their neighbourhoods and engage in activities and projects that improve livability, cleanliness, foster pride and encourage community connections. The campaign focuses on engaging the community to take care of places important to them through placemaking and beautification projects, community clean-ups and volunteerism.

Our City is a citywide campaign that aims to build broad civic pride in Surrey by encouraging and celebrating the actions of people at the neighbourhood and community level. Surrey is on track to be a city of 1 million people in less than 20 years. Our City aims to mobilize this rapid growth and energy to create vibrant community life and neighbourhoods.

## DISCUSSION

The City offers residents many tools, resources and programming to get active in their community and make a positive difference. Our City connects residents to these opportunities in a way that reduces barriers and provides support and guidance. This campaign resulted in the successful completion of over 100 neighbourhood-led improvement projects, cleanups, and events. These diverse projects included block parties, community cleanups, planting projects, fence art, murals, and more.

## Campaign Highlights

Some key highlights of Our City program in 2024 included:

- 567 participants got involved in 23 Our City led events, cleanups, learning opportunities, and beautification activities, including:
  - 8 placemaking meetups with pop-up activities such as fence art and chalk art;
  - 4 workshops that taught residents how to create their own improvement projects;
  - 7 Neighbourhood Enhancement Grant information sessions;
  - 4 Neighbourhood Cleanups hosted; and
  - Over 430 volunteer hours contributed by over 100 volunteers.
- Surrey residents used Our City resources to organize their own community events, projects and neighbourhood clean ups:
  - 70 Neighbourhood Cleanup Kits requests;
  - 35 Neighbourhood Event Kits borrowed; and
  - 56 Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants given out.
- As estimated 21,000 residents participated in the City's 2024 Waste Drop-off Program, delivering over 3,304 tonnes of waste and recycling items.
- Over 25,215 items were collected as part of the City's year-round Large Item Pickup Program keeping these items off city streets, parks, and other property.
- City staff and contractors cleaned up over 208 kilometres of Surrey roads weekly during the campaign period collecting over 2,429 garbage bags of litter.
- 3,108 illegal dumping sites were cleaned up throughout the campaign.

A strategic Our City communications campaign ran from May to August. This campaign led to 11,591 total pageviews and 8,545 unique pageviews.

The grants, clean up kits and other resources promoted through Our City are available throughout the year, and active promotion of specific campaign programs and workshops will begin again in spring 2025 once there is more community demand. Appendix "I" provides a full overview of the components and activities of Our City.

## CONCLUSION

Our City aims to inspire and empower Surrey residents to take care of and improve their neighbourhoods. Surrey is a vibrant growing city, and Our City aims to provide residents with the tools and resources to make Surrey more connected, clean and vibrant. The accomplishments achieved through the 2024 Our City campaign demonstrates Surrey residents' commitment to make Surrey a better place to live, work and play.

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Engineering

Appendix "I": 2024 Our City Campaign Summary

[https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/pradministration/corporate reports\\_regular/2022/lwyl corporate report draft 2022.docx](https://surreybc.sharepoint.com/sites/pradministration/corporate%20reports_regular/2022/lwyl%20corporate%20report%20draft%202022.docx)

## 2024 Our City Campaign Summary

Our City is a beautification, placemaking and civic pride campaign. The campaign focuses on engaging the community to take care of places important to them through placemaking, community clean-ups, community volunteerism and beautification projects. Programs and activities included in the Our City campaign are outlined in this appendix, and include:

### PLACEMAKING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

An Our City program guide listing the full range of program and event opportunities is released at the launch of the annual campaign.

#### Grant Information Sessions

Often people want to apply for grants, but do not know how or where to begin. Information sessions help people identify local projects and learn about how to apply for the Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants. These workshops will be facilitated throughout the campaign to encourage people to apply for support.

#### Learning Opportunities

Hands-on learning opportunities are offered to build skills, knowledge, and increase the confidence and capacity of residents to actively improve their neighbourhoods and build community pride. Opportunities create synergy between established City of Surrey initiatives and programs. The focus is on empowering residents to effectively plan and execute neighbourhood enhancement projects.

#### Placemaking Meetups

Drop-in group meetups are promoted through campaign channels to provide low-barrier access to activities that connect people to the places they live. Residents are encouraged to participate in street banner crafts, fence beautification, chalk art, pop-up parties and more.

#### Resource and Tool Promotion

The City of Surrey provides many resources and opportunities that residents can take advantage of to make their neighbourhoods vibrant places.

Feature programs:

- Neighbourhood Enhancement Grants
- Grant Information Sessions
- Neighbourhood Cleanup Kit
- Neighbourhood Event Kit
- Our City Volunteer Program
- Placemaking Learning Opportunities
- Placemaking Meetups
- Business Beautification Tools

Additional programs:

- Block Parties
- Active PLAYces Kits
- Community Banners
- Block Watch
- Mural Projects

## **CLEANING UP AND LITTER**

### **Neighbourhood Clean Up Kit**

Community members can register their clean-up event on the campaign webpage. The City will support residents by providing equipment and support for picking up bulky items. The service provides support year-round.

### **Our City Volunteer Program**

The Our City Volunteer Program recruit's volunteers to take part in community beautification initiatives. This includes City organized neighbourhood clean ups, a self-directed litter clean up program, beautification projects, and event outreach opportunities.

### **Business Engagement**

Businesses are engaged in Our City through the Community Enhancement Partnership (CEP) Program that offers grants to businesses to beautify their façade and enhance streetscapes. The campaign works with Business Improvement Associations to disseminate information and provide learning opportunities and placemaking meetups near prominent locations within Business Improvement Areas.

### **Block Watch Engagement**

The campaign works with the Block Watch Program to encourage Block Watch groups to get involved in making safe and vibrant neighbourhoods. Block Watch's are provided a Grant Information Session and are encouraged to participate in the regular community clean up contest.

### **City-wide Clean-Up Mobilization**

City staff, along with contractors, are mobilized to complete enhanced litter picking and clean-up of the city moving through each town centre.

### **School Engagement**

Outreach is performed to schools on the availability of support for neighbourhood cleanups, small projects, and celebrations. A resource outlining step by step actions to start easy small projects in neighbourhoods is provided to schools in March, allowing ample time for classes to undertake a small project before the end of the school year.

### **Waste Drop-off Program**

Residents and businesses are encouraged to participate in the City's five-month long Waste Drop-off Program to help keep neighborhoods clean and free of dumped items. The event provides free drop-off to dispose of unwanted material at both Central Surrey and North Surrey recycling and waste centres between May and October.

### **Large Item Pickup Program**

Residents are engaged and encouraged to make use of the Large Item Pickup Program (LIPU). The LIPU service is a convenient and free disposal option for residents to get rid of up to six

unwanted large items (i.e., couches, mattresses, appliances) throughout the year which will keep these items off city streets, parks, and other property.

## **SHARING STORIES AND INSPIRATION**

### **Communications Campaign**

A robust communications strategy both encourages and celebrates individual and group contributions to a more vibrant and clean Surrey.

The Our City landing page on [surrey.ca](http://surrey.ca) provides details for how to get involved with all the neighbourhood enhancement initiatives. A dedicated 'small projects for neighbourhoods' pamphlet and webpage is added to provide additional support for those looking to undertake small projects in neighbourhoods.

The communications campaign also draws attention to the resources available through telling stories about how residents have used them to improve their community. The campaign utilizes existing digital channels like social media (organic and paid) and ENews to elevate storytelling opportunities and key messaging that resonate to channel-specific audiences. A detailed approach to tactics is included in the communications plan.

### **Project Map**

Surrey is full of amazing things that residents have created that make communities unique and special, from block parties and community festivals to small beautification projects. A GIS story map is on the City's website to highlight and showcase neighbourhood enhancement projects to help celebrate and inspire others.