



# Corporate *NO: R096*

# Report *COUNCIL DATE: May 13, 2002*

<b>REGULAR COUNCIL</b>			
<b>TO:</b>	<b>Mayor &amp; Council</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>May 8, 2002</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>City Manager</b>	<b>FILE:</b>	<b>7400</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Surrey Pretrial Remand Centre</b>		

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council,

1. receive this report as information.

## INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide background and other information to Council regarding the issue of “double bunking” at the Surrey Pretrial Centre. Council had recently requested that such information be provided to Council in response to concerns that had been expressed by Patricia Bean, Chair of the Citizen's Advisory Board. This board which consists of 3 members of the community including Ms. Bean, Ron Williams, Director of Surrey Pretrial Centre and Pat Annesty, Director of Programs, Surrey Pretrial Centre, was established at the time the Surrey Pretrial Centre was opened to address any community concerns in relation to the ongoing operation of the facility.

## BACKGROUND

In October 1994, District Director Bill Foster of the Surrey Pretrial Centre, appeared before Council regarding the demand for space at Remand Centres throughout the

Province and advised Council that “double bunking” (i.e., two prisoners to a cell) was occurring in a number of facilities throughout the Province including the Pretrial Remand

Centre in Surrey. Council was advised that the Remand Centre has no control over number of prisoners that are taken in. Council was further advised that throughout the Province, there are approximately 300 of these holding units with

shared accommodation (double bunking). The District Director requested that Council approve the addition of 56 temporary beds at the Surrey Remand Centre (to allow double bunking in 56 cells). There had been no incidents at the Surrey Pretrial Centre at that time that were attributable to double bunking. Council was assured that the Province was committed to removing the additional beds by the year 2000. Council expressed concern that if these beds were approved, they would become permanent. Council was given assurance that this was in fact not the case, and there would be no double bunking in this facility on a permanent basis. Council decided not to grant approval for the additional beds at that time.

There was further communication between the City and Provincial authorities between late 1994 and 1996 regarding the issue of allowing double bunking at the Remand Centre. However, the City never agreed to such a change.

Based on recent discussions with the officials in charge of the Surrey Remand Centre, double bunking has been necessary at the Centre on a relatively consistent basis from 1994 through to the present.

The RCMP has advised there have been no significant incidents at the Surrey Remand Centre where double bunking was considered to be a contributing factor. The only concerns that the RCMP identified were related to complaints that have been received by the RCMP regarding prisoners at the Remand Centre making rude remarks through the cell windows to the staff and public in the areas surrounding the Remand Centre (i.e., predominantly parking areas).

Mr. Ron Williams, Director of Surrey Pretrial Remand Centre, was contacted recently and the matter of double bunking was discussed. He advised that double bunking at the facility has been in effect for 9 or more years. There have been no incidents or serious issues as a result of this procedure. The majority of the Remand Centres, and secure Pre-sentencing Centres throughout the Province are presently utilizing double bunking to accommodate the fluctuations in demand for prisoner space (i.e. Burnaby, Prince George, Chilliwack, Vancouver, etc.)

He advised that the effects and impacts of double bunking include:

- Without double bunking the Surrey Remand Centre does not have sufficient capacity to satisfy the demand for prisoner space.
- Many of the prisoners enjoy double bunking for companionship.
- Occasionally, double bunked prisoners fail to get along and minor assaults do occur but this is not a regular occurrence and such occurrences are addressed by separating the prisoners.
- Security cameras have been installed in all holding units so that prisoners can be effectively monitored from a central location on a regular basis. Prior to the installation of the cameras, additional staff was brought in to meet the demands of the prisoner counts.

Mr. Williams also advised that an assessment is done on each prisoner prior to any consideration of double bunking to ensure that the prisoner is a reasonable candidate for double bunking in relation to the safety of other prisoners. If problems are encountered they are immediately addressed.

Staff contacted Patricia Bean to better understand her perspectives and concerns. She advised that she has met with Mr. Williams and staff of the Surrey Pretrial Centre and expressed the neighbourhood's concerns on the increase of inmates at the facility and the potential for this increase to lead to safety issues at the facility.

Mr. Williams has assured Patricia Bean and the Citizens Advisory Board that he monitors the situation on an on-going basis and does not have concerns that the population of prisoners at the Surrey Pretrial Centre is unsafe. The prisoner population at the facility ranges from a low of 150 to more than 200.

Bylaw No. 9242, (50 year lease, District of Surrey and British Columbia Buildings Corporation) approved by Mayor

and Council in October 1987, stated that the Surrey Pretrial Services Centre would contain “150 beds for male adults, pending disposition under law and/or awaiting Court appearance or transfer”.

## CONCLUSION

The Surrey Pretrial Remand Centre has operated for the last 9 years utilizing double bunking to accommodate fluctuations in prisoner population without incident. It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

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City Manager

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