

REPORT  
Regular Council Meeting  
1988 July 11

TO: MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL 1988 JULY 07

FROM: ALDERMAN R.G. BEGIN  
COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE ON FAMILY  
COURT AND YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: PROPOSED YOUTH DIVERSION PILOT PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT this report be received for information purposes.

R E P O R T

INTRODUCTION

In my capacity as Council's Representative to the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to apprise Council of a pilot project currently being considered by the Committee which would see the development of a positive method of diverting the "generation at risk" who break the law.

BACKGROUND

The Committee was originally introduced to this concept by way of information received from Odessa, Texas where "Teen Court" has been in operation since late 1983. Teen Court was the brainchild of the Junior League of Odessa who researched youth diversion programs in other American cities and subsequently sought funding from the City of Odessa to commence its own program.

The purpose of Odessa's Teen Court, which consists of a jury of peers, a bailiff, a clerk, defense and crown counsel and a judge (who is the only adult involved) is to give young people an opportunity to be tried by their peers under the assumption that when people their own age tell them they have wronged, it carries more weight than when an adult intervenes. It also gives the offender an opportunity to make restitution by performing community service instead of paying a fine or going through the court system. The jury does not decide guilt or innocence but only the restitution the offender is to make. Referrals come from the Odessa Juvenile Detective Division of the Police Department, the judiciary, the School District and various community agencies.

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Through ongoing investigations of existing youth diversion programs in both Canadian and American cities, the Family Court and Youth Justice Committee have discovered similar programs to that of Teen Court in Manitoba, Abbotsford and Vancouver. The program models differ in function but the concept of youth diversion as an alternate measure to formal court action remains the same.

#### CONCLUSION

The Family Court and Youth Justice Committee is currently in the process of conducting an extensive examination of the feasibility, desirability and ramifications of establishing a youth diversion pilot project for Burnaby. Input is being sought from the judiciary, probation, R.C.M.P., Crown Counsel, the Corrections Branch of the Ministry of the Attorney General, and the School Board to name a few.

A full report will be submitted to Council at a later date defining proposed aims and objectives, rationale, process and procedure for a youth diversion program tailored for the Municipality of Burnaby.

Respectfully submitted,

Alderman R.G. Begin