

DATE OF MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2023

AUTHORED BY CHRISTY WOOD, SOCIAL PLANNER

SUBJECT BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND – UPDATE AND CONSULTATION WITH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide Council with an update on the Building Safer Communities Fund and to receive input on risk and protective factors for children and youth connected to gun and gang violence.

BACKGROUND

In March 2022, Public Safety Canada announced new federal funding to address community safety through the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). The objective of this fund is to help municipalities and Indigenous communities prevent gun and gang violence by addressing their root causes. The City of Nanaimo has been allocated \$1.8 million from Public Safety Canada until March 2026 to develop and implement a strategic plan to address gun and gang violence. At the 2022-JUL-04 Regular Council meeting, the following motion was passed by Council:

“It was moved and seconded that Council accept the funds from the Building Safer Communities Fund to address gun and gang violence, endorse Staff to use year one funds to build a 3 year strategic plan with pilot programs, and commit Staff to providing overall grant management.”

Since that time, the City has entered into a contribution agreement with Public Safety Canada, hired a project coordinator, and engaged consultants to support the development and implementation of Nanaimo’s Gun and Gang Violence Prevention Strategy (the Strategy).

DISCUSSION

The BSCF objective, as identified by Public Safety Canada, is to support communities by addressing local risk factors that put youth at risk of gun and gang violence, finding ways to support resiliency among youth, and to increase community safety. Developing Nanaimo’s Strategy will include identifying current risks and protective factors existing in Nanaimo, what programs are working well, where there may be gaps in supporting children and youth, and what evidence based programs and initiatives might work well for Nanaimo. An overview of the BSCF Project Activities for Year One are outlined in Attachment A.

Consultants and Staff are currently engaged in the consultation phase. In addition to the consultations with service providers and direct service workers, young people, parents, Newcomers, and Indigenous communities, the consultants and Staff would like to engage Council in a dialogue around challenges, needs, and ideas to prevent gun and gang violence in Nanaimo.

The consultation phase is expected to be complete by the end of February 2023. Staff will return to Council with a draft Strategy in March 2023 for endorsement prior to submitting to Public Safety Canada for final approval. The Strategy will include recommendations of new programs and initiatives to be implemented in Years Two to Four (2023 to 2026).

Risk factors and protective factors associated with youth gun and gang violence

Working upstream means addressing the underlying causes of gun and gang violence for youth by reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors at the individual, family, peer, school, and societal levels. Risk factors are defined as negative influences in the lives of individuals or a community. They may increase the presence of violence, victimization, or fear of crime in a community and may increase the likelihood that individuals engage in violence or become victims. Protective factors are positive influences that can improve the lives of individuals or the safety of a community. These may decrease the likelihood that individuals engage in violence or become victims. Building on existing protective factors makes individuals and communities stronger and better able to counteract risk factors. For some examples of risk factors and protective factors, see Attachment B for a listing.

Thinking about risk factors and protective factors, the consultants and Staff will be consulting community stakeholders with the following questions:

Identifying Strengths and Concerns:

- What child/youth programs are you aware of in Nanaimo that specifically support children and youth that struggle?
- Which organizations and programs in your experience, do well in working with children and youth?
- In your experience, to what extent are gangs and guns an issue in Nanaimo? What are some key locations of concern?
- What risk factors do you think are present in Nanaimo that cause children/youth to become involved with gangs in the first place?

Identifying Opportunities and Solutions:

- What recommendations do you have to prevent and/or intervene with the reasons children/youth become involved in gangs (discussed in the previous question)? Consider programs, services, policies, etc.
- What do you think should be done in Nanaimo to support young people exiting gangs?

Sustaining the Momentum:

- If the community wants to have a lasting impact building on the strategy, what can organizations do now and into the future to keep up the momentum of prevention and intervention?
- More concretely, what can Council do to create lasting changes in the community (e.g., policies, programs, collaboration efforts, etc.)?

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- At the end of the 3 years of funding, how will we know if our strategy has been successful? What are the possible impacts on children, youth, and community safety in Nanaimo?
- In your opinion, what indicators can show us whether Nanaimo has been successful in achieving the goals for the strategy?

CONCLUSION

Council's input along with other key stakeholders will help to inform Nanaimo's Gun and Gang Violence Prevention Strategy by identifying local risk and protective factors for children and youth and help to build a safer Nanaimo by increasing youth resiliency. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City has been awarded \$1.8 million by Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund to address gun and gang violence in Nanaimo over a four-year period.
- City Staff have hired consultants to develop a plan as well as staff coordinator to support the development and implementation of Nanaimo's Gun and Gang Violence Prevention Strategy.
- The Strategy will identify local risk and protective factors and will include recommendations on new programs and initiatives to be implemented in Years Two through Four (2023 – 2026).
- Council is being engaged to provide input on local risk and protective factors for children and youth in Nanaimo.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: BSCF Project Activities – Year One (December 2022 to 2023-JUN-30)
ATTACHMENT B: Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Gang and Gun Violence Prevention |

Submitted by:

Lisa Brinkman
Manager, Community Planning

Damon Johnston
Manager, Recreation Services

Concurrence by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Director, Community Development

Darcie Osborne
Director, Recreation & Culture

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance

Supt. Lisa Fletcher
Officer in Charge, Nanaimo RCMP

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services
/Deputy CAO

ATTACHMENT A
BSCF PROJECT ACTIVITIES – YEAR ONE
(December 2022 to 2023-JUN-30)

<i>Project Activity</i>	<i>Actions</i>
Research	Developing knowledge to fill gaps at the community level including research, consultation, and best practices related to gun and gang violence prevention.
Consultations	Community consultations with various groups are being conducted to facilitate the integration of different experiences, worldviews, and ways of knowing in the development of Nanaimo’s strategy and will include engaging with service providers, newcomers, Indigenous community members, parents and families, as well as young people.
Steering Committee	A multi sectoral steering committee has been established to oversee the project activities, provide guidance, and ensure the work is rooted in local context and experiences.
Evaluation Plan	Developing systems to support data gathering and evaluation of results achieved from the Strategy.
Sustainability Plan	Developing a plan to sustain successful preventative initiatives or intervention activities beyond the end of the Building Safer Communities Fund.
Final Strategy on Gun and Gang Violence Prevention (3 Year Plan)	Developing local and community based strategies and initiatives to be delivered in Years Two, Three, and Four and submitted to Public Safety Canada by 2023-MAR-31.
Public Education	Developing a public education and awareness campaign to engage youth, parents, and community to bring awareness to both the risk factors and the protective factors associated with gun and gang violence.
Outreach and Recruitment	Conducting outreach and recruitment of vulnerable youth for preventative/intervention programs and initiatives to be delivered in Years Two to Four.

ATTACHMENT B



CANADIAN MUNICIPAL
NETWORK ON CRIME
PREVENTION
Together for Safer Canadian Cities

RÉSEAU MUNICIPAL
CANADIEN EN PRÉVENTION
DE LA CRIMINALITÉ
Ensemble pour des villes canadiennes plus sécuritaires



Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Gang and Gun Violence Prevention

DEFINITIONS¹

- **Individual level:** Focus on factors that can place individuals at risk of being criminalized or victimized.
- **Family / peer level:** Focus on enhancing the strength and well-being of families or peer groups (such as friends, classmates).
- **Community / school / workplace level:** Focus on increasing the ability of schools, workplaces or of a community in general to prevent violence and victimization.
- **Societal level:** Focus on increasing the ability of society to promote positive values, laws, and rules. They may include initiatives that build structures and social systems to aid in the development of a supportive and resilient society.
- **Risk factors:** These are negative influences in the lives of individuals or a community. These may increase the presence of violence, victimization, or fear of crime in a community and may also increase the likelihood that individuals engage in violence or become victims.
- **Protective factors (resiliencies):** These are positive influences that can improve the lives of individuals or the safety of a community. These may decrease the likelihood that individuals engage in violence or become victims. Building on existing protective factors makes individuals and communities stronger and better able to counteract risk factors.

¹ <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/crm-prvntn/fndng-prgrms/rsk-fctrs-en.aspx>



EXAMPLES OF RISK FACTORS²

Individual	Peer Group	School	Family	Community	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior delinquency or criminalization • Illegal gun ownership • Drug trafficking • Desire for status, identity, self-esteem, companionship, and protection • Aggression or violence • Alcohol and drug use • Early sexual activity • Violent victimization • Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang members in class • Friends who use drugs • Friends who are gang members • Interaction with peers who are in conflict with the law • Pre-teen exposure to stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor school performance • Low educational aspirations • Negative labelling by teachers • Few teacher role models • Educational frustration • Low attachment to school • Learning difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family violence, neglect, and drug use • Family members in a gang • Lack of adult and parental role models • Criminalized and/or incarcerated parents • Violence from parents or siblings • Lack of presence of parents before and after school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of gangs in the neighbourhood • Availability or perceived access to drugs in the neighbourhood • Availability of firearms • Cultural norms supporting gang behaviour • Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High poverty • Discrimination, stigma, racism, and oppression • Lack of access to affordable and safe housing options • Lack of services (social, recreational, cultural)

² <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/yth-gng-nvlvmnt/index-en.aspx>



EXAMPLES OF PROTECTIVE FACTORS (RESILIENCIES)³

Individual	Peer Group	School	Family	Community	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intolerant attitude toward violence • Positive self-esteem and sense of belonging • Popularity acknowledged by friends • Highly developed social skills / competencies • Religious beliefs • Strong conflict resolution skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and close relationships with classmates • Close relationships with peers who are not in conflict with the law • Membership in peer groups that do not condone violent behaviour • Involvement in after-school activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to school • Clear behaviour rules in school • Engagement of parents and teachers • Academic achievement and aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectedness to family or adults outside the family • Ability to discuss problems with parents • Frequent shared activities with parents • Consistent presence of parent(s) in the morning or evening • Involvement in social or recreational activities • Parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Volunteering • Participation in traditional healing and cultural activities • Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural) • Supports for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic policies that support positive youth development • Access to basic needs and services • Community norms of shared responsibility for supporting youth and families

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/riskprotectivefactors.html>

BUILDING A SAFER NANAIMO THROUGH YOUTH RESILIENCE (Building Safer Communities Fund)

Council Engagement
2023-FEB-13



Together for Safer Canadian Cities

INTRODUCTION

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

WORK PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

-  Research report
-  Consultation engagement strategy
-  Steering committee engagement
-  Community consultations
-  Best practice summary report
-  Public awareness, education strategy, communication
-  Data collection strategy and monitoring plan
-  Sustainability plan

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

WHAT IS UPSTREAM PREVENTION?



Together for Safer Canadian Cities

RISK FACTORS

Individual	Peer Group	School	Family	Community	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior delinquency or criminalization • Illegal gun ownership • Drug trafficking • Desire for status, identity, self-esteem, companionship, and protection • Aggression or violence • Alcohol and drug use • Early sexual activity • Violent victimization • Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gang members in class • Friends who use drugs • Friends who are gang members • Interaction with peers who are in conflict with the law • Pre-teen exposure to stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor school performance • Low educational aspirations • Negative labelling by teachers • Few teacher role models • Educational frustration • Low attachment to school • Learning difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family violence, neglect, and drug use • Family members in a gang • Lack of adult and parental role models • Criminalized and/or incarcerated parents • Violence from parents or siblings • Lack of presence of parents before and after school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of gangs in the neighbourhood • Availability or perceived access to drugs in the neighbourhood • Availability of firearms • Cultural norms supporting gang behaviour • Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High poverty • Discrimination, stigma, racism, and oppression • Lack of access to affordable and safe housing options • Lack of services (social, recreational, cultural)

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

PROTECTIVE FACTORS (RESILIENCIES)

Individual	Peer Group	School	Family	Community	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intolerant attitude toward violence • Positive self-esteem and sense of belonging • Popularity acknowledged by friends • Highly developed social skills / competencies • Religious beliefs • Strong conflict resolution skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong and close relationships with classmates • Close relationships with peers who are not in conflict with the law • Membership in peer groups that do not condone violent behaviour • Involvement in after-school activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to school • Clear behaviour rules in school • Engagement of parents and teachers • Academic achievement and aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connectedness to family or adults outside the family • Ability to discuss problems with parents • Frequent shared activities with parents • Consistent presence of parent(s) in the morning or evening • Involvement in social or recreational activities • Parental/family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Volunteering • Participation in traditional healing and cultural activities • Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural) • Supports for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and economic policies that support positive youth development • Access to basic needs and services • Community norms of shared responsibility for supporting youth and families

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

DISCUSSION / ENGAGEMENT

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

STRENGTHS

- What child/youth programs are you aware of in Nanaimo?
 - Which of these specifically support children and youth that struggle (e.g., fitting in, displaying challenging behaviours such as problematic substance use, are in conflict with the law, have school attendance issues, live in a situation where it is difficult to make ends meet, etc.)?
 - Which organizations and programs do well in working with children and youth?
 - Are there any specific neighbourhood-based programs that do well in supporting children and youth?

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

CONCERNS

- In your opinion, to what extent are gangs and guns an issue in Nanaimo?
- With regards to gun and/or gang activity in Nanaimo, what are some key locations of concern?
- Why do you think children/youth become involved with gangs in the first place? (E.g., risk factors)

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

OPPORTUNITIES / SOLUTIONS

- What recommendations do you have to prevent and/or intervene with the reasons children/youth become involved in gangs?
 - Consider programs, services, policies, etc.
- What do you think should be done in Nanaimo to support young people exiting gangs?

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM

- If the community wants to have a lasting impact building on the strategy, what can organizations do now and into the future to keep up the momentum of prevention and intervention?
- More concretely, what can Council do to create lasting changes in the community (e.g., policies, programs, collaboration efforts, etc.)?

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

MONITORING / EVALUATION

- At the end of the 3 years of funding, how will we know if our strategy has been successful?
 - Consider the impact on children and youth in Nanaimo.
 - Consider the impact on community safety in Nanaimo.
 - Consider the impact on community capacity and collaboration in Nanaimo.
- In your opinion, what indicators can show us whether Nanaimo has been successful in achieving the goals for the strategy?

Together for Safer Canadian Cities

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

Together for Safer Canadian Cities