

Community-Based Public Safety Task Force: Creating Safe and Connected Communities

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Standing Policy Committee on Community and Protective Services recommend that Council:

1. Endorse the proposed actions of the Community-Based Public Safety Task Force, and
2. Conclude the work of the Community-Based Public Safety Task Force and thank the members for their contribution.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Community-Based Public Safety Task Force (Task Force) brought together a coalition of partners to focus their diverse perspectives on the complex issue of urban violence and to identify tangible actions that are aligned with the needs of communities.
- Task Force proposed actions rely on anticipated funding dedicated to anti-gang programming from Public Safety Canada. The actions focus on sharing feedback from community engagement, applying for the anticipated federal funding for prevention of gang-related violence, and coordinating stakeholders to identify and support priority program needs related to at-risk and gang-involved populations.
- The Task Force was an early initiative focused on improving community safety in Calgary and has since become part of a landscape including the Anti-Racism Action Committee, the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, and the Community Safety Investment Framework. Task Force recommendations for action will coordinate with these initiatives to help address the root causes of gang-related violence in Calgary.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** Community perceptions of public safety have been impacted by a rise in offences involving firearms. Task Force recommendations for action support a community-driven and community-owned approach to addressing concerns around urban violence.
- **Why does it matter?** The Task Force recommendation to apply for anticipated federal grants from Public Safety Canada will support better coordination and improve navigation and access for services targeted to at-risk and gang-involved population, creating safe and connected communities.
- On 2020 February 3, Council directed Administration to create a Community-Based Public Safety Task Force and report back with best advice and recommendations addressing community concerns around gun and gang violence.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods
- Background and Previous Council Direction are included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

The Community-Based Public Safety Task Force (Task Force) was created to provide a foundation for a community-driven and community-owned collaborative approach to create safe and connected communities. The Task Force was composed of a diverse group of experts and professionals from various fields, including representatives from all orders of government, the Calgary Police Commission, the Calgary Police Service, public education, academia, local

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service agencies and community leaders. The mandate of the Task Force was to review local and national programs and engage community members to understand which services are effective, and identify gaps, challenges and issues with existing programs. Research and public engagement were also used by Task Force members to provide Council with actionable recommendations. Task Force findings and recommendations for action are detailed in Community-Based Public Safety Task Force: Creating Safe and Connected Communities included as Attachment 2.

Voices of the Community

Recognizing that the best solutions to community concerns about public safety will be collaborative and inclusive, the Task Force engaged a diverse cross-section of Calgarians to better understand those concerns and learn from the lived experience of those affected by urban violence. Some key themes resulting from the engagement were the need for flexible youth programming tailored to community needs, culturally specific services that recognize the requirements of different ethno-cultural groups, and the need for consistent funding sources for important programs that support the community.

Realities & Responses

Existing gang prevention, intervention and suppression programs in Calgary and other relevant jurisdictions were reviewed, with a specific focus on at-risk or gang-involved populations. The analysis identified a number of gang prevention and early-intervention programs in Calgary that help improve outcomes for at-risk individuals and their families. Program and service gaps included opportunities to enhance system navigation and coordination, and a need for formal support to parents and caregivers. Gang-exiting programs and street outreach for gang-involved individuals were considered by the Task Force to be inadequate.

Recommendations for Action

Based on community input and results of the program review, the Task Force is proposing the following actions toward creating safe and connected communities:

1. **Share, Monitor and Advocate** - Valuable insights gained by the Task Force that are outside its scope will be consolidated and shared with appropriate organizations to action, supporting alignment with existing initiatives. Progress on shared feedback will be monitored by City Administration and continued advocacy to the Government of Canada on issues related to urban violence is encouraged.
2. **Apply for and Align Funding** - It is anticipated that Public Safety Canada will be announcing five years of dedicated funding to deter gun crime and support anti-gang programming and provide details on funding distribution and processes in the 2021 Federal Budget. Funding is foundational to proceeding with Task Force recommendations for action. Administration should apply for anticipated funding for community proposals that align with the framework criteria to support Calgary-based solutions specific to gang and gun violence.
3. **Coordinate and Improve Navigation and Access** - The City should support community stakeholders in identifying and prioritizing needs related to at-risk and gang-involved populations. Initiatives need to be community-built and culturally appropriate,

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ensuring coordination with existing initiatives that address the root causes of urban violence. This work will involve identifying barriers around navigating gang-specific programming and improving access for those at-risk or involved in gang activity. Community-built initiatives will coordinate with existing City initiatives including the Anti-Racism Action Committee, the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, and the Community Safety Investment Framework, to advance The City's overarching commitment to community safety.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- Public Engagement was undertaken
- Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- Public/Stakeholders were informed
- Stakeholder dialogue/relations were undertaken

In-person and virtual engagement sessions were conducted throughout 2020 with 15 different groups including community associations, ethno-cultural groups, education stakeholders, and individuals with lived experience of urban violence. The Task Force launched an on-line citizen survey in 2020 November. The survey sought input on perceptions of the biggest public safety issues in local communities and asked for suggestions on possible solutions.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

The Task Force recommendations for action support the Social Wellbeing Policy principle of prevention by supporting safe and connected communities. Conducting work to understand needs and priorities in relation to at-risk and gang-involved populations will position The City to maximize anticipated Public Safety Canada funding to support programs within Calgary.

Environmental

The natural and built environment impacts and is impacted by community safety.

Economic

Urban violence results in economic impacts for individuals, families and communities. Access to federal funding for more culturally appropriate and gang-exiting programs can reduce spending on touch points to the justice system and related social services.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

The recommendations of the Task Force will require significant resources. Administration is anticipating Public Safety Canada funding to enable this work to advance.

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SPC on Community and Protective Services
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RISK

Actions identified by the Task Force rely on a portion of anticipated funding of \$250 million over five years from Public Safety Canada for municipalities, community groups and Indigenous communities to deliver anti-gang programming. If this funding is not announced in 2021 April or is less than anticipated, capacity to address the identified actions will be compromised. Administration will monitor the announcement of federal funding and adjust actions, if required.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Previous Council Direction, Background
2. Community-Based Public Safety Task Force: Creating Safe and Connected Communities
3. **Public Submission**

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Katie Black	Community Services	Inform
Chris Arthurs	Deputy City Manager's Office	Inform