

Accessing the Building Safer Communities Fund

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Community Development Committee recommend that Council direct Administration to apply for the Building Safer Communities Fund, administered by Public Safety Canada, to support community organizations to reduce gun and gang violence and create safe and connected communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Public Safety Canada launched a \$250 million Building Safer Communities Fund to provide multi-year funding through March 2026 to support programs and initiatives that focus on preventing gun and gang violence. The City of Calgary is eligible to receive an allocation of up to \$7.7 million over four years upon its successful application to Public Safety Canada.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** By accessing federal funding through the Building Safer Communities Fund, Calgarians will benefit from additional resources to address gun and gang violence in the city.
- **Why does it matter?** Supporting youth involved, or at risk of involvement, in gun and gang violence will contribute to a safer community.
- In 2020, Council approved the formation of a Community-Based Public Safety Task Force to address community concerns around gun and gang violence. The Task Force proposed actions to support a community-based approach to preventing gun and gang violence. Two of these actions are outstanding and are contingent upon federal funding from Public Safety Canada.
- The City must apply to Public Safety Canada to access the funds no later than Q4 2022 and funds are expected to be released to community-based organizations no later than Q2 2023.
- Administration is working with Public Safety Canada to streamline this process so that funds can flow to community based non-profit organizations as quickly as possible. The final decision on what will be funded rests with Public Safety Canada.
- Strategic Alignment to Council's Citizen Priorities: A city of safe and inspiring neighbourhoods
- Background and Previous Council Direction is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

In 2020, Council approved the formation of a Community-Based Public Safety Task Force (Task Force) to address community concerns around gun and gang violence. The Task Force made three recommendations:

- 1) **Share, Monitor and Advocate:** Insights gained by the Task Force will be consolidated and shared with stakeholders, with scheduled check-ins to monitor progress. The Chair will continue to advocate to the Government of Canada on issues related to urban violence. This is complete.
- 2) **Apply for and Align Funding:** The City will create an action plan for funding based on criteria identified by the community and Task Force to apply for federal funding from Public Safety Canada. This action plan for funding, called the funding approach (Attachment 2), was shared with Council as part of Briefing CD2022-0109 in January 2022. The funding approach provides the foundation for the alignment of potential investments to the vision of creating safe and connected communities in support of a

Accessing the Building Safer Communities Fund

community-owned and community-driven approach to addressing urban violence. This is the work that is now in front of Committee and Council for approval

- 3) **Coordinate and Improve Navigation and Access:** The City will play a key role in coordinating community stakeholder programs and initiatives through the Building Safer Communities Fund. This work will get underway once funding is secured from Public Safety Canada.

In March 2022, Public Safety Canada launched a \$250 million Building Safer Communities Fund to provide multi-year funding through March 2026 to support programs and initiatives that focus on preventing gun and gang violence across Canada. Eligible activities can be found in Attachment 3 and may include integrating efforts with partners.

The Public Safety Canada guidelines require The City to undertake a two-level approval process. First, The City is to sign a funding agreement with Public Safety Canada for a planning and implementation period. This would require The City to put forward a call for funding proposals to the community, with clear messaging that the availability of funds will depend upon Public Safety Canada's approval of the programs and initiatives. The City would then review the proposals, identify programs and initiatives with the strongest alignment to the funding criteria. In addition to alignment with the Public Safety Canada guidelines, the programs and initiatives would be assessed for alignment to the recommendations from the Community-Based Public Safety Task Force, which includes The City's Prevention of Gun and Gang Violence Investment Approach (Attachment 2). These programs and initiatives would then be put forward for a secondary approval by Public Safety Canada. The agreement with Public Safety Canada would subsequently be amended to reflect the approved programs and initiatives, resulting in funds being allocated to community-based organizations no later than Q2 2023.

Upon successful application and approvals, The City will allocate funds annually to community-based organizations in alignment with a Public Safety Canada disbursement schedule and will provide information on the progress of programs and initiatives through March 2026.

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

Community engagement informed Task Force recommendations, which provided the foundation for the funding approach in anticipation of the federal funding. Moving forward, community-based, non-profit organizations delivering programs and initiatives that align with the outcomes of the Building Safer Communities Fund will be informed of this funding opportunity and supported through the application process. Communications will be required to launch the call for funding proposals regarding the funding opportunity.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Accessing the Building Safer Communities Fund

The Building Safer Communities Fund has a clear connection to policies and strategies that support safe and connected communities and the overall social wellbeing of Calgarians. This includes alignment with the Social Wellbeing Policy, the long-term Community Safety Investment Framework outcome to improve the wellbeing of Calgarians through an equitable and effective crisis response system, and the overall goal of Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy and Action Plan to create hope and strengthen support. The Community Based Public Safety Task Force was itself formed in 2020 to understand and respond to the social implications of gun and gang violence. Applying to the Building Safer Communities Fund provides an opportunity to flow funds by Q2 2023 to much needed community-based programs that prevent and address the social implications of gun and gang violence.

Environmental

Not applicable

Economic

Community safety is essential for a healthy, vibrant, and thriving community ranging from the individual to the collective society. Gun and gang violence can often lower the value of surrounding real estate, businesses, and hinder opportunities to attract investment.

Service and Financial Implications

Existing operating funding - base

The City is reliant on Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund to enable this work. To date, in-kind resourcing has been utilized through the existing operating budget in Community Services.

RISK

If Council does not direct Administration to apply to the Building Safer Communities Fund administered by Public Safety Canada, there will be a delay of federal investment of up to \$7.7 million over four years into community programs and initiatives to prevent gun and gang violence. Members of the community and partners would need to collaborate and explore other sources and ways access to funding if this application is not pursued.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Background and Previous Council Direction
2. The City's Prevention of Gun and Gang Violence Investment Program
3. Public Safety Canada Building Safer Communities Fund Fact Sheet
4. Presentation

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Chris Arthurs	Deputy City Manager's Office	Inform