



March 5, 2014

To Members of Community Services & Protective Services,

RE: Crime Prevention Investment Plan and the Building Safe Communities (BSC) Program

My name is Leslie Evans, Executive Director of the Federation of Calgary Communities. With me today is Stephanie Sokolowski, the coordinator of the Building Safe Communities project.

The Federation provides a number of programs, services and educational opportunities to support community associations working to improve neighbourhood life in Calgary. With the closing of Block Watch in Calgary in 2011, the Federation made a commitment to work in the area of crime prevention, safety and community development as community associations had indicated, in a survey conducted that year, that safety was one of the three most common areas of concern for them and a possible area for community engagement.

Through this commitment, the Building Safe Communities Program was launched in January of 2012 with the generous support of the Crime Prevention Investment Plan. Building Safe Communities (or BSC) is a project using a community development approach to working with community associations and partners to provide residents with the tools and resources to create and maintain safe and caring communities. The project facilitates and supports safe neighbourhoods through a variety of resident led initiatives focusing on preventing and reducing crime as well as increasing community cohesion. Our aim is to not only impact crime and safety in communities but also to increase resident engagement.

We have come a long way since 2012 when the first Building Safe Communities wave was launched. Over 60 communities have applied for the Building Safe Communities engagement process to date. We have launched 5 waves of the BSC process including 14 participant communities from Wards 1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14. These communities go through facilitated community meetings to identify issues regarding crime and safety, determining assets in their community, brainstorming project based solutions to deal with their issues and creating plans of action to move forward with. The communities involved have made plans for over 75 community projects to deal with their issues such as community clean-ups, block parties, festivals, little libraries, walking groups, safety committees, public art installations, crime

prevention and safety resource distribution, promoting public education opportunities, improving lighting and increasing pedestrian safety just to name a few.

Through our learnings we have, over time, morphed and changed the Building Safe Communities program to be better equipped to foster community engagement and self-sustaining community initiatives on crime prevention and safety.

The Building Safe Communities program now has 3 main areas of focus:

Community Engagement Process: Through a facilitated process, Building Safe Communities works with residents, from select community associations, to identify strategies and initiatives focused on preventing and reducing crime as well as creating safe communities. From this process comes a unique plan of action in which residents carry out citizen led initiatives. The emphasis on these strategies often is preventive with many actions focusing on community engagement and community development as research shows the increased social cohesion equals less crime and thus feelings of safety. After the engagement process, the Building Safe Communities coordinator moves to an advisory role as the work of the plan where citizens are leading and engaging to improve their neighbourhood. Partners such as the Calgary Police Service, local stakeholders and City of Calgary Community and Neighbourhood Services are also engaged in the process. The success of the plan is really up to the citizens as the goal is to ignite action at the resident level.

Resource Development and Distribution: A Virtual Resource Centre on Safety and Crime Prevention provides resources to individuals and community groups, such as crime prevention tip sheets on topics like internet safety, graffiti, vandalism, fraud, holiday safety, as well as links to other appropriate articles and resources. In addition, tools and resources are created to help communities engage residents to build social cohesion within the neighbourhood like the block party guide or the walking guide. The resource center is also a place in which communities share their successes and inspire others. All the tip sheets and resources are housed on the Federation's website for access to all Calgarians.

NEW Citizen Engagement: The Partners in Crime Prevention Workshop Series launched in February 2014 with a new partnership between the Federation of Calgary Communities Building Safe Communities project and the Calgary Police Service (CPS) crime prevention unit. Four workshops have been developed to help local residents learn and understand crime prevention and safety issues in their neighbourhoods. Topics include: The Hub Messaging System, How to Be a Good Witness, Cybercrime, Graffiti and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). New topics are currently being explored for the fall of 2014 and 2015.

I would now like to introduce Stephanie Sokolowski to talk about some of the communities and their success.

Stephanie Sokolowski:

Hello members of council: Now for the part with where I can help illustrate how exciting and meaningful this work is!

In accordance with the plans of action that come from the BSC process, both large and small projects are being completed by communities across the city. Each community has different capacities and readiness for initiatives like these. None the less, we want to celebrate all the things communities and their volunteers are doing to create and maintain safer, more vibrant communities.

I want to touch on a few examples of what BSC communities have done:

In the spring of 2013, Edgemont BSC group, together with the community association and help of the City of Calgary successfully changed a local playground zone to a school zone to increase pedestrian safety at peak times. They also were able to mobilize the installation of cross walk lights in a congested, high pedestrian traffic area.

Here is a quote from an Edgemont resident. "Thank you so much to the Building Safe Communities team! [Mother Mary Greene School worked with the BSC team, through the Edgemont Community Association and Calgary Catholic School District, to get a zoning change.] In October of 2013, the Playground Zone in front of MMG was changed to a School Zone. Thank you again! This change was vital as a Playground Zone takes effect at 8:30 and a School Zone starts at 7:30. [As the first bell at the school rings at 8:10, the Playground Zone had no 'reduced speed' effect during our busy 'morning rush', making it very dangerous for children and adults.] Now that the reduced speed zone starts at 7:30, our children are much safer as they arrive at school".

Another example is Downtown West community who went through the BSC process in the fall of 2013. Downtown West is a unique community where it is comprised entirely of apartment style housing and they are without a community hall. Downtown West community is also the home to Shaw Millennium Skate Park. During the time of the massive June 2013 flooding, the Shaw Millennium Park's hours went from being open 24 hours per day to being closed from 11pm – 5am. With these reduced hours many residents believed the community has less deviant behavior and less improper use of the park. Through the BSC process, the group realized that it would be of a significant loss to return the park to being open 24 hours per day and so they have written letter, with the support of their CPS Community Resource Officer, to enact permanent change and ensure that Shaw Millennium Park hours remain decreased. As it stands now, there is a temporary curfew in place that will expire at the end of March when The City will conduct consultation with the skateboarding community around the park's hours.

Another example is Southwood community. Their BSC meetings were very well attended with many other stakeholders joining in on the process. Southwood BSC completed a Take Back the Park event (in the Anderson LRT station park) which entailed cleaning up the park, adding

lighting, landscaping, working with city partners, erecting a community photo mural wall and many other initiatives for the park and community in 2012. They are maintaining the park by continually hosting community engagement events there including music festivals, flea markets and more. Overall, this Take Back the Park initiative resulted in a 30% decrease in crime in the area and almost \$130,000 saving to front line policing in call-out costs.

Cliff Bungalow Mission Community is currently just beginning the BSC process but are already working with their CPS Community Resource Officer to offer a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) themed Jane's Walk this May which is very exciting and the first of its kind in Calgary.

The opportunities are endless; but these are just a few examples of what communities can and will do when they have the tools, resources and opportunity to strategically identify issues, brainstorm solutions and create a clean plan of action to move forward with.

Today, I also wanted to touch on the value and importance of our Partnerships with the CPS. We have been working together since the beginning of BSC for the creation and distribution of the My Neighbour Card – a tool which promotes neighbours getting to know one another and watching out for each other. In partnership together with the CPS, we have distributed over 20,000 of the cards with orders for more! Our newest endeavor with the crime prevention unit has been the Partners in Crime Prevention Workshop series which has had excellent attendance and support from CPS, communities, residents and business owners in Calgary. For this work together, the Building Safe Communities project has been nominated for the Calgary Police Commission Community Policing award for helping to improve the ability of the Calgary Police Service to serve the community.

If you want to experience a piece of this partnership in action, we are hosting a cybercrime workshop tonight with Cst. Carter Dueschaney tonight at Glamorgan Community Association at 7pm that you are all welcome to attend.

Thank you for your time today and your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Evans', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leslie Evans, BSc., M.M.
Executive Director