



**RPT 23-129**

**TITLE:** Building Safer Communities Funding

**DATE:** March 21, 2023

**TO:** City Council

**TO:**

**PUBLIC:** X

**INCAMERA:**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That Administration be authorized to proceed with the proposal for funding through The Building Safer Communities fund in the amount of \$1,138,482.46 over 4 fiscal years.
2. That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute any necessary agreement for the Building Safer Communities Funding, once received.

**TOPIC & PURPOSE:**

That the proposal and potential agreement between the City of Prince Albert and Public Safety Canada be approved.

**BACKGROUND:**

In the Fall of 2021, the City of Prince Albert, supported by the Living Skies Centre for Social Inquiry, in partnership with the Prince Albert Community Advisory Board on Homelessness, launched the *Homelessness Action Initiative*. The purpose of the initiative was to gather diverse understandings of homelessness, including its impact on people and the community, that are required to implement promising solutions for preventing, intervening and mitigating the impacts of homelessness on individuals, families, businesses, services and the broader community.

A major intended outcome of this initiative is to initiate actions that reduce chronic risk, as well as offset the impacts on individuals, businesses, services and the community. To pursue this, initiative partners have examined options for stimulating shared problem ownership and collaborative solution-building. During the initial outreach process, several problems/challenges have been identified. Some examples include, low shelter capacity, inappropriate use of services, public defecation, loitering, discarded needles, and service fragmentation, to name a few. Using this information, willing partners have already begun further exploring the development of a collaborative approach to find solutions to some of these problems.

The resulting *Actionable Solutions Protocol* will help stakeholders across and within different jurisdictions to understand problems and sector-specific solutions to homelessness that are both tangible and actionable. After being presented to City Council, the following was approved in November 2022:

1. That Administration move forward on the establishment of a Chronic Risk Solution Forum;
2. That the City provide coordinating support to community organizations and other levels of government to immediately begin action on solution to problems identified in the Homelessness Action Initiative; and,
3. That the Mayor's Office consider establishing a Housing Committee.

Further, in July of 2022, Public Safety Canada earmarked funding for municipalities and Indigenous governments to initiate community-led projects to combat gun and gang violence as well as address knowledge gaps concerning the impacts of interventions in gun and gang violence. Prince Albert was provided with an opportunity to secure \$1,138,482.46 over four fiscal years (2022-2026).

This funding provides a very unique opportunity to leverage the work that has begun on the Homelessness Action initiative, more specifically the Chronic Risks that members of our community face on a daily basis. A proposal is being requested for this funding and we are quite hopeful that it will be approved in full.

#### **PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:**

In the past 3 years, several community pressures—including drug use, mental crises, criminality, violence and homelessness have mounted. These trends have negatively impacted the safety and security of our community members, strained emergency resources, and heightened the vulnerability of individuals and families in proximity to those showing signs of chronic risk behaviour. Complicating matters in Prince Albert is the growing rise of gangs, gang-related activity, and gun violence.

- a) In 2021, Prince Albert experienced an upward trend in violence and property crime (e.g., 12.5% increase in victims of sexual violation, 12.05% increase in robbery, 19.56% increase in property crime) [Statscan, 2021].
- b) Prince Albert has a civic population of 37,500, but regular retail/visiting population of 190,000 [PAPS, 2021].
- c) In 2021, the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics revealed Prince Albert to be ranked 3rd for violent crime.
- d) In 2020, Prince Albert experienced rise in gun crime (e.g., increased firearm seizures, shootings, gun-related calls, homicides) [PAPS, 2020].
- e) There has been an increase in firearm concealment, mainly among high-risk individuals reporting that they carry a weapon to protect themselves [PAPS, 2021].

Keeping this in mind, our proposal centers around the following 4 core areas:

### **1. Gathering Knowledge on Common Risks and Barriers Impacting Gang/Gun Violence in Prince Albert**

The Gathering Knowledge project will serve as a foundation of knowledge, planning and evidence support to other aspects of the overall Community Safety and Well-Being Initiative. Early on in the initiative, a **scan** of international prevention and intervention models will be conducted. This will reveal promising practices, opportunities for alignment, and potential development solutions. Another key activity in this project will be community **consultations** on risk factors pertaining to gangs and gun violence in Prince Albert. This will involve outreach to individuals with lived experience, families impacted by gangs and gun violence, human service professionals, subject matter experts, and members of the community. Another activity in this project is a Gender-Based Plus **analysis** on risk factors, occurrence, barriers and impact of gangs and gun violence across different sectional identities in Prince Albert and area. That will be conducted through collection of secondary source data gathered from community

### **2. Investing in Prevention/Intervention of Chronic Risk Leading to Gang/Gun Violence in Prince Albert**

The Investment project will mobilize the community in careful assessment of need concerning chronic risk factors leading to crime and violence. Evidence-supported gaps in service need will be filled through strategic investments of prevention/intervention enhancement programming within the community. To begin this process, a **gap analysis** will be completed in the first year of the project. This will allow for a better understanding of service gaps impacting key populations. Following this, **consultations** with community partners on identifying optimal service needs to remedy these gaps will allow for increased readiness for service improvements. Results of the consultation process will be used to outline investment priorities for the project that can yield increased capacity to improve services. Once these service priorities are identified, the City will **invest** in community organizations to build the capacity required for implementation of required intervention and prevention services. Throughout the project, investment recipients will be required to **report** on outputs and track generated outcomes.

### **3. Alignment of Systems around a Framework towards Community Safety and Well-Being**

The Alignment project will identify improved opportunities for strategic use of resources, policies, data and practices around a common framework for Community Safety and Well-Being. Structured and strategic alignment will improve community capacity to sustain whole-of-system impacts on chronic risk leading to crime and violence. The project will begin with an **audit** of community resources. This effort will assess community assets that can be deployable to support prevention/intervention of chronic risk within the broader community safety and well-being space. Following the audit of community assets, community partners will have improved awareness of needs and opportunities. This will create an opportunity to **identify** shared priorities surrounding chronic risk in the community. Aligning community partners around shared priorities will help realize opportunities for prevention/intervention of chronic risk leading to gang and gun-violence. Lastly, this project will involve development and implementation of a community safety and well-being **framework** that helps the community strategically position resources to have the greatest impact on gang and gun-violence.

#### **4. Collaborating on Practical Solutions for Chronic Risk Management**

The Collaboration Project will support the evidence-based design, implementation and measurement of a collaborative, horizontal initiative that targets chronic high-risk individuals in the community. Building upon Prince Albert's nationally-renowned history of collaborative intervention, the output of this project will be a coordinated chronic risk management team involving multiple human service professionals. The project will involve four main activities. The first involves **mobilization** of community partners around a chronic risk management approach. This leads to increased community support and involvement in managing chronic risk. The second activity involves developing and planning a collaborative model of **practice** for managing chronic risk of key populations. This results in improved readiness to manage risk. The third activity involves **implementation** of the practice model among community partners. A key component of this model will be directly engaging key populations who are at risk for gang or gun-violence; assessing their needs; and building a concentrated support solution that focuses on managing risk, reducing barriers, and building effective strategies. The fourth activity involves **evaluating** and refining the model, which will allow for increased knowledge of good practice in the prevention/intervention of chronic risk leading to gang/gun-violence.

The overall initiative has a sustainability plan aimed at extending the other activities beyond the funding period. The broader plan involves ongoing consultations and engagements with stakeholders on the value of the project to their needs and interests; the benefits of the projects to the community; and the opportunities to sustain and expand this project.

It is important to note that although Public Safety Canada is allowing for relative flexibility on what we proposed, we do need to sit within the parameters of researching and developing a community framework for identifying "what works" in crime prevention. We are taking a multi-pronged approach, which all converge around a pathway directly informed by the many valued stakeholders in our community.

This project will help our non-profit service organizations, police, Indigenous, and government partners build capacity and knowledge for effective solutions to chronic risk reduction in Prince Albert and area (i.e., reduce crime, violence, homelessness, gangs, guns, drugs).

**The attached narrative summarizes our approach to this initiative**

#### **CONSULTATIONS:**

This application has been discussed with the City Manager, the Mayor, and the Chief of Police. The application was prepared with the assistance of the Living Sky Centre for Social Inquiry.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:**

Once approved, Public Safety Canada will make a formal announcement to advise the City on their approval for funding dollars to proceed with the proposal.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

This allocation of funding will support the Cultural Action Plan, the Proposed Social Action Plan and a number of other community partnerships.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

If approved, the amount of \$1,138,482.46 will be fully funded by Public Safety Canada.

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no privacy implications, or options to the recommendation

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Strategic Plan identifies Community Safety as a key area of focus in promoting Prince Albert as a progressive Community. The City will work closely with City police and other strategic partners in the roll out of this important initiative.

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:**

Section 12 of the Official Community Plan identifies a number of Goals and Policies that promotes the safety of our residents.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. PSC Summary

Written by: Craig Guidinger, Director of Planning and Development Services

Approved by: City Manager