

**PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: **BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND  
RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council approve the initiation of a research partnership with the Simon Fraser University-School of Criminology, as outlined in Section 4.0 of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.
2. **THAT** Council direct staff to initiate the upstream, community-based programs outlined in Section 5.0 of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.

**REPORT**

The Public Safety Committee, at its meeting held on April 26, 2023, received and adopted the attached report seeking Council approval for staff to initiate a research partnership with the Simon Fraser University-School of Criminology and upstream, community-based programs, in relation to the implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor J. Wang  
Chair

Commissioner M. Santiago  
Vice Chair

**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2023 March 23

**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER  
COMMUNITY SAFETY

**FILE:** 7400-01

**SUBJECT: BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES FUND  
RESEARCH PROJECTS WITH SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**PURPOSE:** To update the Committee and Council on the creation of the Crime Reduction and Intervention Division and subsequent development of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund' three-year workplan, which includes development of a research partnership with Simon Fraser University, and support for a range of upstream community-based programs.

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** the Committee request Council direction to initiate a research partnership with the Simon Fraser University-School of Criminology, as outlined in *Section 4.0* of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.
  
2. **THAT** the Committee request Council to direct staff to initiate the upstream, community-based programs outlined in *Section 5.0* of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.

### **REPORT**

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

At its meeting of May 9, 2022 Burnaby City Council received a report outlining an opportunity for the City of Burnaby to apply for approximately \$2.9 million in funding from the 'Building Safer Communities Fund' (BSCF). Public Safety Canada (PSC) made these funds available to eligible communities in order to enhance community safety with a focus on preventing gang and gun activities.

The funding represented a means and a basis for the City to create the Crime Reduction and Intervention Division, in support of this BSCF work undertaken within the Community Safety Department. The creation of this Division to strategically lead and coordinate the

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BSCF funded suite of programs and research represents an enterprise-based, innovative approach to enhancing community safety in Burnaby.

The newly hired Manager, Crime Reduction and Intervention worked with other Community Safety staff and an external consultant to develop an application for a suite of community-led programs, initiatives and research as part of a three-year BSCF workplan submission to PSC. All initiatives were developed in collaboration with service providers, with the overall goal to reduce gun and gang activities in Burnaby.

The resulting workplan includes several large research projects to be undertaken by researchers at Simon Fraser University School of Criminology; five upstream intervention programs with youth-serving Burnaby community organizations, three City-led community building and strategic sustainability initiatives; and a robust standalone evaluation component. Approval of this workplan is anticipated from PSC by July 2023, at which point in-depth implementation is planned. This report provides an overview of the new Crime Reduction Division and identified BSCF community programming and research projects for the information of the Committee and Council.

## **2.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

The workplan for the 'Building Safer Communities Fund' implementation in Burnaby is aligned with the following Council-adopted policies and plans/strategies: the *Burnaby Strategic Plan* (2022), the *Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011), and the *Burnaby Community Safety Plan* (2020).

## **3.0 CREATION OF CRIME REDUCTION AND INTERVENTION DIVISION**

Hiring processes for the new Manager, Crime Reduction and Intervention commenced last fall, with a candidate in place by late 2022. Since this time, six City staff persons from Crime Prevention Services including the Auxiliary Member Coordinator, as well as the Anti-Graffiti Coordinator have been amalgamated into this new Division within Community Safety.

Under the broader Crime Reduction framework, the work objectives of the Crime Prevention Services and Anti-Graffiti programs will support a cohesive City-led approach to community safety efforts. It is expected that most members of this team will maintain police security clearances, thus also enabling cohesive joint participation with the Burnaby RCMP on shared concerns affecting public safety.

The capacity and broad work scope of the Crime Reduction and Intervention Division will facilitate organizational responsiveness to future funding opportunities related to Community Safety, similar to the BSCF.

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#### 4.0 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

In order to build the substantial research component of this workplan, Community Safety staff worked with the Civic Innovation Lab (CIL) to foster connections with Simon Fraser University researchers. As Council is aware, the CIL is a non-profit society, jointly founded by the City and Simon Fraser University. Through this engagement, several teams of researchers with expertise in community safety interventions and gang prevention were identified. These researchers are well-established in their fields with extensive experience in managing comprehensive, multi-year and large project budgets. This connection with specialized reputable academics ensures that implementation of later funding is based upon evidence-led best practices. Community-based research projects have been developed which have been included in the larger workplan submitted to PSC, as noted above.

The identified research projects are summarized below in *Figure 1*. Should the submitted BSCF three-year workplan be approved as expected by Public Safety Canada (PSC) in July 2023, work will begin immediately.

*Figure 1*

Identified Research Activities
<p><b><i>Building Safer Communities in Burnaby: Addressing Gun and Gang Violence</i></b></p> <p>This is a multi-year, tripartite undertaking to further enhance knowledge pertaining to the early identification of youth at risk who ultimately engage with the gangs and guns lifestyle. This program will seek to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Significantly increase and further broaden understanding of the risk factors involved with youth who engage with the dangerous criminal behaviours associated with the local gang and gun lifestyle;</li><li>2. Enhance knowledge and distinguish upstream intervention programs that suggest potential benefits; and,</li><li>3. Augment the body of evidence-led service delivery best practice through comprehensive local program evaluation. This will be used to strategically focus related service programming in Burnaby.</li></ol>

**Role of Burnaby RCMP Gang Enforcement Team (BGET) in gang intervention and disruption**

The identified project will undertake evaluator activities to:

1. Understand the specific activities undertaken by BGET officers to deter and disrupt gang activity (e.g., prevention, intervention suppression/enforcement, referrals, community development);
2. Examine how these activities meet the needs of the community; and,
3. Document how establishment of the BGET has impacted gang-related outcomes from a prevention/reduction perspective in Burnaby.

**Document & Assess the Impacts of Gang Prevention/Intervention Activities in Schools**

The proposed research streams include: Reviewing and evaluating current gang prevention/intervention activities in Burnaby schools, including the role and impact of the RCMP Youth Section Officers. This work is also intended to include the articulation of potential new programs or approaches based on findings.

To minimize any time lag between receiving BSCF workplan approval and initiating implementation, staff are updating the Committee and Council now regarding the identified research projects. Should the workplan not be approved in its entirety for any reason, the elements flagged for re-working, including any of the above research projects, would be re-examined. In this unlikely event, staff will keep the Committee and Council apprised.

**4.1 Proposed Research – Financial Structure**

The combined cost of the proposed research, summarized above in Figure 1, is approximately \$1 million over three years. Funds for this work have been itemized within the \$2.9 million BSCF grant workplan. As this grant operates on a reimbursement model, sufficient funds to enable the work to begin have been included in the 2023-2027 Financial Plan. Appropriate budgeting for the process to continue will also be included in subsequent Financial Plans over the course of the grant cycle which runs until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2026.

All costs will be tracked and submitted for 100% reimbursement to Public Safety Canada, as per the terms of the grant. Once workplan initiatives, programs and research are approved by PSC, staff will pursue the development of a corresponding legal agreement with SFU respecting the above and itemizing payment schedules, workplan milestones, and deliverables.

## 5.0 OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The programs and initiatives included in the BSCF workplan are all designed to decrease gang and gun activities in the City of Burnaby. These prevention and intervention activities are largely upstream in nature, to actively support and positively engage youth identified as being at risk of engaging with the gang and gun lifestyle. All community program partners are reputable organizations with extensive experience providing Burnaby-based youth programming.

Further to these programs, included is an initiative to support the renewal of the City of Burnaby Community Safety Plan in 2025 and the subsequent creation of a new Gangs and Guns strategy. Together, these strategic documents will support the ongoing sustainability of successful gang and gun prevention efforts realized through the workplan. Both will create capacity to incorporate any outcomes and direction suggested by the localized research being undertaken as part of the workplan.

The proposed programs and initiatives are summarized below in *Figure 2*. Should the submitted BSCF three-year workplan be approved as expected by Public Safety Canada (PSC) in July 2023, work will begin immediately.

*Figure 2*

Identified Programs and Initiatives
<b><i>Neighbourhood Youth Connections Micro-Grant Program</i></b>  An upstream, youth-led, community asset-building and well-being program designed to engage youth to improve Burnaby neighbourhoods. Through the provision of a limited number of micro-grants, the program would facilitate greater civic engagement, enhanced pride of place, and enhanced connections between youth and their community.
<b><i>Youth Engaged Program</i></b>  A year round program for youth aged 12 to 15 that focuses on helping youth to develop relationships and develop lifeskills support that will help them to engage actively in their communities. The program will focus on positive relationships with staff and older youth mentors, creating a safe and supportive space, building skills and experiences that strengthen resilience and engaging in outdoor experiences that help them to push their boundaries.

### ***Mental Health Liaison, Vulnerable Youth Focus***

The new Mental Health Liaison worker would work with youth aged 9 to 18 with identified mental health challenges, who also have risk factors that increase their vulnerability to gang recruitment. This can include but is not limited to arrival in Canada within the last three years from an area of high violence; school non-attendance; substance use issues; family members with a history of gang-involvement; and attachment to antisocial or delinquent peers. This position would work closely with school-based Settlement Workers to identify newcomer communities where community members are arriving from areas of violence and war (e.g., refugees), and where children and youth are at risk for gang recruitment.

### ***Changing Colors Art of Empowerment***

This is a community public art program designed to increase positive social connections between youth identified as at risk and other artistically inclined high-achieving youth without these risk factors. The program will provide pro-social mentoring and engender a sense of civic responsibility and community engagement among participating youth. The program will see the creation of several youth-led public murals in Burnaby.

### ***Community Safety Plan Renewal and Creation of a Gangs and Guns Strategy***

The City of Burnaby will undertake the creation of a refined and redesigned comprehensive Community Safety Plan to further enhance and develop the City's work to address the impacts of local gun and gang violence. This broad-reaching work will also feature the creation of a new Gangs and Guns strategy within the broader Community Safety Plan.

### ***Burnaby Gangs and Guns Prevention Video Project***

This project will seek to build public education and awareness to prevent and deter the risks associated with this anti-social, violent lifestyle. Using professionally created digital content, the series of four to six videos will be developed for audiences of youth and caregivers, as well as other concerned community groups. The final video deliverables will focus on prevention, signs and symptoms of gang involvement, as well as where at-risk youth can go for support.

### ***Burnaby Youth Empowerment Program***

This is a strengths-based life skills and mental health program for Burnaby youth identified as being at risk of, or involved in, the gang and gun lifestyle. Using a wraparound approach, a dedicated BYEP Counsellor will support program youth and their families to facilitate healthy, pro-social life choices to reduce vulnerabilities and potentially harmful high risk behaviours.

**Youth at Risk Prevention and Intervention Community of Practice**

The creation of a multi-disciplinary community of practice stakeholder group, intended to increase the City's capacity for early identification of, and effective intervention for, children and youth – ages 9 up to 24 years old—at risk of engagement with the gang and gun lifestyle.

**Youth Community Connections**

Through this program a qualified, trained youth worker will provide wraparound supports through individualized case management to identified vulnerable youth and connect them to community resources, education, supports and establish a care team that will provide ongoing case management. This will include referrals for services such as counseling, substance misuse, connections to Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU-BC), etc.

**Process and Preliminary Impact Evaluations of BSCF-funded Projects**

To produce user-friendly knowledge regarding the achievements, successes, and challenges of all programs and initiatives funded through the City of Burnaby's BSCF grant, this project will involve the production of evaluation processes and outcome reports. The proposed research projects will not be included in the evaluation. The reports will vary according to the types of projects, with some involving participant assessment pretest-post-test surveys.

In anticipation of the BSCF workplan approval being received from Public Safety Canada, these upstream, community-based projects are being brought forward now to the Committee and Council for review. In the unlikely instance that this aspect of the workplan not be approved in its entirety, the identified elements would be re-examined, and the Committee and Council would be kept informed.

**5.1 Proposed Programs and Initiatives - Financial Structure**

The combined cost of the proposed programs and initiatives summarized above in Figure 2 is approximately \$1.3 million over three years. Funds for this work have been itemized within the \$2.9 million BSCF grant workplan. As this grant operates on a reimbursement model, sufficient funds to enable the work to begin have been included in the 2023-2027 Financial Plan. Appropriate budgeting for the process to continue will also be included in subsequent Financial Plans over the course of the grant cycle which runs until March 2026.

All costs will be tracked and submitted for 100% reimbursement to Public Safety Canada, as per the terms of the grant. Once workplan programs and initiatives are approved by PSC, staff will pursue the development of appropriate activity tracking and financial reporting as well as payment schedules and processes.



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## 6. RECOMMENDATION

The development of the City's Crime Reduction Division has enabled the strategic use of BSCF Gangs and Guns grant monies to further the City's efforts to integrate and enhance local community safety initiatives and research. These measures augment the City's existing capacity, inclusive of the Crime Prevention, Auxiliary Member and Anti-Graffiti suite of programs, positioning for the Crime Reduction Division to further enhance community safety in Burnaby.

This report provides an overview of the BSCF funding submission, including a significant research component as well as a collaboratively developed range of community programs and initiatives. The inclusion of a project to enhance the related City strategic framework through renewal of the Community Safety Plan and the creation of an innovative Gang and Gun strategy means that the benefits of these upstream, localized and evidence-led efforts are sustainable over future years.

As such, staff are recommending that the Committee request Council direction to initiate a research partnership with the Simon Fraser University School of Criminology, as outlined in *Section 4* of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.

As well, staff are recommending that the Committee request Council to direct staff to initiate the upstream, community-based programs outlined in *Section 5.0* of this report, in relation to implementation of the 'Building Safer Communities Fund', as distributed by Public Safety Canada.



Dave Critchley  
GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY

RM/DV/ln

Copied to: Chief Administrative Officer  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer  
Director Legislative Services  
Officer in Charge – Burnaby RCMP