

## **Update on Community Safety Plan and Intergovernmental Community Safety Initiatives**

In March 2004, City Council unanimously adopted the City's Community Safety Plan.

The Plan is guided by three principles:

- a balance between enforcement and prevention;
- investment in youth; and
- building on the strengths of neighbourhoods and communities.

The City's approach to community safety is a comprehensive one. At its core, community safety is demonstrated best when all communities and residents maintain and reinforce conditions in society that foster respect for everyone. Our institutions, such as government, play a vital role in this.

The City's Community Safety Plan focuses specifically on:

- developing neighbourhood action plans, in conjunction with local residents and agencies, to improve City services for youth;
- opening up employment and training opportunities for youth who face multiple barriers;
- providing sports, arts and culture programs, and
- developing community crisis and intervention responses that help support those neighbourhoods experiencing trauma.

This update describes the progress to date in the areas of Strong Neighbourhoods, Crisis Response, Youth Opportunities, and Youth Justice, the City's four pillars of community safety. As well, it provides an update on the Intergovernmental Community Safety Initiatives.

### **Four Pillars**

#### *Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy*

Based on the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force report and the City's community safety work, the City's Strong Neighborhood Strategy has identified 13 priority neighbourhoods that are considered vulnerable. They include:

- Malvern
- Jamestown
- Jane-Finch
- Kingston-Galloway
- Lawrence Heights
- Steeles-L'Amoreaux
- Eglinton-East-Kennedy Park
- Weston-Mt. Dennis
- Westminster-Branson
- Crescent Town
- Flemingdon Park-Victoria Village,

- Dorset Park
- Scarborough Village

Identifying and agreeing to these 13 neighbourhoods has provided us with the necessary framework to build consensus. It is a means for local community engagement. The Community Safety Plan requires neighbourhood action to be effective and allows the City to co-ordinate, plan, access funding, and deliver on local programs and services. Major service gaps, for example, have been identified in areas such as after-school programs, extended hours in libraries and TCHC funding for major repairs. The City continues work on closing those gaps with other orders of government, police and community groups.

#### *Crisis Response*

Crisis response is a program that helps neighbourhoods and communities deal with the impacts of traumatic events like gun violence.

Staff going into communities and providing culturally competent intervention and support to those experiencing violence is a key pillar of community safety. The City's crisis response initiative has been focused on providing resident debriefings, drop-ins for residents to share concerns, community meetings and other supports needed for residents when a traumatic event occurs. Since August, the City has responded to 20 critical incidents.

To make crisis response effective and rapid, the City is working to ensure that preparedness, support systems and co-ordination with the Toronto Police Service, community groups and TCHC are in place.

#### *Youth Opportunities*

Employment, training and mentorship opportunities are essential to providing positive alternatives for youth.

The City's Community Safety Plan is based on partnerships – with other orders of government the community and the private sector.

In 2004, the province provided \$500,000 for a five-week summer employment program called Jobs for Youth, resulting in 316 young people getting employment and training in four of the City's key neighbourhoods. And in 2005, 337 youths received jobs through the same program. The TTC, as well, has committed to hiring 100 young people.

The private sector, too, has been critical in providing opportunities for youth. In September, Mayor Miller hosted a breakfast for corporate executives, to encourage increased hiring of youth from the vulnerable communities. As a result of the breakfast and follow up breakfast meetings, 125 employment opportunities are already committed. The jobs and organizations are varied and include financial and legal institutions, outsourcing organizations, and manufacturing companies.

The legal firm of Heenan Blaikie provided training to six youths in a 12-week internship program. Goodwill Toronto has pledged to provide employment and training to 100 young people. Their goal is to assist 1,000 youth by 2010. IBM Canada will provide internships and training for six youths, and may be able to add more. The city's young people need more employers like these.

Community safety is about encouraging youth to take advantage of these opportunities and to recognize the opportunities that exist. For example, three community colleges offered free skills development and pre-apprenticeship programs for youth. The City has also implemented training opportunities in its various divisions for young people in vulnerable communities.

#### *Youth Justice*

When young people come in contact with the youth justice system there is an opportunity for constructive interventions which can put them on a new path and decrease their risk of re-offending. The federal government has provided \$124,400 for a community-based post-charge youth diversion program to engage young people in conflict with the law. Other youth justice initiatives are being developed as part of the Community Safety Plan.

Helping young people disengage from gang involvement is also critical. The Mayor's Panel on Community Safety, chaired by Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry, as well as other orders of government, the Toronto Police Service and community stakeholders, are reviewing youth gang intervention models.

The Mayor's Panel is also reviewing the Safe Schools Act with a view to making recommendations how best to support youth facing expulsion and suspension from school.

#### **Investments since August 2005**

What follows are just some examples of the co-ordinated efforts among all orders of government and their commitment to community safety. Funding is important, yes. But so, too, is the recognition that community safety is about the neighbourhoods that our residents live in. Access to services should not be a privilege, it should be a right. The Community Safety Plan is making great strides in that direction.

- \$10 million TCHC investment, including \$90,000 for youth outreach
- 1,810 new child care spaces from Best Start provincial funding
- 3,600 after-school child care spaces in 2006
- 360 youth employment opportunities (\$3.7 million from social assistance stabilization fund)
- 19 permanent youth outreach jobs in Parks Forestry and Recreation
- \$3 million from Ministry of Education for community use of schools
- New community centres for York and Thorncliffe
- Service Canada Youth Zone in Malvern
- \$1.9 million in funding from Ottawa – YELL (Youth Employment & Local Leadership)