

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DATE: 2015 March 4

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

FILE: 2410-20

SUBJECT: BLUE RIBBON PANEL ON CRIME REDUCTION

PURPOSE: To provide information on the results of a Provincial consultation on crime reduction.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council authorize staff to write to the Provincial Ministry of Justice indicating support for the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction and to request the Province to consider the City's comments on the Panel's recommendations, as outlined in section 3.0 of this report.

REPORT**1.0 BACKGROUND**

In 2013 September, the Provincial government launched a Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction, chaired by Abbotsford South MLA Darryl Plecas, Parliamentary Secretary for Crime Reduction to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General. The Panel was initiated in response to a report commissioned by the Province on justice reform entitled *A Criminal Justice System for the 21st Century*. The report recommended the development of a province-wide crime reduction plan.

As a key step in developing the province-wide crime reduction plan, the Blue Ribbon Panel was struck to lead a consultation with stakeholders across the province. The Panel was tasked with 1) reviewing existing crime reduction initiatives and identifying gaps, challenges and issues; and 2) making recommendations for crime reduction opportunities and next steps including a plan for implementation.

In consultation with the Public Safety Committee (formerly the Community Policing Committee) and the Burnaby RCMP, the City participated in the Blue Ribbon consultation process by providing a written submission to the Panel, and participating in a stakeholder roundtable held on 2014 February 21 in Vancouver.

This report provides information on Burnaby's submission to the Panel and the Panel's recommendations for a crime reduction plan for B.C.

2.0 BURNABY'S SUBMISSION TO THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL

The Blue Ribbon Panel sought written submissions from cities across the province on their crime reduction goals, most pressing crime problems, successful initiatives to address crime, challenges that have impeded success, and their suggestions for reducing crime. The City of Burnaby, through the Burnaby RCMP and the then Community Policing Committee, provided information on Burnaby's community policing model and a range of Burnaby's current crime reduction initiatives.

In relation to challenges that have impeded the success of some of its crime reduction initiatives, the City's submission highlighted:

- gaps in the justice system that make it difficult to take prolific offenders off the street; and
- insufficient mental health and addiction services and programs (outreach, clinics, counselling, supportive housing) to support those in need.

In relation to crime reduction initiatives that could be applied across the province, the City provided the following suggestions:

- encourage other jurisdictions to implement a crime reduction strategy similar to the one operated by the Lower Mainland District Regional Police Service;
- request the Province to assign dedicated Crown Counsel to prolific offenders and ensure consistent sentencing for offences and breaches;
- request the Province to work with stakeholders to establish more integrated health/police solutions and initiatives to address mental illness and addictions;
- request the Province to review existing police services with a view to improving police service integration and coordination, and sharing of intelligence and police information across jurisdictions; and
- encourage other jurisdictions to adopt a community policing approach to crime reduction that includes establishing partnerships with local government, the health authority, Crown Counsel, community partners and citizens.

At the roundtable session attended by staff on 2014 February 21 in Vancouver, similar challenges and suggestions were identified by numerous stakeholders.¹

3.0 BLUE RIBBON PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND STAFF COMMENT

The Blue Ribbon Panel consultation process took place between 2013 September and 2014 March. Roundtable sessions were held in 14 communities across B.C. Participants included judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers, police, front-line service providers, local government representatives, First Nations leaders, prolific offenders and people in treatment for addictions. The Panel received 36 written submissions including the City of Burnaby's.

¹ Stakeholders at the roundtable session held at the Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver included representatives from Lower Mainland local governments, police departments, school districts, aboriginal organizations, and community service providers including those providing drug and alcohol recovery services.

The results on the consultation process are documented in a report titled *Getting Serious About Crime Reduction*². The report highlights crime reduction challenges and successes from around the province and forwards six recommendations for the consideration of the Honourable Suzanne Anton, Attorney General and Minister of Justice. As noted by the Panel, the recommendations focus on select areas where it believes heightened attention and additional actions could lead to better crime reduction outcomes.

The Burnaby RCMP will be taking the Panel's recommendations into consideration during their Annual Performance Planning session on 2015 March 5.

A brief summary of the six recommendations is provided below along with staff comments pertaining to each recommendation.

Recommendation #1 – Manage prolific and priority offenders more effectively

The Panel notes that a relatively small proportion of habitual or career criminals accounts for the majority of offences committed. The Panel recommends the development of a comprehensive, province-wide Integrated Offender Management (IOM) program that ensures coordinated supervision, enforcement and access to services for chronic and other priority offenders. The IOM would bring together criminal justice agencies, local authorities, health services and the voluntary sector for use as an alternative to short sentences or to help offenders reintegrate with communities after serving their time.

Staff comment - *The City supports the increased focus on managing prolific and priority offenders as described above. However, it is recommended that the Province further consult with local governments to examine the feasibility, funding implications, governance, and resource requirements of establishing an Integrated Offender Management program.*

Recommendation #2 – Make quality mental health and addiction services more accessible

The Panel notes that while there would be a cost to expanding mental health and addiction services, the evidence suggests that these investments would lead to significant savings in the future. The Panel recommends that the Province:

- enhance treatment options available in the community, including offenders in custody;
- increase access to Aboriginal-led treatment programs for Aboriginal offenders;
- prioritize funding for programs focused on sustainable long-term recovery;
- develop provincial guidelines and standards for addiction treatment providers; and
- establish a taskforce to identify ways to address the issues related to unlicensed recovery homes.

Staff comment - *The City concurs with this recommendation to make quality mental health and addiction services more accessible and urges the Province to readjust its spending priorities to ensure appropriate mental health resources, services and treatment programs are available for those in need. The City also supports the establishment of a taskforce to identify ways to address*

² The full report may be viewed at <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/policeservices/shareddocs/BlueRibbonPanel-CrimeReduction.pdf>

the issues related to unlicensed recovery homes. The taskforce should be mandated to address the locational impacts of these homes for surrounding communities and local governments as well as the quality of care residents of these homes receive.

Recommendation #3 – Make greater use of restorative justice

The Panel refers to evidence showing that restorative justice conferencing using face to face meetings of offenders and victims can result in a modest but highly cost-effective reduction in repeat offending, with substantial benefits for victims. The Panel recommends that the Province develop, in collaboration with the UBCM, province-wide standards to govern the implementation and management of diversion and restorative justice programs.

Staff comment – *Burnaby RCMP Youth Services has provided successful prevention and early intervention services, including a restorative justice program, aimed at reducing criminal behaviour in youth since 1974. Based on its experience with its diversion and restorative justice programs, the City supports this recommendation.*

Recommendation #4 – Support an increased emphasis on designing out crime

The Panel notes that many types of crime, particularly property crimes, are opportunistic and can be prevented through activities such as improved security surveillance and planning. The Panel recommends the dissemination of information on best practices in crime prevention and the systematic application of these methods where warranted. The Panel also notes the alarming rise in internet-based crime as it relates to identity theft as well as thefts and frauds against banking institutions and their customers. It recommends partnerships with the banking industry and financial community to develop effective crime reduction strategies to target this type of crime.

Staff comment – *The City recommends that the Province take the lead and work directly with financial institutions to develop appropriate strategies to combat identity theft and commercial/banking fraud and address the impact this type of crime has on vulnerable populations.*

Recommendation #5 – Strengthen inter-agency collaboration

The Panel states that the clearest message heard through the consultations was the need for improved interagency collaboration. The Panel advocates for the establishment of a province-wide interagency collaboration model that supports the development of local partnerships. It recommends that a senior crime reduction leader be appointed to spearhead this initiative. As a first step, the new crime reduction leader would establish an Interagency Community Partnership (ICP) pilot project in a designated community. The ICP would bring together different departments and agencies to deal with high-risk social and personal situations that cannot be addressed by a single agency, and which, left unattended, would likely lead to criminal offending and victimization. The goal would be to stop crime before it happens and keep individuals out of the criminal justice system. Specifically, the ICP pilot project would:

- identify at-risk individuals in the community;

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- connect them promptly with appropriate services and effective interventions to manage and mitigate risks;
- establish rules and procedures for appropriate information sharing;
- draw on the knowledge and experience of local community leaders; and
- evaluate the pilot project after two years with a view to expanding it to other communities.

Staff comment - *The City concurs with the need for strengthened inter-agency collaboration and would be interested in participating in the recommended Interagency Community Partnership (ICP) pilot project.*

Recommendation #6 – Re-examine funding approaches to provide better outcomes

The Panel states that it is imperative to change the way resources are allocated to reduce crime. It recommends that some existing funding be redirected to support new approaches to dealing with persistent offenders, managing short incarceration sentences and supervising offenders in the community.

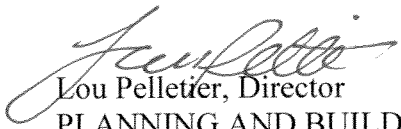
Staff comment – *While the City generally concurs with this recommendation, the City recommends that the funding implications for any new initiatives be explored with local governments. The Province should seek the prior support and agreement of local governments with regard to the funding implications of new or revised crime reduction initiatives.*

4.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Provincially-mandated Blue Ribbon Panel of Crime Reduction has released the findings of its province-wide consultation on crime reduction in the report entitled *Getting Serious About Reducing Crime*. The Panel forwards six major recommendations that if enacted, could have the potential to make a significant impact on crime reduction.

It is recommended that Council authorize staff to write to the Provincial Ministry of Justice indicating support for the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction and to request the Province to consider the City's comments on the Panel's recommendations, as outlined in section 3.0 of this report.

Staff will apprise the Committee and Council of the Minister's response to the Panel's report.


Lou Pelletier, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

MM/sa

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City Clerk