

**TO:** PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (PSC)  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY  
**SUBJECT:** **SU: UPDATE ON BURNABY COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**  
**PURPOSE:** To provide a status update (SU) on the work to refresh and update the Community Safety Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the report titled “SU: Update on Burnaby Community Safety Plan Strategic Directions” dated November 27, 2024, be received for information.

## **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

Work to update and refresh the Burnaby Community Safety Plan and create a new Gang and Gun Strategy for the City is aligned with the following Council-adopted policies and plans/strategies: the Burnaby Strategic Plan (2022), the Social Sustainability Strategy (2011), and the current Burnaby Community Safety Plan (2020).

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

On May 8, 2023, Council approved work to be undertaken by the Crime Reduction and Intervention division to pursue a range of research, community partner intervention programs, and city-led projects all utilizing federally provided grant funding through the Building Safer Community Fund.

One of the initiatives within this approved funding workplan was the updating and refresh of the 2020 City of Burnaby Community Safety Plan. Additionally, the city received funding to develop a new Gang and Gun Strategy. Together, these strategic documents will support the ongoing sustainability of successful gang and gun prevention efforts realized through the workplan.

Since this time, Crime Reduction and Intervention division staff have worked with a consultant group to develop and refine the new 2025 Community Safety Plan and associated Gang and Gun Strategy.

### **2.1 Consultation and Engagement**

Starting in February this year, staff worked with a consultant to meet with key City and community leaders, a range of community organizations, members of the Public Safety

and Community Safety Advisory Committees, as well as select staff from a range of city departments. Through these discussions, the team refined early strategic directions for the Community Safety Plan guiding later public consultation efforts. Details of ensuing broader public consultation work is detailed in section 4.0 Communication and Community Engagement below.

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

Detailed analysis of engagement and consultation data is currently underway. Results will be used to identify key areas of focus within the Community Safety Plan and Gang and Gun Strategy. Using this strategic framework to align focus areas with departmental work and initiatives will ensure city responsiveness to community safety needs.

#### **3.1 Emerging Themes**

Select key themes are emerging at this phase of the project, identified as follows:

a. Crime and Property Safety – Residential and commercial crime rank high among concerns for the community. To a smaller but notable degree, apprehension about violent crimes increased through a small number of high-profile violent crimes.

b. Public Spaces and Safety – For some respondents, perception of safety in parks and trails is coloured by worries about wildfire risk and personal safety. Unsafe driving behaviors, including speeding and other risky driving behaviour were noted from drivers and pedestrians alike as a worsening issue.

c. Social Issues and Safety - Increase in visible homelessness and associated concerns (such as worry for unhoused individuals, the presence of encampments) was frequently noted throughout all types of engagement. There was a notable number of individuals who shared concerns about public substance misuse and worsening mental health for many. Equity-seeking groups such as immigrant and refugee newcomers as well as 2SLGBTQIA+ shared experiences of harassment and tensions that deeply impacted their experience of safety.

d. Environmental and Urban Safety - Worries about wildfire risks near residential areas loom large for many in the community. Illegal dumping and wildlife encounters were noted as concerns throughout the community.

e. Personal and Demographic Safety – Gender and identity differences created a pronounced difference in personal experiences of safety. Personal and cultural safety was noted frequently both as resiliency and possible vulnerability.

f. Trust in Authorities and Systems - Concerns about a so-called “revolving door” justice system and repeat offenders were provided throughout the engagements. Many shared positive experiences with police; others spoke of the need to maintain this trust through active community engagement, especially for newcomer communities.

### **3.1.1 Focus on Community Cohesion**

Personal and cultural safety was highlighted throughout the engagements, with issues of social cohesion and cultural integration highlighted for many. This was particularly true for newcomers, who shared experiences and challenges adapting to life in Burnaby. Factors such as language barriers, difficulty connecting to support resources, and the changing family structures due to migration stressors contributed to feelings of isolation and exclusion, influencing perceptions of safety and well-being.

### **3.1.2 Community Wellness**

Social issues and safety loomed large for many in the community who shared concerns about visible homelessness, substance misuse and worsening mental health within their community. This represents a changing landscape of community safety, and evolving understanding that community wellness is foundational to improving collective safety.

## **4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement and consultation efforts for plan and strategy development was deep and wide reaching. Emphasis was placed on getting a range of diverse perspectives and experiences not frequently captured such as youth, victims of crime, unhoused residents, and newcomer groups.

Public consultation consisted of a range of traditional and non-traditional engagement activities commencing from June until late October. The online survey solicited over 600 detailed responses from the public and was supported in eight different languages. Three open house-style “Community Solutions Forums” were held at three locations across the city. The team held a total of six focus groups: four for youth as well as one each for seniors and small business representatives. One immigrant and newcomer serving organization conducted informational interviews with their colleagues and clients, providing this valuable information back to city staff. Staff and consultant teams attended homeless outreach locations to hear firsthand experiences of those experiencing homelessness. Finally, through engagement pop-ups, staff teams attended 19 different strategic locations throughout the city to connect with more than 450 residents and visitors in person.

Taken together, broad and extended consultation efforts permitted the sharing of insights from many individuals who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to share their voice. Overwhelmingly, the staff teams found that individuals wanted to speak about their feelings and experiences of safety in Burnaby, willingly sharing their perspectives and insights.

**5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Work on the Community Safety Plan and Gang and Gun Strategy is funded through the Public Safety Canada Building Safer Communities Grant Fund.

Respectfully submitted,

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For  
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