



REPORT

Report Date: April 21, 2021
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RTS No.: 14410
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: April 28, 2021

[Submit comments to Council](#)

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

FROM: General Manager, Arts, Culture & Community Services

SUBJECT: “Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives” Process Update and Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve the proposed approach to undertaking work to develop recommendations to Council as directed in Motion RTS 14010 “Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives”, as described in this report.
- B. THAT Council delegate appointment of the Community Panel members to the Nominations Subcommittee.

REPORT SUMMARY

In July 2020 Council directed staff to report back on an approved motion on Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives (RTS 14010) <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200722/documents/pspc20200722min.pdf>).

The motion included two key deliverables: (1) the creation of a submission to the Special Parliamentary Committee on Reforming the Police Act with a special focus on how provincially funded and delivered services must be transformed in order to successfully refocus resources at the municipal level and (2) the development of recommendations to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.” The motion also included some specific information as to organizations with whom to consult in the development of these recommendations.

This report provides recommendations to Council on the approach to developing the recommendations outlined in the second key direction noted above.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 27, Council approved the motion Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives. (<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200722/documents/pspc20200722min.pdf>).

A substantive list of related Council directions is included in Appendix A.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

On July 27, after hearing from over 400 speakers, Council passed the motion “Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community Led Safety Initiatives.” From the speakers, Council heard about the need for decriminalization of a variety of situations and circumstances, including the intersecting impacts of poverty, gender, and race and systemic racism on interactions with policing.

The full motion can be found on page 15 of the minutes:

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200722/documents/pspc20200722min.pdf>. The key directions to staff are outlined below:

A. THAT Council ask the police board to itemize the work they do that is related to mental health, homelessness, drug use, sex work, and the amount of money spent on it, including the number of tickets issued from enforcing related bylaws as well as the cost of this enforcement

B. THAT Council ask staff to seek input from BLM, WISH, CCAP, BCCLA, Hogan’s Alley Society, Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services Society, VANDU, PACE, DTES Women’s Centre, Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Society, Battered Women’s Support Services, PIVOT and the John Howard Society, people with lived experience, equity-seeking, and other community groups as well as housing and health providers, social service providers and non-profit societies specializing in human rights, mental health and addictions, about how the city could support existing and future community-based harm reduction and safety services.

C. THAT Council ask staff to report back as soon as possible with a plan, timeline and budget to de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.

D. THAT Council directs the Mayor to inform the Vancouver Police Board that it is this Council’s priority to respond to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use with initiatives led by community, health agencies, social service providers and non-profit societies rather than policing.

E. THAT Council direct staff to prepare a written submission with Council's input to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act, with a special focus on how provincially funded and delivered services must be transformed in order to successfully refocus resources at the municipal level;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back with proposed recommendations for the aforementioned written submission in Q42020 or at a time determined after consulting the Parliamentary Committee Office regarding deadlines for written submissions.

In reviewing the motion above, staff identified that the main directions are Directions C and E. Directions A and B are information and engagement directions in fulfilling Action C and so staff have approached the planning in this way.

The following items have already occurred or are underway:

- In response to item A, VPD submitted the report “Our Community in Need: VPD’s Community Focused Safety Strategies” (Nov 2020) that is found at: <https://vpd.ca/police/assets/pdf/reports-policies/our-community-in-need.pdf>.
- Direction D has been completed.
- Direction E will be completed in time to submit to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act by their April 30 deadline.

The focus of this report is the process to develop the recommendations in response to Direction:

C: THAT Council ask staff to report back as soon as possible with a plan, timeline and budget to de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.

Strategic Analysis

Context

Safety is important to all of us, and there are certain groups in society that are at greater risk of harm and vulnerability due to the lack of investment and/or insufficient or inequitable systems that fail to address the root causes of poverty and resulting criminalization. These are the same groups of people, often with intersecting issues and identities, who have more and often repetitive interaction with law enforcement.

The Vancouver Police Department is considered among the most progressive of policing agencies in Canada, including their current work on the s.56 Controlled Drugs and Substances Act exemption, progressive position on substance use issues, advocacy for evidence-based medical treatment, harm reduction, and safe-supply of street drugs, their integrated mental health programming, and their established Sex Worker Guidelines. However, it is also important to recognize and acknowledge the lived experiences of the community members who engaged with Council during the public discussion of the motion and with staff during our diverse community engagement activities on work such as poverty reduction, sex worker safety, Murdered and Missing Women and Girls Inquiry Calls for Justice review, overdose crisis, and other social development initiatives.

In addition to signalling necessary review of interactions with policing and alternative responses and preventative programs at the local level, these experiences also point to both significant gaps in senior government services and supports that increase vulnerability. Consideration of specific opportunities for new or redesigned supports from the different levels of government is recommended as an element of this review.

Further, any discussions related to law enforcement must acknowledge that policing like other public institutions, including local government, health care, and education, is built upon and grows from a European colonial past and that this legacy continues to influence the experiences of inequity for Indigenous and racialized community members today – and will continue to without intentional acknowledgement, interventions, and change.

The impacts of intergenerational trauma is an issue that affects all segments of the human population, but particularly historically marginalized individuals. The sources of the trauma vary widely, but for the purposes of this report, intergenerational trauma is applied in terms of the impacts of colonization, including the ongoing impacts of the Indian Residential School System, historically discriminatory policing and other public institutional practices, and interactions between historically marginalized populations and law enforcement in general, but also other governmental and private institutions.

The impacts of intergenerational trauma often have significant impacts on the social determinants of health.¹ Fear of governmental systems such as policing, hospitals, health care, and education have prevented communities from accessing services that have impacted their wellbeing.¹ Given this reality, governments must look beyond legislative changes as the overall solution to policing concerns and apply a holistic approach to systemic changes in all social service sectors.

For the purposes of approaching this motion, historically marginalized groups will include people living in poverty whose identities include people who use drugs, sex workers, people with serious mental health challenges, and people experiencing homelessness. Other identities will be included through an intersectional approach that will include: Indigenous communities; Black and African diaspora and other racialized communities; gender; immigrant communities, residents with precarious status; people with disabilities including learning/hidden disabilities and head injury; and gender diverse communities (2SLGBTQ+) and non-binary people, among others.

Summary of Research

This motion directed staff to report back on options to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use, and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.” As a preliminary research exercise, staff undertook a review of decriminalization approaches in jurisdictions outside of Vancouver that have had the intention or outcome of preventing and offsetting criminalization by:

- Providing an alternative to calling the police;
- Investing in community programs and resources that prevent crises;
- Adopting policies or frameworks that decriminalize health and social issues; or
- A combination of the above.

Through this scan, staff identified that local governments have taken a variety of different measures to co-develop with and engage communities and organizations in developing

¹ First Nations Health Authority. (2016, October). First Nations Health Governance Foundational Documents. West Vancouver, BC, Canada: First Nations Health Authority.

approaches to achieve the intended outcome of redirecting work from policing to community organizations. Some of the methods used include:

- Community Task Forces, a Community Police Review Commission, engagement grants, community forums, visiting jurisdictions (Austin, NZ, Edmonton);
- Developing local partnership to work on implementation (Toronto); and
- Responsive planning to decriminalize community-led efforts (Eugene, Portland).

Learning from other jurisdictions will be part of the process. The current scan is attached in Appendix B and will be expanded upon as new information is received.

Related City Initiatives

Staff have undertaken related work in which there are synergies with this motion that can also be considered in relation to recommendations being brought forward to Council. For example, Council has directed staff to work on housing and homelessness, the review of the Missing and Women and Girls Inquiry recommendations, a request to Vancouver Police Board to end police checks, and an application to the federal government to decriminalize possession of illicit drugs. Council directed work related to anti-racism and staff are undertaking the development of an Equity Framework and an anti-Black racism plan. A complete list of motions and initiatives is included in Appendix A.

Recommended Process

Importantly, the direction from Council is tightly focussed: to receive recommendations of how to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use, and to prioritize funding for community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.” Given these discussions will be underway, staff recommend also seeking advice on community programs that prevent crisis and reduce police interaction, as well as the identification of new policies, frameworks, or guidelines that decriminalize health and social issues, including any commentary on the legal jurisdiction and legislated responsibilities so as to describe any intersects or conflicts with the statutory authorities afforded to the police, health, or other public bodies.

It is important to note that there are many other broader considerations around community safety and well-being that were not discussed in the motion and so are not contemplated in the scope of this work. Accordingly, the work arising from this process would not be considered a broad community safety plan. Rather, the results will be targeted programs and approaches that focus on people living in poverty and interactions with policing.

A Phased Approach

Staff recognize the diversity of stakeholders in Vancouver and also the impacts of marginalization on the ability for many communities to fully participate in City and other public processes. Staff also recognize the urgency to identify and implement recommendations.

Staff are seeking an approach that balances urgency of getting to recommendations with engagement processes and relationship building needed to create the recommendations. The relational aspect of this work is critical because the impacts of colonization and systemic marginalization significantly impact trust and confidence in public institutions. While this motion

and its impacts can be significant, the type of changes contemplated in Council’s resolution will require long-term efforts. It is hoped that this process will assist in fostering relationships that will be needed as Council recommendations are implemented.

Staff recommend an approach to this work that engages community groups and residents most affected by the issues and supports their representation in this process, while providing for some representatives to be appointed directly by the City and VPD, and in some cases with community input.

Recognizing the tension between the need to take time to do the work well and the urgency to develop and implement recommendations, staff are recommending a phased but assertively timed process that is independent of City administration and provides opportunity for a range of perspectives and ideas to be considered.

The phases of the recommended approach are as follows:

Phase One: Recommendations generation would happen through an arm’s length Community Panel comprised of community members with diverse expertise and backgrounds, but all somehow connected to the focus of the motion.

Phase Two: After Council receives the report from the Panel and subject to any additional direction from Council at that time, staff will undertake further financial review and analysis and recommend implementation approaches, including any legal, procurement, jurisdictional, and provincial and/or municipal funding implications to Council. Staff will continue to engage with the Panel through this implementation analysis to ensure staff understanding of the recommendations and Panel’s intentions, priorities, and other thoughts on implementation.

The relationship between the Community Panel and staff is at arm’s length yet cooperative and interdependent. The Community Panel is at arm’s length from City staff so that it is free to do its work, but will be supported in its work through a staff resource group who will provide advice and guidance as needed (described below). Further, the resource group will continue to liaise with the Community Panel as needed as staff assess their recommendations as described above. Staff will present draft recommendations to the Panel prior to making any final recommendations to Council.

It is important to note that while Community Panel recommendations and staff implementation analysis are expected in a timely manner, many of the issues resulting in police interactions are systemic or structural and cannot be resolved immediately through funding alone or even at the local government level. The work started through this process will create an important foundation for discussion, potential partnership opportunities, and advocacy with senior government.

Specific recommendations related to each of the phases is below.

Phase One: Community-Led Recommendations Creation

Proposed Community Panel

Staff recommend the establishment of a Community Panel (“Panel”) representing a diverse range of experiences and expertise that will be responsible for making recommendations to Council. Importantly, the Panel needs to be small enough to move swiftly toward effective

decisions but large enough to represent various perspectives.

The recommendations of the Community Panel would be advisory to City Council and would not be binding on any of the public bodies or organizations mentioned in the recommendations. It is also recognized that the work of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act may result in changes that supersede some recommendations of this Panel.

Community Panel: Proposed Terms of Reference and Composition

The proposed process is considerate of the need to bring people together in a way that centres and values relationships, centres communities and their experiences, and is cognizant of power dynamics. The proposed process will allow for various groups in community to identify representation on the Panel.

The proposed Terms of Reference, including composition, for the Community Panel is in Appendix C. The proposed selection approach is in Appendix D.

As per the proposed Terms of Reference, it is recommended that the Panel be composed of 16 members in total:

- 11 community members: representing the diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those noted in the motion (e.g., sex work, homelessness, substance use, Indigenous communities, racialized communities, etc.), and including three community representatives from the following groups:
 - 1 MVAEC representative: Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee member or staff representative
 - 1 Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) representative
 - 1 Community Policing Centres (CPCs) representative
- 2 community policing experts: VPD-identified experts who are not employees of the VPD
- 1 academic researcher: to be recommended through the community process
- 2 co-chairs: to lead and facilitate the Panel in a collaborative co-creation process:

The Panel will be expected to review a variety of research and data and undertake community engagement to inform the development of their recommendations. The community engagement undertaken by the panel would seek to focus on specific communities and organizations noted in the motion, but would still be open to the broader community. The Panel will also be requested to engage with Council Advisory Committees with associated mandates.

Given the wide-ranging perspectives, all Panelists will require demonstrated skills in engaging in respectful and constructive dialogue with people with diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas.

It is further proposed that the Panel have Co-Chairs who are able to facilitate meaningful, inclusive, and respectful conversations within the context of diverse panelist interests, priorities, and expectations, as well as support the synthesis of complex and competing information into actionable recommendations with clear intended outcomes. The Co-Chairs should have experience facilitating multi-stakeholder initiatives, knowledge and experience of the issues noted in the motion, including understanding of systemic racism and structural inequities, as well as – ideally – some experience with public sector contexts and program design.

Community Panel Recruitment and Appointment

It is recommended that Council’s Nominations Subcommittee be delegated authority to review the recommendations for all appointments to the Panel and make the final appointments to the Panel.

The process for identifying recommended Panel memberships are as follows:

- To identify candidates for eight of the 11 community member appointees, it is recommended that staff engage a community consultant to support a facilitated process with the groups identified in the motion and other groups associated with the focus of the motion. The facilitator would work with the groups noted in the motion and other groups to identify characteristics and experience that eight community members are expected to have. There also needs to be a process for others, who may not be a part of these discussions, to express their interest in participating in this process and to submit their professional or lived experience qualifications. This process will need to be accessible. Operational details about this process would be determined with the community consultant.
- Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, (MVAEC), Community Policing Centres (CPCs), and Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) would each be invited to identify their respective candidate should they accept the invitation.
- The identification of the recommended academic researcher appointment would likewise happen through the facilitated community dialogues.
- The VPD would be invited to identify the two community policing experts who are not current employees of the VPD.
- To identify candidates for Co-Chairs, staff recommend an open recruitment process, including identification of potential candidates through discussions with community groups noted above. Potential candidates who meet the criteria may be interviewed or contacted for further information. The recommendations to Council for Co-Chair appointments would be determined in consultation with the City Manager.

Community Panel Supports

The work described for the Panel is substantive and staff recommend that the \$300,000 approved in the 2021 budget to undertake the work to come to recommendations be directed to support the proposed Panel with several key supports:

1. *Financial compensation for the Panelists*

The Panel will be spending considerable time and exercising expertise in their work to bring recommendations to Council. Recommended honorariums are included in the proposed Terms of Reference (Appendix C).

2. *Project Coordination & Staff Committee*

The project coordinator supporting the panel would be responsible for working with the Chair and Vice Chair to manage the timeline, coordinate various panel activities, and provide other administrative supports, such as record keeping, scheduling, etc. The Project coordinator will also act as the administrative liaison between the Panel

and the staff committee that will be comprised of City, VPD and VCH staff. This staff committee will provide support to this panel, undertaking research or summarizing community feedback, as directed by the panel co-chairs.

3. *Staff Resource Group: Process, Research and Data Supports*

While the Panel will be furnished with jurisdictional research and scans, the Panel may require additional research, advice on process or systems, or data. The City of Vancouver and VPD will provide research and data support to the Panel as feasible. VCH will be requested to participate on this support Team. Staff from other organizations or Provincial Ministries may be contacted by the Panel; the members of the Staff Resource Group can assist with these connections as well as connections with other individuals and groups as needed by the Panel.

4. *Legal advice*

The Panel may require objective legal advice as to legislation or other matters. Staff will engage external Legal Resource for the Panel through City Legal Services at their request.

5. *Community Engagement Design, Facilitation, and Financial Recognition*

The panel will require the support of thoughtful and trauma-informed community engagement facilitation that can implement an accessible process that is grounded in values and relationships. Staff recommend engaging a community engagement consultancy to design and facilitate community engagement activities for the Panel. It will be imperative that the Panel focus on solutions; that discussion about the problems is not the focus. Key questions focused on solutions will be drafted and finalized with input from the Panel.

This includes identifying funds for honorarium for Elders and other community members not representing organizations who may be offering significant time in this engagement process.

The groups noted in the Council motion would receive direct reach out through this process. Council Advisory Committees will also receive a direct invitation.

6. *Writing Support*

The Panel will be required to prepare a final report with analysis and recommendations for Council. Staff recommend the engagement of a writer to support this effort.

It is possible that some of these resources may be offered with internal City resources. The \$300,000 budget assigned to this work will be expended relatively quickly given the resources required to support the Panel. However, allocation of existing City resources to support the Panel will impact delivery of other Council priorities so all efforts will be made to work within the provided budget.

Role of City administration, VPD, and Vancouver Coastal Health in Relation to the Panel

The Panel is an independent body with administrative supports from the City. The Panel will have a senior City Administration contact with whom to discuss progress and any challenges that may be arising. The intended Staff Resource Group can also be engaged to address any additional resource needs, such as research, data, or legal advice.

It is important to note that Health Authority input into this motion is critical as significant interventions and responses will require partnership with Health. VCH staff expressed a very strong interest after the motion was passed to participate in the work on this motion. VCH has assigned a senior staff liaison to the staff resource group. Given the COVID response is an unprecedented health crisis that has required that they prioritize COVID response along with the overdose response, staff will be mindful of their capacity moving forward.

Phase Two: Implementation Review and Recommendations

Staff recommend that Council receive the Report of the Community Panel for information and direct staff to conduct any additional analysis that may be required to fully scope and consider the implementation of such recommendations. This analysis would include matters such as, but not limited to, procurement, labour relations, and financial impacts, legal and statutory considerations, timelines, relationship to other funded programs, jurisdiction, etc.

This Phase will also enable VPD and any other public institution or organization identified in the recommendations time to consider the recommendations and develop their response.

As noted above, staff will continue to engage with the Panel through this implementation analysis to ensure staff understanding of the recommendations and Panel’s intentions, priorities, and other thoughts on implementation. Staff will present draft implementation recommendations to the Panel for review and feedback prior to making any final recommendations to Council.

Proposed Timeline

May-July 2021	Community Panel identification and appointment process
June – July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite community submissions for ideas for community-based programs • Compile research package for Panelists. Send to Panelists once appointments are made. • Develop community engagement process
August 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel convenes and reviews jurisdictional scan and engagement process and finalizes key questions.
Sept – Oct 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement activities • Further research and information review • Necessary legal analysis
Nov 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel works to create recommendations • May require further research or legal support
Dec 2021 or Jan 2022	Report to Council
Jan to Mar	Staff financial and implementation analysis of Panel recommendations
Apr/May	Review report of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act Staff implementation recommendations to Council

Public/Civic Agency Input

Staff would seek to ensure Council Advisory Committees are connected into the recommended Panel’s community engagement processes.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

A significant risk is the assertive timeline to come to recommendations. This timeline may be impacted by a number of factors. As well, the scope of work here is significant and will impact delivery on other Council directions or any new Council directions that emerge before the end of the year.

Human Resources/Labour Relations

There are no Human Resources or Labour Relations implications to the recommendations in this report.

Legal

There are no Legal implications to the recommendations in this report.

Financial

City Council approved \$300,000 in funding to support the work of the motion in the 2021 Operating Budget. Some very modest funds have been expended to secure support to develop the City’s submission to the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act. The remaining balance will be allocated to support the work of the Community Panel. Staff will work to deliver this process within the allocated budget but may require additional funding. Staff will seek to redeploy funding from other City initiatives should additional resources be required to complete this work.

CONCLUSION

The development of recommendations to Council on how to “to de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas” represents an important opportunity for the community to share their ideas for non-policing responses to circumstances and situations that are both the result of and an intensifier of marginalization and systemic and structural inequities. The potential positive outcomes of this work are significant for both the specific communities at the heart of this motion and the broader community as a whole.

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Appendix A

Related Council directions

March 2021: Direction to staff to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the City of Vancouver (Member's Motion B.2) which includes Vancouver's efforts to implement UNDRIP with existing provincial law.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20210310/documents/pspc5.pdf>

March 2021: Direction to staff to continue with the implementation of the Women's Equity Strategy and Next Steps
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20210310/documents/pspc1.pdf>

November 2020: Council directed that a federal exemption from the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act be sought to decriminalize personal possession of illicit substances within the City's boundaries for medical purposes, in order to address urgent public health concerns caused by the overdose crisis and COVID-19
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20201125/documents/cfsc20201125min.pdf>

July 2020: Council directed the Mayor to write to the Vancouver Police Board to inform the Board that while Council deeply appreciates recent efforts to reform policing services and the efforts of the Police Department to quickly implement related changes, Vancouver City Council's priority is to end the practice of street checks in Vancouver.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200722/documents/pspc4.pdf>

June 2020: Community-based Crisis Management Through Understanding and De-escalation Motion asks Council to commit to a community-based crisis management strategy that promotes public safety and prioritizes non-policing interventions as appropriate; directs staff to develop a pilot community-based crisis management program and that the Mayor write to senior government requesting increased investments directed to poverty, public safety, unstable housing, mental health and addictions and support for a community-based crisis management strategy.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200624/documents/pspc6.pdf>.

June 2020: Mental Health and Addiction Reform: An Expert-Led Cross-Jurisdictional Task Force (Sept 2020) Motion called for the establishment of an emergency task force on mental health and addictions, examination of current service delivery and outreach frameworks, and that Council direct the Mayor, on behalf of Council to write to senior politicians
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200915/documents/b5.pdf>

June 9, 2020: Standing up to the Rise in Anti-Asian Racism, All Racism and Hate Crimes calls on senior government to enhance work on <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200609/documents/b3.pdf>

March 2020 and January 2020: Safety for Residents with Precarious Status directs staff to deliver on Access to Services without Fear Policy as well as writing to the VPD Chief Constable and the Premier of the Province of BC
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20200311/documents/pspc8.pdf>

2020 Budget: Council supported one-time funding of \$200,000 in the 2020 budget to initiate work to address anti-Black racism

2020 Budget: Included funding to support the finalization and initial implementation of

the Equity Framework

2020 Budget: Included \$50,000 in one time funding to support the finalization of the review of Red Woman Rising and the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry recommendations and which of these apply to the City of Vancouver.

2020 Budget: Included \$72,000 in one time funding to support the finalization of the UN Safe Spaces for Women and Girls Scoping Study.

2019: A collaborative and new approach to Oppenheimer Park and other Public Spaces. Motion direct staff to develop a collaborative decampment plan with Park Board approval with the goal of restoring the park for broad public use and additional programming; support the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) in its call for increased mental health support through a new improved method of delivering Cars 87 and 88, and related funding from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH); and call on the Province to increase vital wraparound services
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20191023/documents/pspc4.pdf>

2019: Council direct staff to continue to actively pursue partnership funding with senior levels of government for an SRO Revitalization and Acquisition Fund to improve living conditions, secure affordability and enable the replacement of SRO congregate-style housing with self-contained shelter rate social housing for low-income residents AND prioritize advocacy to the Province for annual rent increase restrictions in accommodation designated under the Single Room Accommodation By-law (“SRA By-law”) to better protect marginalized, low-income tenants from homelessness.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20201007/documents/pspc1a.pdf>

2019: Four Pillars Drug Strategy Review and Additional Resources motion directed staff to review the Strategy, ensure adequate resources and review approaches similar to the Portugal model. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20191023/documents/pspc7.pdf>

2018: Council passed 32 actions in response to the Mayor’s Overdose Emergency Task Force recommendations that included as key themes: Investing in Indigenous Healing and Wellness; enabling a peer based network for people who use illicit drugs to strengthen opportunities for engagement at the municipal level; increase investments in private and publicly funded SROs to prevent overdose deaths; expand harm reduction and access to safe supply and treatment options; and take collective action for systemic change including funding and educational/training resources for the VPD. A safe space for sex workers along Kingsway was also adopted as part of the final recommendations.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20201124/documents/b4.pdf>

2018: Grant to Support the Continued Operations of the Saa-ust Centre in City owned space, created in response to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry to provide traditional healing and wellness supports, counselling and other resources for survivors and families of victims.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20180620/documents/pspc2.pdf>

2018: Grant to reinstate the Mother’s Day Traditional Pow Wow in Vancouver as part of the City’s response to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. The Mother’s Day Traditional Pow Wow aligns with City of Reconciliation goals and is grounded in healing and wellness and supports traditional, spiritual, and cultural practices in order to more fully support urban Indigenous women and their families.
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20180417/documents/a9.pdf>

2018: Council directs staff to implement phase 1 of the Accessibility Strategy for the City and form a Task Force including the Persons with Disabilities and Seniors Advisory Committees and people with lived experience who formed part of the Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions.

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20180918/documents/a16.pdf>

2017: Council directs staff to provide an update on a poverty reduction action plan

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20170613/documents/regu20170613min.pdf>

2016: Supporting Trans, Gender Variant and Two Spirit inclusion at the City of

Vancouver : <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/trans-gender-variant-and-two-spirit-inclusion-at-the-city-of-vancouver.pdf>

2014: Vancouver makes a commitment to designate itself as a City of Reconciliation in recognition of the City's commitment to addressing the intergenerational impacts of the IRSS on Indigenous peoples in Canada, including their access to services, justice, and full equitable participation in Canadian society.

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20141028/documents/rr1.pdf>

2014: Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions includes 23 staff recommendations under the following themes: Work Better Together to Address Gaps in Systems; Create a Peer Informed System; Address Stigma; Focus on Youth and Wellness for Indigenous Peoples, and enhance Addictions Knowledge

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20140917/documents/cfsc1.pdf>

2014: Council passed the Healthy City Strategy, the City's first social sustainability plan and in 2015 passed the first Healthy City Action Plan. This plan included as an action that staff prepare a Poverty Reduction Plan for Council approval.

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20141029/documents/ptec1.pdf>

2013: Report back on the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry and City Task Force on Sex Worker Safety and Sexual Exploitation. The City was accountable for three Inquiry recommendations to enhance sex worker safety in Vancouver; further the task force identified recommendations that included increased training and awareness to reduce stigma and increased housing affordability.

<https://council.vancouver.ca/20131218/documents/cfsc7.pdf>

2011: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Protecting Vulnerable Adults & Neighbourhoods Affected by Sex Work: A Comprehensive Approach and Action Plan that endorsed a framework and actions contained in this report providing a comprehensive approach to addressing sexual exploitation and sex work through enhanced prevention, opportunities for exiting, and improved health and safety for all Vancouver citizens and neighbourhoods and direct staff to review license and enforcement policy and report back to Council with recommendations that will enhance prevention, health and safety, mitigate negative neighbourhood impacts, and support responsible. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20110922/documents/penv4.pdf>

2001: Council adopted the Four Pillars Strategy: A Framework for Action and Approach to Vancouver's Drug Problems. <https://council.vancouver.ca/010430/rr1.htm>

Appendix B

Decriminalization of Poverty Jurisdictional Scan

Social Policy and Projects • March 2021

Introduction

On July 27, 2020, Vancouver City Council passed a motion titled “Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives.” This motion directed staff to report back on options to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use, and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.” As a preliminary research exercise, this report identifies interventions in jurisdictions outside of Vancouver that have had the intention or outcome of offsetting criminalization by:

- Providing an alternative to calling the police;
- Investing in community programs and resources that prevent crises;
- Adopting policies or frameworks that decriminalize health and social issues; or
- A combination of the above.

A literature review informed the scope and methodology for this work. We chose nine case studies to illustrate a breadth of decriminalization mechanisms, geographic location, and the target of decriminalization (e.g. sex work, substance use, or homelessness). To determine whether a case study should be included, we adapted criteria from Fraser and Pauly’s recent cross-jurisdictional review “Finding Alternatives to Criminalization”. We included cases that:

- Offset a source of criminalization;
- Prevent need for policing or law enforcement;
- Build community capacity;
- Exist either as a program or a pilot;
- Includes an aspect of participatory engagement with affected populations; this means it does not dictate what other people need, but actively listens to/involves people(s) affected by criminalization; and
- Can plausibly be adopted by a municipal government.

We excluded cases that were:

- Intended to reform policing, such as training programs for police, new restrictions on officers, etc.;
- ‘Integrated’ units, such as outreach teams with embedded police officers;
- Too vague to implement, lacking a series of steps or clear description of what was implemented; or
- Awareness/advocacy campaigns that are meant to appeal to policy-makers.

The limitations of this scan include the small number of case studies to draw conclusions from; the lack of a more exhaustive literature search due to time constraints; and, for many of the cases, a lack of evaluation and evidence available. The amount of information in the public domain influenced selection, meaning that we may have missed some pilot projects or community-based programs. These are often the most innovative but the least documented. As well, Vancouver’s jurisdiction and context are unique, including its location on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, the City’s current efforts in relation to Reconciliation, decolonization, equity and and cultural redress, and responses taking place in other jurisdictions do not share these same relationships or history. That may limit their transferability to our context.

Key themes

Overview

- Decriminalizing poverty entails recognition of human rights, including everyone's right to access basic needs such as safe, affordable, and accessible housing; and nutritious, affordable, and culturally safe food. If homelessness, low incomes, and hunger did not exist then criminalization of homelessness and low-income people would not either.
- Access to universal basic needs for all Vancouver residents is a long-term, multi-billion dollar problem, and the existence of poverty is a baseline assumption that is currently entrenched in many inter-related policies at all levels of government. Penalization of poverty also occurs through these institutions and the policies they create, but in a more complex and obscure way.
- Responses to decriminalization of poverty have included emergency response measures, policing protocols, and reallocation measures that reduce the role of the police.
- There are many case studies of established emergency response alternatives to policing for mental-health and substance-use related emergencies.
- Successful implementation of decriminalization measures can result in long-term cost-savings for police departments.
- However, no net short- to medium-term cost savings should be expected from decriminalization measures. Community and peer-based services need to be adequately resourced and depend on people who need to be compensated fairly and equitably.
- Lack of consistent and adequate funding and resourcing is a barrier to larger-scale implementation of decriminalization measures.
- Stigma from racism is a barrier to larger-scale implementation of decriminalization measures, and there are also intersections with gender, sexual orientation and other dimensions of identity.

Leadership and staffing

- Most initiatives reviewed were the result of community activists working to fill the gaps and address their own needs. Effective programs have emerged from municipalities supporting and partnering with activists.
- Having people with lived experience and peers present is an important consideration for cultural and emotional safety, and to adhere to safer practices.
- Indigenous-led responses are important for cultural safety and reconciliation efforts.
- Careful consideration should be made to uphold and protect workplace conditions when vital societal functions are moved from unionized and powerful service providers, such as municipal police departments, to traditionally underfunded service providers in the community.
- There are challenges that come with forming relationships with police while also holding police accountable and keeping them at an "arms-length" to maintain the trust of Indigenous community members and other groups that are disproportionately criminalized.

Collaborative planning

- It takes time to build trust between organizations and community, move government policy forward, and formalize implementation.
- The work between communities and government needs to be envisioned as being both urgent and long term, or reactive and proactive. Most of the case studies reviewed have taken over 20 years to get to where they are at now. Implementation and scaling are also key. Some of the groundbreaking work done by projects such as CAHOOTS were project specific with shorter implementation times, which were easier to implement and to scale up.

Examples of initial engagement processes

- Governments have taken measures to co-develop with and engage communities and organizations through:
 - Community Task Forces, a Community Police Review Commission, engagement grants, community forums, visiting jurisdictions (Austin, NZ, Edmonton)
 - Developing local partnership to work on implementation (Toronto)
 - Responsive planning to decriminalize community-led efforts (Eugene, Portland)

Evaluation

- In general, there is a lack of available research and data about the intergenerational impacts of specific decriminalization policy and programming on people who have experienced disproportionate criminalization. There is also a lack of available research and data about the relational impacts of specific decriminalization policy between people who have experienced disproportionate criminalization and police and other municipal stakeholders.
- Emerging monitoring and evaluation practices include social and capital return on investment indicators, program-use statistics based on demographics and location, and diversion of police time and resources based on emergency call volume and response. Program auditing has also been used as a tool to measure efficacy.

Case studies at a glance

Intervention	Area	Municipal role	Started	Cost
KUU-US Crisis Line	Port Alberni, BC	Provincial/health authority funding for local service	1993	\$800K CAD
Community Action on Mental Health and Addictions	Calgary, Alberta	Municipal funding to build a better crisis response	2018	\$25M CAD
Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force	Edmonton, Alberta	Municipal task force to recommend budget and policy changes	2020	To be determined
REACH 24/7 Mobile Crisis Assistance Program	Edmonton, Alberta	Municipal funding to alternative service provider	2015	\$1M CAD
Bear Clan Patrol	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Municipal funding to volunteer safety patrol	Revived 2015	\$1.2M CAD
Access T.O. Sanctuary City	Toronto, Ontario	Municipal (and provincial) policy change	2014	Unknown
Dignity Village	Portland, Oregon	Designation of land as “transitional campground”	2003	Land lease and op costs
CAHOOTS	Eugene, Oregon	Contract between police and service provider	1989	\$2.1M USD
Reduce and Reinvest, Transfer, and Reimagine	Austin, Texas	Reallocation of public safety budget	2020	Up to \$153.2M USD
Prostitution Reform Act	Aotearoa (New Zealand)	Local bylaws enabled by national legislation	2003	Unknown

Detailed case studies

KUU-US

- Port Alberni, British Columbia (population 17,678, with about 17% of the population identifying as Indigenous)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Unknown relationship with the local municipality and police	Indigenous-led Crisis Line and Mobile Response	Indigenous people(s) in Port Alberni experiencing poverty, homelessness, mental health challenges and crises related to residential school, child welfare, substance use etc.	Partnered w/ First Nations Health Authority to activate call services province-wide with plans to add a chat/text service; working to expand referral pathways (discharge planning) with major hospitals across BC	KUU-US, a registered charity and non-profit society Member of the Crisis Line Association of British Columbia and accredited as a suicide crisis line by the American Association of Suicidology	First Nations Health Authority, Métis Nation British Columbia, BC Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch	1993	779,054 CAD in 2019

Overview/context

The KUU-US Crisis Line Society offers a range of culturally safe services including a 24-hour crisis phone line, risk assessments, safety monitoring, aftercare and a mobile crisis response in the Port Alberni region, home to the Hupacasath and Tseshaht First Nations. It began operating in 1993 in response to a large number of suicide attempts among local First Nation youth. KUU-US means “people” in Tseshaht Language.

Cultural safety

Phone Operators are from various Indigenous backgrounds, and all crisis response personnel receive training in Indigenous cultural safety, and bring an understanding of First Nations history and intergenerational trauma. KUU-US recognizes that stigma often acts as a barrier to accessing local mental health services, especially in small communities due to concerns around privacy. Where situations pose a risk to the caller or others (the service responds to third party reporting) and require one on one contact, workers are able to call upon their 24hr crisis mobile service for Port Alberni, Mental Health Outreach, Emergency personnel or other identified responders. They are also able to provide CISM debriefings as well as assistance during healing and prayer circles. In addition, KUU-US has partnered with the FNHA to establish Crisis Response Protocols with nations across the province.

Monitoring/evaluation

While the program has not been formally evaluated, it tracks data on people assisted including health region, gender, age, time of week/day, as well as statistics on additional support services accessed. 2020 saw the KUU-US Crisis Line receive a 142% increase in calls relating to loneliness, double the number of calls regarding substance use and a significant increase in calls from Elders.

Community Action on Mental Health and Addictions

- Calgary, Alberta (population 1,285,711)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Municipal	Mental Health and Addiction Strategy and Investment Framework	Addressing gaps in services to build a better crisis response to support those experiencing mental health challenges and addictions	No	City convenes stakeholders to implement the strategy and action plan	Municipal	2018	25 million CAD in 2018 to be spent over 5 years One-time from reserve budget, (no provincial or private funding); an additional 300K from family foundations

Overview/context

Calgary's efforts stem from two council initiatives: one is their Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, of which a goal area is 'staying safe'. The other is a council motion on anti-racism that brought 120 people out to speak to Council in July 2020 with many of the issues centred on policing.

In July 2018, City Council earmarked up to \$25 million from the Fiscal Stability Reserve for Crime Prevention and a new Mental Health and Addiction Strategy by 2023. \$8 million is for community safety/capacity-building initiatives and redirecting policing efforts as part of a Community Safety Investment Framework (CSIF). The development of the CSIF in November 2020 took place in parallel with the development of the Mental Health and Addiction Community Strategy and Action Plan for 2021-2023. The Framework has four outcome areas and its focus is to build a better crisis response as well as to prevent crises from happening in the first place.

The framework

Around \$2.5 million is being used to bolster existing initiatives that are already having good results. Through the CSIF, a call for proposals went out to organizations to apply for funding. In addition, Calgary police have made a one-time commitment of \$10 million towards similar efforts. This funding came about as a result of savings in the policing budget. The police will decide how this money is spent.

Calgary has a funders table through which it is making these funding allocations. The Calgary Police are 'co-governors' of this funding table. There are no community groups present at this table.

Calgary has a relationship with health/public health (which like Vancouver/BC, is separate from the City) to fund health services that are not professional services. For example, Health funds the clinician/nurse/doctor, while the support services are funded by the City.

The Alberta Police Act allows for two City Councillors to be appointed to the Calgary Police Commission. Further, the City appoints members (in BC, the Province appoints members).

Because this is one time funding, they will have to go back to Council with partners to have the programs continue.

Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force

- Edmonton, Alberta (population 972,223)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Temporary council committee, established through city bylaw	Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force	To recommend budget and policy changes related to community safety and well-being	No	Municipality	Municipal	2020	Unknown

Overview/context

In August 2020, the city of Edmonton approved a bylaw and outlined a recruitment approach for a temporary Community Safety and Well-Being Task Force. The mandate of the committee was to initiate a collaborative process that engages both service users and providers to develop actionable funding and policy recommendations that address racism, discrimination, excessive use of force, poverty and homelessness. The work included a review of ‘divest’ or ‘defund’ models, and other proven practises, and a plan to integrate social services offered by the City of Edmonton with Edmonton Police Service’s CSWB department.

The task force was comprised of:

- an independent chair appointed by City Council
- up to 10 community members appointed by City Council
- up to two members of the Edmonton Police Service
- up to two staff members of City Administration
- one member appointed by the Edmonton Police Commission

Members were announced in October of 2020.

Task Force Report

The Task Force came back to Council at the end of March 2021 with 14 recommendations, including freezing the EPS budget until the figure is close to other similar-sized jurisdictions, anti-racism training for police officers, creating an integrated dispatch centre to better identify whether police or others are best-suited to respond to a situation, and creating a professional college to regulate police. City Council voted unanimously in favour of having city staff work with the Task Force to implement 13 of the 14 recommendations. The exception was the freezing of the police budget, which requires a policy review.

Reach 24/7 Mobile Crisis Assistance Program

- Edmonton, Alberta (population 972,223)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Collaborative partnership with REACH and two local non-profits. Works with stakeholders from Edmonton Police Service and Alberta Health EMS Services	Mobile Crisis Response	People experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges, people who use substances	No	REACH, a registered charity and non-profit society	City budget	2015	Received 875,000 CAD from city in 2019, 92,000 CAD in 2021

Overview/context

REACH 24/7 Mobile Crisis Response is a partnership between Boyle Street Community Services, Canadian Mental Health Association, HOPE Mission, and REACH Edmonton. The program was established in 2015 to provide “comprehensive, coordinated access to 24-hour services for vulnerable citizens”, and to reduce the need for medical, judicial and police interventions through the diversion of non-emergency crisis events. According to Edmonton’s chief of police, around 30 per cent of service calls are for social work. REACH, the backbone agency, emerged out of the Mayor’s Taskforce on Community Safety in 2010.

In June of 2020, amidst increasing calls to divest from policing and address systemic racism, Edmonton city council voted against a motion to freeze the 2021 police budget (a \$16 million cut) and opted instead to reallocate \$11 million toward community programs and housing over two years. Jan Fox, Executive Director of REACH, spoke at the public hearing, stating that REACH may be in a better position to address some social services calls. She also acknowledged a lack of diversity at the leadership level of REACH but that they were “listening and learning from the community”.

Evaluation/monitoring

According to REACH, for every dollar invested, there is at least \$1.91 of social value returned. This accounts for efficiencies created for first responders, reduced crime, cost saved downstream (hospitals, courts), and decreased victimization. The diversion of calls saves EPS around 36 minutes per event. While in the first year of service (2016) 211 calls made up roughly 30% of all crisis diversion referrals, as of September 2018 that has increased to 70%. In the same time frame, EPS and EMS referrals have decreased from 42% to 17%. The 2020 REACH Business Plan states that the 24/7 outreach team “quickly became an essential service in the eyes of police, emergency services, agencies and Edmontonians in general” and the program has seen over \$1 million of in-kind contributions from partners.

Bear Clan Patrol

- Winnipeg, Manitoba (population 705,244, with over 12% of the population identifying as Indigenous)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Independent from the Winnipeg Police Service and RCMP, although it does take a cooperative approach with police	Indigenous Community Safety Patrol (volunteer-based, not 24/7)	Indigenous people, people living in the inner city, people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges	Has now expanded into roughly 50 different 'chapters' across Canada	Bear Clan Patrol, a registered charity, non-profit society and trademark (Winnipeg BCP is the 'parent' organization that oversees the various 'chapters')	Sources of funding have included municipal, provincial and federal grants and other donations	1992-1994 2015-present	Just over 600,000 in 2019 Just over 1.23 million in 2020 due to extra pandemic funding

Overview/context

The Bear Clan Patrol (BCP) is a community-led safety patrol operating in five Winnipeg communities. It was formed in 1992 in Winnipeg's North End, inspired by the American Indian Movement's Peace Makers Patrol. Its goals are "the restoration and maintenance of harmony within the community" by promoting and providing safety through conflict resolution, mobile witnessing, a visible presence on the streets, an early response to situations, missing person searches as well as rides and referrals.

While the BCP went on hiatus in 1994, it was revived in 2015 in the wake of the high profile killing of 15-year old Tina Fontaine, an event that drew public attention to the entrenched racism and violence impacting Indigenous communities in Winnipeg, home to the largest urban Indigenous population in Canada.

More recently, many have pointed to existing programs like the BCP as viable alternatives to policing services, which account for over 25% of the city budget. In the summer of 2020, thousands gathered in the streets calling on the city to defund the police, marking the largest mass mobilization in Winnipeg since the anti-war protests of the 1970s.

Community involvement and support

The founders of the BCP and a majority of its board of directors and volunteer base are Indigenous, but there are also allies and supportive non-Indigenous folks involved. Michael Champagne, an organizer with Aboriginal Youth Opportunities in Winnipeg, told VICE News, "People feel a lot more comfortable asking the Bear Clan for support ... We feel like when we talk to the Bear Clan, they'll believe us, and when we ask the Bear Clan to come right away, we know they'll believe us." BCP seeks to be a model for Indigenous safety patrols across Canada, and has now expanded to include around 50 communities, including Vancouver.

Relationship with police

James Favel, co-founder and former executive director of the BCP has stated the relationship with local police has sometimes been tense in part because much of Bear Clan's work in the past sought to hold the police accountable through 'aggressive witnessing'.

Access T.O.

- Toronto, Ontario (population 2,731,571)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Municipal, some provincial policy alignment	Access without fear	Undocumented Migrants	Yes	Driven by the Division of Social Development, Finance and Administration & interdivisional City staff	Municipal, some provincial policy alignment	Access without fear	Undocumented Migrants

Overview/context

Estimates suggest there are between 200,000-500,000 non-status migrants in Canada, most of whom reside in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. This policy directs city officials not to: 1) inquire into immigration status when providing select services, 2) deny non-status residents access to services to which they are entitled, and 3) share personal or identifying information with federal authorities, unless required to do so by federal or provincial law. For example, police officers are trained not to ask victims and witnesses of crime for their immigration status, unless it is essential to public or officer safety.

Monitoring and evaluation

Program audits found that a significant portion of service providers do not follow and/or are not aware of the established protocol for non-status migrants. In 2017, City Council directed staff to create a mandatory training program to inform, educate and train all appropriate City staff and volunteers regarding access to City services for undocumented Torontonians.

Community involvement

Policies were driven over years by local activists in response to events such as two non-status students being arrested on a high school property in Toronto in 2006. Local CSOs, such as FCJ Refugee Centre, have assisted with implementation.

CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Street)

- Eugene, Oregon (population 168,302)
- Springfield, Oregon (population 62,077)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Contract between Eugene Police Department and White Bird Clinic	Mental Health Crisis Response	People experiencing mental illness, homelessness, and addiction	Denver, Oakland, Olympia, Portland	White Bird Clinic, Federally Qualified Health Center	Eugene Police Department reported funding ~1.1 Million USD, other funding unknown	1989	~2.1 Million USD budget reported on website

Overview/context

The White Bird Clinic was founded as a counter-culture collective in the 1970’s, known for its “permissive attitudes towards drug use”. The clinic shifted leadership over time, and in 1989 went into partnership with the Police department to start C.A.H.O.O.T.S, which stands for “Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Street”. CAHOOTS “deal[s] with a wide range of mental health-related crises, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse, and suicide threats.” CAHOOTS dispatches a Mental Health Crisis Worker and an Emergency Medical Technician to each situation. These staff do not carry weapons and rely on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. CAHOOTS is linked to the emergency 911 call center – the dispatcher can connect with them in the same way that they connect to EMS.

Monitoring and evaluation

CAHOOTS was identified in a Eugene Police Department report to divert 5-8% of calls from the Eugene Police Department. CAHOOTS maintains client confidentiality and adheres to HIPAA privacy rules.

Police comments

The Eugene Police Chief Chris Skinner stated, "When they show up, they have better success than police officers do," he said. "We're wearing a uniform, a gun, a badge -- it feels very demonstrative for someone in crisis." Skinner also stated that the program is “a weight off the shoulders of police”.

Next steps

Research suggests that cities looking to import the CAHOOTS model seek local “community partners who are already integrated and building positive relationships with members of the community experiencing behavioral, and housing needs”. In Victoria, research suggests that a CAHOOTS-like model could be improved by the inclusion of peers on community response outreach teams.

Dignity Village

- Portland, Oregon (population 645,291)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Land designated as “transitional campground” by municipality, enabled by ORS 446.265. Resolution 36200, passed February 26, 2004.	“Tiny House Village”	People experiencing homelessness	Seattle, Washington; Denver, Colorado; Las Cruces, New Mexico	Non profit Organization Dignity Village	Most of structures were built with donations -Residents pay \$50/month fee -County funds 1 full time position	2000	Approx 30,000 USD/year operations Municipal land

Overview/context

Dignity Village is an Oregon non-profit corporation, formed for the purpose of developing alternative approaches to addressing homelessness. Dignity Village started as a protest by a group of homeless activists, loosely inspired by the Homeless Unions of the 70s/80s, British squat communes, the Global Justice movement, and the Civil Rights movement. Initially, Dignity Village was policed and moved around the city of Portland each time there was a sweep. A ruling that Dignity Village needed to vacate the area they were located in order to register as an NPO resulted in a division, with some activists moving to an area outside the core of the city to where it currently is. The village was legalized by the city 3 years later. Representatives from Dignity Village have worked with architects to develop transitional housing structures to comply with the requirements of Oregon law. Dignity Village is self-governing with rules, an internal justice and conflict resolution system, an intake community, and internal council elected each December by the membership.

Approach to engagement

Since 2014, the City of Portland and JOIN partnered with Dignity Village to offer on-site support through dedicated social service staff, help the membership board with organizational and administrative support, and connect individuals living at Dignity Village with various social service providers to help identify and overcome barriers to housing so they can transition to permanent housing.

Link to local policy recommendations

Initiatives like this one in which the autonomy and rights of people who are living in encampments are upheld are aligned with adopting the National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada. This protocol includes eight principles, including “Principle 8: Respect, protect, and fulfill the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples in all engagements with homeless encampments”. The Dignity Village approach has also been discussed academically as a form of “accommodation” on a scale of municipal response to Homeless Encampments ranging from “Contestation” (i.e. the status quo criminalization/punitive approach) to “Accommodation” (i.e. an approach that works with people who are experiencing homelessness rather than against them).

Austin Police Department budget review

- Austin, Texas (population 950,807)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Municipal budgeting process: housing	Purchased and repurposed hotel to operate as protective shelter, or as a mix of protective shelter and bridge housing or permanent supportive housing Investment for rapid rehousing, emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing	People experiencing homelessness, people who have experienced family violence	Yes	Service provider unspecified	Austin Police Department, Capital Improvement budget	2020	Hotel: 2 million USD ongoing funding, ~12 million USD one-time funding Homelessness response investment: 1.6 million USD recurring
Municipal budgeting process: substance use	Substance use continuum of care, harm reduction services	People who use drugs	Yes	Service provider unspecified	Austin Police Department	2020	650 000 USD recurring 350 000 USD one-time
Municipal budgeting process: abortion access	Funded services may include transportation, child care, case management, and other services as needed.	People seeking abortions	Yes	Service provider unspecified	Austin Police department	2020	100 000 USD
Municipal budgeting process: municipal departments	14 new hires Equity Office + Police Oversight		Yes	Municipal service	Austin Police Department	2020	3 Million USD

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Municipal budgeting process: emergency medical services	Emergency Medical Services, COVID-19 response	People requiring emergency medical care	Yes	Municipal service	Austin Police Department	2020	~3 million USD recurring ~750 000 one-time
Municipal budgeting process: community health paramedics	Community Health Paramedics to respond to dispatch calls for people experiencing homelessness and to support clinicians in responding to calls for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis	People Experiencing Homelessness, People experiencing a mental health crisis		Service provider unspecified	Austin Police Department	2020	~600 000 USD recurring ~400 000 USD one-time
Municipal budgeting process: new municipal department	Office to prevent and reduce violence and support community safety	People experiencing violence		Municipality	Austin Police Department	2020	1 850 000 USD recurring
Municipal budgeting process: services for formerly incarcerated residents	Potentially broad basic needs and social service provision	People who have been formerly incarcerated by the State		Equity office to facilitate competitive RFP process to one or more organizations	Austin Police Department	2020	200 000 USD one-time 200 000 USD recurring
Municipal budgeting process: food access	Mobile Food Market	People experiencing food insecurity	Yes	Service provider unspecified – CBO Equidad Atx Mentioned	Austin Police Department	2020	150 000 USD one-time 150 000 USD recurring

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
Municipal budgeting process: victim services department	Increase staffing for internal department including counselors, a supervisor, and an emergency assistance fund	People who have experienced domestic violence		Municipality	Austin Police Department	2020	80 000 USD one-time 420 000 USD recurring

Overview/context

On June 11th, 2020, Austin council passed a motion for police reform for a number of reasons including the police using unnecessary weaponized force against unarmed protester, police killing Mike Ramos, an unarmed Black and Latinx man, need for consideration to careful budgeting within the context of COVID-19, and distrust for police in their ability to respond to the needs of the Austin community, particularly People of Colour. The reform consisted of three main components: Reduce and Reinvest, Transfer, and Reimagine.

Approach to engagement

Community Police Review Commission: Consists of 10 unpaid volunteers appointed by the city manager and seeks to represent the community’s voice in policing and public safety.

City-Community Task Force: Created by the city at the start of the Reimagining Public Safety initiative in 2020, it brings together City staff and community members to co-create a framework for public safety to be reimagined. Some meetings are uploaded to Social Media.

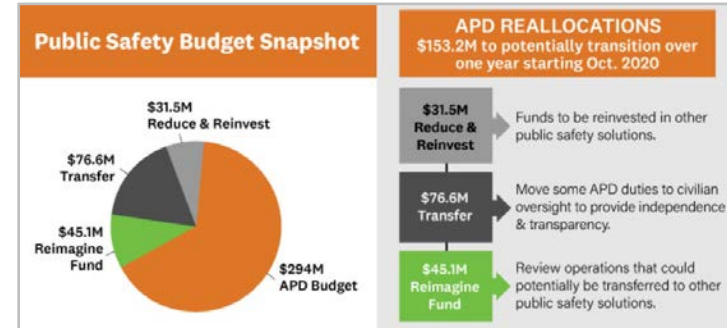
Other Engagement: Intention to work with Equity Office to leverage Mini Grant funding for community engagement

Data inputs

Concurrent review of 911 calls for service including categorization and type, volume, officer-initiated call trends, geographic dispersion, response times, etc.

Police comments

The Chief of Police, Brian Manley, stated, “Oftentimes, police officers are sent to situations for which we’re not always the best trained or the best equipped. We’re just simply the only ones available.”



Prostitution Reform Act

- Aotearoa/New Zealand (population 4.917 million)

Legal framework	Type of intervention	Primary focus	Scaled elsewhere	Leadership or operator	Source of funding	Started	Cost
An Act of Parliament with a framework for territorial authorities to make bylaws	Decriminalization of prostitution and new rights and protections for sex workers	People involved in sex work	Yes, similar models exist	Parliament		2003	Unknown

Overview/context

New Zealand's Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) was passed in 2003, following years of campaigning by the NZPC | Aotearoa New Zealand Sex Workers' Collective (NZPC), an organization run by sex workers, for sex workers. The NZPC formed in 1987 to advocate for the rights of sex workers and to address the impacts of criminalization, including the increasing frequency of arrests and charges for soliciting by police. The NZPC took a lead role in drafting and building support for the Act, which removed legislation that criminalized sex work (both the sale and purchase of sex), as well as provided new rights to sex workers. The purpose was to protect the health and safety of sex workers and to create an environment where they would feel safer reporting their experiences to police. Prior to the Act, New Zealand's laws were very similar to those in Canada. While prostitution in itself was not criminalized, associated activities such as living on the earnings, soliciting in public, procuring and operating a brothel were. The facilitation of anyone under the age of 18 into sex work by a third party is still prohibited, and migrants with temporary visas are also prohibited from working in the sex industry (this was included due to fears that decriminalization would result in the country becoming a destination for trafficking). The legislation allows for small owner operated brothels (SOOBs) of up to four sex workers, as long as workers keep their own earnings. Brothels operate under public health and employment laws, meaning sex workers are entitled to the same social benefits as other workers.

Evaluation

According to the committee mandated to review the Act, the PRA was largely successful in achieving its purpose and the majority of people involved in the sex industry are better off under the PRA than prior to it. Other research has shown that decriminalization has improved the relationship between street-based sex workers and police by reducing the power of police to threaten them with arrest, and increasing the likelihood that street-based sex workers would report violence to police. Street-based sex workers reported they were better able to employ sex worker safety strategies like engaging clients in initial conversation. There remain ongoing concerns about safety, especially for certain groups like migrant sex workers, who may be exploited due to their precarious legal status and fears of deportation.

Relationship with police

The New Zealand sex work community works collaboratively with law enforcement, helping sex workers understand their rights as well as connecting them to resources. The police have now taken over outreach activities from NZPC.

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KUU-US Case Study

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APPENDIX C

Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives **PROPOSED COMMUNITY PANEL**

Proposed Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND

On July 27, 2020, Vancouver City Council passed the motion “Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives.” This motion directed staff to report back on options to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use, and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.”

The ultimate goal of this work is to generate recommendations related to the Vancouver City Council’s motion on decriminalizing poverty. The City is looking for input from a variety of organizations and community members around the central tenets of²:

- I. *Understanding how the city could support existing and future community-based harm reduction and safety services related to mental health, homelessness, drug use, and sex work.*
- II. *Understanding how to de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use.*
- III. *Understanding how to prioritize the allocation of funding to community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas.*

The Community Panel will support a community led process that will include engagement with a variety of organizations and community members in a way that ensures accessibility and transparency. It will ultimately create recommendations for Council consideration based on this engagement and will consider research and activities in other jurisdictions that have made a difference.

This work is undertaken with a Reconciliation and rights based approach, recognizing the City’s commitment to Reconciliation and to UNDRIP, and the impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples.

Building strong relationships and trust are critical to the success of the Panel. While this specific mandate is short term in nature, the Panel and its work mark the beginning of a longer process to implement change in the area of decriminalizing poverty.

² Information sourced from: City of Vancouver Council. (2020). ‘Item 3. Decriminalizing Poverty and Support Community-Led Safety Initiatives in *Minutes of the City of Vancouver Council 21 July 2021*’
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SCOPE AND MANDATE

To develop actionable recommendations for the City to “de-prioritize policing as a response to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use, and to prioritize funding community-led groups, non-profit societies and others with the experience and training to deliver harm reduction and safety initiatives in these areas”. Specifically, the City is seeking recommendations related to:

1. Community-based or non-policing alternatives to respond to mental health, sex work, homelessness, and substance use;
2. Programs that prevent crisis and reduce police interaction;

Recommendations for both 1 and 2 above should include the following:

- a. The benefits to individuals and communities;
 - b. How programs/recommendations will reduce the need for police involvement;
 - c. The short and longer term outcomes for people and communities will be.
3. New policies, frameworks, or guidelines that decriminalize health and social issues, ensuring that any intersections and conflicts with legal jurisdiction and legislated responsibilities that impact police, health or other public bodies are also recognized.

Recommendations are non-binding on all parties named in the recommendations. After the Panel shares its recommendations with Mayor and Council, staff will review for financial, legal, and implementation implications before any final decision by Council. Staff will continue to engage with the Panel through this implementation analysis to ensure staff understanding of the recommendations and Panel’s intentions, priorities, and other thoughts on implementation. It is also recognized that the recommendations of the Special Committee on Reforming the Police Act may supersede some recommendations of this Panel.

As staff are finalizing implementation analysis and options for Council, they will return to the Community Panel for clarification and information. Before presenting the final analysis to Council, staff will present their draft recommendations to the Community Panel.

FUNCTIONS AND AUTHORITIES

To carry out its mandate, the Community Panel will:

1. Review key information sources:
 - a. Jurisdictional research, trends and change models generally described under “divest”, defund”, or “de-task”, including any Canadian or international contextual examples;
 - b. Appropriate VPD materials and data that VPD supplies;
 - c. Information received through community engagement;
 - d. Legal jurisdiction and legislated responsibilities to reflect and comment on any intersects or conflicts with the statutory authorities afforded to the police, health, or other public bodies.
2. Engage community directly:
 - All Vancouver residents, organizations, and businesses can provide information, recommendations, and input to the Panel for consideration.

- Community engagement will focus on equity seeking groups as per the motion and will actively seek to address barriers to engagement faced by communities identified in the motion.
- The Panel will ensure the organizations named in the motion receive direct contact from the Panel, as well as other organizations whose work may be related to the deliberations of the Panel.
- The Panel will be requested to engage with Council Advisory Committees with associated mandates.

3. Develop Recommendations

- a. Synthesize the information above and develop actionable recommendations for City consideration
- b. Prepare a final report.

The Panel may engage in other activities, such as, but not exclusively:

- Seek subject matter expertise to support the Panel's deliberations;
- Decide to draw on the unique and distinct knowledge of specific communities and other knowledge-holders to support its work through conversation circles, town halls, task groups or other activities.
- Request additional information from the City, VPD, or other public bodies;
- Conduct additional research beyond the material presented by staff at the Panel's inception.

The Panel must recognize the validity of a variety of data and information sources, such as quantitative and qualitative data, service metrics, program evaluation data, academic research, and experiential data, particularly from those groups with lived experience of issues.

The Panel must also use an intersectional lens to inform their decisions. An intersectional lens will build understanding intersections of marginalization with poverty, including, among others, race, gender, and abilities and build stronger, fairer and more equitable communities.

COMMUNITY PANEL MEMBERS

The Community Panel will consist of 15 Panelists:

- 2 Co-Chairs: To lead and facilitate the Panel in a collaborative co-creation process:
- 11 Community members: Representing the diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those noted in the motion (e.g., sex work, homelessness, substance use, Indigenous communities, racialized communities, etc.), and including three community representatives from the following groups:
 - 1 MVAEC representative: Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Committee member or staff representative
 - 1 Business Improvement Associations representative
 - 1 Community Policing Centres representative
- 2 community policing experts: VPD-identified experts who are not employees of the VPD
- 1 Academic researcher: to be recommended through the community process

With the approval of the City up to an additional 2 members may be added to the Panel at the request of the Panel through the Co-Chairs. The appointments will be subject to Council approval.

The Panel will be supported by a staff resource group. This resource group will provide the panel with access to a team of City and VPD staff who will provide information and advice to the Community Panel as requested and will do so in a timely way as feasible that acknowledges the significance and the value of this work. VCH will be requested to assign staff to this resource group. Staff from senior government will be asked for participation on an as needed by the Panel basis. The resource group may also engage other individuals or organizations with expertise as needed or requested by the Panel.

In addition, an evaluator to evaluate the overall process and the outcomes over a longer period will be sought. These person/persons will observe the committee but will not actively participate. They will also engage with committee members individually and collectively in order to effectively evaluate the overall process and the outcomes.

ROLE OF PANELISTS

- Contribute knowledge and experience gained through direct, first-hand experiences and knowledge of the issues related to the motion.
- Work respectfully and collaboratively with other Panelists, also recognizing the general expectations set in the City's Respectful Workplace and Code of Conduct policies, as well as other relevant legislation, including the BC Human Rights Act.
- If representing a group or sector (e.g., MVAEC, BIA, CPC), liaise with the representative group on a regular basis to both share information and inform the Panel's deliberations.

The Panel may identify other responsibilities or expectations.

ROLE OF CO-CHAIRS

- Facilitate meetings of the Panel, working toward development of recommendations aligned with the scope of the motion
- Ensure that all Panelists are heard and respected in their contributions and that communication amongst the Panel is respectful
- Promote Panel members to take a systems approach which facilitate discussions to resolution
- Ensure independence of recommendations
- Nurture trust and relationship among Panel members
- Mediate membership as appropriate
- Liaise regularly with City Senior Liaison as to the progress of the Panel

Other responsibilities or expectations may be set by the Panel.

Other responsibilities or expectations may be set by the Panel with the agreement of the Co-Chairs in so far as they do not expand the scope of the mandate of the Panel.

TERM

The Community Panel will conclude in January 2022 with the goal of presenting recommendations in a report to City Council by December 2021 or January 2022.

The Panel may be requested by staff for clarification and information during the implementation analysis and staff will present the implementation analysis to the Panel prior to presentation to Council.

REMUNERATION

Co-Chairs, and community members of the Community Panel may receive remuneration for their participation on the Panel. The remuneration is an honorary stipend that is intended to recognize the time and expertise and to mitigate some of its impact on personal or organizational capacity of Panelists and their organizations. It is recognized that the Panel co-chairs require a greater commitment and are taking on a role with additional responsibilities.

Suggested remuneration for participation in the effort which is expected to engage approximately 5 months is as follows:

Community Panelists: \$5,000
Community Panel Co-Chairs: \$7,500

Remuneration for Community Panelists representing organizations will be directed to their organizations.

Community Panelists are also eligible to receive reimbursement for actual expenses incurred while carrying out duties, including childcare and transportation.

Other City of Vancouver policies and practices will also be adhered (e.g., honoraria for Elders).

OTHER MATTERS

Panel Resources

- Project Coordinator: The panel will be supported by a project coordinator who will work with the Co-Chairs to manage the project within the timelines and deliverables and support ongoing communications with the staff committee.
- Other Supports will be arranged for the Panel by the City:
 - Community engagement facilitation
 - Clerical support
 - Research support
 - Independent legal advice as needed
 - Writing support
 - The presence of Elders at meetings

Administration Liaisons and Supports

- Senior Administration Liaison:
 - The Panel will have a senior City Administration liaison who can support the work of the Panel, as requested by the Panel through the Chair or the Panel's Project Coordinator.
 - The senior Administration lead will liaise regularly with the Chair and will support them in ensuring the Panel stays focused on the delegated scope of work and in ensuring the independence of the panel recommendations.
- Staff Resource Group (SRG):
 - The role of the staff resource group is to provide information and advice to the Panel.

- A base staff resource group of the City, VPD, and VCH staff will be established.
- Staff resource group members will attend each Panel meeting as needed or requested.
- Staff from Provincial ministries such as MCFD, Social Development, and Advanced Education and Training, will be engaged as needed.

Conflicts of Interest

- All Panelists will be required to disclose any of their personal circumstances that may place, or be seen to place, the Panelist in a real or potential conflict, or in a plausibly perceived conflict with a specific decision or recommendation of the Panel and should recuse themselves from discussion of such matters.
- The Chair must advise the City Senior Liaison of any real or perceived conflicts of interest and advise of the planned approach to manage the conflict.

APPENDIX D

Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-led Safety Initiatives **PROPOSED COMMUNITY PANEL**

Proposed Composition and Selection Approach:

Community Panelist selection:

- The 11 community members will be identified as follows:
 - MVAEC, BIAs and CPCs will be invited and asked to identify their respective appointees;
 - The further 8 community members will be identified through a facilitated process with the groups identified in the motion and other groups associated with the focus of the motion.
- The facilitator will work with the groups noted in the motion and other groups to identify other characteristics and experience that community Panel members are expected to have. They will also identify potential panel members. The selection process will include appropriate people who are not part of these groups but are respected community leaders.

Co-Chair backgrounds:

- Ability and experience leading large complex initiatives;
- Experience facilitating large groups with diverse perspectives with good results: specifically, ability to navigate conflicting views, deal with high conflict issues and bring around consensus or decision with respect, care and understanding;
- Knowledge of the issues; in particular those raised in the motion related to poverty and criminalization in relation to mental health, addictions, sex work and homelessness
- Understanding and recognition of systemic racism and structural inequities, understanding of equity issues, and understanding of power dynamics in groups and how to effectively respond to these;
- Cultural competencies relevant to the focus populations; and
- Government or public sector policy and program development experience an asset.

The facilitated community process may identify other needed characteristics of the Co-Chairs.

Co-Chairs Selection:

- Identification of candidates for Co-Chairs will happen through an open recruitment process, including identification of potential candidates through discussions with community groups noted above.
- Potential candidates who meet the criteria may be interviewed or contacted for further information.
- The recommendations for Co-Chair appointment will be brought to the Nominations Subcommittee of Council as part of the Panel appointment process.

The identity criteria that will be required by the City will include that the following for the Panel as a whole:

As per Council Policy for Advisory Committees:

- Membership of 50% or greater of people from equity-seeking groups
- Membership of 50% or greater of people who self-identify as women

Further:

- There should be a diversity of age and other identity characteristics on the Panel.
- Experience and knowledge of services and experiences related to the motion are also important (e.g., sex work, homelessness, substance use, mental health, etc.)
- That panelists must be willing to disclose any Conflicts of Interest as defined in the City's Code of Conduct that may limit or impact their participation, recognizing conflicts of interest can be managed.