

Council Motion Report Back

Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-Led Safety Initiatives

Recommendations for a Process to Identify Community-Led Safety Initiatives

Standing Committee on City Finance and Services (April 28, 2021)

1. Background: Motion and Approach
2. Process Recommendations
 - Phase One
 - Phase Two
3. Council decision requested today

Motion: Decriminalizing Poverty and Prioritizing CL Initiatives

(Approved 2020-07-27)

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 **SUBMISSION REC'D**

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. **COMPLETE**

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 PROGRESS**

- Budget to advance the Motion approved in December 2020: \$300,000
- Recognition of delay since Jan 1: Small staff team managing many complex Council priorities and operational pressures:
 - s56 Controlled Drugs and Substances Act Exemption
 - DTES Street Market relocation
 - MMIWG Inquiry Calls for Justice
 - UN Safe Spaces for Women and Girls Scoping Study
 - Anti-racism motions and plans in development, Accessibility Strategy, internal Equity work
 - OPS relocations in partnership with VCH
 - COVID responses (washroom trailer)
 - Day-to-day operations (e.g., child care, grants, social infrastructure strategy & projects, etc.)
 - Many other items

Motion title: Decriminalizing Poverty and Supporting Community-Led Safety Initiatives

Scope: “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.

Note: *This is not a broad Community Safety Plan – the focus is on people living in poverty – and specifically those who are homeless, have mental illness, use substances, or are engaged with sex work – their intersecting identities, and the circumstances that lead to increased interactions with policing.*

- Toronto: Staff team led and undertook the work to develop recommendations – broad community consultation and an Community Accountability Advisory Committee comprised of many community organizations
- Edmonton: Joint community/staff/police task force
- Calgary: Launched a grants call
- Austin: 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.

Vancouver:

- Extensive expertise and experience in our community service sector
- People with lived experience and those serving them are best positioned to identify what would work for them
- Commitment to Reconciliation and Equity
- Recognize the over-representation of Indigenous people across all social determinants of health, including homelessness
- Recognize the gendered impacts of poverty on women, sex workers, TSLGBTQ + and gender non binary people in relation to increased risks of violence and health issues
- Strong network organizations who also have an interest in this work, such as MVAEC, CPCs, BIAs

Two Phase Process:

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.

Panel would be supported by a Staff Resource Group

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.

Staff would stay connected to the panel to ensure understanding of intentions, priorities. Accountability to the Panel.

COMMUNITY PANEL

Proposed 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:

- i. The benefits to individuals and communities;
 - ii. How programs/recommendations will reduce the need for police involvement;
 - iii. 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.

COMMUNITY PANEL

Functions and Authorities (1 of 2)

Review key information sources:

- Jurisdictional research, trends and change models generally described under “divest”, defund”, or “de-task”
- Appropriate VPD materials and data that VPD supplies
- Information received through community engagement
- Legal jurisdiction and legislated responsibilities

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
- 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

Develop Recommendations

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

COMMUNITY PANEL

Functions and Authorities (2 of 2)

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
- 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

Information recognition. 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 situations.

Intersectionality. 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

Proposed Composition

- 11 community members: representing the diverse backgrounds and experiences, including those noted in the motion (e.g., sex work, homelessness, substance use, and mental health, recognizing the intersections with urban Indigenous communities; racialized, women, TSLGBTQ+ and gender non-binary communities, etc.), including 3 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

For Panel consideration: 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.

COMMUNITY PANEL

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.

COMMUNITY PANEL

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.

COMMUNITY 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

COMMUNITY PANEL

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:

- The presence of Elders at meetings
- Community engagement facilitation
- Clerical support
- Research support
- Independent legal advice as needed
- Writing support

COMMUNITY PANEL

Administrative Liaisons and Supports

Senior Administration Liaison:

- The Panel will have a senior City Administration liaison.
- The senior Administration lead will liaise regularly with the Chair and will support them as needed

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

PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Presented to Council: December 2021 or January 2022

PHASE TWO

- 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.
- Panel report will be shared with VPD and other public bodies as named in the Panel report.
- 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 report back on implementation analysis and 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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel receives suggestions for recommendations• 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

- 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 direct the Nominations Subcommittee to review staff recommendations for Community Panel appointments and bring forward recommendations to Council for decision.

Thank you
