

DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title:	Approval of the Building Safer Communities Strategy
Date Prepared:	September 25, 2024
Report To:	Committee of the Whole
Councillor and Role:	N/A
Ward:	N/A

Decision/Direction Required:

Approval of the Building Safer Communities Strategy.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

On February 27, 2023, Public Safety Canada [announced](#) that the City of St. John's would receive funding over a three-year period to work with community partners and stakeholders to develop and facilitate a Building Safer Communities Strategy aimed at addressing the underlying conditions that give rise to crime and violence, particularly for young people.

Public engagement was undertaken earlier this year to help identify priority areas and actions for the strategy for Council's consideration, as captured in the [What We Heard](#) report presented on [June 18, 2024](#). The Building Safer Communities Strategy addresses several recommendations identified by the [Building Safer Communities Steering Committee](#), partners and collaborators, and supported by research, evidence, and public engagement findings.

The Building Safer Communities Strategy eight priorities to address the root causes of violence and crime with associated goals and outcomes:

1. Enhance community capacity
2. Enhance City capacity
3. Increase public awareness and education
4. Strengthen coordination and collaboration
5. Advocate to address the root causes
6. Enhance research and data collection
7. Support and advocate for the urban Indigenous community
8. Improve urban design and infrastructure

Pages 33 through 42 of the Building Safer Communities Strategy outline 50 action items to help address violence and crime in the municipality. Examples of action items include the following:



- Continue the BSC Grant Program until 2026 to support projects that provide the following to young people:
 - Wraparound Support Programs
 - Family-Focused Programs
 - Educational Programs
 - Programs for Racialized or Vulnerable Populations
 - Prevention Programs
 - Recreational Programs
- Explore opportunities for continued grants in future years based on lessons learned.
- Explore options for developing / customizing content for the City's internal training system related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and wellness.
- Develop a landing page on the City's public website to share resources and information related to violence and crime prevention.
- Hold networking events with community organizations, businesses, and different levels of government to strengthen collaboration in addressing crime and violence.
- Advocate for policy, program, budgetary, and/or legislative changes to help address the root causes of violence and crime.
- Add a question to the City's Residents' Satisfaction Survey related to safety to measure and compare changes over time.
- Collaborate with other municipalities to explore the feasibility of developing a tracking system for community hate crimes.
- Promote and share information about Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training to learn about the Indigenous groups in our province, our history, and how that information can be beneficial to our community.
- Identify areas of advocacy related to Indigenous peoples through the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights and bring forward to Council for consideration.

Timelines for completion have been identified for all action items:

- Short term: one to two years.
- Medium term: two to four years.
- Long term: five or more years.

All action items will be supported through an evaluation framework which will guide the work and inform measurable, outcome-based reporting on progress.

While project funding ends in March 2026, the Healthy City Strategy will provide an ongoing mechanism for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Building Safer Communities action items.

The Building Safer Communities Strategy is a living document, designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of our community. It will be reviewed and updated throughout implementation as City staff and the Steering Committee continue to receive feedback and recommendations from residents, community partners and collaborators.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications:

N/A. The project is funded through Public Safety Canada until March 2026.

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders:

- City Council
- Public / residents
- Community-based organizations and advocates
- Provincial Government departments, agencies, and entities
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Education / school representatives
- People with lived expertise of homelessness, sex work, and involvement with the justice system
- Urban Indigenous community
- Marginalized populations
- City of St. John's Advisory Committees and Working Groups

3. Is this a New Plan or Strategy: Yes

If yes, are there recommendations or actions that require progress reporting? Yes.

If yes, how will progress be reported? (e.g.: through the strategic plan, through Cascade, annual update to Council, etc.)

- The BSC Strategy is housed within the Healthy City Strategy and progress will be reported regularly through Cascade.
- Staff will also provide annual updates to Council.

4. Alignment with Strategic Directions:

A Connected City: Increase and improve opportunities for residents to connect with each other and the City.

A Connected City: Develop and deliver programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy and vibrant communities.

5. Alignment with Adopted Plans:

- [Healthy City Strategy](#)
- [10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019 to 2028](#)
- Envision St. John's [Municipal Plan](#) and the Envision St. John's [Development Regulations](#), Amended 2022
- City of St. John's [Accessibility Plan](#) 2024-2026
- City of St. John's [Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous People](#)

6. Accessibility and Inclusion:

- Every effort was undertaken during BSC public engagement to include and represent the views of diverse groups of people, including:
 - Residents
 - Community-based service providers
 - The urban Indigenous community
 - People with lived expertise of homelessness, involvement in the justice system, and sex work
 - City Advisory Committees and Working Groups including
 - Building Safer Communities Steering Committee
 - Youth Engagement Working Group
 - Seniors' Advisory Committee
 - Anti-Racism Working Group
 - Inclusion Advisory Committee
 - Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee
- The membership of the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee includes a broad range of diverse perspectives and experiences.
- The BSC Strategy document has been designed in an accessible format.

4. Legal or Policy Implications:

It is anticipated that the Building Safer Communities Strategy will help to inform City policies and procedures relating to preventing violence and crime and addressing the root causes within the community.

The Legal Division has reviewed the Strategy and noted no concerns.

5. Privacy Implications:

N/A. No personal identifying information was collected during the development of the Strategy.

6. Engagement and Communications Considerations:

The Building Safer Communities Strategy will be publicly communicated to partners, collaborators and residents through City communications channels, the Engage project page, and with the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee.

7. Human Resource Implications:

N/A. This project is funded through Public Safety Canada until March 31, 2026. After that time, the Healthy City Strategy will be the mechanism to monitor, sustain and evaluate the initiative.

8. Procurement Implications:

N/A

9. Information Technology Implications:

N/A

10. Other Implications:

N/A

Recommendation:

That Council approve the Building Safer Communities Strategy

Prepared by:

Approved by:

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Approval of the Building Safer Communities Strategy.docx
Attachments:	- Approval of Building Safer Communities Strategy 2024.pptx - Building Safer Communities Strategy 2024.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Sep 25, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Krista Gladney - Sep 25, 2024 - 2:20 PM

Tanya Haywood - Sep 25, 2024 - 4:33 PM