

OUR CITY. OUR FUTURE.

# Building Safer Communities Strategy

Addressing Violence  
and Crime in the City  
of St. John's



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**ST. JOHN'S**

# Background

- The City received funds through Public Safety Canada's **Building Safer Communities Fund** (BSCF) to facilitate a holistic strategy to help address the root causes of violence and crime, particularly for children, youth, young adults and their families.
- Public engagement was undertaken to help identify priority areas and actions for the Strategy, as captured in the What We Heard report presented to Council in June of this year.

## Background (cont'd)

The Building Safer Communities (BSC) Strategy was also informed and validated by **research and evidence** including:

- The social determinants / root causes of violence and crime.
- Risk and protective factors.
- Evaluated best practices for children, youth, young adults, and their families.
- Local violence and crime data and trends.
- Local socio-economic and demographic indicators.

# Purpose

- The Strategy's **purpose** is to address the root causes of violence and crime, particularly for children, youth, young adults, and their families, including seniors.
- While the City does not provide direct services or programs related to public safety or crime prevention, it acts as an important **facilitator** in developing long-term plans and concrete initiatives to improve community safety.

# Relationship to the Strategic Plan

- The City of St. John's has a strategic direction to be a **Connected City**, one where people feel connected, have a sense of belonging, and are actively engaged in community life.
- The BSC Strategy will advance this direction by improving access to programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy, and vibrant communities.

# Vision

The **vision** of the Building Safer Communities Strategy is:

- A safe city where children, youth, young adults, families, and all people can live, learn, work, and play without fear.

# Mission

The **mission** of the Building Safer Communities Strategy is:

- To facilitate and support collaborative, community-based prevention, awareness, education, and research initiatives that help address the root causes of violence and crime in the City of St. John's.

# Priorities and Goals to Address Violence and Crime (1/4)

## 1. Enhance community capacity

**Goal:** To strengthen community resilience and safety by enhancing the capacity of community-based organizations to address the root causes of violence and crime.

## 2. Enhance City capacity

**Goal:** To enhance the City's internal capacity by providing training and resources on safety, inclusion, and prevention, while fostering partnerships with advisory committees and community-based partners to address violence and crime.



# Priorities and Goals to Address Violence and Crime (2/4)

## 3. Increase public awareness and education

**Goal:** To increase public awareness and understanding of the root causes of violence and crime as well as local prevention and intervention programs and services.

## 4. Strengthen coordination and collaboration

**Goal:** To enhance community collaboration and leadership in addressing the root causes of violence and crime.

# Priorities and Goals to Address Violence and Crime (3/4)

## 5. Advocate to address the root causes

**Goal:** To drive systemic change by advocating for legislative and policy reforms to address the root causes of violence and crime, with a focus on equity and support for marginalized populations.

## 6. Enhance research and data collection

**Goal:** To enhance our understanding of crime and violence trends and root causes and improve intervention effectiveness through research and evaluation.

# Priorities and Goals to Address Violence and Crime (4/4)

## 7. Support and advocate for the urban Indigenous community

**Goal:** To advance cultural respect and support for Indigenous communities by fostering collaboration, advocating for Indigenous rights, and integrating anti-racism and decolonization principles into City programs.

## 8. Improve urban design and infrastructure

**Goal:** To support public safety through improved physical design, infrastructure, and effective use of the built environment.

# Action Items

- Pages 33 through 42 of the Building Safer Communities Strategy outline **50 action items** to help address violence and crime.
- 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.
- Some examples include of action items include:

# Action Items (2/3)

- Continue the Building Safer Communities 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.

# Action Items (3/3)

- 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.

# A Living Document

- As the City continues to grow and evolve, so will the Strategy.
- It is a living document, designed to be **flexible and responsive** to the needs of our community.
- The Strategy 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.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

While project funding ends in March 2026, the **Healthy City Strategy** will be the ongoing mechanism for the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of BSC goals and actions.

- An **evaluation framework** will inform measurable, outcome-based reporting on progress.
- Progress and results will be reported in **Cascade**, the City's strategic planning software.
- **Progress updates** will also be provided to Council on an annual basis.



# Recommendation to Council

- That Council **approve** the Building Safer Communities Strategy to help address the root causes of violence and crime in the City of St. John's.