

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

VOLUME II: SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS

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THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN THE HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY:

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES IN RESPONSE TO
THE ROUNDTABLE REPORT**

Kit Waters

Introduction

The 2008 report *Violence and Public Safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality* (Roundtable Report) provided a broad range of recommendations for guiding the municipality's response to problems of violence and public safety. The report stated that a successful response to the recommendations would require organizational and structural changes to build capacity and coordinate a multi-dimensional, collaborative approach to community safety challenges. This report examines progress that has been made to date in responding to these recommendations and offers some observations regarding possible future directions.

Methodology

Jurisdictional review

A number of municipalities have developed special structures/mechanisms as focal points for the development of a coordinated approach to community safety. For the purposes of this report, a survey of selected larger municipalities in Canada was undertaken to determine the nature of these structures and mechanisms. A questionnaire¹ was circulated to a number of members of the national Municipal Network on Crime Prevention² followed up by a telephone interview.

Interviews with key stakeholders

In order to determine the nature and impact of organizational changes in HRM resulting from implementation of Roundtable Report recommendations, interviews were conducted with senior officials at the provincial and municipal levels. Regional Councillors and Police Board members were also consulted for their views. Interviews were conducted with the individuals directly responsible for the operation of the new organizational structures resulting from the Roundtable Report recommendations. In addition, a number of individuals with expertise in various aspects of community safety were consulted.

Review of documentation.

¹ a copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A

² The national Municipal Network on Crime Prevention was established in 2006 through the efforts of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (University of Ottawa). It is composed of representatives from 14 municipalities: Vancouver, Surrey, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatchewan, Regina, Waterloo Region, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John and Halifax. Members share knowledge and experience with the goal of strengthening the capacity of Canadian municipalities to reduce crime and enhance community safety.

A number of reports detailing the Municipality's response to the Roundtable Report recommendations were reviewed including: *Partnering for Public Safety*, February 2009 (a report to Mayor and Regional Council submitted by the Chief of Police and Chief Administrative Officer, HRM outlining an action plan in response to the Roundtable recommendations); *Status Report to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners*, December 2009; *Public Safety Strategic Plan*, 2011; *Spotlight on Public Safety*, a monthly report on activities prepared by the Public Safety Officer; minutes of the meetings of the Board of Police Commissioners from 2008-June 2013.

Organization of the report

Two key organizational changes within HRM were recommended in the Roundtable Report: establishment of a Public Safety Office and creation of a Race Relations Advisory Group. These functions will be addressed separately in this report: Part 1 - the Public Safety Office and Part 2 - HRM response to the recommendations relating to race relations.

The report presents an overview of progress that has been made in responding to the structural/organizational recommendations of the Roundtable Report, impact of the actions that have been taken, observations regarding remaining challenges and some recommendations for future action.

The report also presents findings from a review of structures/mechanisms developed in selected Canadian cities to respond to public safety issues.

PART 1: The Public Safety Office (PSO):

Recommendations of the Roundtable Report:

The Roundtable report documented the 'widespread view' that "the municipality lacks vision and capacity at present with respect to dealing directly with outstanding public safety issues or effectively lobbying senior levels of government for needed change in HRM."³ "To stake out a greater public role, to provide leadership on matters of public safety, and to be the expertise centre for local problem identification and response, there will have to be more organizational specialization at City Hall, backed by strong leadership from the Mayor."⁴ The Roundtable recommended the appointment of a "full-time Public Safety Coordinator and advisory committee, both linked to the Mayor's Office to enhance visibility and quick response and implementation"⁵.

The following specific recommendations were made regarding the role of the municipality in public safety:

1. There is widespread consensus that the municipality as a government must play a greater role in dealing with violence and public safety. That role involves three dimensions: vision and leadership; capacity-building in the municipal administration; and resources.
2. It is recommended that a priority response to the Roundtable initiative should be the municipality's engagement of a full-time Public Safety Coordinator linked to the Mayor's Office and with a standing Public Safety Advisory Committee appointed by the Mayor and possibly made up of several councillors, representatives from law enforcement agencies, business activists in the public safety field, and representatives from the United Way, minority groups and other pertinent HRM voluntary organizations. It is important that the municipal government indicates its commitment to fighting violence and crime by developing a 'business unit for public safety'.
3. The central activities/responsibilities for the Public Safety Coordinator and the accompanying advisory committee should be: development of a strategic action plan; promoting the establishment of a Tripartite Forum on Justice that would bring together municipal, provincial and federal representatives for a three-year period to consider violence and public safety issues and strategies to deal with them.
4. Recognizing the significant developments in conceptualizing and advancing the place of Canada's larger municipalities in public safety activity, HRM (through the proposed office of the Public Safety Coordinator) should become an active participant in cross-jurisdictional bodies such as the National Municipal Network on Crime Prevention

³ Clairmont, D., Atlantic Institute of Criminology and Halifax Regional Municipality (N.S.) (2008) *Violence and Public Safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality. A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable*. Halifax, N.S.: Halifax Regional Municipality. p. 68

⁴ *ibid.* p.69

⁵*ibid.* p.70

sponsored by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Institute for the Prevention of Crime (University of Ottawa).⁶

Establishment of the Public Safety Office:

Responsibility for responding to the Roundtable Report was assigned to the Chief of the Halifax Regional Police. Former Chief Frank Beazley convened a working group "to conduct a comprehensive review of the Clairmont [Roundtable] Report and other initiatives impacting policing and public safety. In February 2009 *Partnering for Public Safety: Response to the Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable* was tabled with Halifax Regional Council. The report identified a champion, stakeholder commitment, strategies, timelines and resources for each of the recommendations included in the Clairmont Report."⁷ Council approved the recommendations and action plan.

In February 2009, a Public Safety Office (PSO) was established within the Halifax Regional Police Service (HRPS). It was to be comprised of a Public Safety Officer and the following divisions/sections which already existed within HRPS: i.e. Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team, Integrated Traffic Unit, the Community Response Team and other services administered through the Community Relations and Crime Prevention Services (Victim Services, Volunteer Services, School Liaison Program). The HRM Board of Police Commissioners was designated as the Public Safety Committee to provide civilian oversight to the PSO.

In March 2009, Superintendent Don Spicer of the Halifax Regional Police was appointed to the position of Public Safety Officer. In November 2012, Inspector Spicer resigned from the position of Public Safety Officer and was replaced by Sergeant Scott MacDonald⁸ of the HRPS. In November 2012, the operational Divisions reporting to the PSO were removed from this Office; the majority were reinstated in July 2013⁹. In addition, the Youth Advocate Program¹⁰ was transferred to the PSO in the spring of 2013.

⁶ *ibid.* p.71

⁷ Halifax Regional Municipality (2011) *Public Safety Strategic Plan: Partnering for Public Safety*, p.3

⁸ MacDonald was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant in the summer of 2013

⁹ The Mounted Unit was added to the PSO; the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team and the Integrated Traffic Unit are no longer located within the PSO. An administrative assistant position was originally assigned to the PSO but was removed in November 2012.

¹⁰ See FN 27. Regional Council transferred the YAP budget to the PSO to align with *Halifax Charter* requirements regarding expenditures for 'police services', bringing the program within the oversight responsibilities of the Board of Police Commissioners. The program continues to be operated by the HRM Department of Community and Recreation Services, not the PSO.

Observations re the impact of PSO.¹¹

Virtually every individual interviewed who was familiar with the PSO spoke very favourably about the dedication of the two individuals who have performed the role of Public Safety (PS) Officer. Interviewees were more familiar with the work of Inspector Spicer because he occupied the position for a longer period of time. He was variously described as community-minded, a doer, a partnership-broker. Almost uniformly, any critiques of progress made to date by the PSO were directed at structural concerns rather than at the individuals performing the role of PS Officer: e.g. limitations due to location of the PSO within the HRPS; lack of connection to the Mayor and Regional Council; inadequate oversight and strategic direction; lack of clarity re mandate; and inadequate resources.

Location of PSO within the HRPS:

It is interesting to note that of all the PSOs surveyed in other Canadian cities (see below for further detail), the PSO in the HRM is the only one situated within a police department. Many of the jurisdictional contacts noted that it was a deliberate decision not to locate the office within a police service. While each jurisdiction noted that law enforcement agencies have a key role to play in maintaining community safety and must be a partner in any public safety initiative, they expressed the view that the mandate must be shared by many other organizations and individuals. They noted the importance of conveying the message that 'community safety is everybody's business' and were concerned that situating the PSO within a police department signalled the notion that public safety is really primarily a police responsibility.

The HRM is policed by both the HRPS and the RCMP. The RCMP are responsible for 33% of the calls for service¹² (policing 41.5% of the total population of HRM¹³) and 94% of its geographic area¹⁴. A number of those interviewed for this report noted that the location of the PSO within one police service presented some challenges vis-a-vis the other force. Some observed that the RCMP management did not perceive a strong connection to the PSO. Certainly, a number of the operational sections reporting to the PS Officer (i.e. School Response Officers, Victim Services, Volunteer Programs and Crime Prevention Officers) are

¹¹ This report does not address the impact of specific programs developed or overseen by the PSO; these matters are addressed in other sections of the Roundtable Review.

¹² total police reports and/or calls for service 2012. Source: Public Safety Office

¹³ Statistics Canada. Police Resources in Canada 2012. cat.85-225-X. p.33

¹⁴ http://www.rcmp-grc.ca/ns/detach/halifax/halifax_co-eng.htm

specific to HRPS. The RCMP operate their own similar programs, unconnected to the PSO. In summary, it appears that RCMP operations were not significantly affected by the creation of the Office¹⁵.

Establishment of the PSO did not appear to have an impact on the majority of the operational units ostensibly reporting to the Office¹⁶. The supervisors of the operational units reported that, after the establishment of the PSO, it continued to be 'business as usual'. Initially, it was determined that the units would meet bi-weekly with the PS Officer, but in fact only the Community Response Team and Community Relations and Crime Prevention Unit supervisors attended the meetings. Operational units continued to go about their regular business - for the most part, the PSO did not make a substantial difference to their operations¹⁷.

A number of respondents commented that location of the PSO within the police department prevented the development of a strong relationship with Mayor and Regional Council. There is a strong interdiction against political involvement in policing operations. It is for this reason that oversight of policing matters is the responsibility of the Police Board, not Regional Council. As a result, many Regional Councillors stated that they were unfamiliar with the work of the PSO.

Some respondents were of the view that the PSO location was an obstacle to the development of productive relationships with other business units within HRM¹⁸. It is clear that many of these units have a role to play, either directly or indirectly, in crime prevention and it is essential that a mechanism be established for collaboration with the PSO.

There were some issues associated with the rank of the two individuals who have performed the role of PS Officer. The first PS Officer occupied the position of Superintendent, the highest rank below the Chief and Deputy Chief within the HRPS. Interview respondents noted that rank is significant within policing organizations and that highly ranked officers command significant authority. The officer currently performing the role of PS Officer is a Staff Sergeant (recently promoted from the rank of Sergeant in the

¹⁵ Some examples of joint HRPS-RCMP crime prevention partnerships can be cited; e.g. the Cops 'n Kids weekend camp program for approximately 80 HRM youth sponsored by the Tim Horton Children's Foundation. In addition the HRPS and RCMP in partnership with the provincial Department of Justice will soon embark on an ambitious crime prevention program 'Ceasefire'.

¹⁶ It should be noted that the supervisor of one of these operational units expressed the view that the PSO was successful in identifying the importance of a community development approach to crime prevention

¹⁷ Some of the operational units (e.g. Integrated Traffic Unit) were seen as having a tenuous connection to the core business of the PSO and did not appear to 'belong' there.

¹⁸ Examples were given of the difficulty in securing meeting spaces and the lack of support for social media initiatives.

summer of 2013). Many respondents noted it was problematic that the operational divisions reporting to the PS Officer were headed by officers of equal rank and (frequently) longer service and that this reporting is atypical and dysfunctional within a policing organization.

A number of respondents noted there were certain advantages associated with the appointment of a serving police officer as PS Officer. In their view, police officers have established considerable credibility in the community and have had success in bringing various community groups together to address public safety issues. It is universally accepted that any community safety initiative requires excellent relationships with law enforcement and some suggest that it is easier for a serving member to establish and sustain these relationships than it would be for a non- police officer.

Some respondents expressed concern that commitment of the police service as an institution to the PSO could decrease were the office to be located elsewhere. Clearly, the police service must be a key partner in any public safety initiative and any moves which could jeopardize this commitment must be analyzed carefully. Some have expressed concern that location of the PSO within the HRM bureaucracy would perhaps open the door to political interference with the function.

Partnerships:

The PS Officers in other jurisdictions identified the need to develop partnerships and funding agreements with community agencies and other levels of government. It is evident that both PS Officers in HRM recognized the need for community partnerships and spent considerable time and effort in reaching out to a variety of agencies. For the most part, these relationships were project-specific and the absence of a structure to cement the partnerships over the long-term appeared to limit their long-term impact.

In 2009, an intergovernmental committee (Safer, Stronger Communities) was established by the then Chief of Police and the provincial deputy ministers of Justice and Community Services, initially as a mechanism to address inter-jurisdictional issues related to community problems being experienced in Uniacke Square by providing coordinated services to crime 'hotspots'. In September 2009 this committee "revised its mandate to complement the HRM Public Safety initiative".¹⁹ The work of this committee was place-based, essentially confined to Uniacke Square, although there was some intention to subsequently address problems in North Dartmouth. Reports of the accomplishments of this committee were mixed. Although the committee is no longer operational, it is unclear when it was disbanded.

¹⁹ Halifax Regional Municipality (2011) Partnering for Public Safety: Public Safety Strategic Plan. p.11

There is no formal on-going mechanism for provincial-municipal discussions or partnerships related to community safety. A number of respondents voiced the need for such a coordinating mechanism. Criticisms were voiced that programs have been implemented on an ad hoc basis, independently by both provincial and municipal governments (frequently in response to federal funding initiatives) and the opportunity for a coordinated, integrated approach has been missed²⁰. It was suggested that the Province should develop a set of fundamental principles/tenets related to community safety which would facilitate the strategic implementation of inter-related initiatives by each level of government according to a comprehensive plan.

In 2007 the then provincial government published *Time to Fight Crime Together*, described as a provincial strategy to prevent and reduce crime. This strategy was replaced in 2012 by a document published by the provincial Department of Justice entitled *As We Go Forward: Nova Scotia's Approach to Crime Prevention 2012-13*. The document contains a statement of guiding principles for crime prevention and also a list of actions. The document confirms a commitment to partnerships by the provincial government and indicates that a Crime Prevention Advisory Circle will be established "to identify actions that can make a positive impact in communities...and identify ways to support communities". Provincial representatives report that terms of reference for the circle have been developed but the committee has not yet been struck.

Some Regional Councillors expressed the need for the Municipality to adopt an over-arching strategy to address the development of safer, stronger communities. Concern was expressed by many Councillors regarding the lack of coordination and planning among all levels of government on issues that have a bearing on community safety; such as housing, design of public spaces, recreation and programs for youth. The Councillors stated that other levels of government must be brought to the table, as responsibility for addressing some of the root causes of crime do not fall within the purview of the Municipality. Councillors noted that the Municipality must be a 'player' in the development of a strategy to address community safety issues, but the challenge is to avoid being defined as an equal funding partner for specific issues outside the mandate of the Municipality and for which it has no resources.

²⁰ This is not to suggest that there have not been some productive joint initiatives of the PSO and the provincial Crime Prevention Office; e.g. the Housing First Table; Ceasefire Project proposal; and the Sexual Violence campaign ("Don't be that Guy").

Oversight:

Responsibility for civilian oversight of the PSO was assigned to the HRM Board of Police Commissioners (Police Board) in February 2009. The Nova Scotia Police Act requires that each municipality that establishes a police department must establish a Police Board²¹ and that its function is to provide "(a) civilian governance on behalf of the council in relation to the enforcement of law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime in the municipality, and (b) the administrative direction, organization and policy required to maintain an adequate, effective and efficient police department."²² Because the PS Office was established within the HRPS, the municipality determined that civilian oversight was to be provided by the Police Board. In view of the fact that the HRM is jointly policed by the RCMP, it should be noted that the Police Act requires that any municipality receiving police services in whole or in part from the RCMP must establish a police advisory board.²³ Accordingly the Police Board states its mission as follows:

"The Halifax Board of Police Commissioners provides *civilian governance* in regards to strategic policy planning and policy driven budget planning for police service delivery within the communities serviced by *Halifax Regional Police* and carries out an *advisory role* in respect of police matters within communities serviced by the Provincial Police Service (*RCMP*)."²⁴

Therefore, although the HRM is policed by both the HRPS and the RCMP, civilian oversight of the PSO (because of its location within the HRPS) is the responsibility of the body that provides *civilian governance* to the HRPS only.

The Police Board is comprised of 7 members: 3 members of Regional Council, 3 members appointed by Regional Council (who are neither councillors nor HRM employees), and 1 member appointed by the provincial Minister of Justice.

In order to determine the extent to which PSO business was discussed by the Police Board, a review of Police Board meetings was undertaken for the period October 2008- June 2013. The first discussion of the PSO occurred at the Police Board's November 2008 meeting, during which members of the Board were invited to participate in a discussion of the Roundtable Report recommendations. A draft of the document

²¹ Police Act, RSNS 2004, c.31, s.44

²² Police Act 2004, RSNS, c31, s.55(1)

²³ Police Act. s.57

²⁴ Board of Police Commissioners website. www.halifax.ca/boardscom/bpc/index.html

Partnering for Public Safety (a response to the Roundtable recommendations) was presented to the Police Board in early 2009, but little discussion ensued. In fact, this very limited response to the business of the PSO was characteristic of the Police Board meetings. While a report from the PS Officer has been a standing item on the agenda of the Board since the establishment of the PSO, for the most part these reports (the *Spotlight on Safety* monthly report prepared by the PS Officer) have been received without any comments from the Board. This suggests, therefore, that the PS Officer did not receive any significant strategic direction from the Police Board.

This conclusion is supported by comments from the two individuals who have occupied the position of PS Officer as well as some members of the Police Board. There was a sense that the role of the Police Board vis-a-vis the PS Office was essentially *pro forma* and that there was little input into PSO policies, priorities or activities. Monthly Police Board meetings typically address a broad range of policing issues and it seems evident that, for the most part, the PSO matters did not occupy any significant amount of time during these meetings.

A number of respondents indicated that there was little direction provided to the PSO by the leadership of the HRPS. Some noted that the accomplishments of the PSO were solely attributable to the individual efforts of the two PS Officers, who were able to succeed with some projects, despite lack of institutional support.

In view of the very limited guidance provided to the PSO by the Police Board and the HRPS, it can be concluded that there has been a lack of strategic direction to the PSO from any source.

Role of Halifax Regional Council:

The role of the elected body is to set policy and determine priorities regarding matters that are within the jurisdiction of the municipality. The HRM Charter states that one of the functions of the Municipality is to "develop and maintain safe and viable communities".²⁵ It could be expected therefore that Regional Council would be cognizant of the work of the PSO.

As part of the research for this report, all but one of the current Regional Councillors were interviewed.²⁶ Some of these Councillors were currently, or had been, members of the Police Board. It is interesting to note that the majority of the Councillors were not familiar with the work of the PSO - neither with the

²⁵ Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, RSNS 2008, c.39, s.2(c)(iii)

²⁶ Professor Don Clairmont conducted the bulk of these face-to-face interviews on a range of topics germane to the terms of reference. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix B.

mandate of the Office, nor with its activities. This was a source of concern to a number of Councillors, who felt that Council should have a better grasp of a structure charged with an issue as important as public safety.

A number of Councillors were of the view that the PSO should report to a Standing Committee of Council rather than to the Police Board. This would ensure that Councillors receive regular reports from the PSO and have an opportunity to provide input into policies. The majority of Councillors felt that the PSO should be located within the HRM bureaucracy, reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer. They did note that caution should be exercised to ensure the office is not 'buried' within the overall bureaucratic structure and that its location should reflect the weight or importance placed on the issue by Council. One Councillor did express the reservation that location within the bureaucracy could result in the office being "bogged down in red tape" and that it could lose its ability to be nimble in terms of being able to respond quickly to emerging issues.

One Councillor argued that the PSO should remain within the police department, as it could be inundated with special ad hoc requests were it to be located within the bureaucracy and more open to Council requests. This Councillor did feel that the PSO could be strengthened if the Police Board functions and objectives were expanded to include more engagement with Council. One Councillor was critical of the Police Board's limited jurisdiction over the RCMP and stated that the national force did not appear to be an active participant in the PSO.

A number of Councillors stated that the core functions of the PSO have never been adequately articulated. Some suggested that there was value in having a more transparent public safety office, one connected to the HRM bureaucracy and engaged collaboratively with the other orders of government. Location within the bureaucracy would promote the PSO/municipality taking a broader perspective on public safety issues and would facilitate the involvement of other business units with a role to play in community safety. In the view of one Councillor, the PSO has been too focussed on conventional police crime prevention strategies and has not given adequate attention to programs addressing the broader social determinants of crime (such as early intervention programs for disadvantaged persons). The point was made that the Municipality must adopt a more expansive role in responding to issues such as poverty and housing, etc. in order to deal with the direct causes and roots of violence.

It should be noted that Regional Councillors have been provided with the monthly *Spotlight on Safety* reports prepared by the PS Officer. It appears, based on the limited knowledge of most Councillors regarding PSO operations, that these reports are not widely read by them.

A number of Regional Councillors who had been members of the Police Board were critical of the lack of involvement by the Board in strategic discussions of policing matters in general (including the PSO), noting that it had adopted a more passive role of listening to presentations by police personnel. A number of Councillors advocated a more active role for Regional Council in addressing issues of violence and public safety.

Some Councillors voiced the opinion that the PSO needed to have a much more significant public profile and that opportunities should be provided for public engagement through more extensive use of social media.

Clarity re Mandate:

In June 2010, the PSO convened a meeting of 30 key stakeholders (representing municipal and provincial governments and community agencies) to develop a strategic plan to serve as a blueprint for the work of the PSO. The strategic planning document was completed in 2011. Key components of the plan are as follows:

Vision:

HRM is a safe, inclusive and welcoming community.

Mission:

To develop and implement a strategy to achieve a safe, inclusive and welcoming HRM.

Guiding principles:

Collective purpose, collaborative decision-making, shared accountability, comprehensive information sharing, commitment to sustainability.

Strategic Directions:

Communication - outline the research, target audiences, communication vehicles and key messages required to address and create a communication culture surrounding public safety internally and externally.

Community engagement - engage citizens and community groups in playing an active role in public safety in HRM.

Diversity - Strengthen HRM's connection with diverse communities while at the same time addressing quality of life issues with these communities.

Partnerships - Align with all levels of government, social agencies and community partners to realize efficiencies and improve public safety programs and services in HRM.

Police Community Response - HRP and Halifax District RCMP must continue to implement strategies which reduce crime and enhance public safety.

Race/Ethnic Relations - Learn more about and develop strategic actions to effectively address the underlying issues of the over-representation of young Black males in the criminal justice system.

Safer, Stronger Communities - Identify strategies that will enhance public safety and the perception of public safety.

Social Development - Work with partners to address the root causes of crime including but not limited to education, employment, housing, transportation, mental health and addictions.

Sustainability Initiatives - HRM as an organization must undertake a variety of initiatives to improve public safety.

While this list could be regarded as a general statement of direction, it cannot be viewed as a strategic plan. No priorities were set. No goals with measureable outcomes were established. No implementation plan was provided, with specific actions and timeframes for completion.

In the absence of a strategic plan, the PSO approach has tended to be somewhat ad hoc. A list of activities initiated is provided in the monthly *Spotlight on Safety* report, but it is not clear how the activities fit within a larger plan for the PSO.

Many respondents commented on this lack of direction and identified the need to develop a coherent, comprehensive strategic plan, articulating priorities and measureable outcomes. Some noted that the lack of direction was reflected in the makeup of the PSO itself; i.e. that a number of business units incorporated within the Office were not a good fit with the overall objectives of the PSO, serving as a distraction from the 'real business' of the PSO.

Resources:

In a report to the Board of Police Commissioners, the Chief of Police noted that the PSO was "initially composed of 32 police officers, 14 civilians and volunteers with a budget of \$3.2M from realigning existing resources."

Funding for the creation of the position of PS Officer was provided by the provincial Additional Officer Program (formerly the "Boots on the Street" program). Although at the outset an administrative assistant

position was attached to the office, this was later eliminated. The operational units assigned to the PSO were already in existence and thus did not require any new funding. Therefore the budget assigned to the PSO (net of the operational unit expenditures already committed) was approximately \$100,000.

In April 2013, Regional Council approved the transfer of \$526,300 (fiscal year 2013/14) to the Public Safety Office for the Youth Advocacy Program²⁷, formerly within the budget of the municipality's Department of Community and Recreation Services. This program continues to be operated by that Department, not the PSO.

The PS Officers indicated that they did not exercise any budget control over the PSO, as the budget did not include any program funding. Lack of funding was regarded as a severe impediment to the accomplishment of PSO objectives.

Role of municipal government in public/community safety

The Roundtable Report noted that municipalities in Nova Scotia have a limited legislated mandate for responding directly to the social factors associated with crime or public safety²⁸. The mandate does include policing, recreation, local transportation and some community development. It was noted that the HRM has regularly stepped outside the formal mandate through, for example, the Grants Committee of HRM Council which provides modest funding to various non-profit and community groups for programs aimed at contributing to enhanced community safety. The report noted that it could be problematic for several reasons for the municipality to step significantly beyond its mandate; e.g. constitutional barriers and lack of funding being some of the most salient²⁹.

²⁷ See FN 10. YAP is a neighbourhood-based intervention program targeting youth aged 9-14 who are at risk of, or involved in, criminal activity and/or gangs. The program was originally funded through Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Program for four years (extended for one year). Upon termination of federal funding and following a very positive external review, Regional Council, in March 2011, approved funding of \$550,000 (Community Development operating budget) to continue the program. The program has continued to operate, although funding was reduced to \$504,000 in 2011/12. In April 2013 the budget was transferred to the PSO. With funding from the provincial and federal governments, the YAP is planning to expand through the delivery of the Souls Strong program (North Preston) and the Girls United program.

²⁸ *ibid.* 3, p.15

²⁹ It should be noted that the current Regional Council has shown a willingness to become involved in broader social issues. In October 2013 Regional Council voted in favour of participation in a coalition (involving United Way Halifax, the provincial government, private sector and the Affordable Housing Association of NS) to tackle homelessness and affordable housing.

The significance of the role of the municipality in community safety is reflected in the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter which lists, as one of three key functions of the Municipality "to develop and maintain safe and viable communities".³⁰

The first European and North American conference on Urban Safety and the Prevention of Crime produced an Agenda for Safer Cities which articulated a vision for the role of municipalities in community safety. The main conclusions of the document are as follows:

- The community is the focal point of crime prevention. Government at all levels must nurture community-based anti-crime efforts.
- We must go beyond the criminal justice system response - police, courts and corrections - if we are to prevent crime in our cities. Our response must be part of a long-range approach, yet responsive to immediate needs.
- Crime prevention must bring together those responsible for housing, social services, recreation, schools, policing and justice to tackle situations that breed crime.
- Elected officials at all levels must exert political leadership and assume responsibility for crime prevention. Without this, our belief in community, the quality of life in our cities and human rights can be threatened.
- Crime prevention must be supported by the whole society. Political leaders should encourage the development of solidarity of community members.³¹

It is widely acknowledged that community safety is a shared responsibility of all levels of government, societal institutions, private and public sector organizations and individual citizens. Most certainly, police have a significant role to play in responding to crime. However, increased awareness of the social determinants of crime (among many other factors) has resulted in a heightened appreciation of the necessity for a more broad-based approach aimed at addressing the root causes of criminal activity.

In 2007, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (University of Ottawa) conducted consultations with members of the national Municipal Network on Crime Prevention³² which resulted in a profile of the various approaches to community safety adopted by the municipalities and the identification of "four key components" to successfully reducing crime and enhancing community safety:

1. Strong commitment and leadership (e.g. mayor, chief of police) and alignment of community safety with other local priorities (e.g. children's services, youth programs, housing, recreation);

³⁰ Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, RSNS, 2008, c.39, 2(c)(iii)

³¹ Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2000) Primer on Municipal Crime Prevention. www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/Primer_on_Municipal_Crime_Prevention_EN.pdf. p.8

³² see FN2

2. Coordination among all orders of government and appropriate funding for municipal and other actions to develop, improve and sustain initiatives, strategies and programs to target root causes of crime;
3. Partnerships and public engagement which fosters priority setting at the local level; and
4. Effective use of data, knowledge and evaluation to guide decisions on what works and how to apply resources to tackle local problems.³³

The Network also developed a set of 'guiding principles' as follows:

1. Establish responsibility centres at all levels of government
2. Address priorities at the local and community level
3. Effective use of knowledge and data
4. Sustained funding for targeted programs and networking
5. Public engagement

Cross-jurisdictional review:

A comprehensive response to public safety issues requires the involvement of all levels of government, community organizations and citizens. The specific nature of the contribution of each of these entities is influenced by many factors including legislation, policy, fiscal and organizational capacity and historical practice. Regional and local differences, overlapping mandates and gaps in service delivery can result in a patchwork of inefficient use of the resources of the various partners. These concerns have been recognized by governing bodies and efforts have been made to address these issues.

A number of municipalities have developed special structures/mechanisms as a focal point for the development of a coordinated approach to community safety. For the purposes of this report, a survey of selected larger municipalities in Canada was undertaken to determine the nature of these structures and mechanisms. A questionnaire³⁴ was circulated to a number of members of the national Municipal Network on Crime Prevention³⁵ members, followed up by a telephone interview.

The community safety challenges experienced by Canada's largest cities vary. They are a function of local variations in the frequency and type of crimes committed, varying demographics and levels of the social determinants of crime and the capacity of governments and neighbourhoods to address the root causes of crime. The ways in which these cities have organized to address the challenges also vary in the extent

³³ Institute for the Prevention of Crime (2008) Making Cities Safer: Canadian Strategies and Practices. www.sciencesociales.uottawa.ca/ipc/eng/documents/ipc_MR2-Eng.pdf . p.iv

³⁴ a copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix A. Detailed responses to the questionnaire are available upon request.

³⁵ see FN2

to which they involve other business units within the municipal bureaucracy, their connection to municipal councils and the strength of partnerships with other levels of government and with community agencies.

For most municipalities, the genesis of a structure to address community safety was a task force or similar report noting deficiencies in the capacity of the municipality to address broad community safety issues (i.e. beyond the crime prevention and enforcement mandate of the police).

A number of municipalities have created a specific business unit focused on public safety.³⁶ Many have established a council or advisory group to provide strategic direction regarding public safety initiatives.

Waterloo Region, Ontario:

The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRCPC) is a broad-based community partnership of approximately 40 members, representing the community-at-large, social service agencies, schools, public health, municipal planning, justice, corrections, police, media, community and neighbourhood support agencies and political representatives. Created by Waterloo Regional Council, the WRCPC establishes policies for its own governance which are consistent with the terms of reference of the Region. Daily activities are managed by an Executive Director, under the direction of the WRCPC, within the policies and procedures of the Region of Waterloo.

The Executive Director's office is a Division of the Regional Chair's office. There are seven staff and the office functions with core funding of \$750,000/year provided by Regional Council.

According to its mandate, first approved in 1993, the WRCPC seeks to advise, recommend and stimulate actions which reduce and prevent crime, victimization and fear of crime through:

- Information sharing
- Public education and awareness programs
- Promotion of partnerships among key players
- Crime prevention problem solving
- Advocacy

The WRCPC consulted with 700 individuals in a broad-based community consultation, resulting in the WRCPC's strategic plan for the period 2010-2014: *Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region*.

The four priority directions identified in the plan are:

³⁶ note that this is separate from the crime prevention and enforcement activities carried out by police agencies.

- Research and Inquiry
- Education and Learning
- Strategic Leadership
- Organizational Design

City of Surrey, British Columbia:

Surrey has established a Community Safety and Crime Reduction Office in the City Manager's Department. The Office, created in 2007, is mandated with the responsibility of implementing the recommendations contained in the City of Surrey Crime Reduction Strategy (2006) in partnership with other stakeholders.

The primary objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

- Reduce crime and increase community safety
- Increase public involvement in reducing crime
- Increase integration between all stakeholders involved in crime reduction
- Improve public awareness around the reality and perception of crime.

The objectives are to be achieved through strategic actions in each of the following four strands:

- Prevent and deter crime
- Apprehend and prosecute offenders
- Rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders
- Reality and perceptions of crime

The Office's two employees report to the City Manager, but also meet regularly with the City Councillor who chairs the *Community Safety Committee*. The annual budget for the Office is \$300,000.

The *Community Safety Committee* is chaired by a City Councillor and includes 2 key RCMP representatives (Inspector, Strategic Operations and his Sergeant), Fire Chief, By-law Enforcement Manager, City Solicitor, Mayor, staff of the Crime Reduction Office, manager of the Options program (not-for-profit responsible for outreach for homeless persons) and the Warden of Surrey Remand Centre. The Committee meets every 6 to 8 weeks to discuss progress on annual initiatives and to discuss emerging issues.

City of Thunder Bay, Ontario:

The Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council (CPC) was established in 2010 at the direction of City Council. The Council is described as "a unique partnership between citizens, community groups and service providers", composed of a maximum of 32 members. The CPC is an advisory committee of City Council and reports to Council through the Administrative Services Committee of the Whole Session.

The City provides 'administrative leadership' of the crime prevention initiative by funding a coordinator's position. The Crime Prevention Coordinator reports directly to the City Manager, but is administered through the Corporate Communications and Strategic Initiatives Division of the City Manager's Office. The annual budget for the position and some project funding totals \$120,000.

The mission of the CPC is to engage the community in the task of preventing crime, increasing safety and security, and fostering the well-being of all citizens in Thunder Bay. Strategic directions are as follows:

- community ownership and interaction
- research and planning
- communication and education
- crime prevention initiatives (in priority areas)

The 'neighbourhoods' initiative has been key for the CPC. Target neighbourhoods are selected on the basis of demographics such as low income, incidence of crime, poor housing and fear of crime. Based on the Action for Neighbourhood Change model, community leaders are identified, problems are prioritized by the community and CPC provides support for local events. In its Community Safety and Crime Prevention Strategy 2011-2014, the CPC identified a Neighbourhood Support Program as a priority. A funding request has been submitted to the provincial government for a two-year pilot Neighbourhood Support Program, the goal of which is to build restorative neighbourhoods (building on the concept of Restorative Practice in schools), community kitchens and community hubs.

City of Winnipeg, Manitoba:

Intersectoral crime prevention activities are coordinated through the LiveSAFE Advisory Network. The City of Winnipeg does not have a dedicated public safety office. Approved by City Council in 2008, LiveSAFE is a cross-sectoral partnership and network comprised of citizens, neighbourhoods, community organizations, business and other levels of government. The LiveSAFE Advisory Network is co-chaired by the Chief of Police and the Director of Community Services, City of Winnipeg.

Guiding principles for the initiative are as follows: prevention, leadership and coordination, interconnectedness and partnerships, sustainability and accountability.

LiveSAFE has identified six 'strategic action themes', based on a model of crime prevention through social development:

- Community and Winnipeg Police to work together in neighbourhoods using a preventive approach to reduce crime and disorder

- Resources targeted at high risk neighbourhoods for ‘quality programs’ (including early childhood development) for families
- Build community capacity to develop resiliency in youth, children and families by focusing on recreation and school attendance
- Ensure culturally vibrant education systems
- Responsible and balanced media that recognizes its role in crime prevention. Access to connectivity and computers for citizens
- Establishment of community driven organization engaging citizens in crime prevention through social development (*not yet established*). Promotion of best practices.

The City has taken a leadership role with respect to action themes 1 and 3, reflecting the scope of the municipality's mandate (i.e. police services, recreation). Leadership for the other action themes is provided by other individuals/organizations.

No specific funds are allocated to LiveSAFE. City representatives report that their focus is on supporting and leveraging Crime Prevention through Social Development initiatives in Winnipeg which are undertaken by a broad array of government and community organizations.

City of Regina, Saskatchewan:

A crime prevention committee has been in existence for many years, established first as the Regina Crime Prevention Commission in 1989. The current Crime Prevention Advisory Committee (CPAC), established by City Council in 2009, consists of 17 members: Mayor, Chief of Police, a representative of the Community and Protective Services Committee of City Council, 8 citizen members and representatives from a number of other organizations (e.g. school board, provincial Ministry of Justice, health board, Social Services).

Terms of reference are as follows:

- Serve as a resource, information gathering and advisory body to Council on matters pertaining to safety and prevention of crime in Regina;
- Advise Council regarding ways the City and other stakeholder members can participate in:
 - Identifying strategies, policies and programs that address the root causes of crime and opportunities for crime reduction;
 - Bringing information and understanding on crime prevention and justice related issues to Regina residents so that residents can better understand some of the roles they can play in crime prevention and safety issues; and
 - Encouraging individuals and groups to become more actively involved in crime prevention and safety issues.
- Develop programs to acknowledge and formally recognize the actions and activities of individuals and groups who are actively involved in crime prevention; and

- Facilitate the coordination of crime prevention and crime reduction resources among institutions, agencies, community based organizations and residents.

The City of Regina does not have a dedicated public safety office. A City staffer (Coordinator of Social Development, Planning Department) is assigned to the CPAC as subject matter expert for crime prevention and social development issues. The City Clerk's office has overall responsibility for the committees of City Council (including CPAC) and provides administrative support. CPAC presents an annual report to City Council, reporting on the results of the work plan. There is no dedicated budget for this initiative.

City of Edmonton, Alberta:

REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities (a community-based, stand-alone organization with independent Board of Directors) was established in 2010, replacing Safedmonton which was located within the City administration. The mission of REACH is "to be a centre of excellence that inspires citizen engagement and coordinated agency action to strengthen and sustain community safety in Edmonton. The role of REACH is to initiate, coordinate and integrate, not duplicate what already exists."

The organization is directed by a Board of Directors (15 members), comprised of influential people representing key organizations. There are also three advisors: a senior executive from the provincial government, one representative from the City and one from the Edmonton Police Service. The Executive Director of REACH Edmonton reports to the Board of Directors.

Total staff of the organization numbers approximately 10 (Executive Director, corporate services (human resources/finance), communications and project leaders/coordinators).

The total budget for REACH Edmonton (2012) was \$3M with funding provided by the City of Edmonton and the Province (Safe Communities and Innovation Fund). REACH also has a membership structure (\$25 annually for individual memberships; corporate memberships from \$50-\$200) which generated \$6105 in 2012.

A Task Force on Community Safety, appointed by the Mayor of Edmonton in 2008, generated nine recommendations in three strategic areas (investing in children, youth and families; catalyzing change; and new leadership) which serve as the foundation for the activities of REACH:

- A new model of family and community safety focussing on Schools as Neighbourhood Access Points to social support services
- Develop 'Turn away from Gangs' initiative focused on at-risk youth

- Community coordination on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)
- A 24/7 Service Delivery Model for high-needs individuals
- Cultural Community Groups: work with community leaders from Aboriginal and Multicultural Communities to develop and implement innovative models for engagement within cultural contexts
- Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative: Implement a new Neighbourhood Organizing Model in several diverse areas of Edmonton to develop grassroots community leaders who support a preventative approach to community safety
- A new Community Safety Coordinating Council to facilitate and integrate sustainable community safety efforts
- A Sustainable Strategy for Prevention
- An Innovative Evaluation Framework to measure success

City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan:

The Neighbourhood Safety Office is part of the Neighbourhood Planning Section of the Planning and Development Branch of the Community Services Department of the City. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Safety program is “to add value to existing civic programs and help make the City safer” through:

- Creation of neighbourhood safety plans in conjunction with Local Area Plans;
- Implementation of Neighbourhood Safety recommendations;
- Safe Growth/Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Review Committee;
- Response to ad hoc requests for assistance from affected neighbourhoods, administration and referrals from City Council; and
- Program support.

In 2008, City Council adopted the philosophy of Safe Growth and the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in its official Community Plan.

The Office is staffed by two employees and has an annual budget of \$60,000 in addition to staffing costs. It does not have an advisory committee.

In addition, City Council approved the establishment of the Safe Streets Commission in February 2012. The Commission is a City-appointed corporation with all members appointed by City Council. It is led by a corporate CEO and board and its major focus is on addressing safety issues related to homeless people on the streets of Saskatoon. Two major priorities identified by the Commission are the establishment of a referral centre to which Community Support Officers and police could direct people on the street viewed as being 'at risk' (i.e. under the influence of alcohol/drugs or suffering from mental health issues); and the establishment of drop-in centres for at-risk youth.

City of Toronto, Ontario:

In March 2004, Toronto City Council approved a Community Safety Plan that pursued an approach to community safety in Toronto which balanced crime prevention with law enforcement and included both short- and long-term initiatives in Toronto neighbourhoods for investing in youth and building on the strengths of neighbourhoods and communities. The Plan established nine (9) priority strategic actions that included the creation of a Mayor's Advisory Panel on Community Safety and a City Community Safety Secretariat to support the efforts of the Mayor's Panel and coordinate the components of the overall Safety Plan. In April 2004, the Mayor's Advisory Panel on Community Safety was established, chaired by Chief Justice Roy McMurtry, with a mandate "to guide the City in building safe communities and bring together public, private and community-based civic and community leaders to focus on solutions to combat violence." In June 2004, the Community Safety Secretariat was formed within the City, housed inside the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division (SDF). To ensure coordination with Toronto Police Service, two (2) senior officers were appointed to liaise with the Secretariat.

Following an increase in gun violence, primarily among youth during the summer of 2005, Toronto City Council approved the 2005 *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy*, a robust 'place-based' approach to service planning and investment in social/recreational infrastructure, youth-focused programming and supports and community capacity-building in 13 priority neighbourhoods³⁷ (PNs) for investment identified by the Strategy. The Strategy was jointly developed with the City by a Task Force composed of civic leaders from the private, labour, community-based, academic and public sectors of Toronto who met over a one-year period. The Strategy was a joint project of the United Way Toronto and the City, with federal and provincial financial support.

The Strategy called for a comprehensive, long-term approach to addressing under-invested neighbourhoods, which as a result, were experiencing issues of violence and crime.

³⁷ The City of Toronto is organized geographically into 140 'social planning neighbourhoods' for service planning, analysis and delivery purposes. Using a broad range of indicators to assess the level of community infrastructure in Toronto neighbourhood versus the demographic profile of the neighbourhood, the Strategy identified 13 "priority neighbourhoods" for immediate investment. The analysis included the *distribution of key services/facilities* in each neighbourhood and *indicators of vitality*.

Implementation Pillars from the Task Force Recommendations	City of Toronto Implementation
<p>Local neighbourhood investment partnership: neighbourhood-based group of influentials (businesses, community service providers, government, faith groups, local residents, etc) responsible for developing the Neighbourhood Investment Plan, which identifies local priorities and addresses community needs. Supported by staff of the Strong Neighbourhoods Unit of the City.</p>	<p>In each of the 13 priority neighbourhoods, the City's Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) Division convened and supported Neighbourhood Action Partnerships (NAPs). The NAPs are supported by an SDFA Community Development Officer and a senior City manager from across the Corporation.</p>
<p>Inter-governmental table: provides over-arching governance ensuring that the Strategy is "politically led and publicly accountable." Determines level of resources required from all levels of government; establishes broad goals and objectives for the Strategy.</p>	<p>At the request of the Prime Minister, Premier of Ontario and Mayor of Toronto, the Intergovernmental Working Group on Gun Violence ("Tri-Level") was established in January 2005 to better coordinate the work against gun and gang violence in Toronto. All three orders of government discussed the initiatives underway and identified areas for greater collaboration and shared solutions.</p>
<p>Strong Neighbourhoods Investment Board: key body that guides implementation of the strategy across investment neighbourhoods. Comprised of 15 members (representatives from each level of government, each of the school boards, United Way and 6 community members, 2 appointed by each of the 3 levels of government)</p>	<p>Investments Boards were not established. Instead, the City, other funding partners like United Way Toronto, and other orders of government have aligned funding to the youth and community development priorities of the 13 Priority Neighbourhoods. The NAPs, in each PN, developed coordinated community priorities, including required service and capital projects and initiatives. these priorities were used to guide investments where possible from all partners</p>
<p>Strong Neighbourhoods Unit: staff of City, work with local neighbourhoods</p>	<p>SDFA is the lead division for the implementation of Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. Community Development Officers facilitate the NAPs in each PN. Managers and frontline staff from across the City's Divisions and Agencies participate in the NAPs as members to help improve services and spaces locally. Because City staff participants come across many business units, there are multiple champions for the City's place-based work with residents.</p>
<p>Each neighbourhood is required to have 'anchor' agency (non-profit) to serve as local hub and focal point for implementation of the Strategy in each neighbourhood.</p>	<p>Recognizing that each of the 13 neighbourhoods had different community infrastructure, no anchor organization model was pursued. Instead, the City's Community Development Unit was the anchor support and in each PN, a number of community agencies were engaged and leads on specific local initiatives and community spaces such as hubs.</p>

At its creation, the Community Safety Secretariat was a separate business unit within SDFa, reporting to the Division's Executive Director. However, as efforts of the Secretariat evolved in tandem with the City's cross-Corporate work to advance meaningful safety, security and opportunities in Toronto's neighbourhoods, the Community Safety Secretariat was realigned to match the City's 'place-based' approach to community safety. The work of the Secretariat is now divided between two separate Sections of the SDFa³⁸ which continues to be the City's lead for non-law enforcement community safety coordination.

Working in partnership with residents, community agencies, businesses, the federal and provincial governments and key partners, more than 1,200 initiatives took place in the 13 PNs between 2005 – 2012, reaching more than 50,000 youth and 38,000 other residents. Some of these initiatives focused on community safety include the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy, Community Crisis Response Program, Prevention and Intervention Team, Reclaiming Outdoor Space and Partnership Opportunities Legacies Fund.

In March 2012, City Council adopted the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, an updated version of the 2005 Strategy, to ensure "equitable outcomes for all neighbourhoods" in Toronto. Based on current data regarding Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods and the results of community consultations, City Council will select neighbourhoods for coordinated investment in 2014.

Observations from the jurisdictional review:

Importance of the location of the PSO:

Jurisdictional respondents noted the importance of locating the public safety function where it is perceived as being a priority for the municipality. According to the office a high profile is necessary to send a message to citizens and to municipal staff that this is a key role of the municipality. Failure to provide a distinct and identifiable public safety function was viewed as creating a serious obstacle to the achievement of public safety objectives.

³⁸ Neighbourhood-specific services/supports such as the Community Crisis Response Program were integrated with the SDFa's Community Resources Section, while community safety policy supports (including intergovernmental and Mayor's Advisory Panel supports) were relocated and ultimately integrated into SDFa's Social Policy, Analysis & Research Section.

None of the jurisdictional respondents expressed support for locating the function within a police department. Many suggested it would send a message that public safety is being 'handled' by the police, when in fact it is essential to convey the concept that public safety is the responsibility of all levels of government, the municipal bureaucracy, community agencies, business and citizens. Some respondents noted that police departments in major cities are very large operations and that, consequently, a relatively small unit (e.g. a PSO) could be lost in the bureaucracy and overpowered by other important police functions. All respondents viewed the police as key partners in the public safety enterprise, but did not feel they should be seen as 'owning' the problem of crime and public safety.

Edmonton was the sole municipality surveyed that had created a stand-alone public safety office. Prior to the creation of REACH Edmonton, the public safety function resided within the municipal bureaucracy as *Safedmonton*. The rationale for creating a separate body was articulated as allowing for more independence, flexibility and creativity. A number of respondents from other jurisdictions expressed concern that a stand-alone structure would be quite vulnerable to funding cuts in times of austerity. Many noted the beneficial contribution of municipal finance and personnel services and that securing independent services would be prohibitively expensive. It was generally acknowledged, however, that location within the municipal bureaucracy brings the constraints that come with all municipal operations: approval of projects can become bogged down in 'red tape'; and other priorities of the municipality can sometimes 'derail' planned activities in the public safety sector.

Some respondents expressed concern about locating the PSO within the Mayor's office. While it can give the office a high profile with an activist mayor who sees public safety as a priority, it was also seen as leaving the office vulnerable to political interference with ever-changing priorities in response to the 'issues of the day'. The majority of respondents felt that the PSO should be located in the office of the City Manager (Chief Administrative Officer), to ensure the buy-in and collaboration with other municipal business units. Respondents did caution that locating the PSO too far down in the municipal hierarchy would prevent it from receiving adequate attention and funding.

Functions:

The public safety function in the cities surveyed has taken many forms. There is considerable variation in the nature of the objectives defined and activities undertaken in the different jurisdictions. Most PSOs would define their role as being one of a catalyst - bringing together individuals and groups to collectively define and address public safety priority issues.

Some have defined themselves as 'centres of excellence', serving as a repository of information regarding best practices in the field of public safety. Some provide workshops and other training to municipal employees and those working in various community agencies.

For the most part the PSOs note that they do not provide any direct services, but rather assist in bringing parties/agencies together for a synergistic, more effective, multilateral approach to community safety problems. To this end, they were of the view that they play a significant role in improving interagency coordination and cooperation.

Many PSOs address diversity issues within their mandates. Significant differences in demographics in the various cities are associated with differing crime prevention issues. In some cities, factors associated with the root causes of crime (poverty, substandard housing, lack of employment opportunities) are disproportionately experienced by some diversity groups and the PSOs are typically engaged in activities to address these issues.

Virtually all of the jurisdictions noted the priority they place on informing the public about public safety issues; i.e. what is being done to address these issues and how the public might become involved. Many saw public engagement as an important function.

Some PSOs defined advocacy as a key function - lobbying for changes in legislation and policy at the provincial and federal levels.

Place-based initiatives:

A number of cities have adopted a place-based approach to public safety initiatives. Recognizing that resources are limited, these cities have identified specific neighbourhoods for investment and targeted programs. For example, the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy notes that "under-investments have created inequitable access to services and opportunities for residents and have contributed to inequitable outcomes, including low educational attainment, high levels of unemployment and gang activity in these neighbourhoods"³⁹.

REACH Edmonton has invested in a Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative (developing grassroots community leaders to support a preventative approach to community safety). One of Winnipeg's

³⁹ Toronto, Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020, staff report to Community Development and Recreation Committee, Feb.8, 2012, p.4

'strategic action themes' is the targeting of resources at high risk neighbourhoods for 'quality' programs (including early childhood development) for families.

Thunder Bay has initiated a Neighbourhood Support Program based on the Action for Neighbourhood Change model. Community leaders are identified, problems are prioritized by community and support is provided by the local Crime Prevention Council. Neighbourhoods were selected based on demographic factors such as low income, fear of crime, poor housing and incidence of crime. Saskatoon has identified the creation of neighbourhood safety plans as a key element of their crime prevention strategy.

Importance of partnerships:

All jurisdictions noted that achievement of their objectives was tied to the strength of their partnerships (e.g. "we are stronger when we work together"). Many cautioned that cultivating and maintaining relationships is time-consuming and difficult, but recognized that collaboration was the key to success.

Advisory committees:

Significant variations among jurisdictions were observed in the mandate and composition of advisory committees. In Edmonton, REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities functions as a community-based, stand-alone organization with an independent Board of Directors (15 members, representing key organizations, including provincial and municipal governments and Edmonton police).

The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (a 40-member multi-agency group) was created by Regional Council, with members approved by Regional Council as part of the municipal advisory committee membership process, and under terms of reference approved by Regional Council. The WRPCPC operates fairly independently in setting priorities and overseeing crime prevention activities.

In Surrey, the office of the Crime Reduction Strategy is located within the municipal bureaucracy and reports to the City Manager. Input regarding priorities is provided by the Community Safety Committee, a committee of Surrey City Council, chaired by a City Councillor. The committee is composed of 12 members, representing municipal leadership, law enforcement, by-law enforcement, fire, corrections and the Options program (not-for-profit responsible for outreach for homeless persons).

In Thunder Bay, the Crime Prevention Council is an advisory committee of City Council that reports to Committee of the Whole. It is composed of 32 members - a partnership of citizens, community groups and service providers.

In Regina the Crime Prevention Advisory Committee is an advisory committee of City Council. It is composed of 17 members (Mayor, Chief of Police, one City Councillor (non-voting), 8 citizens and 6 'institutional' members). The Committee is attached to the City Clerk's office with administrative support provided by that office.

In Winnipeg, the LiveSAFE Advisory Network is a cross-sectoral partnership composed of citizens, neighbourhoods, community organizations, business and other levels of government, co-chaired by the Chief of Police and the Director of Community Services (City of Winnipeg). The Network identified a series of strategic action themes and meets quarterly to review progress. The City has assumed responsibility for progress in two of the action themes that directly bear upon the City's responsibility for recreation and police services.

Although input from a diverse range of stakeholders in the development of priorities was generally viewed as healthy and beneficial, some respondents voiced notes of caution regarding the role of advisory committees. With the inevitable changes in membership, sustaining interest and participation of key organizations and individuals over the long term have proven to be problematic for some PSOs. Problems can also arise when advisory committee recommendations are incongruent with the overall priorities of municipal councils and bureaucracies - the bodies which are accountable for municipal operations.

Adequate funding:

Inadequate funding was noted as an issue by most respondents. The majority of funding is provided by municipal governments but, in some cases, project funding is contributed by the provincial or federal government. REACH Edmonton has established a membership structure and receives a limited amount of funds from membership fees. Thunder Bay municipal council contributes \$1 per citizen toward the crime prevention initiative⁴⁰.

Communication:

All respondents noted that communication is a key function for the PSOs aimed at informing the public and potential partners of their existence and role. Many dedicate considerable ongoing efforts (through diverse media) to communication activities.

⁴⁰ This was based on a proposal by Irvin Waller of the Ottawa-based Institute for the Prevention of Crime to the Thunder Bay City Council that cities should contribute \$1 per citizen for crime prevention activities.

Support of municipal leadership:

Many respondents pointed to the importance of strong support from the Mayor and Council for their activities. In a number of jurisdictions the Mayor played a key role in the establishment of the public safety office/function. This serves to send the message that the function is regarded as important within the municipality and promotes the involvement and support of the municipal bureaucracy and other community organizations.

A number of respondents identified the need for the PSO to establish and maintain a strong relationship with Municipal Council. Councillors are elected to represent the interests of all of their constituents and PSO directors/coordinators were of the view that they should be kept informed of activities and have an opportunity for input into PSO priorities.

Relationship with Province:

All jurisdictions noted that the provincial government has an important role to play because of its constitutional responsibilities in the area of the administration of justice and for many social programs required to address the root causes of crime. Many stated that it was incumbent upon provinces to develop provincial crime prevention strategies to set guiding principles, global direction and priorities for action. Respondents stated that these strategies must recognize the important role played by cities in the response to public safety issues. Furthermore, because of their much greater revenue-generating potential, provinces must be prepared to contribute funding to municipalities and recognize, through their contributions, that cities are disproportionately burdened with social and economic conditions responsible for the highest rates of crime.

Elements of an Effective Organizational Structure of a Public Safety Office in

HRM:

Based on the jurisdictional review and views of key informants regarding the operation of the PSO in HRM since its inception, the following elements of an effective organizational structure for the PSO were identified:

Location of the PSO:

The PSO should be moved from its current location within the Halifax Regional Police Service (HRPS) to a location within the HRM administrative structure, reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

The current location of the PSO sends the message that public safety is the responsibility of the police, instead of being jointly shared by all levels of government, community organizations and citizens. Even at that, the location within HRPS has meant that the operation of the PSO has related mainly to the functions of that service, not the RCMP.

The location within the HRPS resulted in the Police Board's designation as the oversight body. Given the significant responsibilities of the Board in providing civilian oversight to all policing functions, the Police Board was not able to provide strategic direction to the PSO.

Consideration was given to the establishment of a stand-alone PSO (as per the REACH Edmonton example) but this was rejected. This option was assessed as being prohibitively costly and vulnerable to funding cuts during times of austerity. Consideration was also given to locating the PSO in the Mayor's office, but attachment to the political office was rejected. This location was viewed as being too vulnerable to political interference and is highly dependent on the characteristics of one individual. The PS Officer, as a public servant, should not report to a political office.⁴¹

The HRM *Charter* states that one of the functions of the Municipality is to "develop and maintain safe and viable communities". Location of the PSO should reflect the priority of public safety for HRM and that it is an integral part of the City's infrastructure. This can best be accomplished by according the PSO a prominent position within the office of the CAO.

A reporting relationship to the CAO demonstrates, facilitates and promotes the over-arching connectivity across all city functions/operational units which is required for an effective public safety strategy. The PSO must be given observable priority within the HRM bureaucracy as a message to other business units, other levels of government and citizens that HRM views public safety as a key issue.

Although this recommendation is substantively supported by the evidence presented in this report, it should be noted that additional legal research may be required to determine whether a *Charter* amendment is needed to authorize the establishment of the PSO in the office of the Chief Administrative Officer⁴².

⁴¹ based on the notion that municipal public servants are responsible for the implementation of laws and policy as determined by a democratically elected council (doctrine of separation of powers between executive and legal powers)

⁴² Colin Taylor, Solicitor, Legal, Insurance and Risk Management Services, HRM, personal communication, Nov.7, 2013. The *Charter* (s.79(1)) does not enumerate 'public/community safety programs' as a specific category for which expenditures by the Municipality are authorized. While 'police services' is enumerated in the expenditure clause, this report supports the conclusion that the PSO should not be considered a 'police service'.

Functions:

It is critical that the PSO have a statement of purpose that clearly defines the public policy mandate it is established to fulfil. As reflected in the jurisdictional review and in comments by those interviewed for this report, 'public safety' should be defined expansively and holistically to include a host of factors linked to the protection of citizens and property from harms caused by crime. These factors extend beyond the crime prevention functions typically performed by law enforcement to include considerations of planning functions (to promote crime prevention through environmental design) and root causes of crime. Not all of these public safety functions fall within the jurisdiction of the Municipality, which is why a comprehensive public safety strategy requires partnerships with other levels of government and the community. But the Municipality, as the level of government closest to the community, has a key coordinating role to play. Furthermore, the functions for which the Municipality bears important responsibilities (law enforcement, municipal planning, some aspects of housing, recreation and transit) are essential to the design and delivery of a comprehensive public safety strategy.

The PSO should serve as:

- the focal point for HRM's public safety agenda;
- a 'centre of excellence' and a repository for relevant research (both internationally and locally), best practices, training and development materials;
- the key contact in negotiations and consultations with other levels of government regarding public safety issues affecting HRM and in leveraging funding for programs;
- an expert advisor to the municipality on emerging issues relating to public safety⁴³;
- a catalyst to bring key stakeholders together to assist in the identification of key public safety problems and appropriate responses;
- the 'subject matter specialist' for public safety in HRM to ensure that all municipal operations incorporate public safety principles (e.g. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design);
- the focal point for public information and engagement regarding public safety issues;
- coordinator for the development of a public safety strategic plan; and
- the focal point for the development of an outcome framework and an evaluation process with the analytical tools to provide for regular reporting of results measured against goals and objectives.

⁴³ for example, the challenge to the *Criminal Code* provisions relating to prostitution currently before the Supreme Court of Canada could result in the requirement for municipalities to adopt new strategies for responding to this issue.

The Roundtable review has documented a continuing serious concern regarding the over-representation of African Nova Scotian youths and adults in the criminal justice system, both as perpetrators and victims of crime. The statement made in the original Roundtable Report - "this is a complex, longstanding problem involving a volatile mix of racism and socio-economic disadvantage (including parenting issues) that needs attention and requires social action in HRM"⁴⁴ - continues to resonate.

Efforts have been made since the 2008 report to address the concerns and some progress has been made in delivering programs such as the Youth Advocacy Program, and planning for the Souls Strong, Girls United and Ceasefire programs, all of which aim to address factors which place young African Nova Scotians at risk to commit crimes. However, many of the efforts have been ad hoc and there is an acknowledgment of the need to promote a more coordinated approach, inviting input from African Nova Scotians in HRM, community and government agencies.

It is proposed that these efforts be coordinated through the Public Safety Office as a priority undertaking for the Office in its new location within HRM. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Consultation Committee⁴⁵ provide a useful foundation for the work. A special 'table' with representation from African Nova Scotian leaders, other relevant community organizations and provincial and federal representatives should be constituted to inform the initiative. The African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office should also be involved to provide expert advice.

The jurisdictional review highlighted the importance of place-based initiatives in an overall strategy to improve the health and safety of the broader community⁴⁶. This reflects a growing body of research indicating that, in some neighbourhoods, inequitable services and opportunities for residents have contributed to significant negative outcomes, including concentrations of crime and public disorder. Neighbourhood initiatives seek to engage local citizens and organizations to build social capital. The United Way of Halifax adopted the Action for Neighbourhood Change⁴⁷ model in 2005. Work has continued in the neighbourhoods of Spryfield and Dartmouth North and commitment to a Neighbourhood Strategy was confirmed for the period 2013-2015 by the United Way Board of Directors. It is suggested

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 3, p.69

⁴⁵ see page 35

⁴⁶ "To have a significant impact, both *people* and *place*-based approaches are needed. General policies not focused on place (e.g. national income and employment policies) need to be coordinated with programs and policies focusing on place. Neighbourhood-based initiatives should complement, not replace or displace, structural measures such as income and employment policies." Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force Toronto (2004) *Why Strong Neighbourhoods Matter*. p.31

⁴⁷ www.anccommunity.ca

that the Municipality investigate the work being done by the United Way and the potential for partnership in this place-based initiative.

Key attributes of a Public Safety Officer⁴⁸

- strategic planning expertise
- experience working within a government structure
- consensus-builder
- demonstrated problem-solving skills
- subject matter expertise
- strong organizational and communication skills

Relationship with Regional Council:

The proposed organizational structure must ensure an effective relationship with Regional Council in order for this governing body to exercise ultimate responsibility for determining the strategic direction and priorities of the PSO. There must also be a mechanism for regular reporting to Council so that it may be adequately informed about the activities of the PSO and the extent to which the Office is achieving its objectives. Accordingly, it is recommended that the PSO report to a Standing Committee of Regional Council. The strategic direction and priorities provided by the Standing Committee (and ultimately Regional Council) would be translated into specific actions and programs at the operational level, for which the PS Officer would be accountable to the CAO of the Municipality.

It is understood that the current committee structure of Regional Council is under review. Presently there are six Standing Committees⁴⁹ of Council: Executive, Appeals, Audit and Finance, Community Planning and Economic Development, and Transportation. The Executive Committee is chaired by the Mayor and the others by Regional Councillors. There are also a number of advisory committees composed variously of Regional Councillors and citizens which provide advice on specific municipal issues. Council has identified a number of focus areas: economic development, governance and communication, healthy communities and transportation. At the staff level, outcome teams are aligned with these focus areas. The Healthy Communities outcome team is chaired by the Chief of the Halifax Regional Police Service.

⁴⁸ These attributes are based on the functions of the PSO which are not those of a law enforcement agency. This would not exclude a police officer who possesses these attributes from being considered for the role of coordinator/director of the PS Office.

⁴⁹ "Standing Committees are intended to focus on the more strategic initiatives in their areas of oversight and responsibility...Standing Committees are responsible for carrying out Council's governance responsibilities such as oversight, review of policies...and oversight of Advisory Committees..."
www.halifax.ca/boardscom/documents/SCQuestions.pdf

It is key that the Municipality adopt an expansive view of public safety to encompass the broad range of contributing factors identified earlier in this report. This will require 'horizontal' connectivity of many functions for which the municipality has responsibility⁵⁰. It is not clear that any of the existing standing committees provide the comprehensive oversight that is envisaged. The current review of the Regional Council committee structure may ultimately identify a governance structure within which the PSO may fit most appropriately. However, at this point, the Executive Standing Committee, chaired by the Mayor, would appear to be the best option to provide the leadership and over-arching framework most closely aligned with the overall PSO objectives.

Partnerships:

Because of the broad scope of the public safety agenda (i.e. the need to address root causes and social determinants of crime by committing to multidisciplinary, multilayered approaches), it will be necessary for the PSO to cultivate partnerships with a diverse group of government agencies, community organizations and the private sector.

As the new PSO begins to define its agenda for the next five years, it should seek the input of key stakeholders to map out broad strategic directions as well as specific activities to achieve goals and measurable outcomes. Recommendations of the Roundtable Review can serve as the foundation for this process. Responsibilities of relevant partners for various elements of the strategic plan should be clearly stated. Authority for approval of the plan and monitoring progress rests with Regional Council.

Advisory Committee:

Some cities have established committees or community councils which have the authority to direct activities of their public safety offices. As it is being recommended that the PSO be located within the HRM administration, accountability for PSO activities rests with the Municipality, not an exterior body.

Instead of a standing advisory committee structure, it is recommended that separate consultative groups/tables be established (composed of relevant subject matter specialists, key community organizations and representatives of other levels of government) to provide advice to the PSO on specific initiatives to be undertaken. This structure has the advantage of being task-specific and outcome-

⁵⁰ It has been identified earlier in this report that many operational units have a role to play in public safety; e.g. transit, recreation, planning & design, law enforcement

oriented, with a focused agenda and defined time horizons. It is generally easier to engage key advisors for a specific purpose and timeframe. In addition, the structure is more likely to be nimble and better equipped to respond to emerging issues. It is less likely to be vulnerable to the concerns which are associated with standing advisory committees (e.g. agendas that are too general, changing membership, declining interest over time, and ensuring active engagement in business that is not 'top of mind' for individual members).

Budget:

The core budget requirements of the PSO are linked to its functions as described above. Because its primary role is not to operate programs directly, the budget requirements would be quite modest. It is clear, however, based on the comments by other jurisdictions and the current and former Public Safety officers, that some funding additional to the current level of \$100,000 would be required for the office to effectively perform its communication, coordination and catalyst role. Specific budget requirements should be determined in the course of developing a comprehensive public safety plan for the municipality.

PART II: HRM Response to the Recommendations relating to Race Relations

Recommendations of the Roundtable Report:

The Roundtable Report documented the over-representation of Black youths and adults in the justice system and pointed to a broad range of factors apparently responsible for the situation. As noted on page 32 above, "this is a complex, longstanding problem involving a volatile mix of racism and socio-economic disadvantage (including parenting issues) that needs attention and requires social action in HRM."⁵¹ The report concluded that "the municipality must work with the majority African-Canadian population and with Black community leaders and other activists working with the pockets of problem to change that situation."⁵²

The report called for a greater leadership role for the municipal government in responding to public safety issues of minorities. It was noted that the standing committee of HRM Council (the Community and Race Relations Committee) appeared to have been "ineffective and scarcely able to function".⁵³

The report recommended that "a special subcommittee be established, linked to the Mayor's office and proposed Public Safety Coordinator, to advise on what strategies could be effective and how the extant

⁵¹ *ibid.* 3, p.69

⁵² *ibid.* p.70

⁵³ *ibid.* p.73

Community and Race Relations Committee might be revitalized and tasked".⁵⁴ The report further recommended that the Municipality commit to "reaching out to the Black and other minority communities in its own staffing strategies"⁵⁵.

Response to Roundtable Report recommendations:

Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee:

Revitalization of the committee has not occurred; it last met in April 2008.

Ad Hoc Consultation Committee:

Following the release of the Roundtable report in 2008, an ad hoc consultation committee was formed to "discuss issues of violence and public safety in relation to race relations." The committee met six times and was composed of a small group of informed individuals from the provincial and federal governments, the Public Safety Office and the African Nova Scotian community. The group prepared a progress report in September 2009, documenting the results of their consultations, and proposed that this serve as the basis for a strategic action plan to be developed by the HRM Public Safety Office. The ad hoc committee identified the following 'key mechanisms required for success':

- A Race Relations Committee focussing on violence and African Nova Scotian issues with representation from various Black communities and groupings, with a proactive mandate and some resources (modest funding for assessing progress and for special projects), being a sounding board for suggestions and having a capacity to assess initiatives.
- The Public Safety Office must have a capacity to obtain and examine a wide range of reports, best practices, etc. from elsewhere bearing on the salient issues.
- Tripartite approach/partnership with other levels of government (HRM should especially bring to the Tripartite 'table' detailed knowledge/awareness of the public safety issues and what best practices have emerged from consultations and the many past and ongoing salient projects) and networking with relevant NGO and other community organizations.
- Emphasize the social marketing dimension of the initiative, informing the HRM public and especially the Black communities about what is being done and what has been accomplished.

⁵⁴ ibid. p.70

⁵⁵ ibid. p.73

Africville Agreement:

In February 2010, HRM, as part of the Africville terms and conditions of settlement, announced the "establishment of an African Nova Scotia Affairs Office or function within HRM that would enable our organization to better engage with the African HRM community". No specific mandate was provided for the Office/function.

The African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO):

It should be noted that the establishment of this office was as a result of the Africville Agreement and was not specifically recommended in the Roundtable Report. The office was established in September 2012 within the Government Relations and External Affairs Division of HRM and is described as "providing leadership, strategic direction, policy advice and expertise to all parts of the organization to strengthen the delivery of municipal services to residents and communities of African descent within HRM". The Office's sole full-time position (manager) is currently filled by an individual on secondment from the provincial government for a two-year term. The Office also has a half-time community development position shared with another HRM department and has been assigned an intern position for the period June 2013-November 2014.

Throughout the first year, the manager has been engaged in consultations, both internally with HRM staff, and externally with members of the African Nova Scotian (ANS) community. The purpose of the consultations was to determine the strengths and weaknesses in the response of HRM business units to issues of concern to the ANS community, which in turn would determine the focus of the ANSAIO and its priorities for action.

During the past year, the manager indicated that she has been involved in a number of internal HRM issues: e.g. working with the Racially Visible Employee Caucus⁵⁶ (composed mainly of ANS employees); working with unions and other 'affinity groups' to address recruitment and training issues; and providing assistance to HRM business units on engagement with ANS communities regarding specific projects (e.g. the Preston Area Watershed Study).

⁵⁶ Racially Visible Employee Caucus (RVEC) was established in 2003 "to provide a safe and confidential forum to offer support and guidance to racially visible employees of HRM. It also acts as a resource to HRM by increasing the knowledge and awareness of HRM leadership regarding areas of diversity and social inclusion" (news release Feb. 22/13 HRM Communications)

In May 2013 the ANSAIO sponsored a *Big Ideas Breakfast* attended by the Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, four other city staffers and eight 'influential African Nova Scotian community leaders'. The purpose was to provide an opportunity for these ANS leaders to share their 'innovative big ideas' with HRM leadership. The themes identified were: "collaboration, coordination, leadership, youth engagement, spirituality, entrepreneurship and African-centred." There appeared to be little discussion of crime other than one statement that "the approach to the over-representation of violence in some Black communities should be the one recommended in the Nunn Report (shared collective response)". There was a general sense that there is a need in HRM for an advisory body, connected to the various ANS communities, to make "courageous decisions" and to provide support to the ANSAIO.

Observations re the ANSAIO:

It is too early to assess what the impact of the ANSAIO will be. The manager has been in the role for one year, a period which appears to have been dominated by consultations with key interest groups regarding potential priorities for the office.

The impact of the Office has not yet been fully felt. The majority of HRM Councillors were not certain of its mandate. Some expressed concern that the Office did not report to a standing committee of Council and that, as a result, Council did not receive regular information about its activities. The Public Safety officer indicated that his contact with the ANSAIO has been minimal.

The manager of the ANSAIO has indicated that consultations with the African Nova Scotian community in HRM have identified priorities for action in the following areas: land use (development); facilities (equitable access); transit and employment. The manager stated that issues related to crime and violence were not identified as priorities during the community consultations.

The manager indicated that she was in general agreement with the concept of establishing an advisory committee to provide support and advice to the ANSAIO. She was of the view, however, that the focus on the committee should be strictly on African Nova Scotian issues and should not be combined with a body addressing diversity issues in general.

Potential role for the ANSAIO:

The role and functions of the ANSAIO have not yet been specifically defined. However it seems likely that the Office will serve as a resource to all HRM business units to assist those working in the various service areas to become more competent in addressing issues of race. It will no doubt play a role in addressing employment equity issues and continue to work in collaboration with the Racially Visible Employee Caucus

in providing support and guidance to racially visible employees of HRM. The Office could also provide policy advice to HRM staff and Regional Council on issues relating to African Nova Scotian matters.

The ANSAIO will also likely play a role in facilitating dialogue between HRM and the African Nova Scotian communities in HRM to ensure their concerns and priorities are acknowledged and addressed by the Municipality. There may also be a public education role to increase understanding of ANS culture, heritage and community issues.

The Roundtable review identified that the serious concern regarding the over-representation of African Nova Scotian youths and adults in the justice system (as perpetrators and victims of crime), highlighted in the original Roundtable Report, continues. It is recommended⁵⁷ that efforts to address these persistent problems be coordinated through the Public Safety Office as a priority undertaking for the Office in its new location within HRM. The ANSAIO should be involved in this initiative to provide expert advice.

In order to effectively perform its role, it is essential that the ANSAIO report to a Standing Committee of Regional Council. This would assist in ensuring that all Councillors are aware of the work being done by the Office and that they are able to provide input and strategic direction.

The Africville Agreement signalled that matters of concern to African Nova Scotians must be accorded particular attention by HRM leaders at the elected and bureaucratic levels. The ANSAIO must be positioned in such a way that it can provide expert advice to all HRM business units and input on matters both internal and external to HRM which are considered to impact African Nova Scotian citizens and communities.

In keeping with the views of the ANSAIO manager and members of the African Nova Scotian community consulted by her over the past year, it is suggested that it would be beneficial for the Office to strike an advisory committee with specific terms of reference relating to the priorities of the Office, once these are determined. The committee would be comprised of individuals identified as providing influential leadership throughout the African Nova Scotian communities in HRM.

A number of individuals consulted in the preparation of this report cautioned against combining a proposed ANSAIO advisory committee with a potentially 'revitalized and retasked' Community and Race Relations Advisory Committee as recommended in the Roundtable Report. In view of the Africville Agreement, the history of the relationship between the African Nova Scotia community and HRM and the

⁵⁷ see page 31 of this report

pressing and specific issues related to African Nova Scotian affairs, it is recommended that a separate ANSAIO advisory group be constituted.

No definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of the ANSAIO. In establishing the Office, the Municipality has clearly acknowledged the need to provide a mechanism to better engage with African HRM communities. It is incumbent upon the Municipality to provide a statement of purpose and list of functions for the Office, develop measurable outcomes and determine the extent to which they have been achieved. It is recommended that this evaluation of the ANSAIO be conducted within 3-5 years. The evaluation should also address organizational issues to ensure that the location of the ANSAIO within the HRM structure, its reporting relationships (within the bureaucracy and to Regional Council), budget and staff complement promote and facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the Office.

APPENDIX 'A'

Municipal public safety offices – cross-jurisdictional survey

1. Is there a business unit (Office) within the municipality focused on public safety? (This would be in addition to the regular crime prevention programs run by the police)
2. What is its mandate?
3. Where is it located: Within the police department? Attached to the Mayor's office or other municipal administrative office? Other? Is this the original location or has there been a change?
4. What was the rationale for the decision re location in the municipal administrative structure?
5. Description of organizational structure; reporting relationships (external/internal)
6. Is there a governance document or municipal by-law establishing the Office and its mandate?
7. Structure of office itself; number of employees by function
8. Annual budget? By functional area?
9. How/when/why was the office established? (Was it the result of a report e.g. Crime Reduction Strategy?)
10. What is the relationship to any relevant provincial initiative/ office?
11. Summary of activities (link to annual report?)
12. How are the priorities/activities for the Office established?
13. Is there an advisory/steering committee? Role and composition?
14. Nature of the relationship between the Office and local police force?
15. What key challenges has the Office faced? Steps being taken to address these challenges?
16. Have there been any evaluations/assessments of the Office? Obtain copy/link to information.
17. Are there any municipalities in Canada you are aware of which have a similar Public Safety Office?
18. Are there some special advantages for dealing with violence and public safety that flow from the way the Public Safety Office has been established in your municipality?

APPENDIX 'B'

Survey instrument - HRM Regional Councillors

REQUEST TO COUNCIL MEMBERS

As in the Roundtable initiative of 2006-2008 I am committed to interviewing all current councillors in the Roundtable Review process. As a first step, I am sending each of you a short questionnaire to elicit your views on a few of the central Roundtable issues. This will be followed up, I hope, by my meeting individually with those who are interested in such a meeting. The responses to this short questionnaire could enhance the value of the individual meeting but if you wish to forego the questionnaire and just have an individual meeting that is fine. Whatever your decision, I would be very grateful to have the opportunity to hear from you on the issue of Violence and Public Safety in HRM. As in the 2006-2008 Roundtable, individual views would be considered confidential and anonymous and no one would be identified or cited by name in any oral or written report of the Roundtable Review.

1. How would you compare the levels of violence and public safety in HRM today with those in 2007-2008?
2. What specific concerns do you and/or your constituents currently have with respect to issues of violence and public safety? (the ask about the following specifically)
 - i. Downtown scene
 - ii. Youth crime
 - iii. Gender violence
 - iv. Shootings
 - v. Guns
3. Some root factors identified in the Roundtable Report were (below); are these relevant concerns of the Municipal Government?
 - i. Legacy of poor race relations
 - ii. Housing issues
 - iii. Lack of coordination of the 3 levels of government
 - iv. Others?
4. Key recommendations of the 2008 Roundtable Report included the creation of a Public Safety Office and more active engagement of the municipality with the other orders of government (and community groups) in responding to the underlying roots of violence and concerns about public safety.
 - i. Are you aware of what the PSO has been engaged in?
 - ii. How do you get your knowledge of its activities?
 - iii. Are there some PSO accomplishments that you consider important in reducing violence and enhancing public safety?

- iv. Are there some areas or activities where you wish the PSO would be more engaged? If so, why has it not been in your view?
 - v. The PSO has been located in the HRPS and under the jurisdiction of the Police Board. Is this in your view the best place for it? What are the advantages of this location? The disadvantages?
 - vi. What changes should be considered for the Public Safety Office?
5. One of key recommendations of the 2008 Roundtable Report and its follow-up was the creation of a Race Relations Coordinator. What are your views of the position, Manager, African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office, filled in the fall of 2012 to assist in addressing violence and public safety issues?
- i. To your knowledge are African Nova Scotians in HRM over-represented as offenders and victims of violence?
 - ii. How can the position (Manager etc) provide an effective linkage of the Black communities and HRM government to deal with the over-representation issues?
6. In your view, over the past 5 years, has HRM become more actively engaged with other levels of government and local community groups regarding issues of violence and public safety.
- i. In what areas has there been adequate coordination and collaboration?
 - b) In what areas have there been shortfalls?
 - ii. Should the municipal government become more actively engaged?
 - iii. Do the formal mandate and charter pose significant obstacles to a larger role for the municipality in responding to root problems pertinent to violence and public safety?

APPENDIX C

List of individuals interviewed

Jean-Michel Blais	Chief, Halifax Regional Police Service
Chris Bryant	Leading the HRM Governance Review
Richard Butts	Chief Administrative Officer, HRM
Marion Currie	Project coordination, Intergovernmental Affairs, HRM
Judith Ferguson	Deputy Minister, NS Department of Justice
Jeannie Flynn	Nova Scotia Council for the Status of Women
Pat Gorham	Crime Prevention, NS Department of Justice
Scott MacDonald	Public Safety Officer, Halifax Regional Police Service
Bill Moore	Deputy Chief, Halifax Regional Police Service
John Moreash	Commissioner, Board of Police Commissioners
Sylvia Parris	Manager, African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office
John Peach	Executive Director, John Howard Society of Nova Scotia
Bob Purcell	Executive Director, Public Safety, NS Department of Justice
Micki Ruth	Chairperson, Board of Police Commissioners
Fred Sanford	Public Safety, NS Department of Justice
Michael Savage	Mayor, Halifax Regional Municipality
Verona Singer	Victim Services, Halifax Regional Police Service
Don Spicer	Executive Director, Housing Nova Scotia
Jennifer Watts	Regional Councillor ⁵⁸ , Halifax Regional Municipality
Allan Wayne	Special Projects, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency
Robert Wright	
Jurisdictional review:	
Kaylin Betteridge	Racism Free Edmonton
Jan Fox	Executive Director, REACH Edmonton
Colleen Kerr	Manager, Crime Reduction Strategy, City of Surrey
Kathy Knudsen	Manager, Strategic Services Division, Community Services Department, City of Winnipeg

⁵⁸ the remaining Regional Councillors, with one exception, were interviewed by Professor Clairmont

Elisabeth Miller	Senior Planner, Neighbourhood Safety, City of Saskatoon
Brendan Nolan	Corporate Management & Policy Consultant, City Manager's Office, City of Toronto
Councillor Barinder Rasode	Chair, Community Safety Committee, City of Surrey
Christiane Sadeler	Executive Director, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council
Amy Siciliano	Crime Prevention Coordinator, Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council
Janice Solomon	Coordinator of Social Development, City of Regina
Clive Wightman	Director, Community Services Department, City of Winnipeg

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**DOWNTOWN CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY:
THEN AND NOW**

Dr. Christopher Murphy
Dept. of Sociology and Social Anthropology
Dalhousie University

Introduction

In 2008 the Mayor's Task Force Report on Crime and Public safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality (Clairmont) and the research report on HRM's Downtown entertainment zone (Murphy) identified a number of significant and distinct crime and public safety problems. The assessment was based on an analysis of area crime stats, victimization and survey data, the level of police service calls and a number of highly publicized alcohol-related assaults and homicides. The report provided an analysis of a variety of downtown crime and public disorder problems and identified a number of contributing causal factors and made a number of specific recommendations regarding policing, liquor licensing enforcement as well as regulations and transportation issues in order to better address the problem.

Drawing on a combination of police statistics and interviews with key stakeholders, this 2013 update assesses the current status of downtown problems by examining current crime and disorder patterns and trends and explores the development and the impact of the key policing, regulatory and transporting response strategies that have been implemented since the 2008 report. Based on this analysis, the report also provides some recommendations for improving current and future responses to HRM's downtown crime and public safety problem.

1) DOWNTOWN CRIME AND DISORDER PROBLEMS – STATISTICAL TRENDS AND PATTERNS

In the 2008 report, the downtown district (statistical atom C-14) was distinguished by significantly higher rates of assault, robberies, calls for police service and alcohol-related charges and incidents etc. than any other district or atom in HRM. This distinction has not changed significantly since 2008 and the downtown remains the most active police response atom, still with the highest rates of alcohol-related crimes such as public intoxication, assault, mischief and robberies. While the offence rate has declined gradually since 2008, so have general offence rates in other atoms in HRM. Thus while Table 1 suggests that previously high rates of crime and disorder have moderated in downtown HRM since 2008, they remain significantly higher than any other location in the city and they remain high enough to warrant ongoing concern and further response. The following (Table I) summarizes the HRM police data on crime pattern and trends in the downtown since the 2008 report.

**Table 1: SELECTED CRIME TRENDS IN DOWNTOWN HALIFAX (C401),
2006-2013**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total *LCA files	743	1133	1006	927	893	851	856	616
2 Year Average	938		967		872		736	
*LCA (No SOT)	143	824	588	391	479	143	10	19
2 Year Average	483.5		489.5		311		14.5	
LCA SOTs	600	309	418	536	414	708	846	597
2 Year Average	455		477		561		722	
Assaults	229	206	182	189	187	235	162	134
2 Year Average	218		186		211		148	
Threats	25	29	22	23	23	13	11	13
2 Year Average	27		23		18		12	
Drug Incidents	22	26	38	37	17	38	32	32
2 year Average	24		38		28		32	
Mischief/Property Damage	123	120	119	114	98	109	90	54
2 Year Average	122		117		104		72	

* LCA: liquor control act (SOT) summary offense ticket Source: Halifax Regional Police Service, 2014

Downtown Crime and Disorder Trends and Patterns

Generally the crime data described in Table 1 indicates that since 2007 there has been a gradual but uneven decline in general police enforcement stats in the downtown area. This positive downward trend in crime and disorder incidents is particularly evident in the last 2 years and the latest 2013 data suggests a continuation of this trend. More detailed analysis of specific crime and disorder rates and patterns reveal similar but more complex micro level trends.

Public Disorder Order Trends and Patterns

Public Disorder refers to various offences and behaviors that threaten or disturb the public peace and public safety and includes activities such as public drunkenness, public mischief, assault, excessive noise and vandalism. Many of these activities take place in the downtown core, outside bars, on public streets, late at night and most are alcohol-related. As a result they are the primary focus of police response and enforcement strategies. The data in Table 1 indicates that the number of incidents and charges under the liquor control act remain high in frequency, though there has been a recent decline in the total amount of liquor related charges. The number of Summary Offense Tickets (SOT) went from a combined (No SOT and SOT) high of 1096 in 2008 to a low of 616 in 2012, a 30 % decline in 4 years. A recent shift in police

enforcement policy emphasizing the more formal use of SOT as deterrence explains the changing mix of intoxication charges in Table 1. Thus while the number of summary offense tickets issued for public intoxication increased significantly in 2011 and 2012, the overall total number of public intoxication charges has actually declined since 2008.

While it is difficult to assess the impact of changes in enforcement efforts and policy on these statistics, HRM police and bar spokespersons believe these statistics indicate a real decrease in the number of public intoxication incidents and suggest that police patrol and bar enforcement strategies are the key reason for this decline. While this recent downward trend in public disorder incidents is hopeful, its continuation remains dependent on maintaining current police resources and active patrol enforcement as well as other preventative or regulatory responses. Given the highly visible nature of late-night alcohol-related disorders in the downtown core and its negative effect on general public perception of the safety of the downtown in general, the downtown public order problems should remain an ongoing public safety priority.

Argyle Street: a manageable public disorder problem? *Argyle Street is the most visible and active public space in the downtown core and as a result is the center of most “public” disorder problems. As it attracts the most people, it is where most assaults, accidents, noise ,and disturbances are likely to happen—in short, it's where the action is. Its heavy concentration of bars result in both pedestrian and vehicular congestion, created by sidewalk bar lineups, wandering intoxicated pedestrians, parked cars and a constant stream of vehicular traffic. Police and a number of key respondents identified the problematic nature of Argyle late-night disorder, noise, and congestion and have on occasion limited vehicle access, others have called for regular street closure on weekend nights to all traffic—essentially turning Argyle Street into a pedestrian only walkway during that time. This street closure strategy would allow for more effective police management of public disorder and public safety by limiting or eliminating all vehicles-except possibly taxis, and making Argyle a pedestrian only space for those particular hours. A safer and more orderly late-night Argyle Street could be an important element in enhancing both the reality and the public perception of the downtown as a safe and secure late-night destination.*

Assaults: Excessive alcohol consumption and frequent incidents of violent physical assaults were identified as serious problems in the downtown in the 2008 report. Both the number of violent assaults and the occasional assault homicide also remain an ongoing problem in the downtown core. Two high

profile late night downtown assault-homicides of bar patrons in 2012 illustrate the occasional but serious problem of alcohol-related violence in the late night downtown. The five year assault trend displayed in Table 1 indicates little change in the high level of criminal code assaults between 2007 and 2011 (235), but does indicate a recent and significant decline in assaults beginning in 2012 (162) and continuing in 2013 (134). This two year decline may be a temporary fluctuation or the beginning of a hopeful downward trend. Nevertheless the two year 2012-13 average of 148 assaults per year for the downtown zone indicates the persistence of the problem and the continuing need for police presence and ongoing violence reduction strategies.

Street Robbery and Swarming: At the time of the 2008 report there was evidence that planned group assaults of late-night bar customers on their way home was becoming a serious problem often resulting in personal injury and theft. Whether these visible “signal crimes” were planned or spontaneous “swarmings”, their impact on victims and perceptions of public safety were significant. Interviews with police and other key respondents suggest that the organized group or gang nature of street assault/robberies have diminished. While periodically incidents of group assault/robberies are reported (“Halifax Police Arrest 3 in Downtown Swarming”, C Herald, Jan 13/14), they appear to have diminished in frequency. However given their unpredictable and opportunistic nature and high public profile, their possible return reinforces the importance of police presence and other strategies such as access to adequate and safe bus and/or taxi transportation as a way of reducing swarming opportunities and incidents.

Changing Public Perceptions of Downtown Safety and Threat: Almost as important as the actual incidents or statistics on crime and disorder in the downtown is the impact on public perception of the general safety of the downtown area as a place to visit, shop and live. The downtown core has historically had a poor reputation as a safe and secure place, particularly late at night. In the 2008 report an Omni- fax Daily News Poll indicated that 44% of HRM residents saw the downtown area as mostly unsafe and that 29% of them avoided the downtown for safety reasons. More recent Metro News (2013) Poll Data indicated that while the majority of HRM public now see the downtown as “very or mostly safe”, 40% of the population also said they would not feel safe “at night”. So while the majority of HRM’s population feel safe during the day, a significant proportion of HRM’s residents still don’t feel safe downtown, at night. This suggests that managing the night time crime and disorder problems remains critical in terms of improving general public perceptions about the downtown as a safe place for everyone, both day and night.

Summary

The summary table of HRMP enforcement data displayed in Table 1 and interviews with key sources support the general premise that there has been a recent decline in the general level of crime and disorder in the downtown core area and that “ the problems are less serious now than they were in the past “. This decline began in 2011 and continues according to the latest 2013 police data in a generally downward direction. However despite this recent positive trend, the data also indicates that there remain enough persistent and significant policing and public safety problems to require the ongoing dedication of extraordinary police resources and other varied response strategies in order to sustain this trend. It would be premature from this limited data and time frame to conclude that current trends will necessarily continue and that the downtown public crime and safety issues have been resolved. However it is reasonable to assume that a continued downtown public safety focus, current policing efforts and additional enhanced regulation and transportation strategies should sustain this downward trend.

2) POLICING RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES

The 2008 report made a number of recommendations regarding enhanced policing in the downtown. The recommendations included more visible police presence and proactive collaborative work with liquor enforcement and bar owners. Since then, HRM police have responded with a variety of policing initiatives targeting the downtown that appear to be having a positive impact on the problem. While various enhanced policing strategies were developed earlier, they were recently formalized in 2012 by HRM in a Downtown Public Safety Strategy with the explicit goal of “increasing public safety by reducing the number and level of public intoxication and assaults in the downtown core”. The following are the some of the key policing initiatives introduced by HRM police that appear to be having a positive impact on the downtown crime and disorder.

Crime Analysis: HRM police conduct regular statistical crime analysis of the downtown area; relevant crime stats are collected by HRM police on geographic basis for all service calls and crime related incidents, charges laid and so on by date, time and location. The data is compiled and assessed by HRMP crime analysts and distributed to various users. This allows for detailed collective and comparative analysis that can be used to allocate and target police resources and assess policing response strategies. It also allows for more reliable and detailed assessment of specific crime and disorder trends and patterns in downtown. Data provided by HRM police crime analysts was particularly useful in describing valid past and current crime and disorder trends for this report.

Downtown Patrol and Enforcement Unit: Though HRM police previously have had foot and motorized patrols in the downtown area; they recently formally dedicated a special Patrol and Enforcement Unit specifically to better manage late-night weekend violence and disorder in the downtown area. This has required the re-allocation of six police officers from other HRM districts to work in three teams of 2, on weekend night shifts. The officers pro-actively and visibly patrol all key streets and also bars and restaurants, intervening when necessary to prevent or manage potential crime and conflict. Police argue that their active visible presence provides a deterrent function in addition to providing a rapid response capability for incidents. The response of bar owners and many customers to this active police presence has generally been welcomed and is seen as positively enhancing both the reality and the perception of public safety and security in the downtown.

Liquor Enforcement Unit (LEU): In addition to the downtown patrol response unit HRM police have partnered with The Nova Scotia Government Alcohol and Gaming Division to create a joint Liquor Enforcement Unit (LEU). HRM police have dedicated three full-time officers who work directly with liquor enforcement personnel to enforce liquor regulations in the downtown bars. The combination of police and liquor enforcement inspectors provide inspectors with additional authority and protection allowing them to more effectively enforce liquor regulations in bars and also provide the police with additional access and information on potential bar related crime and disorder problems. Both HRM police and Nova Scotia Alcohol and Gaming Commission Enforcement Units endorse this collaborative policing and enforcement models as being more productive and effective than their previous separate regulatory and enforcement practices.

In addition to these specific policing responses, HRM police have developed a number of other enforcement and management strategies such as emphasizing high visibility police presence, conducting proactive bar patrols and initiating occasional street closures and selective CCTV monitoring of key street locations. In general HRM's policing initiatives are strongly supported by most downtown merchants and bar owners who believe they are having a real impact and are primarily responsible for what they see as a recent decline in crime and disorder incidents. They strongly support continued enhanced police visibility and presence and support an ongoing commitment to the downtown policing strategy as critical to the viability and sustainability of the downtown and its future development. It would seem that the current HRM policing initiatives are having a significant impact on reducing late night crime and improving public order in the core downtown area.

Recommendation: Given the special policing mandate, resources and expertise that HRM police are bringing to the management of the downtown and given the positive impact on ongoing crime and disorder problems, HRM police should be encouraged to maintain its successful downtown policing strategy and to play a central role in the proposed downtown public safety and security committee.

3) REGULATORY RESPONSES: PROVINCIAL LIQUOR ENFORCEMENT, LICENSING AND CLOSING HOURS

The 2008 report identified a number of important liquor licensing and regulatory issues that were having a direct impact on downtown alcohol-related assaults and disorder. These issues had to do with limited provincial liquor regulation enforcement, inadequate bar security and management, liberal bar licensing, late closing hours and cheap drink prices. The report made a number of licensing and regulatory recommendations. The following describes some of the key relevant regulatory issues and developments that have evolved since the 2008 report.

Price Regulation: Eliminating Cheap Drinks: The 2008 report identified a particularly problematic practice at that time— some downtown bars were selling alcohol at extremely low prices, as low as .99 on “slow” nights such as Wednesday and Sunday. The impact of “dollar drink” nights was reflected in a dramatic increase in downtown crime and disorder statistics for those designated nights. There was consensus among most downtown stakeholders, including some bar owners, that this new pricing practice was harmful and a source of a variety of alcohol-related problems. The report recommended that the NS provincial government raise minimum drink standards. In response, the Provincial Government amended the regulations in 2008 and raised the minimum drink price to \$2.50. As a result, bars stopped serving and promoting cheap drink nights in HRM and the level of crime and disorder returned to normal levels for those designated nights. This positive development demonstrates the impact that changing liquor regulations can have on excessive alcohol consumption and on its negative public consequences.

Bar Management and Training Issues: The 2008 report identified problems associated with bar management—specifically the apparent lack of control of “over serving”, underage serving and the management and prevention of in-house bar assaults and conflicts. Various recommendations were made to address these issues.

Bar Conflict Management: The “PASS” Program: Recognizing the negative impact of being associated with alcohol-related violence both in and outside bars, the Nova Scotia Restaurant Association and some

downtown bar owners have responded by implementing the PASS program—a “patron accountability, safety and service program”. Its stated objectives are to “encourage and promote safe and comfortable environment for patrons, staff that frequent licensing establishments”. The PASS program is a bar suspension program which works with Halifax regional police and the liquor enforcement unit of alcohol and gaming Nova Scotia. Participating bars can issue suspensions to patrons who may be involved in incidents that occur on or off the premises related to weapons, underage drinking, excessive intoxication and various forms of violence. A suspension means individuals are no longer allowed in the bar or restaurant for a set period of time in all participating downtown bars and restaurants. Suspensions range from six months to an indefinite suspension. PASS reports that approximately 170 suspensions have taken place since its introduction in 2012, the majority being for underage drinking. Both police and participating bar owners believe the PASS program is having a positive impact and that it deters some potential problem customers while eliminating known problem customers from their establishments. While it is difficult to clearly establish the actual effectiveness of this program, it is a positive industry response to the problem and recognizes their responsibility as an important part of any effective solution.

Recommendation: Given the importance of the bar entertainment industry in the downtown area and its role in the prevention and management of potential alcohol-related problems, it is important that the downtown business community be encouraged to continue to play an active role in enhancing staff training and customer management through programs like PASS and that they become participating partners in the development of a downtown public safety and security plan.

Provincial Liquor Enforcement

The 2008 report was critical of what appeared to be limited enforcement resources and efforts in terms of existing liquor laws and regulations by the provincial government enforcement unit. The report suggested that more vigorous and visible enforcement of liquor regulations would have a positive impact on reducing underage drinking and the “over serving” of intoxicated bar patrons.

The Alcohol and Gaming and Municipal Relations Division of the Nova Scotia Provincial Government are responsible for the licensing of all establishments that serve alcohol and the enforcement of the rules governing their operation under the liquor control act. Therefore most of the rules and regulations concerning licensing and the operations of bars in the downtown area of HRM are under provincial, and not municipal, jurisdiction.

Since 2008, but especially in the last two years, enforcement statistics provided by the provincial alcohol and gaming division liquor enforcement unit indicate that there has been an increase in both enforcement resources and efforts focused on HRM downtown bars and restaurants. This has been facilitated in part by policy changes in enforcement philosophy from an equity-based enforcement model to a targeted risk-based model and realigned enforcement efforts on three main safety regulations: over service, overcrowding and underage access. Alcohol and gaming statistics provided indicate that inspections of the 164 licensed downtown premises went from 3,500 in 2007/08 to 5,700 in 2011/12. The unit has committed their enforcement personnel to work with police on the combined liquor enforcement unit, which they argue has been an effective way of reinforcing their authority and the impact of their work. In addition, the Division has developed training programs to assist licensees with compliance issues and ID check training. These programs are now voluntary but there are ongoing discussions regarding compulsory training for bar security and bar servers etc. and provincial legislation and regulations may be enacted in the near future.

The general impression from the data and interviews with both enforcement and bar owners is that provincial liquor enforcement through more active deployment of provincial liquor inspectors in the downtown has significantly increased since the 2008 report and that is having a positive impact on the regulation and management of downtown alcohol consumption.

Recommendation: Given the importance and demonstrable impact of the provincial liquor enforcement unit activities on the regulation, licensing and enforcement of liquor related rules in the downtown, it is recommended that the unit should play an active role in the proposed downtown public safety committee and keep that committee regularly informed on its licensing regulatory activities and programs.

Bar Closing Hours and Cabarets' Licensing: The HRM downtown bar entertainment district is distinguished from similar settings in the rest of Canada (i.e. exception St John's-Nfld) by the late closing hours of some of its largest bars. While regular bars stop serving at 2:00 am, 4 large downtown cabaret licensed bars are allowed to serve drinks until 3 am and their customers must exit by 3.30 am. International research and HRM police statistics indicate that there is a relationship between later closing hours and higher level of alcohol-related violence and disorder. HRM police data indicates that approximately 80% of all alcohol-related crime disorder incidents in the downtown take place between 2 am and 6 am in the morning. Emergency room statistics further support the link between late nights and alcohol-related violence. Cabaret licenced bars are thought to contribute disproportionately to this late

night violence problem given their typically large seating capacity (up to 1000 seats), often already inebriated clientele and the potential for further excessive alcohol consumption. As their clientele typically don't leave the bar until 3:30 am, this may also encourage the current widespread practice of extensive pre- pub/club drinking and a late start to a downtown evening; for many this begins at midnight and ends at 5 or 6 am in the morning. As a result, late bar closing times require HRM police to commit additional police resources to police the downtown and related neighborhoods until at least 6 am in the morning, 3 nights a week.

However Cabaret and entertainment industry representatives argue that the bar entertainment district is an important economic and social driver of the downtown and they cite their bars' popularity as proof of public support. Earlier closing hours, they argue, would threaten their business model and ultimately the economic viability of the downtown. Also they say that later closing hours are not proven to be directly related to downtown crime and disorder problems and that there are positive policing advantages in staggered closing hours. While these industry claims can and have been challenged, they should be assessed in relation to their ongoing public costs, such as the allocation of extra police resources and the negative consequences of downtown late-night alcohol-related violence and disorder. Given the seriousness the downtown crime and order issue, the importance of a vibrant entertainment district and disagreement over the problem and its solutions, this issue deserves more research and analysis before changes to the current situation.

Recommendation: Given the mixed evidence on the impact of late-night closing hours, specifically cabaret licensing hours and their contribution to the crime and order problems of the downtown and given the importance of a vibrant downtown entertainment district, it is recommended that the issue of bar closing hours and its impact on both the downtown bar business and related crime and disorder be explored further as a basis for a more informed discussion and possible changes to the current situation.

4) DOWNTOWN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Lack of adequate public transportation to and from the downtown bar area, particularly late at night was identified in the 2008 report as a problem that contributed significantly to downtown congestion, conflict and assaults. Taxi access, limited by restrictive zone licensing, and the lack of public bus transportation after midnight were identified as key contributors to downtown congestion and related disorder. The report recommended a number of possible transportation solutions to be addressed by HRM.

Downtown Taxies: Still Not Enough? Since the 2008 report the transportation issue in the downtown has been discussed in Council regarding both taxis and buses but no significant changes were introduced until recently. In 2012, in order to increase the number of taxies available for the downtown, HRM council relaxed zone restrictions by amending municipal by-laws in order to allow taxies from all zones to work the downtown area from 12 am – 5 am from Thursday to Monday mornings. However this modification appears not to have adequately increased the number of taxies available as there was broad consensus among downtown stakeholders that despite the change, there were still not enough taxes available or willing to move late night bar patrons out of the downtown. A variety of possible explanations were offered ranging from the often unpleasant and potentially risky nature of intoxicated fares, the unattractive nature of late night shifts, the preponderance of part-time and older risk adverse drivers, the unwillingness of drivers to invest in cab safety equipment and the limited profitability of short downtown fares. Whatever the problem, it appears that resolving this issues is also complicated by a variety of conflicting opinions and competing interests regarding both the nature of the problem and desirable solutions. A number of respondents suggested that under these circumstances, an external consultant should be hired to do an independent study and review of the problem and make recommendations for change to HRM council. Thus improving taxi access in and out of the downtown, especially late at night, remains an important and unresolved problem requiring more exploration and political action.

Bus Transportation: The 2008 report also recommended exploring the issue of using HRM buses after regular hours on selected routes as another possible transportation option to move people from the downtown. This particular recommendation failed to generate any apparent serious consideration. While recognizing that late night bus transportation presents both security and financial challenges, its potential for addressing the downtowns transportation problems should be explored by HRM as a possible transportation option and part of its public service and safety response.

Recommendation: The issues involved in providing more taxies and buses to address late night downtown transposition problems are complex and controversial; therefore it is recommended that HRM engage an independent consultant to analyze the situation and make recommendations to Council that would improve current downtown late night transportation options.

A CHANGING SAFER HRM DOWNTOWN?

While many merchants and bar owners have serious concerns about the impact of the crime and disorder problem of the bar entertainment district on downtown business in general, there are some recent changes in consumer habits and demographics that may ultimately be positively affecting the environment within which the current problem is evolving. Since 2008 there have been a number of socio-economic developments in the downtown area that may have long-term ameliorating effects on current public safety and security problems. These changes relate to shifting demographics, consumer tastes and current and planned development of both commercial and residential space both in the core bar entertainment zone and surrounding areas.

A number of downtown merchants and bar owners indicated that there seems to be a general diminishing number of traditional customers or consumers coming downtown and those who do, appear to have less disposable income. As result, a number of bars, restaurants and small business have recently closed or moved out of the downtown core and others are rebranding or revising their business model. Whether this is simply part of the normal business cycle is not clear, but it does suggest that the economic viability of existing bar and restaurant entertainment business models in a changing downtown environment is uncertain and may be in transition. One response to this challenging environment is reflected in the remodelling and rebranding of some downtown bars. One large bar has shifted from being primarily a youth oriented-music bar to a sports bar, presumably in order to attract a more diverse and sustainable clientele. Another bar is renovating and expanding its food business to broaden its market and extend it daytime business. This may be the beginning of a new trend to broaden and diversify the appeal of the downtown bar business in order to attract a more diverse clientele in terms of age, gender and taste. This should become an even more attractive business model as the downtown resident and visitor population expands and becomes more diverse, as result of the new convention center and various new downtown residential developments. This trend has potentially positive implications for improving public safety and order in the downtown as both experience and research suggests that downtown residential development creates a more stable, diverse and mature public, with broad consumer and entertainment tastes and interests. This new now resident and diverse visitor population base tends to be more heavily invested in an orderly and safe environment than a downtown populated exclusively by a visiting young, non-resident, late-night entertainment focused demographic.

This projected shift is important because there are growing concerns about the spillover effect of the negative reputation of the late night downtown “bar area” on other non-bar businesses and residential

areas. Some interviewees felt that potential customers and residents were deterred from coming downtown to shop, eat and live especially in the evenings and at night because of the negative reputation and perceived safety issues of the downtown bar area. One well-known Argyle restaurant recently closed and moved to a safer and more accessible location, citing a decline in customers willing to risk coming downtown in the evenings and also the lack of parking and taxis. While this negative identification of the downtown as a problematic or risky area may be inaccurate or exaggerated, it does have serious implications for future residential and commercial development in the downtown and emphasizes the importance of continuing to effectively manage both the reality and perception of public safety in downtown bar area.

These developing trends suggest that a more expansive focus and approach to downtown public safety and security encompassing the whole downtown and not just the bar entertainment district, may be desirable in order to support its ongoing and future development.

A New Public Safety Vision for HRM: A Vibrant and Safe Downtown

The widespread perception of HRM's downtown core as an essentially risky and disorderly bar-focused youth entertainment district, while exaggerated is nevertheless an unfortunate and limiting image for the HRM's downtown and may inhibit its future residential and commercial development. Though many of the current initiatives described in this report are having a positive impact on downtown public safety and disorder and need to be sustained, it is also important that HRM shift some of its policing and security resources away from the negative problems of the bar entertainment district to achieving a broader positive public safety and security vision for the whole of the downtown area.

Developing a comprehensive public safety and security strategy beyond the bar district would require addressing the rundown or neglected condition of some parts of the downtown area (i.e. Barrington Street), characterized by dark streets, poor lighting, neglected property, graffiti and limited police and security presence. These "signs of crime" make the downtown appear to be unsafe, especially at night and more than one respondent described some parts of the downtown as "dark, dingy and a bit scary". Hopefully recent and planned residential and business developments and increased HRM investment in the downtown core will begin to change this perception. A positive vision of downtown public safety would require a more active populous street life with a diverse range of visitors, residents and shoppers moving freely and securely in safe, clean, well lit, policed and regulated mixed-use public and private spaces. A downtown public safety strategy would employ a variety of planning, policing and crime prevention techniques such as environmental design or CPTED strategies such as enhanced street lighting,

forms of streetscaping, selective use of CCTV cameras, and combination of private security and public police etc. This combination of environmental planning , urban design and preventative policing and security has been used in a number of urban settings with positive impacts on both public safety for visitors and residents but also on residential and commercial development. This new vision of downtown public safety will require extensive consultation and collaboration with relevant public and private stakeholders and should be embedded in the downtown planning and development process.

Recommendation: That the proposed Downtown Public Safety and Security Committee develop a new public safety vision and plan as part of the HRM downtown development strategy by consulting with a broad range of stakeholders, partners and security and planning experts.

Summary

This update identified that a number of the recommended policing and regulatory initiatives that have been developed and implanted since the 2008 report that appear to be having a positive impact on the policing and management of alcohol-related crime and disorder in the downtown district of HRM. While recent data reveals a decline in key crime and disorder enforcement statistics, the downtown core area still shows disturbingly high levels of alcohol-related crime and public disorder, despite the allocation of extra police resources and bar management and liquor enforcement efforts. This report identifies and makes recommendations regarding a number of unresolved issues related to late bar closing hours, downtown transportation and the lack of a general downtown public safety vision and strategy. By building on the progress made by the existing policing and industry initiatives and addressing some of the remaining identified problematic issues, it should be possible to move beyond the current negative and narrow focus on both the real and perceived crime and disorder problems of the downtown bar district to a truly more positive, safe, secure and vibrant HRM downtown.

Summary of Key Recommendations:

- 1) **Specific Recommendations - that appropriate committees i.e. personnel address the following outstanding core issues related to the management and regulation of the downtown bar district:**
 - a) **A closure strategy for better managing street disorder and safety issues due to late night pedestrian and vehicular congestion on Argyle Street**
 - b) **Development of a new and more effective transportation strategy including the deregulation of taxis and the possibility of increased public bus transportation**

- c) **The exploration and re-assessment of modifying of late-night closing bar hours. I.e. review of bar and Cabaret licensing.**
- 2) **General Recommendation That HRM create a Downtown Public Safety Committee composed of various public and private partners and stakeholders. This committee would be responsible for coordination, development and support of various crime and public safety initiatives as part of the overall process of the planning and managing the downtown as a residential and commercial area. The committee could be co-ordinated or chaired by the proposed HRM public safety office and possibly be a standing committee of counsel.**

Research Sources:

Research for this update was conducted from May 2013-until November 2014.

Interviews: The findings for this update report are based on a number of interviews with a variety of selected key informants; 11 in people, 4 groups and 2 telephones. They included representatives of the HFX RCMP, HRM Police, N.S. Provincial Alcohol and Gaming- enforcement division, Downtown Business Association Reps, Bar and Restaurant Owners, a Bar Industry Rep , Taxi Drivers, some HRM staff, and an HRM Councillor.

Additional data and information were obtained from HRM police, NS Alcohol and Gaming Division, Halifax Newspapers, *The Chronicle Herald* and *Metro*, Research Assistant field observation notes and interviews. The author also consulted relevant published research on relevant urban crime and disorder issues.

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**GENDERED VIOLENCE IN THE HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

Verona Singer, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Gendered violence is an issue that received more explicit attention in the 2013 Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM) Roundtable than it did during the 2008 Roundtable Report. This is for several reasons including, its' continuing high rate of occurrence in HRM, recent major incidents in HRM (the Rehtaeh Parsons case and St. Mary's University frosh week chant) which have underlined the depth of cultural factors that sustain gendered violence, combined with technological/societal changes that have increased public concern, and policy developments aimed at all the major dimensions of gendered violence. Generally, this report attempts to identify the scope of gendered violence—what is currently working, what is missing and what we can do about it.⁵⁹

HRM is the largest municipality in Nova Scotia and it provides a significant number of services and organizations serving women who have been subjected to violent victimization. It is home to the largest and oldest sexual assault centre in the province, Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, as well as the only agency that serves sex workers, Stepping Stone. Moreover, Bryony House, the shelter for abused women and their children is the first and largest transition house in Nova Scotia. The expertise and knowledge of these agencies along with service providers in victim services, men's treatment programs, second stage housing, and within the government, provide the foundation for this chapter on gendered violence.

An interview guide was developed for three sectors of gendered violence; intimate partner violence, sexual violence and violence in sex work (Appendix A) and interviews were conducted either in person or by phone. Notes were taken during each interview and then analyzed for consistent themes. A list of the service providers who participated in the interviews is attached at the end of this report (Appendix B).

The report begins with the overarching themes that consistently emerge from all the interviews. These themes include: youth sexuality, use of technology, and men's accountability. Then each sector is presented with a brief literature review supported by evidence from statistics and research, the themes from the data in the interviews, and data tables using local data sources. The report ends with future directions and pulls together recommendations to move forward.

Youth sexuality

The topic of youth sexuality is present along all three dimensions of gendered violence. One identified trend is that younger women are at higher risk in intimate partner violence, sexual violence and violence

⁵⁹ I would like to thank Charlene Gagnon and Don Clairmont for this assistance with this report.

in sex work. Another perceived trend identified through the interviews is that cultural norms of youth sexuality are shifting, and are in many ways disturbing, compared to the mainstream or traditional sexual norms of society. It is unclear to what extent the extreme cases represent the actual sexual norms among youth in HRM; however the anecdotal stories heard in the interviews and high-profile cases reported in the media, which are now thought to exemplify youth sexual norms, are disturbing and shocking.

Use of technology

Use of technology to intimidate, harass, threaten, expose and humiliate young girls and women is also indicated as a trend along all three dimensions of gendered violence. Social media and mobile technology are powerful mediums, which have outpaced our traditional institutions of social control; we don't know how to regulate technology in our own adult lives or in the lives of our children. Technology can be an extremely powerful tool for controlling and abusing others and is creating new offences, creating more avenues for harassment, and providing challenges for police regarding how to investigate and control the abuses.

A second aspect of the technology trend was the view that social media and mobile technology can be used positively to combat and prevent gendered violence. The positive use of technology can take place through public education and awareness campaigns, and by providing a venue for an enhanced public dialogue around the issues.

Men's accountability

The lack of men's accountability in the way we approach and deal with gendered violence is the final theme that emerged along all three dimensions of gendered violence. There is a commonly held view that men must accept more responsibility for their violence against women, the suggestion is that there must be a redirected focus on the behavioural and social norms among boys and men, not just women and girls. Getting men to take responsibility for their violence can reduce future violent behavior and enhance women's safety (Singer, 2012).

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Intimate partner violence is defined as abuse between two people who are or have been in an intimate relationship. It can include verbal, emotional, psychological, financial and physical abuse, as well as stalking and the use of technology to intimidate and harass. There are different levels of severity of the

abuse which are important to distinguish when it comes to response and treatment options (Johnson, 2011).

Many women can be at risk for intimate partner violence. It occurs in all countries, all cultures and at every level of society without exception, although some populations (for example, women of low socio-economic status and / or those belonging to racial and ethnic minorities) are at greater risk of violence by their male partner than others (Renzetti, 2011). For example, aboriginal women in Canada are at greater risk of being abused by their husband, boyfriend or ex-partner than non-aboriginal women (Perreault, 2011). Some of this is due to the consequences of colonization, the impact of residential schools, racism and poverty (McMillan, 2011). Furthermore, there is an under-reporting by aboriginal people to the police due to systemic discrimination and inadequacy in the criminal justice system (McMillan, 2011).

Women who are young, living in isolated communities or from minority cultural groups may not have access to services and resources, making them more vulnerable and unable to leave relationships (Dawson, 2010). Women who are disabled are likely to experience more severe forms of violence for extended periods of time (Disabled Women's Network, 2013). Immigrant women are often economically dependent and, therefore, in fear of deportation (Miller, Iovanni, Kelly, 2011). The majority of victims, 66 percent, do not access formal services for help, instead seeking help from informal supports such as friends, family and co-workers. Approximately 22 percent report their abuse to the police (Brennan, 2011).

Intimate partner abuse is distinctly gendered. Women report being abused far more than men (Brennan, 2011). Further, when men report abuse by their spouses, the level of violence and its consequences seem to be significantly less severe: women are more likely to report injuries, lost productivity, multiple assaults, fear for their lives, and to experience negative emotional consequences (Sinha, 2013). Women are more likely to be choked, beaten, threatened with a gun or knife, stalked, sexually assaulted or killed (Brennan, 2011). In contrast, men are more likely to be pushed, shoved, slapped or kicked (Brennan 2011). The more severe intimate partner violence experienced by women has been reflected by the continuing and indeed growing need for shelters in Canada. Overtime the number of shelters in Canada has increased to 593, with Nova Scotia demonstrating the highest rate of positive change with increasing shelter usage over the period since the 2008 Roundtable Report (Sinha, 2013).

According to police reported data from Uniform Crime Reporting, the trend shows a decrease in police-reported attempted murders and physical assaults against women between 2009 and 2011. Following nearly three decades of decline, the rate of homicide against women has been relatively stable over the

past decade (Sinha, 2013). Statistics Canada General Social Survey indicates there has been a decline in self-reported spousal violence between 1999 and 2009 (NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 2012). However women report more incidents of spousal violence, are assaulted multiple times, experience more severe forms of spousal violence than men, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed (Brennan, 2011; Sinha, 2013).

In 2009, in Nova Scotia there were 31,000 victims (5.5%) who self-reported that they had experienced spousal violence in the past five years. This is a decrease from 2004 when the same statistic was 7.5 percent and 1999 when it was 7.2 percent. In 2010, there were 3,255 incidents of intimate partner violence reported to the police with 78 percent being female victims and 22 percent male victims (Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 2012). According to the Nova Scotia Family Violence Tracking Project (2012), data from 2007 indicates that 81 percent of victims were female and dating relationships made up over half of these cases. The average age of both victims and suspects was in the mid-thirties. The most common offences were physical assault and uttering threats. Fifty-nine percent of victims sustained injuries, particularly when the suspect had been consuming alcohol or drugs. One quarter of the cases had a prior history of domestic violence and 55 percent involved the use of alcohol and/or drugs.

According to the community group Silent Witness Nova Scotia, 41 confirmed intimate partner femicides have occurred in Nova Scotia since 1990. The group estimates another 34 unconfirmed or suspected cases, including cases where no charges were laid or the case has not yet been dealt with in the courts (D. Mosher, personal communication, August 29, 2013). Recently, two women were murdered by their intimate partners in HRM in May and June 2013. In Halifax, the police responded to 2660 domestic dispute calls in 2012, 140 of which were classified as high risk for lethality (Singer, 2013). In these cases the police deemed that the victim, most often a woman, was at risk of being killed by her partner.

Table 1 – Police reported domestic dispute calls 2007-2012

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
# of domestic incidents reported to police	3080	2876	2557	2714	2816	2660
Monthly average of incidents	257	240	213	226	234	221

Source: HRP Victim Services

Currently, there is a three year pilot of a domestic violence court in Cape Breton. It is a post plea court, meaning, the offender must plead guilty. Offenders must go through a risk assessment and volunteer to participate in the programs. There is dedicated court staff, including a crown prosecutor, legal aid defense, victim services and a probation officer. The goals of the court are to increase safety for victims of intimate partner violence and their children, provide timely and effective interventions for offenders—to hold them accountable for criminal behavior and reduce or deter offender recidivism—and to provide a collaborative response within the criminal justice system to address complexity of issues in intimate partner violence. Other objectives include, efficiency in court processing of cases and establishing a strong community linkage conveying the message that intimate partner violence is a community problem and not just a criminal justice system concern.

As of April 2013, the court had processed 493 cases and 242 accused showed interest in participating in the program. There have been 92 guilty pleas and 91 offenders were sent to programming. The sentencing dispositions for 50 of these cases were absolute discharges (42), the remaining received probation, conditional discharges or time served by attending court (Jewkes, 2013). The lack of any jail sentences to date indicates that, at least initially, only minor instances of intimate partner violence are being dealt with.

Specific themes from the interviews

The intimate partner violence interviews were conducted with service providers from the non-profit sector, police victim services, public prosecution service, and policy-makers. Overall, they identified several issues that emerged in the response to intimate partner violence. These include issues with the criminal justice system's response to intimate partner violence, restorative justice, the lack of housing for women trying to leave a violent home, the province's response and HRM's response.

Criminal justice system response

In the mid 1990's the criminal justice system became more proactive in its response to intimate partner violence. Police adopted a pro-charge policy (police lay charges with or without the consent of the victim when reasonable grounds and evidence exist that an offence occurred) while the crown implemented a pro-prosecution policy. Over the years, challenges have been identified. Various service providers identify court delays in HRM as problematic for intimate partner violence. The problem in cases of intimate partner violence is the longer there is no resolution, the less likely there will be a successful outcome which increases recantations and victim disinterest (Clairmont, 2009). *"Intimate partner violence makes*

up a substantial part of the court docket, it is mostly male accused and female victims and often repeat offenders with the same or new partners”⁶⁰.

“There is no recognition from the court of the level of poverty, acute risk, lack of support and the acute trauma that is played out in intimate partner violence. The criminal justice system loses sight of the humanness of the people involved and they are either a credible or un-credible witness. The repetitive times that people go into court with the same outcome, a one-size-fits-all approach and where is an alternative approach? How do we get a different result if we don’t try different approaches? People say that when we know better we do better. However the focus still remains on the victim and not the offender.”

One service provider identifies a lack of cultural competency within the court system particularly when dealing with cases involving new Canadians, where criminal justice service providers do not appreciate the cultural context of the home country and issues from whence the immigrants have come. When legal aid does not spend the time to explain to the immigrant what is happening, staff from Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services (ISIS) (a local immigrant settlement service) often support and prepare the immigrant for meetings with the various criminal justice service providers. Sometimes interpreters are not used for first court appearances so immigrant men do not have a good understanding of what is happening to them.

“Unless people come to ISIS immediately after the incident the systems get involved and the immigrant families don’t understand what is going on. They may not understand the language; police are not trusted due to violations and experiences with police in their own country. Refugees who have dealt with powerful and intimidating systems from the past are not going to be trusting of the systems in Canada. This can include victim services, child welfare, and police. The immigrants feel lost and panicked and they are afraid of their status in Canada particularly if they are being charged (if charges are being laid). This can push families underground into silence and not reporting the abuse”.

Pro-charge was also identified as a problem for a number of immigrant women. Many women say they call the police to have them just talk to their husband but they don’t want him charged. In research conducted with women in Nova Scotia who were abused, many also stated they would like officers to use more discretion when deciding to lay charges. The reasons were varied, ranging from women wanting more decision making control over how to respond to their partner’s violence to just wanting the violence to stop but not having their partner charged (Singer, 2012).

⁶⁰ All the italicized sentences are quotes from service providers and taken from the interviews.

Service providers were asked for their thoughts on the domestic violence court pilot project, in Cape Breton, and their responses were varied. Some would like to see it rolled out across the province, claiming it is a good model, holistic and integrated with a wide spectrum of stakeholders at the table. Others were concerned it is not addressing the habitual offenders and some service providers felt the model was not necessary in every community in the province. Consensus is that a domestic violence court needs to be well thought out and regulated. At present, an evaluation is being conducted on the court pilot. It has been suggested that before pursuing more domestic violence courts, it would be prudent to wait for data from the domestic violence dialogue program (a project where those impacted by intimate partner violence record their stories which are subsequently analyzed) and to view the court evaluation, in order to create an innovative domestic violence court model that is suitable to Nova Scotia, rather than borrow one from another jurisdiction (D. Crocker, personal communication, September 13, 2013).

Restorative justice

The restorative justice program in Nova Scotia, initiated with young offenders, was to be rolled out to include adults but while pilot projects have been launched for adult restorative justice, it still formally deals only with youth offending in HRM and throughout most of the province. Due to concerns from the violence against women's sector, a moratorium was placed on using restorative justice with intimate partner violence and sexual violence, however there seems to be a shifting of attitude.

While some service providers do not think restorative justice is a good vehicle for intimate partner violence as the issue is too complex, they did wish to see more restorative types of programming for offenders. Others suggested restorative justice might not be appropriate for high risk intimate partner cases but felt restorative justice might be useful for mutual couple violence or low risk intimate partner violence. One service provider thought there would be value for restorative justice to be used with young people as it would teach them how to deal with relationships. For low risk violence by young people, restorative justice could present a more preventative approach, which may lead to less violence in the future.

Others see restorative justice as a positive development that increases women's safety and male accountability while increasing women's opportunity to be heard by the courts. The moratorium on restorative justice for intimate partner violence came about at a time when the thinking was that if intimate partner violence was not dealt with in the traditional criminal court, it was being swept under the rug. Restorative justice could be seen as part of a domestic violence court model. Service providers

identify that immigrants and aboriginals have consistently emphasized the need for alternative approaches such as restorative justice for some cases of intimate partner violence.

“The nugget of restorative justice is based on relationships not punishments and the relationships that the man has with significant others in his life and in the community. He has not only to be accountable to his partner but to all these other relationships in his life”.

Housing

Where traditionally transition houses in HRM are meant to provide women with a safe haven from violence, many abused women going to transition houses are doing so for housing reasons. Service providers say the shelter is playing more of a housing role, as a place women utilize for housing needs in addition to safety needs, whereas in the past it was mostly for safety. Women are staying in transition houses for longer periods of time as many of these women are on social assistance and unemployed. Financial barriers leave abused women feeling as if there is less choice for them. Contributing to this trend are low social assistance rates and fewer affordable housing options for women leaving abusive relationships. Service providers identify several major problems that abused women face with respect to their housing needs, issues including the fact that large companies control many apartment complexes, which may cause a woman with a bad tenancy history difficulty in obtaining another apartment because the same landlord controls the building. Additionally, at times the only affordable housing available tends to be located in violent neighborhoods.

Immigrant women try to avoid the shelters and look to neighbours and friends for support; however, with the immigrant communities being so small it can often be difficult to achieve safety which presents complications for women attempting to hide.

Transition houses are seeing more women with mental health issues than ever before. These increases have developed because women do not have good access to mental health services in the community. Given that women are finding it hard to access professional services, and since it takes longer to get into mental health services, they become transient and therefore return to the abuser. Service providers are concerned how the province’s new mental health strategy and addiction strategy with emphasis on shared care and collaboration, and indeed how the housing strategy as a whole, will support women who are living in a shelter.

Provincial government's response

The Domestic Violence Action Plan is a provincial government initiative launched in 2009 that outlines how the province will address intimate partner violence. Service providers have generally identified it as a solid plan and as a positive response to address intimate partner violence, but they also contend that the initiative could be sharpened

Service providers outlined two positive outcomes of the action plan, first, the Neighbours, Friends and Family education campaign to raise awareness on intimate partner violence, and secondly, amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act that enable a woman to get out of her lease if she is experiencing domestic violence. Service providers also indicate that while there has been a lot of good will, government staff are being asked to do this work in addition to their regular duties. Further, no staff members have been allocated to monitor the initiatives from the action plan or to ensure the continuance of those initiatives. Moreover, there has been little to no funding attached to the initiatives with the exception of the pilot domestic violence court program in Cape Breton.

"All the seeds are there in the Domestic Violence Action Plan but it hasn't bloomed."

Halifax Regional Municipality's response

As a municipal government HRM has not played a significant role in intimate partner violence since amalgamation. Prior to amalgamation, the City of Halifax (through the Social Planning Department) spearheaded initiatives such as community safety audit tools for women in the early 1990's. Since then, many of the service providers are questioning HRM's investment in intimate partner violence, except through its extant services such as policing and victim services. Moreover, some service providers feel that police outreach to organizations and agencies that work in gendered violence has been lacking. One service provider identified the issue of a lack in adequate interpretive services, contending that when police conduct an interview with immigrants there is a lack of communication. *"When you have to express your emotions in English which is not your first language, there can be a breakdown in understanding of what has happened."*

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is defined as an act or encouragement that includes any violence, physical or psychological, carried out through sexual means or by targeting sexuality. It takes many forms including: assault, rape, incest, harassment, stalking, indecent or sexualized exposure, degrading imagery,

voyeurism, cyber harassment, trafficking and exploitation (Acting Together, Responding to Sexual Violence, 2013, p.3)

In 2011 just over 173,600 women aged 15 years and older were victims of violent crime in Canada. Sexual crimes are the most common offence against girls. Girls under the age of 12 years were reported as victims in 47 % of all violent crimes which were sexual offences. Level one sexual offence, defined as minor and causing no physical injury, was the most common. Women are 11 times more likely than men to be victims of sexual offences. There was an increase from 2010 to 2011 in sexual assaults against women reported to the police. However a large number of sexual assaults are not reported to police (Sinha, 2013). Disabled women are four times more likely to experience a sexual assault than women without disabilities (Disabled Women's Network, 2013).

Sexual assault is under reported, with approximately 9 in 10 incidents (88 percent) going un-reported. Halifax has one of the highest police reported sexual offences, with the third highest rate for female victims and also the third highest total rate in Canada (Sinha, 2013). Of those reported offences, 75 percent know the accused as a casual acquaintance, friend, intimate partner or family member (Sinha, 2013).

According to Halifax Regional Police, the sexual assault investigation unit averages about 35-40 files per month which is about 420-530 files a year. A very small percentage end in a charge, perhaps 10 percent, for various reasons (M. Hobeck, personal communication, June 12, 2013). In 2011 in Nova Scotia, 708 sexual assaults were reported to police. Of these: 98 per cent were level one assaults, 82 per cent of survivors were women and 97 per cent of suspects were men and there were 105 sexual violations against children (Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 2012). There is also a strong link between youth and over-consumption of alcohol leading to sexual assaults (Rubin, 2011). In a 2008 needs assessment, focusing on sexual assault services across Nova Scotia, for adults, many core services of a comprehensive response were identified as missing in the Halifax Regional Municipality. These missing elements include a dedicated hotline, adequate resources to accompany a victim to the hospital, police station or court, adequate counselling resources, adequate outreach and education resources and adequate advocacy resources (Rubin, 2011).

Table 2 – Police Reported Sexual Assault in Halifax, 2007-2011

Level of Sexual Assault	Statistics	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Level 3, aggravated	Actual incidents	1	1	2	4	6
	Total, persons charged (23)	0	1	3	1	4
	Total, adult charged	0	1	3	1	3
	Total, youth charged (39,40)	0	0	0	0	1
Level 2, weapon or bodily harm	Actual incidents	4	6	9	10	4
	Total, persons charged (23)	1	3	2	6	2
	Total, adult charged	1	1	2	6	2
	Total, youth charged (39,40)	0	2	0	0	0
Level 1	Actual incidents	329	299	299	303	343
	Total, persons charged (23)	67	90	63	72	86
	Total, adult charged	60	71	51	59	76
	Total, youth charged (39,40)	7	19	12	13	10

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey; Canism table 252-0051

The province of Nova Scotia has established a sexual violence team in response to the tragic circumstances surrounding the suicide of Rehtaeh Parsons, a 17 year-old girl who was sexually assaulted, bullied and harassed through technology. Rehtaeh died by suicide in April 2013. The response to this tragedy has been swift and several initiatives have been rolled out in the last few months (some which directly respond to issues raised in this report); one example is the cyber-bullying legislation, where a cyber safety unit has been created to investigate incidents of bullying through the use of technology. Another result is the creation of a sexual assault resource guide produced for youth on sexual violence. An awareness campaign has been launched with a series of posters that use provocative phrases to address young people about asking and consent. There is a community sexual assault conference being held in September and \$700,000 in funding has been established for community organizations and government to collaborate on projects and programs to address sexual violence. Finally, student unions in several universities across the

province are examining their policies on alcohol use and sexual violence and establishing an awareness campaign (Action Team on Sexual Violence and Bullying, 2013).

Specific themes from the interviews

The interviews on sexual violence were conducted with service providers from the non-profit sector, the police and policy-makers. Themes that emerge from the interviews about the prevalence of sexual assault in HRM include issues with youth, the role of alcohol in sexual assault, lack of men's accountability for their behavior, inter-agency cooperation and the criminal justice system's response to sexual assault.

Youth

Service providers are seeing an increase in the complexity of sexualized violence. There appears to be increased violence with multiple perpetrators and an increase in the number of young women being socialized to pleasure men. For youth, oral and anal sex are not considered sex but as a birth control measures and more young boys are being gratified sexually by young girls. The socializing of boys and girls is a problem with boy's expectations of what a sexual relationship is reportedly being based on pornography.

"People are having difficulty having conversations with youth on healthy sexuality; it is either all bad or all okay. There doesn't seem to be conversations with the teens, sexuality becomes a commodity and uneasy."

The police find that some of the information they are getting about youth and sexual violence is coming through third parties, the youth are not coming directly to police. The sexualized act does not come to light until a photo or a video has been shared and then police are notified after the images have spread. It may be that young people do not realize it is sexual violence; as instead they are concerned with the release of the image.

In a report developed for Avalon Sexual Assault Centre entitled "Exploring service options for youth/survivors in HRM" (Rubin, 2011), youth identified gaps in services for sexual violence in HRM. The gaps include lack of basic information, lack of counseling, lack of trust with systems, lack of interventions in hyper-sexualization and sexual exploitation of youth, and a lack of specialized services for youth. There is also a lack of services for male victims of sexual violence.

Service providers identified that many youth do not understand what sexual assault means. While the stereotypical myth is that you are raped by a stranger and severely assaulted, most sexual assault is committed by acquaintances and therefore youth don't have solid understandings of what is implied by

consent. They do not know how to determine consent, they do not understand sexual exploitation and trafficking, they do not lay responsibility for a sexual assault on the perpetrator, they do not know their options after an assault, nor can they define myths and stereotypes and how to support peers who have been sexually abused or assaulted (Rubin, 2011).

Specialized counseling for youth is only available through Avalon sexual assault centre (after 16 years) and the IWK children's hospital has long wait lists. Other options are not available except through the private health plans of parents. The report identified there is a strong resistance in the school system to include sexual violence prevention in the core curriculum offerings in HRM. School administrators are concerned about stigma and backlash from parents (Rubin, 2011).

Finally, there was a lack of specialized training for service providers on sexualized violence. The report stated that more research is needed in the HRM area on sexualized violence, evaluation templates for what is working and what is not, longitudinal evaluation with youth and more research on alcohol and sexual violence in HRM (Rubin, 2011).

Alcohol

Service providers identified alcohol as playing a significant role in the sexual violence in HRM. Most of the sexual violence is committed by someone known to the victim such as causal or new acquaintances and many of the sexual violence acts are related to alcohol and bars. It appears many young women are drinking excessively and engaging in sexual activities that end up in violence or non-consensual sex acts. In this case, non-consent is interpreted as meaning women being too drunk to be able to give consent in the first place, even if the victim appears to be "into it." The question asked by police in these cases is, would a woman have given consent if she was sober?

Another issue with alcohol and sexual assault is in transportation home after a night of drinking downtown. One service provider stated they are seeing more women being sexually assaulted by cab drivers. This has ranged from grabbing and touching women to asking women to perform sexual acts to pay for the cab fare.

Awareness and men's accountability

Service providers stated the "Don't Be That Guy" poster campaign (initiated by Halifax Regional Police) was positive in that it addressed the accountability and responsibility of men to stop sexual violence, however they questioned whether there could be a more effective means of increasing awareness for

everyone and not just “that guy”? Awareness campaigns can be targeted at the general public so the public has an understanding of what is happening around sexual violence in their community.

“Ways need to be found to have conversations, actions and programming that does not dilute the supports and resources to women but also addresses men”.

This also needs to occur in schools. Prevention is a key component with early intervention and preventative initiatives. The public and policy makers can sometimes see sexual violence as an individual problem not a societal problem. If it is an individual problem it is easier to neglect. Sexual assault awareness month has been running for the last five years with the province participating along with community and this year, HRM.

“The messages sent out are “Don’t Get Raped”, not “Don’t Rape”. There seems to be a lack of public discourse on what the collective values are around gendered violence”.

Service providers also identified a lack of programming for male perpetrators of sexualized violence.

Inter-agency cooperation

Service providers stated that sometimes they are in their own bubble and to interact with others and get involved on inter-agency teams increases the diversity and growth of their agency and would allow them to expand their scope. Inter-agency groups can help service providers re-conceptualize their thinking on sexual violence. The provincial government, through the sexual violence action plan, has been leading the way since the Rehtaeh Parsons case. Public servants are much more aware and have created dialogue about sexualized violence outside the confines of a couple of departments, including community services and justice. The provincial government has provided a leadership role in sexual violence and funding support. It was also noted that some of the protocols found in intimate partner violence (such as the high risk case coordination model, where confidential information is shared among service providers) were missing in sexual violence protocol which may be a factor in the lack of inter-agency cooperation. Service providers suggest there should be incentives for funders to support collaborative efforts. Both the provincial and municipal governments support initiatives and provide leadership but there must be increased support in terms of translating more of the efforts into action.

Criminal justice system response

Service providers stated one of the biggest hurdles in the criminal justice system’s response to sexual assault is the length of time it takes to resolve cases, as many cases drag on in court; this can range from

several months to get forensic results back from the lab to a couple of months for an arraignment, and then six to eight months for a trial.

“For victims to wait one and a half years for closure is a huge issue”.

As one service provider stated, the criminal justice system does not view the victim as a whole person with needs and issues beyond the incident of sexual violence. The tendency is to see victim and perpetrator as separate and distinct. It is expected that a life changing event is to be dealt with in the court system and then everyone’s lives go back to the way they were. Unless we support the whole person and direct our interventions that way it just becomes a one-time intervention that doesn’t make a difference. Support needs to be with them before and after the event, not just during.

Some service providers state there are not enough sexual assault investigators with the police and it would be good to have a specialized unit (although the Halifax Regional Police and RCMP have an integrated sexual assault investigation team). It was also suggested that the public prosecution services either have dedicated specialized crowns or a specialized court to handle time delays and to develop expertise that would then smooth out delay issues.

“Going forward, if anything good is to come of this progress, is for police to acknowledge there are things we can do better such as internal awareness and sending investigators on adequate training. If we want to do this right we have to back it up”.

Another service provider inquired how victim services fit into the Halifax Regional Police in their response to sexual violence and questioned whether there was a bigger conversation to be had there. They suggest there is a great opportunity for HRM to open up the conversation because, as a small city, some really unique initiatives could be accomplished and HRM could become a leader.

VIOLENCE IN SEX WORK

Sex work is defined as the exchange of sex for goods, services or money. There are many different kinds of sex work and no agreed upon definition by sex workers. There is the traditional sex worker, meaning there is physical sexual contact or intimate acts are carried out for money. However sex work can also be identified as stripping and the production of pornography, though many porn stars do not view themselves as sex workers. Thus, the definition of sex work can be very broad. In terms of the diverse categories, there exists: street-based, escort, phone-sex, internet-based, pornography, erotic dancers, video-based, services that are in-call (where the client comes to the sex worker’s location such as a massage parlour), or out-call (where the sex worker goes to the client’s location such as a hotel).

There is also survival sex work which is sex work for survival purposes, regardless if there is an addiction issue present or not. For some, the decision to engage in sex work is economic-based as there is not enough money to live on from social assistance. There are different levels of survival—a sex worker who is making enough money in a safe environment is not necessarily engaging in survival sex work. There is also the practice of supplementing income with money from sex work; this might be better considered subsistence sex work as opposed to survival sex work. It is the level of economic poverty and vulnerability which draws the lines between survival versus non-survival based sex work. With survival sex work it is not always only cash that is changing hands, sometimes it is material goods and other resources (such as a place to stay) that is traded for sex—exchanging things that have value to the sex worker for their services (McCann, Akin, Airth, 2012). This is a complex issue where there is an absence of any alternative feasible coping strategy because of addiction, lack of treatment and other programs, perceptions of the sex worker and economic marginality.

“In Halifax there is a bunch of sex work such as in and out call work, street based, and youth who exchange sex for money. There is huge debate about youth such as do they have agency or are they exploited? There is street based survival sex and underground sex work such as fetish clubs, the kink community, bars and bathhouses. This underground sex work is not necessarily gay but heterosexual as well. We do not know the true extent of the sex trade in Halifax. In the 1980s and 1990s there used to be a stroll and much of the work was street based. Now there are only a handful (of sex workers) on the street. “

Most sex workers identified violence as the worst part of the trade. Being beaten, raped, taken advantage of and not being paid are some examples of the violence sex workers encounter (Jeffrey & MacDonald, 2006). Sex workers are subject to situational violence where something goes wrong in the transaction, and predatory violence, where sex workers are being targeted. Further, according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, sex workers face the highest occupational risk for homicide (Jeffrey & MacDonald, 2006, p. 80). Violence is more of a factor for street survival workers than for in-call workers. Halifax police have identified that in the past 20 years, 8 women associated with the sex or drug trade have gone missing or have been murdered, therefore since 2002 police have been collecting DNA samples from sex workers (Jeffrey & MacDonald, 2006).

Violence against sex workers has also been seen as a function of state policies as the policies and actions of police, courts, municipality, and health programs may contribute to a social context which directly or indirectly generates violence. Some examples might be police misusing the laws, a municipality enacting

by-laws such as boundaries, or a doctor refusing to examine sex workers due to their occupation (Shah, 2009).

Research conducted in the mid 1990s in Vancouver with 85 street sex workers identified that 99 percent of sex workers stated they had experienced violence and most had experienced multiple forms of violence. Most of these violent experiences were from a client and at least half of the victims contacted the police (O'Doherty, 2007). In a simultaneous study in British Columbia, sex workers stated that for every 100 dates, up to 15 were "bad dates" which indicated some form of violence. In a 2001 study in British Columbia, sex workers identified harassment, threats and robbery as the violence most commonly experienced (O'Doherty, 2007).

For in-call and out-call sex workers, fear of violence was the reason most sex workers moved off the street, as they felt better protected by an agency (such as a massage parlour or escort service). However exploitation by the agency is another concern and sex workers often do not believe they can report these workplace violations to the authorities who regulate them. Reluctance to report to police agencies was also a constant theme in research (O'Doherty, 2007).

According to various service providers, many of the sex workers they support are engaged in survival sex work as they have addiction issues and experience poverty. Sex workers in Halifax have been harassed by police, charged with jaywalking and told to move along by police (MacDonald, Jeffrey, Martin & Ross, 2013). Moreover, the boundary issue in Halifax (restricting sex workers to specific geographical areas) has historically been a source of frustration and increasing restriction for sex workers. When the boundary conditions are breached, sex workers receive more harsh and punitive restrictions and sentences (MacDonald, Jeffrey, Martin & Ross, 2013). Boundary conditions and other restrictions make sex work more dangerous for the women as they increasingly rely on other methods to complete their work day and are placed at greater risk. It should be noted that boundaries have not been used with sex workers in Halifax since 2010. This is reflected in the police-reported crime statistics for prostitution in Halifax.

Table 3 - Police Reported Statistics on Prostitution 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Actual prostitution incidents	105	92	59	65	40
Total, persons charged	56	59	29	38	8
Total, adult charged	56	59	29	36	8
Total, youth charged	0	0	0	2	0

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey; Canism table 252-0051

Service providers indicate that street based sex work in Halifax is almost non-existent and mostly considered survival sex work where addictions are present and sex workers are working to meet basic needs and support their drug use. It is estimated that less than five percent of sex workers in Halifax are street based and of that amount, approximately 75 percent have drug issues. Most of the sex work is now advertised on Back Pages, Craigs List, or through internet ads and escort agencies. This type of sex work is carried out in private, indoor spaces and is either in-call or out-calls. Young girls are involved in sex work in Halifax and are advertising themselves online as "young and fresh." Very few of the sex workers in Halifax are men and those who are male are typically younger.

Specific themes from the interviews

The interviews were conducted with non-profit organizations, police and policy makers. The themes were safety issues for sex workers and enforcement and the criminal justice system response.

Safety

Identified safety issues for sex workers in HRM are related to a disconnect between the trade and police. Where women are engaging in an activity considered "deviant" or criminal, they are reluctant to turn to the police when they are victims of violence.

Service providers were mixed about whether safety was increasing for sex workers now that stroll has declined and more in-call work is the norm; some service providers believe sex workers are more vulnerable to violence, while others think sex workers are more careful. Now that most of the sex work is being conducted indoors, it appears sex workers are not sharing information with each other as they did historically about "bad dates" and other safety concerns, thus increasing their vulnerability to violence and harm. Service providers also stated that sex workers are not reporting their victimization to the police.

One service provider stated there are a number of young women being recruited and trafficked to larger markets such as Toronto, Edmonton, Montreal and Fort McMurray. It is difficult for the police to manage this due to the transient nature of these sex workers and the level of violence and threats directed at the sex workers from recruiters and managers.

Service providers also mentioned that the various government departments and agencies are not working with each other to create a more holistic approach to include wrap around services that could address the health and education issues of sex workers. Service providers recognize that change is needed to address the impacts, health and safety, and harm reduction issues sex workers encounter and that collaboration will present a way forward. One service provider stated that while the federal government has put forth initiatives, there is no discussion on harm-reduction, sex workers are perceived as only victims and not agents, and funding is taken away from harm reduction programs to be put into trafficking programs thereby impacting service organizations that do not view sex work as trafficking.

None of the service providers indicated support for tolerance zones or red light districts. Instead it was suggested the focus should be on health, safety and human rights for sex workers.

“Tolerance spaces are recipes for violence and death because the location of sex workers is known and it opens them up to potential violence. It can also create sex ghettos. There are huge concerns around the legalization of red light districts because then the government becomes their pimps.”

Enforcement and criminal justice system response

Some service providers argue that general beat officers stigmatize sex workers and do not treat them respectfully due to their work. This can result in sex workers not wanting to report violence to the police. There is a lack of communication between senior police management (who seem collegial and open to suggestions) and beat cops. The reality on the streets is a relationship of mistrust and often the officer’s hands are tied due to the law. There are also undercover stings that are problematic for some service providers, however police say they use the stings in order to be in touch with sex workers and to try and help them out. Police need to balance the need to enforce laws with the need to build relationships with sex workers. Police have stated they are looking for improved relations with sex worker services. It does appear, given the significant decline in arrests and the views of officers close to the sex worker scene that a harm reduction approach patterned after that of the Vancouver Police Service (McCann, Aiken, Airth, 2012) may be adopted in an HRM context.

In the past there was the boundary enforcement issue where the courts would release sex workers on boundary conditions stipulating that they avoid specific locations in the city. The problem was often the boundaries included areas where the worker's medical clinic or drug treatment program was located. Workers would then be breached by police and sent back to court for being in violation of their boundary conditions. It appears that boundary enforcement by police has declined in the past couple of years. Sex workers are not being charged, nor seem to be released on boundaries. Service providers believe a clear policy on the discontinuation of boundaries would be useful in preventing this type of enforcement from being used discretionarily. Boundaries are brought about by public complaints therefore it is important to educate the public around sex work so police do not have to enforce boundaries.

One service provider stated there is no clear policy or procedure around missing persons. For example, if a sex worker goes missing, sometimes her mug shot is used in a media release, instead of a less stigmatized picture. Other questionable information in media releases are comment's such as "has been known to run away". Some question how useful that information is to the public.

Currently, the Supreme Court of Canada is reviewing the Bedford Case which is a legal challenge to Canada's prostitution laws, more specifically, it challenges provisions such as communication for the purposes of prostitution in public spaces, operating a bawdy house, and living off of the avails of prostitution. The argument is that the laws deprive sex workers of their right to liberty and security by forcing them to work in secret (Santini, 2013). Service providers note that sex work cases are not being processed much through the courts now in anticipation of the outcome of the Bedford case. It could be said that police are adopting a health and safety approach to adult sex work until the Supreme Court ruling. Service providers also state that if the Supreme Court strikes down the laws, then sex work will be regulated through provincial and municipal regulations such as labour standards, zoning by-laws and legislation such as the Safer Communities Act where sex workers working inside will be removed from their homes.

The Safer Communities act is provincial legislation enacted in 2007 to make communities and neighbourhoods safer. It uses civil law and allows a community impacted by illegal activity to reclaim their neighbourhood. The main mandates deal with complaints about public or private property that are being used for specified purposes such as illegal drug use and trafficking, prostitution, and illegal gaming or liquor. Half of the complaints come from the police and the other half from the public. Most of the complaints investigated have been drug activities with some prostitution complaints. In HRM there have been 7 cases of suspected illegal activity involving drugs and prostitution, 3 of drugs, alcohol and

prostitution, and 11 solely of prostitution under the Safer Communities Act (F. Sanford, personal communication, July 4, 2013). Many of the cases do not go to court but are resolved through an informal resolution with a voluntary notice to vacate the property. There can also be warning notices for minor infractions. Speculation is if the Bedford case is successful the unit may get more complaints.

Some service providers stated there have been sex workers who have gone through the mental health court which has been a very positive experience for these women. The court checks in with the woman each week and the court staff talk with the woman about what she has accomplished. The woman comes into the court once a month and after a year of programming, charges are dropped. Most of the women who have gone through this court have been successful at meeting the courts' requirements.

Some service providers identified changes to the pardons program as causing more hardship for sex workers to start a new life. Under new regulations, pardons can only be applied for five years (previously three years) after a sentence has been fully served, anyone with more than three convictions for offences with two-year sentences cannot be pardoned, and the cost has risen from \$50 to \$631.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The service providers suggest various recommendations to address the issues raised about gendered violence. Many of these recommendations overlap so they are grouped together under broad goals such as; improved cooperation across sectors, safe and affordable housing, funding for service providers and training issues. More specific recommendations for each sector follow.

1. Improved cooperation across sectors

Cooperation, information sharing, eliminating silos, sharing expertise and knowledge exchange were consistently identified as necessary to remove barriers to improved services and resources to address gendered violence in HRM. Many service providers noted the good work being done by their colleagues in government and non-profit agencies and organizations across the region, however the information is not being shared or disseminated in a systematic way which would allow others to become aware or learn from it. Suggestions ranged from carrying out more research on gendered violence initiatives across the province, to conducting evaluations, analysis and qualitative conversations so the helpful initiatives are acknowledged and the unhelpful ones adapted or removed. As one service provider stated, *"The stronger the work becomes the better it is for others."*

Other service providers noted that there could be more partnerships between HRM and the province with an investment to share the responsibility for gendered violence. This could include more liaison and coordination with the federal government so their decisions are not made in absence of provincial and municipal priorities. It is useful to note that both police departments (Halifax Regional Police and RCMP) along with the provincial government have of late advanced models to greatly facilitate inter-agency collaboration and a holistic strategy using the RCMP HUB approach (ISIS, 2009) and HRP's Full Circle approach (Deputy Chief Moore, personal communication, April 8, 2013). These models are similar in that both advocate proactive and social development styles of policing and call for more inter-agency collaboration in dealing with problems with both offenders and victims. They are made more feasible by provincial legislation that facilitates the sharing of hitherto privileged information.

Service providers acknowledged that HRM has improved its collaboration, largely reflected in improvements in police and victim services, but in addition to being a funder and facilitator, HRM could also be an advocate for change, and a repository for information and research. This could include developing meaningful, collaborative relationships between community organizations and police or more analysis from the police on gendered violence. Further, one service provider raises the suggestion of creating a social development planning capacity in HRM that looks at gendered violence from a holistic approach. This might require a different structuring of bureaucratic roles. Thus the public safety unit would not be attached to the police department but involved in the broader social and cultural purview of a social planning concept that moves gendered violence outside the narrow confines of a legal framework. It was also recommended that HRM should partner with Cape Breton Regional Municipality to demonstrate leadership in the area of intimate partner violence.

2. Safe and affordable housing

Housing needs for women experiencing violence were mentioned many times, particularly with intimate partner violence and sex work. Given that many of the women experiencing violence are on fixed and low incomes, having access to safe and affordable housing is an essential requisite to improve women's health and safety. When basic needs such as adequate and affordable housing are targeted as a priority, women can then focus their time and energy to address other pressing issues they face. Service providers want to ensure that HRM is involved to secure and support affordable housing initiatives for women who are poor and are working in partnership with other government departments such as the province's housing strategy.

3. Funding for service providers

Service providers overwhelmingly recommend that HRM develop a funding strategy for organizations and agencies across all spectrums such as shelters, second stage housing, counseling services and supports, men's programs, along with greater resources for police and their victim services. Suggestions also include in-kind support such as municipal tax breaks for non-profits to providing rent free office space in municipal buildings. It was also recommended that the municipality work more with community groups around sexual violence, alcohol issues and what is cutting edge in the work on violence with sex workers by developing and funding awareness campaigns.

Finally one service provider believes that HRM needs to spend money and resources to evaluate their policy and programs from a gendered lens. This means that all programs and policies developed and implemented in HRM are reviewed for how they will impact the safety and well-being of women; issues such as bus routes, placement of bathrooms, and housing.

4. Training for service providers

Training of service providers in community and government on gendered violence was a consistent recommendation. This included initial training in organizations and agencies such as how to conceptualize and respond to IPV, to ongoing training as in how to support a person experiencing sexual violence. Training for police was repeatedly mentioned ranging from providing officers with refresher and updated courses on IPV and the immigrant community, to more training on complex sexual assault investigations, and the realities of sex work.

5. Specific priorities for each sector

Service providers have specific recommendations for each sector that are discussed in this next section.

Intimate partner violence

Several service providers suggest the police department establish a domestic violence unit or domestic violence police officer as a better resource tool for the police. Developing and delivering curriculum in schools for IPV and sexual violence was also recommended. The response of child protection services to IPV was identified as not helpful and needs work. Service providers stated that child protection workers need to engage fathers as well as mother's by using more restorative approaches and models such as family group conferencing. Finally, there needs to be staff solely dedicated to the domestic violence action plan to ensure recommendations are implemented, evaluated and reported on.

Sexual violence

For the last few years in HRM the month of May has been designated as sexual assault awareness month. While the scope of the activities has improved, going forward it would be useful to have them backed up with resources.

Awareness campaigns such as "Be More Than a Bystander" spearheaded by the police and the "We Believe" campaign by Avalon Sexual Assault Centre need to occur regularly and become more prominent with features such as billboards.

It is recommended there be more cooperation interdepartmentally within the police and with other partners such as a team of crowns to be trained on sexual violence and other sex offences to ensure there is a core section dedicated to work on sexual violence files. It was also recommended that police establish a sex crimes unit that would include vice, the integrated child unit and sexual assault team. Finally, it was suggested that HRP enhance their victim services section to include addressing sexualized violence.

Violence and sex work

The media was specifically mentioned in relation to sex workers. How the media portrays violence against sex workers must change. For example the media should avoid using the term *prostitute* as it conjures stereotypical perceptions of sex workers, does not acknowledge the wide range of sex work and that sex work is an occupation. Furthermore it raises privacy issues when a sex worker has been victimized. When the media outs the victim through their reporting, the victim is impacted so the media needs to improve its coordination and collaboration with community agencies and authorities.

CONCLUSION

The findings and recommendations on gendered violence in HRM are not new. Reports from various provincial departments and community groups have echoed the same concerns and recommendations. Frustration arises when the concerns are repeatedly highlighted yet nothing happens. It is reasonably clear that, overall, a more nuanced picture emerges; there is some decline in police-reported intimate partner violence and there have been changes in approach to sex workers by the police but there are also incidents reinforcing gendered violence as a major violence and public safety issue. There have also been numerous policies and strategies to deal with different dimensions of gendered violence. In the last few months there has been unprecedented awareness about sexual violence. Most recently the frosh chant during orientation activities at St. Mary's University in Halifax has raised the profile about sexual violence on university campuses. It is always the right time to address gendered violence; however, with public opinion at a high and some forward movement from the provincial government, it would be appropriate

and timely for HRM to become more involved in a responsive and collaborative manner and to work with their partners in government and community to address gendered violence.

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APPENDIX A

Interview questions for three sectors

Intimate partner violence

1. IPV – how do we conceptualize it? Are there crucial different types of IPV to be differentiated?
2. What are the trends in IPV (or crucial subtypes) as regards public acknowledgement and prevalence? - Has there been a decline or increase in these trends? What do you think drives some of these trends?
3. What are some of the problems in the Justice system's (police, crown, courts, probations) response to intimate partner violence (IPV) in HRM? Are there better Justice system responses elsewhere in Canada?
4. Has there been any improvement in the federal or provincial government's response to IPV in the last five years?
5. What kinds of programs and policies have been developed in the last 5 years to respond to IPV in HRM? What has been their impact on the problem?
6. What are your thoughts on some recent initiatives such (a) the establishment of a domestic violence court in CBRM; (b) talk of negotiating an end the restorative justice moratorium on IPV?
7. What are some of the specific government responses at the federal, provincial and municipal level to IPV that you would wish to see developed or elaborated upon?
8. What are the needs and resources for your own organization and/or for non-governmental bodies trying to deal with the problem(s)?
9. What do you think the municipal government can do to address IPV? Are there other Canadian municipalities where the municipal government is more active in responding to IPV?
10. Are there accessible informative data sources that you are aware of dealing with IPV? Is there particular data that you think should be gathered to assist in dealing with the problem?

Sexual violence

1. Sexualized violence – how do we conceptualize it? Are there crucial different types of IPV to be differentiated?
2. What are the trends in sexualized violence (or crucial subtypes) as regards public acknowledgement and prevalence? - Has there been a decline or increase in these trends? What do you think drives some of these trends?
3. What are some of the problems in the Justice system's (police, crown, courts, probations) response to sexualized violence in HRM? Are there better Justice system responses elsewhere in Canada?
4. Has there been any improvement in the federal or provincial government's response to sexualized violence in the last five years?
5. What kinds of programs and policies have been developed in the last 5 years to respond to sexualized violence in HRM? What has been their impact on the problem?
6. What are your thoughts on some recent initiatives such (a) response to Rehtaeh Parsons case; (b) sexualized violence action plan; (c) police poster campaigns?
7. What are some of the specific government responses at the federal, provincial and municipal level to sexualized violence that you would wish to see developed or elaborated upon?
8. What are the needs and resources for your own organization and/or for non-governmental bodies trying to deal with the problem(s)?
9. What do you think the municipal government can do to address sexualized violence? Are there other Canadian municipalities where the municipal government is more active in responding to sexualized violence?
10. Are there accessible informative data sources that you are aware of dealing with sexualized violence? Are there particular data that you think should be gathered to assist in dealing with the problem?

Violence in sex work

1. Sex work – how do we conceptualize it? Are there crucial different types of sex work to be differentiated?
2. What are the trends in sex work (or crucial subtypes) as regards public acknowledgement and prevalence and the implications for violence and harm? Has there been a decline or increase in these trends? What do you think drives some of these trends?
3. What are some of the problems in the Justice system's (police, crown, courts, probations) response to sex work in HRM? Are there better Justice system responses elsewhere in Canada?
4. Has there been any improvement in the federal or provincial government's response to sex work in the last five years?
5. What kinds of programs and policies have been developed in the last 5 years to respond to sex workers in HRM? What has been their impact on the problem?
6. What are your thoughts on some research such as (a) urban space and red light districts or tolerance sex work activity?
7. What are some of the specific government responses at the federal, provincial and municipal level to sex workers that you would wish to see developed or elaborated upon?
8. What are the needs and resources for your own organization and/or for nongovernmental bodies trying to deal with the problem(s)?
9. What do you think the municipal government can do to address sex workers? Are there other Canadian municipalities where the municipal government is more active in responding to sex workers?
10. Are there accessible informative data sources that you are aware of dealing with harm done to sex workers? Are there particular data that you think should be gathered to assist in dealing with the problem?

APPENDIX B

Service providers interviewed

Alice Housing
Avalon Sexual Assault Centre
Bridges
Bryony House
Department of Community Services
Department of Justice Victim Services
Halifax Regional Police Victim Services
Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services
New Start Counselling
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Public Prosecution Service
Public Safety Unit, Department of Justice
Halifax Regional Police/RCMP
Rene Ross
Silent Witness Nova Scotia
Stepping Stone

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING & THEIR
RELATIONSHIP WITH VIOLENCE AND
PUBLIC SAFETY IN HRM:
ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND
HRM'S FUTURE ROLE**

Don Spicer

Purpose

Mayor Mike Savage commissioned Professor Don Clairmont to conduct a review of the Mayor's Roundtable Report on Violence and Public Safety which was authored by Professor Clairmont in 2008. The review, entitled *HRM Roundtable Review*, has provided Professor Clairmont with the following mandate:

To review implementation of the recommendations of the Round Table Report of 2008, and provide a "snapshot" assessment of current levels and manifestations of violent crime in Halifax Regional Municipality as well as corresponding public safety initiatives.

As part of the review, homelessness has been identified as a precursor to violence and as a factor that may decrease public safety. The purpose of this document is to identify issues surrounding homelessness and lack of affordable housing and their impact on public safety in HRM. In doing so, this document will provide contextual background and a synopsis of what has been done in the past five years to address the issues. It will also identify gaps and highlight the role HRM, as a municipality, could play in improving the homelessness and affordable housing situation.

Background: Homelessness, housing and crime

Homelessness is a complex, multi-faceted social problem with diverse precursors and risk factors. The many interviewees who helped inform this report assert that people experiencing homelessness and a lack of adequate affordable housing are more likely to commit a crime than their housed counterparts and are, therefore, more likely to be incarcerated. An oft overlooked fact is people in this sector are also more likely to be victimized.

This assertion is supported by several studies as identified in a document prepared by the University of Ottawa titled *Homelessness, Victimization and Crime* (Roebuck, 2008.) Studies in this report indicate that as many as 77% of those experiencing homelessness have been jailed at some point in their lives. This is by far a greater percentage than their housed counterparts. According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 1/100th of one percent of Canadians were incarcerated.

Why HRM should be involved

It has oft been said that housing and social issues are the mandate of the Province of Nova Scotia and not the municipality. Why then, should HRM play a role?

The benefits of HRM playing a role in enhancing the well-being of its citizenry are numerous. Doing a better job of assisting its citizens affects the health and well-being of a community. This can also have

economic spin-offs that will benefit HRM. It's encouraging to note HRM already recognizes it has a role in addressing homelessness and housing as evidenced in this statement on its website:

Housing is fundamental to HRM's quality of life, social inclusion, future growth and the development of vibrant and sustainable communities. The need for shelter is universal, and housing is a powerful determinant of health, safety, and access to public amenities. Although HRM is not responsible for the delivery of social services and social housing, HRM planning processes and regulations can help to provide for a suitable supply of housing in a range of types and locations to meet the needs of HRM's diverse population. HRM can also contribute to partnerships formed to address homelessness and the shortage of safe and affordable housing.

(HRM website, 2013)

It has also been identified in *The Real Cost of Homelessness Report* (Gaetz, 2012) that relying on emergency services is expensive. Many of the emergency services referenced in the report are the responsibility of the province (health care, shelter beds, social services, etc.) but not all. For instance, the cost of policing associated with homelessness and the lack of adequate, affordable housing alone is high. As an example, from 2010-12 Halifax Regional Police responded to one homeless shelter 458 times as compared to a private residence next door, where they responded three times. In 2012 alone, police responded to Metro Turning Point, an 80 bed men's shelter, 460 times. This, in comparison to a nearby 80 unit apartment building where officers responded only 11 times in the same time period (C. Fisher, personal communication, June 12, 2013).

The homeless population being statistically more likely to be victimized by crime than their housed counterparts (Roebuck, 2008) also places a great burden on the municipality's police resources. Those experiencing homelessness are also more likely to commit drug and property related offences and create nuisances and municipal by-law offences (Roebuck, 2012). It is these types of offences that have the greatest impact on people's perception of safety (Police Town Hall meetings, personal communication, 2003-2006).

Looking back – What has transpired in the past five years?

The consensus among key informants is that much has happened in the past five years to impact the housing situation in HRM. Better services exist for people experiencing homelessness and more affordable units are available (see Appendix 'A'). That said, there is also a consensus that even though much has been done, there is still a great need for more.

Partnerships with private sector

A number of partnerships are in place with private sector landlords as a result of initial meetings with Killam Properties, Capital Health and the former Community Action on Homelessness, now the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia. One such partnership, initiated in 2008, allows people receiving mental health care access to apartments at below market rent. This enables people on social assistance to live in safer, more adequate housing than they could otherwise afford. This model has expanded to include shelter partners such as Shelter Nova Scotia, Adsum House, Halifax Housing Helps, etc. These partnerships have created more than 100 additional affordable housing units in HRM. The goal was to provide 250 homes but with limited capacity this has stalled at just over 100 homes.

Shelter improvements

Metro Turning Point increased its capacity from 65 to 80 beds, moved from a model that saw it open from 11 p.m. – 8 a.m. to a 24/7 model with enhanced outreach services directly in the shelters, including partnerships with Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Out of the Cold Shelter was also reopened, providing an additional 15 emergency beds during the coldest months of the year.

Housing Support Workers were added to shelters to help transition clients back into the community. This will be discussed in greater detail under the ‘provincial initiatives’ section of this paper.

Increase in supportive housing units

Initiatives such as Shelter Nova Scotia’s Rebuilding (19 units), Adsum for Women and Children’s The Alders (10 units) and Metro Non Profit Housing’s Maynard Street building (20 units) are all new initiatives in the past five years which have increased supportive housing stock in HRM. Other providers such as the YWCA, through their Women in Supported Housing and Young Mothers in Supported Housing programs, have also increased their supportive housing unit numbers.

Provincial Initiatives

Housing Support Worker Program

A housing support worker pilot program was launched in 2011 and made permanent in 2013. This program consists of nineteen housing support workers across the province, fourteen of which are in HRM, whose role it is to develop relationships with clients, landlords and service providers in order to assist clients in

getting and maintaining a home. As an example of the program's early success, over 160 men, women and children were housed in the Shelter Nova Scotia program in 2012. Of those housed, 87.5% have remained housed, which is consistent with national numbers (M. Phillips, personal communication, August 7, 2013).

Poverty reduction strategy

The Nova Scotia government released its Poverty Reduction Strategy on April 3, 2009. The purpose of the strategy is to provide a framework for addressing the needs of those most vulnerable and those at risk of falling into poverty. The four main goals of the strategy are: enable and reward work; improve supports for those in need; focus on children; collaborate and coordinate.

Housing Strategy

Launched in 2013, the provincial Housing Strategy's goal is to ensure that Nova Scotians can find the housing choice that's right for them and their families, at a price they can afford, in a healthy, vibrant community that offers the services, supports and opportunities they need.

To that end, it will focus on building diverse, mixed communities; using government as a catalyst for partnership and change; providing options to make home ownership and rental more affordable; and providing housing options for seniors and vulnerable Nova Scotians. In support of the strategy, the province created Housing Nova Scotia as a crown corporation with its own private board.

The provincial housing strategy and Housing Nova Scotia are in their infancy and as such it is too early to measure their impact.

211 system

In many cases, there are services available to Nova Scotians but people either do not know they exist or do not know how to access them. In 2012 a province-wide 211 system was launched. It is a free, confidential information and referral service for thousands of community and social services available across the province. It is available 24-hours-a-day, 365-days-a-year – by dialing “2-1-1” to speak with a staff member or by searching the online database at www.ns.211.ca. This is a useful tool for people in need or their friends, family members or care providers looking to connect them with services.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

A number of initiatives aimed at better addressing mental health and addiction concerns have been launched since the original roundtable report was released.

In June 2006 a partnership between Capital Health, IWK Health Centre, Halifax Regional Police and Nova Scotia Department of Health was formed. The Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team (MHMCT) provides crisis support for children, youth and adults experiencing a mental health crisis

Telephone crisis support and mobile response is offered for work, home, school, and community agencies. Mobile response is available in most communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (Capital Health, 2013). The team, which is a co-response model with police officers and mental health clinicians, averages over 1000 calls per month.

In November 2009, the Province of Nova Scotia opened its first ever mental health court in HRM. This new court hears cases which have been recommended by a mental health court team as being eligible for the program, and a team of mental health clinicians and lawyers will be at the courthouse to assess potential clients and assist with their needs through counselling and other support. The goal of this new court is to treat Nova Scotians with mental disorders who commit criminal offences, fairly and compassionately, and to help them improve their mental health to reduce the risk to public safety.

In 2012, IWK Mental Health began a new outreach program designed to connect with clients and their families in the community in an effort to be more accessible and reduce wait times for accessing services.

Beginning in January 2013, Capital Health moved from a Withdrawal Management model to one of Intensive Treatment Services for both inpatient and in-community clients. The move is designed to offer more effective treatment and reduce wait times.

Other initiatives impacting housing

Mobile Outreach Street Health

Created in 2009, Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) provides accessible primary health care services to people who are homeless, insecurely housed, street involved and/or underserved in our community. The MOSH team is a collaborative primary health care team of two full-time nurses, a half-time occupational therapist, a half-time administrative support and 12 hours of physician care per week.

Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) is a national program through Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) that assists not-for-profit agencies with funding for housing initiatives. HPS moved to a community entity model in 2012 where allocations of funds are made at a grassroots level. In HRM, the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia serves as the entity and funds are administered based on recommendations of a community advisory board which uses a community plan as a guide. This results in a more effective use of funding.

Opportunities going forward

While much has happened in the past five years to improve issues around homelessness and housing, the demand for safe, affordable housing remains high. As an example, Shelter Nova Scotia operates Metro Turning Point, an 80 bed shelter at or near capacity. In 2012, it opened a 19-unit apartment building to transition men from shelter to supportive housing. At the same time, through the work of a housing support worker, it transitioned approximately 100 men from the shelter to their own apartments. Despite these tremendous accomplishments, Metro Turning Point continues to operate near capacity (M.Phillips, personal communication, August 7, 2013).

Barriers to obtaining adequate housing continue to exist with rising rental costs and increases in the cost of living. In a recent survey conducted by the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS, 2012), 69 percent of those surveyed identified a lack of affordable housing as the main barrier to being housed. Further, 50 percent are living on \$0-\$200 per month.

As evidenced in Figure 1, from the fall 2012 – CMHC Rental Market Report, rent continues to increase far beyond the housing allowance for people on assistance.

Figure 1 – Private Apartment Average Rents (\$) by Zone and Bedroom Type, Halifax CMA

Zone	Bachelor		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom		3 Bedroom +		Total	
	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12
Peninsula South	718 a	756 a	935 a	945 a	1,368 a	1,368 a	1,789 b	1,762 a	1,067 a	1,099 a
Peninsula North	646 b	675 b	784 a	805 a	937 a	962 a	1,129 b	1,221 b	879 a	906 a
Mainland South	515 b	479 b	582 a	605 a	748 a	808 a	1,030 c	975 b	693 a	741 a
Mainland North	623 a	647 a	726 a	743 a	941 a	961 a	1,135 a	1,132 a	894 a	907 a
City of Halifax (Zones 1-4)	690 a	718 a	803 a	819 a	987 a	1,014 a	1,278 a	1,290 a	922 a	946 a
Dartmouth North	518 a	518 a	630 a	657 a	771 a	803 a	846 b	902 b	700 a	729 a
Dartmouth South	530 a	553 a	636 a	649 a	705 a	726 a	803 a	835 a	686 a	706 a
Dartmouth East	830 a	**	726 c	707 a	955 b	955 b	1,053 d	930 c	898 b	893 b
City of Dartmouth (Zones 5-7)	542 b	527 a	641 a	660 a	800 a	822 a	845 a	878 a	730 a	752 a
Bedford	592 a	565 d	670 a	756 b	843 a	883 a	1,057 b	1,074 a	820 a	879 a
Sackville	**	545 a	727 c	740 a	866 b	880 a	992 b	1,019 a	832 b	864 a
Remainder of CMA	**	n/s	661 a	735 a	748 a	795 a	**	**	730 a	810 a
Halifax CMA	670 a	690 a	753 a	773 a	925 a	954 a	1,182 a	1,191 a	866 a	893 a

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report, Fall 2012

Figure 2 from the same report shows that overall vacancy rates have also increased, from which one could draw the conclusion that fewer people can afford to rent the apartments.

Figure 2 – Private Apartment Availability Rates (%) by Zone and Bedroom Type, Halifax CMA

Zone	Bachelor		1 Bedroom		2 Bedroom		3 Bedroom +		Total	
	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12	Oct-11	Oct-12
Peninsula South	1.7 b	2.7 c	1.9 a	2.7 a	3.1 b	3.8 c	4.4 d	4.0 d	2.4 a	3.1 b
Peninsula North	1.3 d	2.9 c	2.4 a	2.8 b	3.7 b	3.3 b	2.8 c	**	2.9 a	3.0 b
Mainland South	0.0 c	0.0 d	2.9 b	4.0 c	4.8 b	6.5 b	0.0 c	1.7 c	3.7 b	5.1 b
Mainland North	0.6 a	2.1 b	2.0 a	2.6 a	1.5 a	3.4 a	1.0 a	2.4 a	1.6 a	3.1 a
City of Halifax (Zones 1-4)	1.4 a	2.6 b	2.1 a	2.8 a	2.6 a	3.8 a	2.0 a	2.8 b	2.3 a	3.3 a
Dartmouth North	13.3 d	11.1 d	6.5 b	7.6 b	6.2 b	5.6 b	**	**	6.4 b	6.7 a
Dartmouth South	**	**	3.3 a	3.5 a	5.1 a	5.8 a	4.8 b	6.8 b	4.5 a	4.9 a
Dartmouth East	0.0 a	**	0.7 a	4.3 c	2.2 b	3.0 a	10.1 c	1.6 c	2.5 a	3.1 b
City of Dartmouth (Zones 5-7)	12.7 d	9.0 c	5.2 b	6.4 a	5.1 b	5.0 a	4.8 c	4.6 c	5.3 a	5.7 a
Bedford	2.9 b	**	1.5 a	2.3 a	2.1 a	6.8 a	0.7 a	0.8 a	1.9 a	4.9 a
Sackville	11.7 d	12.0 a	3.1 d	**	4.2 d	2.5 b	**	4.1 b	4.6 c	3.7 b
Remainder of CMA	**	**	0.0 d	1.1 a	1.1 a	1.1 a	**	**	0.9 a	1.0 a
Halifax CMA	2.9 a	3.5 c	3.0 a	3.8 a	3.2 a	4.1 a	2.7 a	3.1 b	3.1 a	3.9 a

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report, Fall 2012

The above tables refer to the cost and availability of housing in HRM. Among those who are housed, Halifax has a high rate of people who are deemed to be in a severe housing need; that is, they are spending more than 50% of their total income on housing. Based on Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) information, CMHC has identified Halifax (12.8%) as being above the national average (10.5%) for percentage of households in the severe housing need category. This places Halifax second only to Toronto. Essentially, this means that a number of people in Halifax who are housed are at an increased risk of homelessness.

High housing insecurities, as noted above, go hand in hand with high food insecurities. Once again, Halifax (18.9%) is above the national average (12.2%) and second only to Moncton for percentage of households

experiencing food insecurities. It is reasonable to expect that an area with high housing and food insecurities is more vulnerable to crime and could experience deteriorating public safety if these issues are not addressed.

Based on the information obtained for this report, the author asserts that the successful programs listed above need to be expanded and new strategies need to be implemented.

What role can HRM play?

The following recommendations are derived directly from the Homelessness, Victimization and Crime report prepared by the Institute for the Prevention of Crime, University of Ottawa (Roebuck, 2008). These recommendations were developed in consultation with the Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, city housing authorities, academic researchers, service providers, and community action groups on homelessness from Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver:

- Increase the availability of affordable housing
- Develop municipal homelessness prevention strategies that include services such as rental subsidies for low-income individuals at risk of losing their housing
- Work to reduce barriers to employment experienced by former offenders
- Demonstrate leadership on reducing homelessness, set actionable reduction targets based on homelessness indicators, and develop long-term housing strategies
- Support and increase inter-sectorial coordination and collaboration
- Work with school board to:
 - invest in programs to help youth attend and stay in school
 - implement programs aimed at preventing family and interpersonal violence in school curricula
 - provide life skills training to at-risk children and youth
 - provide alternative education tailored for young adults excluded from schools apart from traditional adult high schools
- Provide public education that challenges prejudices about homeless people
- Since family violence and violence against women are known risk factors that contribute to the homelessness of youth, women and children, investments should be made in programs that:
 - prevent child abuse and neglect
 - prevent intimate partner violence; and
 - facilitate early intervention in at-risk families
- Provide training for local police and private security on best practices when intervening with homeless persons

- Develop alternatives to traditional punitive responses, such as ticketing homeless individuals for breaking municipal by-laws. Use by-law intervention as an opportunity to make referrals to community services
- Provide victim assistance to homeless persons who report crimes, and work to improve relations with homeless people to improve reporting rates
- Reduce the use of incarceration for minor incivilities and breaches of municipal by-laws.

As indicated above, these recommendations are a result of research and consultation in municipalities across Canada. Many of these recommendations are supported by the information this author gleaned in interviews conducted for this report and all can be impacted by municipal intervention.

Recommendations as a result of interviews

Based on the results of more than a dozen interviews conducted with service providers, community leaders, provincial and municipal government leaders and the private sector, the author is putting forth the following further recommendations, listed in order of importance:

1. It is ineffective for several people to look at housing and homelessness off the corner of their desks. HRM needs a champion for housing and homelessness and they should create a 10-year community plan to address homelessness.
2. Ensure new developments, buildings or communities, are mixed use/mixed affordability with single units and family units. Mixed use provides role models in the community. People experiencing homelessness or insecure housing need to be in a place where there is a sense of community.
3. Work with the province of Nova Scotia to create a HRM-led land bank⁶¹ and establish a trust fund to assist not-for-profits in purchasing quick turn-around opportunities for land/buildings (see Appendix 'B').
4. Fast track development planning and approval processes for supportive and affordable housing projects.⁶²
5. Offer tax incentives and explore density bonusing options for developers who include a percentage of adequate affordable housing in their projects. Initiatives should also include basement apartments, in-law suites, nanny-suites and so on. This would

⁶¹ See Appendix 'A' a letter to Mayor Savage from the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia.

⁶² This has been implemented in other cities such as Victoria BC where, according to a 2007 report titled 'Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness,' the city implemented a recommendation to fast-track development planning and approval processes for supported housing projects. In an interview with this author, a Victoria city employee stated "All of the processing aspects handled within the Administration for all approvals (rezoning, development permits with or without variances, development variance permits and all of the construction-related permits regarding building, plumbing and electrical permits), these files are treated as the top priority and they jump the "queue" of other files that might have entered the system earlier" (K. Perkins, personal communication, August 23, 2013).

encourage a greater pool of affordable units and also enable extended families to remain in homes.

6. Find ways to work with not-for-profits that provide housing to buy or use city-owned property.
7. Recognizing that some people need rooming houses, they must be adequate. To that end, HRM should provide better controls over landlords who are providing sub-standard housing and enforce by-laws around inadequate rooming houses.
8. Parking space requirements for new developments that offer affordable housing should be relaxed to encourage more development in the urban core. This will enable developers to create more affordable units.
9. Good public transit is critical. It can influence people's decision/ability to live in the urban core and closer to work and services. HRM should examine ways to improve public transit and to offer free or discounted fares to people experiencing homelessness, perhaps through the shelter system.
10. Maintaining adequate housing is predicated on being able to pay your rent. This is hampered by a lack of opportunities to build job skills/resumes. HRM should explore the possibility of intern-style programs for entry level jobs so marginalized people can build their job skills, confidence and resumes.
11. Make recreational programs and workshops available for those who cannot afford them.
12. Examine ways to establish more social enterprise or offer bonuses to businesses for hiring marginalized people.
13. Evolve from the current passive zoning model to a proactive one by taking a leadership role to be visionary about what they want our communities to look like (mixed use, etc).
14. HRM should work with the Province to:
 - a. Develop a wrap-around service delivery model to address the underlying causes of homelessness.
 - b. Examine ways to support tenants' insurance. Many marginalized people cannot afford it but it is required by all landlords.

Conclusion

This document identifies issues surrounding homelessness and lack of affordable housing and their impact on public safety in HRM. In doing so, it provides contextual background and a synopsis of what has been done in the past five years to address the issues. Through national research and more than a dozen interviews with key informants, it also identifies gaps and highlights the role HRM, as a municipality, could play in improving the homelessness and affordable housing situation.

Notwithstanding the mandate of the Province of Nova Scotia to address housing issues, it is clear the municipality has an obligation to its citizens to ensure HRM is a safe, inclusive and welcoming community.

Effectively dealing with homelessness and the lack of affordable housing will assist HRM in fulfilling this obligation.

This document provides HRM with a number of recommendations for improving the homelessness and affordable housing situation in the municipality. All of the recommendations are within the scope of what HRM is responsible for and, in fact, they are related to its current business practices. For the most part, the recommendations challenge HRM to stretch the boundaries and think a little differently about how it does business.

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APPENDIX 'A'

Selected Developments in Homelessness and Housing, 2008-2013

2008

- The Independent Supportive Housing Initiative, a partnership between Capital Health's New Beginnings and Killam Properties, launched
- Metro Non-Profit Housing Association launches new program, Halifax Housing Help, and opens a 20-unit supportive housing complex on Maynard Street

2009

- Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy launched
- Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) launched, providing primary health care the homeless and other marginalized citizens
- Mental Health Court launched
- 2009 Halifax Report Card on Homelessness released by Community Action on Homelessness
- 2009 Health and Homelessness in Halifax report released by Community Action on Homelessness
- Metro Turning Point increases capacity from 65 to 80 beds and moves to a 24/7 model with enhanced services
- Out of the Cold Shelter opens providing an additional 15 emergency beds during the coldest months of the year

2010

- 2010 Halifax Report Card on Homelessness released by Community Action on Homelessness

2011

- Department of Community Services launches its Supportive Housing Pilot program with Housing Support Workers and rent subsidies
- Adsum Shelter for Women and Children opens The Alders, a 10 unit apartment building
- Housing Nova Scotians: A Fresh Look report released by Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Association

2012

- Provincial Housing Strategy consultations begin
- Provincial 211 Community Services Phone line

- The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) moves to a community entity model where funding allocations are made at a grassroots level
- Community Action on Homelessness, a project of the North End Community Health Centre, ends
- NS Housing and Homelessness Network formed
- Shelter Nova Scotia opens The Rebuilding, a 19 unit transitional apartment complex for men
- Health and Homelessness in Halifax Update Report released by the NS Housing and Homelessness Network
- 2012 Halifax Report Card on Homelessness released by the NS Housing and Homelessness Network

2013

- Provincial Housing Strategy launched including the creation of Housing NS, a crown corporation with its own private board, structurally like the NSBI
- Federal budget extends the Homeless Partnership Strategy for 5 years
- Supportive Housing Pilot program made permanent
- 2013 Report Card on Homelessness released by the NS Housing and Homelessness Network
- HRM council approves by a vote of 15 to 0 formal participation in a coalition with the United Way and AHANS, attacking issues of homelessness and affordable housing. Council reportedly considered it a moral obligation, and have set a target year of 2019 to eliminate homelessness in the city

APPENDIX 'B'



May 23, 2013

Mayor Savage
HRM
PO Box 1749
Halifax, NS
B3J 3A5

Your Worship:

Recently, three important initiatives converged to offer considerable hope for the future of decent, affordable and sustainable housing in the HRM. We are referring to the Housing Strategy for Nova Scotia, the Stantec Report on the costs of urban sprawl, and the soon-to-be approved Bill 83 which seeks legislative changes to enable density bonusing in return for affordable housing. In light of these events, we suggest that HRM take the lead in establishing a Community Land Trust (CLT). Nova Scotians are very familiar with the concept. Indeed, we would not have the Forest Hills, Lower Sackville and Millwood Village communities were it not for the visionary activities of the Nova Scotia Housing Commission as a banker and developer of land in the 1960's, '70's and '80's.

In cities as diverse as Vancouver, Saskatoon, Vienna (Austria) and Albuquerque (NM) land banks are proving to be highly effective tools in the development of income integrated communities which include amenities, services and affordable housing. Since the 1920's, the City of Saskatoon has maintained a land bank and since the 1950's it has deployed and replenished its assets as a means to securing that City's planning and development objectives. More recently it has successfully applied its land bank to achieve affordable housing in large scale, income-integrated communities. Since the 1920's, Vienna, Austria, has developed and sustained a massive stock of affordable housing which now accommodates fully 60% of the City's households. At present, Vienna purchases and releases land through carefully crafted Calls for Proposals which require the partnering of for-profit developer/builders and not-for-profit community-based owner-managers.

In the United States, Community Land Trusts are helping low and moderate income households to build equity through homeownership, while preserving the affordability of these homes for future residents. At the same time, as the authors of a useful introduction to CLT's point out,

Preserving housing affordability requires long-term monitoring and enforcement, an administrative burden that local governments are neither equipped for nor generally interested in taking on. CLTs are well positioned to play this stewardship role by administering the municipality's eligibility, affordability, and occupancy controls, while also "backstopping" lower-income owners to protect subsidized homes against loss through deferred maintenance or mortgage foreclosure. (1)

Many of the CLTs initiated by municipal governments in the US are community-based and somewhat at arm's length from the municipalities themselves. The benefits are considerable. The municipalities establish the ground rules and profit from the sales, while the heavy lifting is transferred to the private and not-for-profit sectors. In the end, it seems successful CLTs come about as a matter of effective leadership, team-building, the inclusion of the private and not-for-profit sectors and the active cooperation and collaboration of other levels of government.

Were the HRM to establish a Community Land Trust, the City would have an effective means for: making strategic purchases of its own; gently 'guiding' the disposal of the surplus land and properties of other levels of government; and accumulating charitable donations, land and funds-in-lieu, surplus buildings, and properties acquired through tax arrears. More importantly, following the example of Vienna, it would have a measured way of disposing of and managing assets such as former school sites, fully informed by the City's Land Use By-Laws and Urban Design Strategy.

CMHC tells us that many thousands of HRM's households are in Extreme Housing Need and thousands more are in Core Housing Need. Unfortunately, at our present pace their demands for decent, affordable and sustainable housing will never be met. We deeply appreciate that you are fully aware of this and that HRM is in urgent need of sustained planning and development interventions which are both bold and thoughtful. The circumstances are 'right' for a carefully conceived initiative. We believe that what's called for is a Community Land Trust. Once implemented the City's CLT would play a pivotal and on-going role in meeting HRM's affordable housing needs.

We look forward to our upcoming meeting at which we hope to convince you that with the full support of the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia, the Office of the Mayor would be the most appropriate location from which to launch a Community Land Trust for the HRM.

Sincerely,

J. Grant Wanzel, M. Arch., MRAIC,

Emeritus Professor of Architecture,

Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, and

Chair, Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia.

Notes:

(1) Davis, JE & Jacobus, R. The City-CLT Partnership: Municipal Support for Community Land Trusts. Cambridge, Mass. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 2008

APPENDIX 'C'

Interview Questions

1. The Roundtable Report highlighted the importance of housing issues in getting at the roots of violence and public safety in HRM – what are your views about that characterization (then and now)
2. Has the housing situation (homelessness and poor housing options) improved, declined, stayed the same over the past five years? How changed? Why or why not changed?
3. Are there accessible data sources available which provide support for your views?
4. What significant developments have occurred in this housing situation from your perspective? From your organization's?
5. Are you aware of any new programs/policies for these kinds of housing issues from government whether federal, provincial, or municipal? Any collaboration among them?
6. Are you aware of any developments in private sector/government collaboration?
7. What about developments in local non-profit agencies?
8. What is HRM's contribution to dealing with the housing issues? What does it do? What can it do?
9. Do you have any ideas for advancing the agenda regarding this social problem?

APPENDIX 'D'

Service providers interviewed

Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia

Community Leader

Department of Community Services, Province of Nova Scotia (2)

Halifax Housing Helps

HRM Mayor and Councillors (2)

Killam Properties

Phoenix Youth Centre

Public Housing Community Leaders (4)

Salvation Army

Shelter Nova Scotia

Tawaak Housing

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC
SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Stephen Kimber

Introduction

How quickly — and dramatically — the world changes.

In 2008, the primary focus of the Social Construction subgroup within the Roundtable on Violence and Public Safety in Halifax zeroed in on how the mainstream media had reported incidents of swarmings and disturbances in the downtown bar district. The issue today is that there are a whole new set of issues.

In 2008, for example, the 13-person focus group we convened to discuss issues around the social construction of violence seemed broadly inclusive at the time. The mainstream media was well represented (five individuals) as were police services (two), public servants (three) academics (one) and engaged citizens (two). What is most striking today, however, is that not one member of that original focus group had, as a primary focus, the role and impact of “social media.”

While the term social media had been in use for at least a decade — there is some debate about who coined it and when — the reality is that few of us were prescient enough in 2008 to understand or reflect on how central the notion of social media would become to any discussion of the social construction of violence and public safety in 2013.

What is social media and why does it matter?

What is this phenomenon we call social media? Internet experts Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications... that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” Sounds straightforward enough, but it is in that intersection between the creation and exchange of user-generated content that the world — and the social construction of that world — becomes increasingly complicated.

It’s now practical — and not uncommon — for someone to send a message in real time that can be seen instantly by thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions of people around the world — and for those people to respond to that original message in the blink of a few keystrokes and/or to pass it along to their own networks, which may, in turn spread the message further afield, and for others in those networks to then pass the message along to still others who — with no real connection to the original poster or post — may comment on the initial message and/or the person who sent it. Once the cork has been popped on that message, it is almost impossible to shove it back in the bottle, or erase its presence from Internet memory.

Writing in the *Journal of Law and Technology*, Dalhousie University law professors Rob Currie and Steve Coughlan suggest “social media might need to be regarded as being different in kind, not merely degree”

from all previous forms of communication. “Its use and popularity,” they note, “has been meteoric and the rate of its changes and evolution is practically unprecedented.”

Consider just a few comparators.

In February 2004, Facebook launched as a Harvard-students-only online social networking service. By August 2008 — the year the Roundtable Report was published — there were 100 million Facebook users worldwide. Sound impressive? As of March 2013, the Associated Press reports Facebook claimed 1.1 *billion* users. On an average day, the Facebook site has 665 million active users.

Twitter, an online micro-blogging site, broadcast its first 140-character message in 2006, two years before our last report. By 2008, it boasted four to five million users. As of December 2013, it had 554,750,000 registered users with another 135,000 signing up every day.

The first iPhone was launched in 2007. In 2008, fewer than 20 per cent of mobile phone users had a smart phone capable of data communication. Today 55 per cent of mobile phone sales are for smart phones and more than 5.6 billion are in use worldwide.

Instagram, an online photo and video sharing and social networking site, didn’t even exist when the Roundtable reported. It was created in 2010, and now boasts more than 150 million actively monthly users and more than 16 billion photos shared.

What do all those numbers mean?

What that means, for starters, is that social media has become ubiquitous.

Individuals of virtually all ages, genders, races, economic and social groups now use it to communicate privately — but often very publicly — with their friends and acquaintances.

Politicians use it as a public square to talk to — but also hear from — their constituents.

Conventional media use it to amplify their print-on-paper and broadcast reporting as well as to create public forums in which readers can respond to their reporting, offer story ideas, information or sometimes just their considered — or unconsidered — opinion on anything at all.

Police services use it to communicate information to the public, to answer questions, to field complaints and commendations, even, occasionally, to aid in investigations. The Halifax Regional Police Services established its online presence in 2009; today it manages two official Facebook pages with more than 8,300 "likes" and three Twitter accounts with about 15,000 followers. There are, on average, 20 interactions with the public for each social media stream each day, but the fact is that HRP’s social media

advisor is officially also its “communications advisor,” and her job includes a variety of other duties: “employee recognition and event planning, internal communications, monthly newsletter...”

Criminals use social media too. Like the pager and the cellphone, social media has become yet another weapon in the criminal’s tool belt, another way of conduct their illegal business. Drug deals, for example, are frequently carried out with the help of social media messaging. But that’s far from the only way in which social media influences crimes and our understanding of them. We have heard anecdotally, for example, of situations in which one criminal gang member attacks another — which are often described in the media as turf wars — simply because someone “dissed” someone else on social media.

It is worth noting that some law enforcement officers told our researcher that, in the war on cyber crime, police are often less well-armed than criminals. As of this report, Halifax Regional Police mobile phones were not capable of using social media technology. This was especially frustrating for HRP’s School Response Officers, the front line soldiers in the battle against such phenomena as cyber-bullying, who told our researchers they “have fewer tools than the students and the students are more savvy” when it comes to using them.

Which brings us to another point: the emergence of otherwise unremarkable students and young people as a new subset of criminals: cyber-bullies.

Social media, new-old-crimes and new criminals

What is perhaps most interesting, and most disturbing, about the inter-relationship between crime and social media, in fact, is that social media has created new crimes — and new criminals.

That’s not actually true.

Bullying, for example, has been around forever, from give-me-your-lunch money intimidators and snide-comments-in-the-hallway snipes to their grown-up versions in factories and offices. But because bullying was traditionally carried out in relative privacy and the victim suitably intimidated, such behaviour rarely attracted the attention of police or other authorities

The emergence of bullying through social media, however, has had what the 2012 Report of the Nova Scotia Task Force on Bullying and Cyber-bullying understated as a “magnifying effect” on bullying — and on society’s response to it.

The schoolyard bully now has the world as her or his playground. Someone can post a demeaning or intimidating comment or photo about another person on Facebook, and watch it spread to people who

don't even know either the perpetrator or the victim but who may now feel free to "pile on... for entertainment's sake," often anonymously

We are still only beginning to come to grips with what this means in societal, as well as criminal justice terms.

Intimate photography isn't new either. People have probably been taking and sharing such photos with their partners since the earliest days of photography. But now, thanks to digital photography, cell phone cameras and the prevalence of social media, it's possible to share those photos to a much wider audience — or even publish them as revenge after a relationship ends. And those images, being digital, can not only be replicated endlessly but also never truly eliminated.

Taking and sharing intimate photos becomes even more complicated when teenagers are involved. If a 15-year-old girl sends her boyfriend a sexual image of herself and he then shares it in any way on social media, is he guilty of possessing and distributing child pornography? Is she guilty of manufacturing it? Was that ever the intent of the child pornography laws?

Are the old laws — and the old social mores — applicable to the new circumstances?

It may be helpful to look at two recent high-profile incidents in Halifax, both involving, in one way or another, social media, the intersection between creating and exchanging user-generated content, allegations of criminal behaviour and its social construction.

Rehtaeh Parsons

Rehtaeh Parsons was a 17-year-old Cole Harbour high school student who committed suicide in April 2013. Seventeen months earlier on November 12, 2011, her parents allege Rehtaeh had been raped by four teenaged boys at a party where alcohol was consumed. Someone took a photograph of one of those alleged sexual assaults, posted it online and forwarded it to students at her school. Within days, Parsons was being taunted by some as a "slut" while others began leaving text and Facebook messages inviting the girl to have sex with them too. The harassment continued until she took her own life. Before her suicide, the police had investigated but determined there was insufficient evidence to lay charges against any of the boys.

After Rehtaeh's death, however, the family went public with her story. "Rehtaeh is gone today because of the four boys that thought that raping a 15-year-old girl was OK and to distribute a photo to ruin her spirit and reputation would be fun," her mother wrote on Facebook, adding that "the justice system failed her." That prompted an international public and social media outcry. At one point, the CBC reported the

phrase “Nova Scotia” even became a trending topic on Twitter worldwide. Politicians, including then-Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, offered public comments on the case, and it was even eventually featured on the international television talk show, *Dr. Phil*.

The hacker group Anonymous also got involved, tracing the names of those allegedly involved in the rape through online searches and threatening to expose them if the police didn’t lay charges. One young man, whose name was being circulated online as a “rapist,” felt compelled to go public himself to deny any role in the attack. Anonymous ultimately withdrew its threat at the request of the Parsons family, but it is fair to say, as one columnist wrote, that “police and prosecutors were being criticized as bumbling incompetents or worse, in the modern lingo, as somehow complicit in ‘slut shaming.’”

On April 12, one day before her funeral, the RCMP announced it was reopening the case because of “new and credible information,” which, it was at pains to note, did not come from Internet sources.

Two individuals have since been charged, not with sexual assault, but one with making and distributing child pornography and the other with distributing it.

While those charges are before the courts and it is not our place to pass judgment on them, it is worth noting the role that social media has played in every aspect of this case — from the alleged photographing and distributing of images of the original incident, to the online bullying and attacks on Rehtaeh’s character, to her parents’ anguished pleas for justice, to the public outrage it generated, to the new information that led police to reopen the investigation (while the police may be right that their information didn’t come from Internet sources, it seems unlikely any new evidence would have materialized in this closed case if not for the social media outcry), to even the charges themselves, in which the allegation is that those accused used online media to distribute the offending images.

The significance of the role — and implications — of social media in such high profile cases has not been lost on legislators who rushed to produce new legislation to deal with these old-new crimes. In April 2013, the Nova Scotia government introduced a Cyber Safety Act “to better protect citizens and hold people who cyber-bully accountable for their harmful behavior” online. It defined a new crime of cyber-bullying, which it described as “bullying by electronic means that occurs through the use of technology, including computers or other electronic devices, social networks, text messaging, instant messaging, websites or e-mail.” In November the federal government introduced legislation making it a crime to distribute intimate images without the consent of the person in those pictures.

While there are ongoing debates about whether those laws were drafted too hastily and too broadly — our researcher discovered during interviews that the provincial act was passed without input from any Halifax Regional Police Services School Response Officer, the front-line workers in dealing with student cyber-bullying — there is no debate about the impact of social media on crime and our understanding of it.

The Frosh Chant

On September 2, 2013, someone posted a 15-second video on the social media site Instagram. Filmed on the football field during an orientation week event for 400 new students at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, the video showed dozens of young men and women, led by frosh week leaders, shouting out a chant glorifying having non-consensual sex with underage girls. "Saint Mary's boys, we like them young," goes the last line.

The chant was apparently not new or original to Saint Mary's; it had been shouted during previous year's orientation events at Saint Mary's, and was similar to ones in use at other universities across the country.

What changed was that this chant was videotaped and posted on social media for all the world to see, provoking what CBC News described at the time as a "backlash of disgust and anger." And soul-searching.

The President of the Saint Mary's Student Union apologized, and resigned. The university administration ordered the entire student union and all 80 frosh week leaders to take sensitivity training, and appointed an outsider to look into what happened, why and what to do about it. That report, released in December 2013, offered 20 recommendations aimed at encouraging a "cultural change" about sexual conduct and respect at the school. The university says it accepts all of the recommendations.

In this case, it can be argued that social media — by shining its all-powerful beam on a corner of some previously hidden or ignored practises — helped trigger a necessary and useful debate.

Social Media and Mainstream Media

While those two cases help make clear the significance of social media in the social construction of violence today, it is also important to note the symbiotic relationship between the new social media and the old mainstream media.

In the Parsons case, Rehtaeh's mother went public on Facebook. The Halifax *Chronicle Herald* followed up that post and wrote a story poignantly describing the family's anguish, anger and frustration. That mainstream media story was then published by other media outlets, shared on Facebook and retweeted

endlessly via Twitter, which helped create a social media firestorm that informed and inflamed subsequent mainstream media coverage.

The offensive chant story started as an Instagram post, which was picked up and amplified by conventional media reporting, which then fed into — and off of — social media expressions of disgust and outrage.

Because of the always-on, 24-hour-a-day, instant-gratification-at-the-press-of-the-Send-button nature of information sharing on social media, the journalist's traditional role — gathering information, synthesizing it and contextualizing it within the constraints of a daily deadline — has been dramatically altered by the need to provide the same quick currency of a Tweet or other social media communication.

In crime news, the media's willingness to post incomplete snippets of information as they're developed is driven, in part, by the reality that police media releases about incidents, which used to be distributed just to the conventional media, are now posted on Twitter and Facebook for all to see. And also by the fact that eyewitnesses to those incidents often also post their own pictures and comments on social media.

Mainstream media reporters now “troll” social media sites for news to report on, sometimes seeking out sensational stories with the potential to go “viral.” And they use social media to crowd-source developing stories. While that can — and does — often lead to important information that would otherwise be unavailable or unknown, there are inherent dangers as well. In the aftermath of 2013's Boston Marathon bombings, for example, social media sites, including Twitter and Reddit, erroneously identified a young man as a suspect in the attack. Prominent journalists re-circulated the misinformation, adding to its credibility and creating a “horrible” night for the family of the young man before the error was corrected. In the case of Rehtaeh Parsons, we know that one young man felt forced to go public to deny social media reports he was involved. While he was not identified by the mainstream media — in part because of stricter reporting rules in Canada — there is no question the erroneous allegations against him were widely shared, and potentially damaging.

There are other implications (most outside the scope of this report) to the reality that people are getting their conventional news in unconventional ways. More and more people are not reading the news in the pages of their daily newspaper or seeing it on television newscasts. As a result, they're not exposed to the eclectic, often unconnected mix of vetted news and information those media offer, and which expose readers to unexpected knowledge and opinion that sometimes runs counter to their expectations or biases. Instead, they're now getting more of their news from like-minded friends and acquaintances on

social media, where people most often share posts that amplify and echo their own views. That creates social media bubbles of understanding, which may — or may not — reflect their real significance.

Conclusion

Given the dramatic, unanticipated, game-changing changes that have occurred around the issue of the social construction of violence in the years since the original Roundtable Report — thanks largely to the emergence of social media as a significant force — it would be presumptuous, even foolhardy, to offer broad sweeping predictions about what will happen next and/or advice on how to respond to it.

We can offer a few very specific recommendations:

- Halifax Regional Police Services should develop a comprehensive social media strategy to better reflect the realities of today.
- HRP officers, especially those involved in school liaison, should be equipped with smart phones and trained in their use as both a communications and investigative tool.
- School Response Officers should have the ability to communicate directly with students through social media in their roles within the schools.
- HRP Services should expand its use of social media by training and empowering officers in various units (fraud, major crime, community policing) to utilize social media as a tool for interacting with the community.
- The Public Safety Officer position, which was recommended in the last Roundtable Report, should become part of the municipal administration rather than Police Services and report directly to the city's Chief Administrative Officer, in order to ensure that the office has a broader role in developing and responding to issues around the social construction of violence.
- The Halifax Regional Municipality should impress upon senior levels of government the critical need to consult with its front-line officers, both when crafting new legislation and implementing it.

More broadly, and perhaps more importantly, we would urge everyone — municipal authorities, the police, the media, citizens — to recognize that we are in the middle of a continually evolving, often unsettling tectonic shift in the ways in which we understand, talk about and deal with everything, including violence and public safety.

We need to be aware of the potential — and the pitfalls — of social media. We were surprised, for example, when one prominent politician our researcher talked with expressed concern about young girls casually exchanging oral sex for small favours such as a ride to school, and saw this as a growing social problem requiring a “cultural revolution.” But when asked for evidence or data to back up this assertion

or to evaluate how widespread the practice was, the politician was quick to retreat to the argument that these “patterns were apparently prevalent in the new social media.”

We — all of us — need to be cautious in taking at face value anything we see, hear or read, not exclusively, but perhaps especially in the new unfiltered world of social media.

THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**OFFENDER REINTEGRATION IN THE HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY**

By: Adrienne MacDonald, MA

John Peach, BA

Robert MacDonald

Offender reintegration is an issue receiving more consideration in this review than in the 2008 Roundtable Report (*Violence and Public Safety in HRM: A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable*). The following is a report on the condition of offender reintegration in the Halifax Regional Municipality⁶³ (HRM), a dimension of the Violence and Public Safety HRM Roundtable Review of 2013. The scope of the offender reintegration process begins while an individual is in custody of a Federal Institution or Provincial Correctional Facility and continues upon their release into the community. The length of time and resources required for reintegration are dependent on a variety of factors. As such, a report on the topic must include consideration of varying social dynamics, including many of the other Roundtable Review dimensions.

This report draws on information collected from numerous sources. Statistical data on admissions to Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF) between 2005 and 2013 was collected from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice.⁶⁴ Correctional Service Canada provided statistical data on offenders released to the HRM from facilities across Canada (snapshot of an average day). Meeting notes and reference materials of the Offender Reintegration Ad-hoc Committee were collected, as well as information on the organization of corrections within Nova Scotia. Within HRM there are a number of services or organizations relevant to offender reintegration. Interviews with service providers in key areas⁶⁵ were conducted to identify and consider the range of elements involved with this review dimension. Contacts represented federal and provincial corrections, police services, and non-profit organizations for housing (temporary or long-term), at-risk youth, female offenders (or those at-risk), male offenders (or those at-risk) and street outreach. Although the reintegration of youth offenders is an important issue, this report focuses primarily on adult offender reintegration. Information collected on youth offenders is referenced as a point of comparison for identifying gaps in services or potential areas for improvement for adult offender programming.

Reaching out to other services and organizations was intended to gain better understanding of any changes or emergent issues that have come about since the original Roundtable Report. It also contributed other perspectives on major problem areas and potential recommendations moving forward

⁶³ Throughout the document, HRM will be used to refer to the municipal government. “The HRM” represents the city as a whole.

⁶⁴ Nova Scotia Department of Justice Correctional Services will be referred to as Provincial Corrections or NS Corrections. Correctional Service Canada will be referred to as Federal Corrections or CSC.

⁶⁵ Throughout the document, Interviewees will be referred to interchangeably as Sources, Contacts, Subject Matter Experts and Representatives.

from this review. However, it remained difficult to identify changes relevant to offender reintegration in the HRM since 2008.

The report is delivered in four sections. The first provides context for the report by providing information on the HRM's offender population, considering data on the three most relevant Correctional Institutions/Facilities. The second section reviews the eight recommendations from the 2008 Roundtable Report that referenced any connection to offender reintegration. Most of these have not been addressed in the years since the original report, or at least not in practical ways that impacted the issue.

The third section combs through common themes that emerged from the collected data. The themes are: i) services and/or programming within institutions; ii) release planning/ programming that begins prior to an offender's release from an institution; iii) community support and navigating systems and support services; iv) access to and continuity of income assistance programming; v) safe and appropriate housing; vi) mental health and/ or substance abuse support; and vii) employment and/ or employability programming. These indicate priority areas for improvement before higher rates of successful reintegration can be achieved in HRM. The fourth section follows with a list of the most pressing recommendations and corresponding actions to be taken in order to improve rates of successful offender reintegration in the HRM.

The HRM's Offender Population

Offender reintegration is a diverse and complex subject. The only part of the process that is the same for every offender released from institutional custody is that they are made to transition from a correctional facility to some level of independence in the community. The level of support that an offender receives throughout that process, the amount of supervision they are subjected to by corrections while in the community, and the length of time for reintegration varies individually.

It is difficult to know the population under study when discussing offender reintegration in the HRM. Each offender has a different set of needs and risks upon re-entry to the community. Some offenders will have received programming or support while incarcerated to begin to address those needs and risks. However, it was obvious from discussion with Contacts that not all institutions offer such resources, and not all offenders choose to engage with programs while incarcerated. The number of offenders currently in the community in the HRM is also hard to nail down because women and men are released to the HRM from federal and provincial institutions across the country.

Within Nova Scotia alone there are five provincial⁶⁶ and two federal adult correctional facilities. Three of those institutions were identified as having the most significant impact on the HRM, particularly in terms of geography and releasing the highest numbers of offenders to the HRM. Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF) is a multi-security level provincial institution in Dartmouth, NS that houses female and male offenders. Springhill Institution is a medium security level federal facility located in Springhill NS for male offenders. Nova Institution for Women is a multi-security level federal women's facility in Truro NS. CNSCF is the only institution located within the HRM, and presumably has the most direct impact on the city's public safety. A large portion of CNSCF prisoners are released to the HRM and exit planning seems to be inconsistent for male offenders. Conflicting information was collected on whether or not the facility supports releasees to travel to (or return to) destinations outside of the HRM. The issue of release practices at CNSCF is discussed further in section three of the report.

General trends in the released offender population could be surmised from the statistical data collected for this report. Between 150 and 200 federal parolee cases are being supervised at any given time in the HRM, and roughly 10% are female. On average, approximately 4.7% of federal offenders in the HRM community are Aboriginal and 17% are African Canadian. Counts for provincial offenders in the HRM community are more difficult to deduce for a few reasons. For one, CNSCF does not track where individuals go upon leaving the facility; they only record where prisoners are admitted from. Another snag is the shorter duration of provincial sentences to custody, which allows repeat offenders earning multiple jail terms in the same year to be counted multiple times under admission statistics. A third problem with using provincial statistics is that CNSCF holds individuals on remand as well as offenders sentenced to custody. Not all remand inmates are convicted and some will not remain in provincial custody for later release to the HRM.

Nonetheless, admissions statistics for CNSCF between 2007/2008 and 2012/2013 shed some light on the offender population released to the HRM since all individuals sentenced to provincial incarceration will be released within a two year period. Female offenders accounted for between 11% and 18.5% of those sentenced to custody.⁶⁷ Aboriginals were between 3% and 7% of offenders sentenced to custody and

⁶⁶ Nova Scotia's five adult provincial facilities are Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (discussed above), Cape Breton Correctional Facility in Sydney, Southwest Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Yarmouth, Antigonish Correctional Facility in Antigonish and Cumberland Correctional Facility in Amherst.

⁶⁷ Generally, females accounted for between 13.5% and 15.5% of sentenced admissions to CNSCF, however 2012/2011 (11%) and 2012/2013 (18.5%) were atypical.

African Canadians were 15% to 20%.⁶⁸ Overall, the age group with the highest rates of sentenced custody upon admission was 25-34 years of age.⁶⁹ Although there has been a general, moderate downward trend in admission rates, the rates of previous incarceration among the CNSCF offender population has remained between 63% and 64%, with a spike to 66% in 2008/2009. Data from a CNSCF Representative was particularly telling about rates of recidivism within the HRM: there are approximately 4000 admissions and releases per year, but many of these statistics are multiple stays by the same people. This identifies that offenders are not successfully reintegrating into the community from CNSCF and that “many” are re-incarcerated within the same year.

The statistics discussed above offer some idea as to how many individuals are released from institutional custody into the HRM, but it is another matter to suggest how many offenders remain in the HRM after they have completed their term of correctional supervision. It is useful to position offender reintegration within a broader context. Canada’s population is urbanizing and job development and social service resources are increasingly focused on provincial urban communities. This is pertinent because the rate of offenders released to the HRM is higher than the rate of offenders admitted to correctional institutions from the HRM. Not only are more offenders released into HRM than to other parts of the province, but it is more enticing for those offenders to remain in HRM in order to access the wider range of services available. Further, living in a city provides more anonymity or a perceived better opportunity for a “fresh start” than would be experienced by returning to a rural community with a smaller population, where residents tend to know one another more intimately.

It is widely accepted that a small percent of a population accounts for a high percent of that population’s crime. Although the number of offenders in the community may be a small percent of the HRM’s population, the rates of successful reintegration are not high. There is an identified need for helping individuals transition from institution to community. Supporting these small numbers through their reintegration means that a much larger proportion of crime in the HRM—in other terms, of violence and public safety concerns—will be addressed.

Roundtable Report: 2008’s Recommendations

⁶⁸ Aboriginals tended to make up between 3% and 5% of sentenced admissions to CNSCF, but 2011/2012 spiked to 7%. The rates of African Canadian offenders sentenced to custody gradually increased from 15% to 20% between 2007/2008 and 2011/2012 but 2012/2013 shows a decrease to 18%.

⁶⁹ In 2011/2012, the difference between the 25-34 age group and 24 or younger age group was only five people.

This section reviews the recommendations from the original Roundtable Report that were presented as being relevant to offender reintegration in HRM. There were eight such recommendations, some more directly related to offender reintegration than others. The following table outlines each of the eight recommendations considered for this report and briefly summarizes corresponding action taken to advance them as of November 2013.⁷⁰

2008 Recommendation	Outcome or Status as of November 2013
<p>Develop a strategic action plan and establish a Tripartite Forum on Justice which would bring together representatives from the three levels of government (Federal, Provincial and Municipal) for a three year period to consider violence and public safety issues and strategies to deal with them. Topics included: housing, offender reintegration, specialty courts and resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategic action plan was developed in 2011: <i>Halifax Regional Municipality Public Safety Strategic Plan: Partnering for Public Safety</i>. There was no mention of intention to improve offender reintegration processes. Further, when listing the ad-hoc committees initiated in response to the Roundtable Report, the document left out the Offender Reintegration Ad-hoc Committee⁷¹; only the Public Safety and Race Relations and Public Safety and Housing ad hoc consultations were included. • The Safer, Stronger Communities initiative was made to “serve” as the Tripartite Forum on Justice. Committees were created to focus on some of the problem areas identified in the Roundtable Report. In practice, response took a crime prevention approach to community safety issues in public housing areas. Although improvement was noted for some issues in certain parts of the HRM, there is no evidence of efforts around offender reintegration.
<p>Encourage a more in-depth delivery of the restorative justice program for repeat Black young offenders. For example, sentencing circles and collaboration with Federal and Provincial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little evidence that this recommendation has been advanced to any extent by HRM. However, pro-active

⁷⁰ For context surrounding these recommendations, or for the complete list of recommendations, visit the following website for the 2008 *Violence and Public Safety in HRM* report and HRM follow-up reports: <http://www.halifax.ca/police/PublicSafety/MayorsRoundtable.html>

⁷¹ As a result of the Mayor’s Roundtable Report, the Offender Reintegration Ad hoc Committee was formed in the latter half of 2010 and held a handful of meetings. Its purpose was to help the PSO to develop ideas around effective policy-making from an HRM viewpoint, and to work towards a strategic action plan to be advanced by the PSO.

authorities to develop effective offender reintegration programs.

programming targeting at-risk communities and youth have been implemented (for example, Cops’N Kids and Step Up to Leadership by HRP).

- Public Safety Office reported a partnership forged between the Safe Communities Committee and Community Justice Society to explore alternatives to the court process for Black youth. However, outcomes of this partnership are not clear.
- In 2011 a “think tank” was hosted by the Parole Board of Canada for representatives from police, parole officers, correctional services, Black Educators Assoc, and African Nova Scotian community leaders. Outcomes of this initiative are not clear.
- Although the HRM itself was not involved, federal funding was sought for a mentorship program for Black offenders to help with their reintegration. Support was not available at the time.
- Also, there is substantial Federal funding being contributed to reduce weapons violence in the North Preston area over next 3 years, to begin in 2014.

Support the creation and implementation of a Drug Treatment Court, which could help with the reintegration of offenders with addictions problems.

- Although other specialty courts have been developed around the province, there has not been movement on implementing a Drug Treatment Court in the HRM.

Collaborate with local organizations and senior levels of government to ensure safe supervised housing is provided for both youths and adults exiting custodial institutions in order to achieve successful reintegration efforts.

- There is evidence that some work may have been done for youth housing, for example, partnerships between public housing, the private sector and Phoenix Youth Centres.
- There is no evidence of progress with adult housing specific to Federal and Provincial offenders. Note, however, the recent initiative

by Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) to implement an effective “housing first model” to HRM. This plan is still at the preliminary planning stage, but AHANS intends to have plan approved by the federal minister in March, 2014 and end chronic homelessness in Halifax by 2019. Presumably, this would have a positive impact for youth and adults re-entering the community from correctional facilities.

Examine the experiences of other municipalities in Canada and the US with respect to best practices in dealing with the street sex trade, responses to addicted offenders and related issues.

- The Public Safety Office (PSO) examined best practices in other jurisdictions with some public safety issues, but there have been no evident changes as a result. The PSO did not seem to pay any particular attention to offender reintegration.

Advocate for Drug Treatment Courts, given that evidence suggests there is a high level of serious addiction among street sex workers. This could also help facilitate the rehabilitation and reintegration of addicted offenders.

- As noted above, there has not been movement on implementing a Drug Treatment Court. HRM has not shown any interest in this idea.

Encourage Nova Scotia Corrections to do more in the way of exit planning given that offender rehabilitation and reintegration is “woefully inadequate for both adults and youth.”

- There is no indication of any improvements to exit planning for adult men at CNSCF.
- Elizabeth Fry Society facilitates exit planning and support for Provincial female offenders of CNSCF, but community organizations have not been permitted to offer comparable services to male offenders because of complications internal to the facility and a lack of funding sources.
- Programming within CNSCF, which would contribute to offender rehabilitation and reintegration, remains very limited for men. The offered programs are: Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, a General Educational Development (GED) program, and a pilot program called Working On Our Future

(WOOF). This last program is a partnership between SPCA and DOJ to develop transferable skills among inmates through working with/training dogs.

- More programming is offered to female prisoners. Elizabeth Fry Society attends CNSCF regularly to provide programming to female offenders. This was identified as initiating a support network that women could continue to access upon release.

Innovative approaches should be directed to dealing with certain offending young adults. Although enforcement is acknowledged as crucial, crime patterns and the one-track (punishment) approach to adult offenders is not adequate. For example: restorative justice approaches for minor, non-violent offences by (young) adults; direct assistance and advocacy for offender reintegration for more serious offenders. HRM must find a role in these Provincial responsibilities.

- Adult restorative justice has not yet been made available in the HRM area, although it is in other parts of the province (delivered out of East Hants & Colchester counties, and Sydney, Cape Breton).
- Youth restorative justice has been available throughout Nova Scotia since before the Roundtable.
- There are few programs, services and resources tailored specifically to adult offenders. However, there are some new to the city that were developed and implemented without contribution by HRM. For example, Circles Of Support and Accountability (COSA), 7th Step, Navigator Street Outreach, and the Employment Readiness Program. (Each program is discussed in the next section of the report).

Review of the recommendations from 2008 makes it clear that there was little HRM involvement in efforts to improve offender reintegration in the city. Changes or developments that have been implemented were made by community organizations with some private sector involvement for certain initiatives. The scope of such programs, however, is often limited by funding and/or collaboration prospects. The next section identifies that key government stakeholders in offender reintegration have not taken an integrated approach to reintegration. As a result, efforts since 2008 were largely restricted to silos. Considerably more of HRM's attention focused on pro-

active/ preventative initiatives to decrease the number of crimes committed, and in that way lessen the number of offenders in the community.

Over the past decade effective procedures have been implemented to apprehend offenders who do not successfully reintegrate and return to involvement in criminal activity. HRP/RCMP Integrated HEAT Unit is an example of such work, where the unit works to ensure that offenders released to the community follow any orders or conditions after their release. The Halifax Regional Police (HRP) HEAT unit tracks the activities of “long term offenders” and “incompatibles”⁷² in the HRM and deals with background preparation for cases involving the release of “high risk offenders,” where the public may need to be notified. Additionally, information sharing occurs between correctional institutions and the police service so that planning can be done to prepare for high-risk admissions and releases (discussed below). HEAT’s focus is community safety. Unfortunately, this only addresses one side of the problem and does not necessarily address reintegration or discourage recidivism. It is important to consider the discussion of this section in combination with that of the previous, which reviewed statistics on offender reintegration since the original Roundtable Report. Given that offender reintegration practices within the HRM have not received significant attention since 2008, there has been no detectable progress made to rates of successful reintegration within the city.

Major Themes and Priority Areas

This section focuses on priority areas of offender reintegration, most of which are in need of major improvements. Findings are presented from the perspective that helping offenders successfully reintegrate will mitigate the threat they pose to violence and public safety concerns in the HRM. Before narrowing discussion to the HRM, a brief overview of research on offender reintegration is presented.

Research from around the world has identified a number of social, economic and personal barriers to successful reentry. These include: *lack of pro-social or community bonds* (Bales and Mears 2008; Griffiths et al 2007; Visser and Travis 2003), *insufficient education or employability skills* (Carter 2009; Graffam et al 2008; Gillis and Nafekh 2005), *appropriate housing* (Carter 2009; Griffiths et al 2007), *regular/ suitable employment* (Vennard & Hedderman 2009; Griffiths et al 2007; Borzycki 2005). *Mental health* (Carter

⁷² “Incompatibles” refers to individuals or groups who want to do harm to one another, such as opposing or competing gangs.

2009; Petersilia 2001) and *substance abuse/addictions* (Griffiths *et al* 2007) are also common concerns. Literature suggests that at least one of these factors can typically be credited for an individual's re-incarceration (Bales and Mears 2008).

The reasons for an offender's failed reintegration are often predictable because most people "enter confinement with a myriad of problems and ... many are released with the same problems, or worse" (Carter 2009, 3; similarly Griffiths *et al* 2007). Obviously, the foundation for successful reentry to the community must begin while an individual is incarcerated. Further, processes for identifying and addressing the range of needs experienced by an offender should begin in the institution because it provides an opportune time for meaningful intervention. Carter summarizes this process nicely,

It is critically important to address offenders' immediate needs – *both* criminogenic and those that support a stable lifestyle – prior to release from confinement to ensure that offenders have a viable [short term] release plan It is equally important that, [once in the community,] ... corrections professionals [or comparable support workers] work with offenders to address criminogenic needs and develop a long-term stability plan that will lead to their ultimate success in the community (2009, 3).

This literature review has included contributions from a number of countries because research focusing exclusively on issues of offender reintegration in Canada is limited. The current project was able to identify a list of major barriers to reentry that are specific to the HRM. The challenges experienced locally are quite comparable to those met by recently released offenders around the world. After synthesizing the data collected from various sources, seven priority areas or themes emerged as needing improvement in the HRM. Data from Subject Matter Experts was particularly helpful. Priority areas include: i) services and/ or programming within institutions, ii) release planning/ programming, iii) community support services and navigating support systems, iv) access to and continuity of income assistance programming, v) safe and appropriate housing, vi) mental health and/or substance abuse, and vii) employment and/or employability programming.

Each of these areas were identified as having significant impact on an individual's reintegration to the HRM. Topics iv through vii are inter-related issues that come into play largely upon an offender's release from an institution. Of note, issues i, ii and v were among the recommendations for offender reintegration from the 2008 Roundtable Report. The seven themes are now presented as priority issues for improvement.

i) Services and/or programming within corrections institutions

The services and programming options offered in federal institutions for men and in federal and provincial institution for women surpass those offered to men in provincial institutions. There are more supports offered to incarcerated women than men at either institution level, but there is a particularly desperate need for services and programming at the provincial level for men. Since services and programming offered within federal institutions were recognized as much less of a problem when compared to that of CNSCF, they are only briefly overviewed here. Greater attention is given to services and programming offered at CNSCF.

At the federal level, programming offered to men and women is quite different. Within CSC's Atlantic Region, the four major program areas available to male prisoners are:

- Integrated Community Program Model (ICPM), which is a pilot program including aspects of problem-solving, goal setting, conflict management, coping skills, identifying contributing factors to their incarceration and criminal involvement, identifying actions to be taken to improve their situation, and recognizing that one's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values have an impact on their actions. This program is voluntary but strongly recommended to all prisoners. Programming is streamed into high need, moderate need or maintenance and offenders are designated to one based on their risk, determined by the institution. Although some do not need the programming, the majority meet the criteria.
- General Education Development (GED)
- Programming targeting pre-employment readiness and developing employment skills
- Community Integration Program, which works on financial management, resume writing, employment preparation and establishing a working lifestyle, familiarizing prisoners with parole and community supervision processes and expectations, as well as trades training (for example, working with drywall or food preparation). Typically, this programming is offered in affiliation with a local community college and so there is some variation between institutions of what trades skills are offered.

All of this programming is voluntary but prisoners are "strongly encouraged" to participate in those that apply to them (CSC Contact). In all programming, there is some variation between institutions in terms of how programming is delivered and the range of programming options. From the CSC website, "CSC is required to offer programs that respect gender, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences, and are responsive to the special needs of women, Aboriginal offenders, offenders requiring mental health care and other groups" (CSC 2013). Information could not be collected specific to Springhill Institution.

The full range of services and programming specific to federal female prisoners at Nova Institution for Women (Nova) was not pursued, but some important information was collected. Nova's programming and services includes the Federal Outreach Coordinator program administered by Elizabeth Fry Society. The program receives federal funding for the Coordinator to attend the facility twice monthly to conduct release planning, during this time the coordinator also visits women housed in segregation and the secure unit. The coordinator makes sure they are treated well, addresses any concerns they may have and ensures they have received the required administrative reviews from correctional staff. Prisoners sign-up on a list the week prior to the coordinator's visit so they can discuss their concerns. Staff at Nova Institution also regularly refer inmates deemed in need of support. The Federal Outreach Coordinator position also receives funding to be a part of an advocacy group that attends Nova on a monthly basis to provide advocacy on systemic issues. This program is offered at every federal institution where women are incarcerated. The Coordinator's role includes walking the grounds, inspecting units, speaking with inmates in segregation, and meeting with the prisoner's committee, house representatives, the Warden, Deputy Warden and Head of Security to identify and resolve issues or problems before they can escalate. The facility also provides special attention to mental health issues among female prisoners.

Programming offered within the local provincial facility is very different. In part, this is because of the shorter length of time that individuals are in the institution. However, there are internal logistical and human resource issues that also cause complications at CNSCF. Programming offered to female and male offenders varies greatly, both in the kind of programming and the number of options. It was already identified in the previous section that programs for men at CNSCF are Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), GED with a full time teacher and the Working On Our Future (WOOF) pilot program. Inmates must fit a certain profile to be eligible for NA and AA programming and potential gang affiliations are also considered. A representative from NS Corrections identified that the number of seats available in their education program has more than doubled over the last few years. However, teaching capacity has not changed and as a result the quality of the program has weakened. WOOF is available to inmates of two wings in the facility, but they must go through a selection process. Information on how many offenders are in the program at any given time was not collected.

CNSCF Sources recognized the need for more institutional programming for male offenders but the security concerns caused by overcrowding and the lack of internal resources within the institution limits male prisoner movement. This includes staff availability to escort prisoners to and from programs. CNSCF senior management seem to be open to community groups participating in programming within the

facility, but management also communicated that not all staff are enthusiastic about this prospect because of the problem with offender movement and staff resourcing issues.

Female offenders at CNSCF have significantly more access to support. Elizabeth Fry Society administers a Provincial Outreach Coordinator program that receives outside funding to attend CNSCF on a weekly basis to meet with female prisoners. The Coordinator assists with release planning and offers support in terms of the day-to-day issues related to incarceration, such as contact with lawyers, grievances, court dates, prisoner treatment, and things of that nature. Women can sign up to meet with her on an individual basis or phone her on a dedicated line to place their names on the list. Interestingly, this dedicated phone number has also been made available to male offenders at CNSCF, and Elizabeth Fry Society frequently receives calls from men looking for various forms of assistance. Elizabeth Fry Society offers other types of programming to women at CNSCF in the form of four hour workshops that focus on core principles of anger management, healthy relationships, and personal boundaries, among others. Courses are usually delivered in groups of 10-12.

In 2012 the Province launched a mental health and addictions strategy called Together We Can (Mental Health Services website). Part of that strategy includes providing incarcerated adults with mental health and addictions care. Work on that component of the strategy is meant to get underway in 2013/2014; at time of writing information could not be collected on plans or progress for mental health and addictions care to adults in custody.

ii) Release planning and programming

Release planning and programming is closely related to the previous theme and identified trends are very similar. For both men and women, release planning seems acceptable at the federal level for bridging offenders into the community, aside from the state of halfway houses (resident complaints of interior mold and food provisions and preparations). Women offenders receive support at both the federal and provincial level from Elizabeth Fry Society, however, sources identified that there is very little release planning for men at the provincial level. This sometimes sees men released from CNSCF without any resources unless they have maintained some support from community networks while they were incarcerated, such as family or friends. Reportedly, offenders are often released from CNSCF with only the clothes they arrived with and the distribution of even a bus ticket is inconsistent. Typically, those without other options find their way to the HRM's shelters, however, these were identified as inappropriate housing situations for many former offenders (mental health/ addictions issues, potential criminal influences, etc).

Federal institutions offer release programming and planning in the form of the Community Maintenance Program for male offenders, Community Residential Facilities and Community Correctional Centres. Shelter Nova Scotia also contributes to the release process for a portion of releasees. These processes are discussed in turn before comparison is made to initiatives around provincial release.

The *Community Maintenance Program* (CMP) is the phase of the ICPM (discussed in previous section) that federal offenders take once released to the community. The program is designed to help male offenders address their risk factors and reinforce, rehearse and review skills that were learned or developed in the core institutional programs. These include problem solving, high risk thinking, self management skills, goal setting, healthy relationships, and emotions management. The program has participants apply those skills to problems, high-risk situations and challenges they face in the community that can lead to re-offending. Most CMP delivery is during the day directly by CSC staff, however, The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia (JHS) is contracted to offer evening programming for offenders who work through the day.

Community Residential Facilities (CRF) or *Community Correctional Centres* (CCC) offer both housing and programming support upon release.⁷³ When an offender reaches eligibility for parole they can apply for consideration for residency in a community residential facility (CRF).⁷⁴ A community assessment determines the level of support available to the applicant and the suitability of their request. Although the decision process⁷⁵ involves a range of representatives, discretion for accepting an offender at a CRF is left to the community organization that operates it. Those offenders who are deemed unsuitable for a CRF may then be considered for residency at a community correctional centre (CCC). Even though all applications are reviewed by CRFs, persons being released from maximum security facilities, those who have residency requirements, or those identified as “detainable” (show significant risk of committing a Schedule 1 offence upon release) would almost always be directed to a CCC (see *Corrections and*

⁷³ CRFs offer day-to-day supervision and support while attempting to help residents connect with relevant local resources that may be beneficial to them. CRFs also refer some clients to Shelter Nova Scotia’s Supportive Housing Program, where they can access ongoing supports. CFRs do not offer in-house programming.

⁷⁴ There are four community residential facilities in the HRM. They are Railton House in Dartmouth for adult men, Sir Sanford Fleming House in Halifax for adult men, and Marguerite Centre and Nehiley House in Halifax for adult women. CRFs are run by community organizations. Community Correctional Centres (CCC) are run by CSC directly and Halifax has two: Carlton CCC and Carlton Centre Annex.

⁷⁵ The institutional parole officer refers a prisoner’s application to a CRF to the local parole office, where it is assigned to a community parole officer to conduct a community assessment to determine the level of support and suitability of the applicant’s request. A case management meeting is held among the head(s) of the community-run halfway house(s), staff from Carlton Centre, a CSC social worker, HRP’s Community Corrections Liaison Officer, and the community parole officer assigned to the file. The parole officer compiles the information and reports back to the applicant’s institution via the community assessment.

Conditional Release Act). Those facilities are better equipped to manage offenders who may pose a higher risk of parole violation or re-offending.

A CRF/CCC Source explained that each case is judged on its own merit but that a demonstrated motivation to change is considered a strong indicator of successful reintegration. Although some consideration is given to the nature of an applicant's offence, the efforts undertaken by an offender during incarceration are given weight; for example, program participation, personal development, behavior, compliance with their case plan and security issues.

In-reach workers from Shelter Nova Scotia travel to Springhill Institution and Nova approximately once per month with a CSC parole officer to do client pre-assessments. Shelter NS then has a good idea of what a federal offender's needs are before they are released to one of Shelter NS's housing facilities. Shelter Nova Scotia is also contracted by CSC as the parolee Report Centre for those individuals who have a reporting condition as part of their federal release plan.

The HRM's provincial institution is quite different from its federal counterparts. Senior Management of NS Corrections has advised that they have the capacity to make travel arrangements for prisoners from out of province or outside of the HRM, and that CNSCF does make such arrangements upon request.⁷⁶ Another CNSCF Representative also supported that offenders are provided with a Metro Transit bus ticket upon release, to help them travel to a destination within the city. However, information from multiple other Sources suggests that such procedures are not often practiced at CNSCF. Although CNSCF has Case Management Officers, for whom release planning is a part of their job description, other duties related to security within the facility take priority. Labour management issues were also identified as problematic. As a result, exit planning for CNSCF inmates has become a target that may be missed; security of the facility is of more concern than how a released offender will manage once in the community.

Numerous Sources, including those from CNSCF, identified an overall lack of release planning for men coming from CNSCF. A representative from a community organization described exit planning at CNSCF as "non-existent" and former inmates were reported to leave the facility in the clothes they arrived with (regardless of the weather or season upon their incarceration and release).⁷⁷ Sources furthered that releasees typically have no plan in place for where to go once out of the facility and no bus ticket or pre-

⁷⁶ According to Senior Management of NS Corrections, there are instances where CNSCF will arrange with DCS to fund travel expenses in order to send an offender back to another province or for bus tickets to the nearest community to where they live.

⁷⁷ One Interviewee explained that a man arrested and incarcerated at CNSCF in shorts in July is released in shorts in January.

arranged mode of transportation from CNSCF (in an industrial park on the city's outskirts) to the urban core or elsewhere, unless individuals have maintained support from the community and have been able to make arrangements, whether with friends, family or a community group. Elizabeth Fry Society attends CNSCF on a weekly basis to assist female prisoners with release planning, but there is not a comparable support service for male offenders. Male offenders are not consistently provided a bridge between incarceration and the community. A Contact reported that Elizabeth Fry Society frequently receives calls on their dedicated line at the institution from men looking for assistance with release planning.

Prisoners released on provincial parole are actually able to access CRF housing, but the number of applicants is low and the rate of successful applicants is even lower.⁷⁸ Although it has traditionally been rare, a CRF/CCC Representative identified a current increase which may be related to an increased effort by provincial corrections to engage offenders in provincial parole to help alleviate issues of mandatory minimum sentencing and institutional overcrowding. The contact also explained that there is minimal supervision when a provincial offender is released on ERD (Early Release Date, at two-thirds of their sentence), so they are not engaged in much programming once released. However, by having provincial parolees on Day Parole at a CRF, they are supervised by federal parole officers and are able to access federal programming and support that would not otherwise be available to them.

Those who leave CNSCF without release planning may be directed to Metro Turning Point by CNSCF staff, which is an emergency shelter for men located in Halifax. However, former inmates may not be given any bus tickets and often do not have any money accessible to them immediately upon their release. Even if an individual in this situation were familiar with the city, getting from CNSCF in Burnside to Metro Turning Point in Downtown Halifax can be difficult.

Although Shelter Nova Scotia works with federal corrections to provide housing options to released offenders, they have no contact with any of the provincial correctional facilities. It is common for those released from CNSCF to "turn up" at Metro Turning Point. Shelter NS can only begin the process of supporting recently released individuals to find housing at that point, as the client often does not have any of their essential documents (MSI card, SIN, etc) when they arrive. Some clients released from CNSCF are already on income assistance (IA) and many others are eligible for IA. This should help individuals move into more appropriate housing. However, it is common for released offenders to remain at Metro Turning Point for an extended period of time while DCS Community Navigators work to collect the

⁷⁸ A Subject Matter Expert noted that provincial parole numbers are much higher in both New Brunswick and Newfoundland.

necessary information for re-opening an individual's IA file and/or securing them a better housing arrangement. Interaction between CNSCF and Department of Community Services (DCS) was also identified as a weak point. Sources external to NS Corrections communicated that there are efforts to get funding for two social workers for CNSCF, but it was not communicated what their proposed role would be.⁷⁹

To summarize findings on this theme, federal programming and case management, both in the institution and through Community Parole Offices, is reportedly quite good for released female and male offenders. There was a great need identified to replicate those efforts at the provincial level, specifically for men, in order to (potentially) break the cycle of criminality before crime escalates to the realm of federal imprisonment. Elizabeth Fry Society seems to offer appropriate support to female provincial offenders. A couple of Sources also identified a need for release planning specifically related to addictions issues or mental health concerns. While federal corrections have resources in place for offenders released to CRF and CCC facilities, provincial corrections do not appear to offer any level of support to women or men with substance abuse issues upon release. This issue is discussed in more detail in subsection vi (below).

Speaking generally on offender release planning in the HRM, the CRF/CCC Representative outlined it best: without adequate programming and reintegration opportunities, offenders are unable to break their criminal cycle, "especially young offenders." Provincial offenders slowly see the severity of their offences and sentences escalate without having received any meaningful interventions. NS Corrections appears to do little to address public safety concerns around offender reintegration, however, CNSCF does play an important role through their dedicated resource for the criminal intelligence network within the HRM. This resource facilitates intelligence that serves both public safety in the greater community as well as security within the institution. CNSCF has also changed some of their procedures to improve community safety. For example, offenders who had a sentence to be served on weekends used to be given a "pass" and sent back home upon arriving at the facility due to overcrowding. This no longer happens, due to concerns around public backlash if an individual re-offended while they are in the community but supposed to be in custody.

iii) Community support/ navigating systems and services

Recently released offenders require ongoing support through adequate programming and services once in the community to help with their transition from incarceration to the wider community. This group also

⁷⁹ The notion behind the social worker positions at CNSCF could be meant to address the ability by DCS to identify their clients who are in custody for over 30 days yet continue to receive IA, contrary to what is allowed by policy.

needs to be made aware of available community resources, as it is not realistic to place the emphasis on the offender to seek out access to resources due to existing barriers in their life (disruption/ disorientation caused by incarceration, lack of knowledge, previous “burned bridges,” mental health/ substance abuse issues, etc). Having support of this nature seems to have a significant impact on success rates of reintegration.

There are community groups in the HRM that offer specialized support to women, men and/or youth with a criminal history, and who can help such people navigate the systems and services available to them. While researching this report, sources noted many positives and that measurable progress since 2008 is evident; there is increased community effort responding to various aspects of offender reintegration. Instead of attempting to provide an exhaustive list of relevant organizations and initiatives, this section identifies some of the new initiatives since the original Roundtable Report and existing service or resource gaps in the community support currently available to HRM citizens with criminal histories.

Although not a complete list, the following are examples of programs implemented in the last six years. Each represents a community initiative developed in response to a gap in the support services available to reintegrating offenders in the HRM.

- *Navigator Street Outreach* (also Navigator Program) was started in 2007 by the Spring Garden Area Business Association (SGABA).⁸⁰ One full time staff member works with street-involved and homeless individuals, many of whom have been involved with the criminal justice system to some extent.⁸¹ The structure of the program is very flexible in that the majority of its work is done on the street instead of from an office, and that interactions with clients completely vary by person, depending on their identified need(s) or desire for some kind of assistance. The program offers to connect clients with local resources and offer financial assistance with obtaining IDs, bus passes, work boots, and other general supports, but in many cases interactions are simply a “check-in” by staff on foot with street involved persons. The Navigator receives approximately 50 contacts daily, whether in person or by text, email or phone call. The program offers the target population opportunities to access support at any time and on their terms.⁸²
- *Our Thyme Café* is a social enterprise initiative by Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia to offer workplace training and experience in the food industry to

⁸⁰ Supporters over time have included the Downtown Halifax Business Commission, the Downtown Dartmouth Business Association, HRM, Department of Justice and The Society for the Improvement of the Conditions of the Poor.

⁸¹ There is also a part time staff who helps clients with housing.

⁸² For more information on the Navigator Street Outreach program, see <http://springgardenarea.com/2012/07/navigator-street-outreach>.

women who have been involved in the criminal justice system or who could be considered at risk. It opened in December of 2008 and is supported by DCS. The program also maintains strong ties with various local restaurants and businesses to provide employment opportunities for their participants.

- *Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)* is a volunteer-based reintegration program for sex offenders who are deemed high-risk to re-offend. Participation is voluntary for released offenders and they are pre-screened to enter the program while they are still incarcerated. Groups of three or four trained volunteers form a “Circle” of support to the offender and hold them accountable through the process of their re-entry to the community. COSA Halifax was established in 2009 and provides ongoing, long-term support for as long a period of time as former offenders feel they need it; the reintegrative support offered by COSA can extend well beyond that of CSC.
- *Employment Readiness Program-Pilot (ERP)* is an initiative by The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia to support adult men on income assistance who have identified their criminal record as barrier to their finding regular employment. ERP supports participants through personal development, employability skills development, job searching practical skills training and a work placement with a local business with the opportunity to be hired for permanent employment. It began in the Fall of 2013 in partnership with Employment Nova Scotia and DCS.
- *7th Step* is active in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island and has only recently started to re-organize in Nova Scotia. It held its annual general meeting in Halifax in September 2013 and has been working to collect volunteers and public input but at the time of writing it was not fully operating. 7th Step is a self-help group run by peers to support current inmates or offenders recently released to reintegrate as law-abiding, productive citizens.

Unfortunately, obstacles remain for individuals who are rehabilitating and reintegrating into the community. Sources identified that former offenders continue to be impeded by a lack of ongoing support, access and availability of resources, true outreach (“feet on the ground”) services, advocacy and collaboration and communication between and among support services.

- *Lack of ongoing support-* Interviewees noted that their clients, particularly those who have been incarcerated or are in long-term receipt of income assistance, do much better when they have had support in establishing clear goals, a concrete plan of action for achieving them, and have ongoing support to help them but also hold them accountable.

For federal offenders, parole officers (and CRF/CCC staff, when applicable) work to facilitate an offender’s transition from CSC-based programs and services to provincial- and community-based resources. This is particularly the case for those with high need of support, like for mental health issues, substance abuse concerns, and those requiring employment supports. There is a need in the HRM for appropriate, long-term services to pick up where short-term services end.

- *Access and availability of resources-* Community programming is recommended for former offenders in the community but fees for accessing such supports can be a barrier to their participation. Probation Offices have identified that the affordability of court-ordered programming is a significant problem for their clients. For some offender groups, Department of Justice purchases a block of seats so that probationers can access the necessary programming. Sources identified the same financial barrier for released offenders in the community, where programming fees are expected to be paid out of pocket. However, funding support is not readily available to help offenders released from custody access programming that will help with their reintegration. Upon release, even for individuals who have been able to re-access IA, programming like Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, or education and employment skill upgrades are often not affordable, and are thus out of reach.

A gap in service was identified for men who have "aged out" of youth programming (25+), who may have ongoing legal issues and some level of "learned helplessness." Reintegrating adult male offenders require targeted support in the priority areas of: income assistance access, housing, mental health and/ or substance abuse, obtaining employment or employability programming. Although there are services targeting some offender groups (for example, women, youth, Aboriginals, African Nova Scotians) there is a general lack of services targeting adult males. Traditionally, churches could be accessed for general community support, but they are no longer the community-wide institution that they once were. Now, it is difficult for an individual to find the support they require.

- *True outreach or "feet on the ground" services-* A few Contacts identified that the HRM lacks "feet on the ground" services, where the onus is on the service providers to go to their clients or target population. Instead, the general expectation among services in the HRM is that offenders in the community will seek out and access services that are almost entirely office based. This service structure is built on the assumptions that clients know about existing relevant services and that their lives are collected enough to seek out support. As one Contact explained, this common practice presents a barrier to clients, who are possibly already dealing with re-orienting themselves to the community, a lack of knowledge about what services are available, "burned bridges" from previous failed access attempts, and instability linked to mental health and/or substance abuse issues. More organizations in the HRM should offer true outreach services and programming.
- *Advocacy-* Sources identified that navigating systems (for example, income assistance, health) can be confusing and difficult, particularly because offenders are dealing with stigma tied to their criminal record. Contacts from a few organizations identified that the help of an advocate can be "vital" to a client's ability to access a service. An advocate can relieve the burden on the client and endorse claims about their needs, intent, efforts and progress, etc. An advocate can also act as an intermediary between the individual and service provider to alleviate the client's stress and prevent misunderstanding between the two parties.

- *Collaboration and communication between/ among support services-* Where so many former offenders are dealing with a range of issues that must be overcome for a successful reintegration to the community, involvement by a number of services offered by different organizations is required. Many Sources explained that the provision of a holistic network of support is the most effective method for helping clients address their needs. However, Contacts also identified that agencies in the HRM often work in “silos,” meaning that there is little information sharing or collaboration to respond to an individual’s need or even a broader social issue. This shortfall produces problems for those seeking support; navigation of different social systems and their services is tedious and confusing and individuals are constantly required to repeat their experiences to each service provider they are referred to or seek out.

The process of accessing help becomes a series of chores that rely on strong organizing skills and patience. As such, the follow-through is made very difficult for individuals who may have some level of comprehension or attitudinal issues, “learned helplessness,” and little physical and emotional support to continue to access services and attend appointments. The support services in the HRM could truly improve the level of help provided to their clients by improving lines of communication and collaboration efforts with other services in the network.

Where this section has reviewed new programs implemented in the last six years and remaining challenges for accessing services in the HRM, the next four sections outline major problem areas of offender reintegration in the city, as identified by Sources. These are income assistance, housing, mental health or substance abuse and employment or employability programming. Discussion is kept brief, as the recommendations made by this review (below) directly respond to specific problems or “hitches” in services that sources identified.

iv) Income assistance

Interviewees consistently identified problems with access to and continuity of income assistance programming for recently released offenders. These include:

- *Inmates are unable to begin IA while incarcerated, even as they approach release.* This creates delays in accessing appropriate housing and housing services other than the shelter.
- *Reactivating IA is complicated by communication disconnects.* Offenders may be unable to maintain contact with their caseworker during criminal justice proceedings. As such, their IA files may be closed and offenders must go through IA intake procedures “all over again” with a new caseworker upon release. This includes tracking down acceptable identification and confirming housing arrangements, even though the necessary information may be held by a former caseworker’s file and could hasten reactivation.

- *To access IA, offenders need to stay at a shelter unless they have a home to return to. If an individual does not have an address to be released to (a residence of family, friends, or their own), they are required to stay at a shelter in order to access IA. A Source reported that the provincial government considers shelters to be the main way to address homeless; if an offender is unable or unwilling to access a shelter (mental health, addictions, social issues, even non-contact orders) and has no other living options, they are unable to access IA.*
- *DCS offers to cover expenses for identification, health cards, etc one time only. If these items are lost, stolen, or not obtained upon release from incarceration, DCS will not provide further funding for the items and offer little-to-no hands-on assistance to individuals in obtaining them.*

Contacts did note that having DCS staff in the shelters (the “transient team”) has been a useful and important resource for getting the IA intake process started right away. This specialized team was reported as being able to flex policy if necessary to overcome issues that could otherwise stall the process. However, as noted above, individuals must be in a shelter or have an address in order to access IA and the transient team. Those who are unable or unwilling to access shelter services (due to personal issues or over-crowding) are not able to utilize the transient teams’ valuable services.

v) Housing

Interviewees consistently identified housing as a serious concern, especially for released male offenders. Appropriate housing provides some level of stability and improves overall quality of life, both important components of successful reintegration. One Contact reported that available stable housing greatly increases success rates of clients accessing treatment and community resources. For lack of other options, as discussed above, released offenders often end up in the HRM’s shelters which can be detrimental to successful reintegration due to mental health, substance abuse issues, criminal influences, among other potential triggers. Reserved temporary housing for recently released provincial offenders is lacking.

There is also a lack of affordable housing units in the HRM. In the city, a small number of landlords control the majority of residential units. Even when shelters may be suitable as a short-term solution to housing, recently released offenders have very limited options for long-term housing. One Source explained that a client with stability issues can quickly find themselves blacklisted and unable to secure housing except in illegal and/or deplorable rooming or boarding house options. That said, Halifax Housing Help (HHH) provides support in this area, for those who are aware of the organization. HHH helps those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless find and maintain housing by offering assistance in locating

appropriate housing, trusteeship, and ongoing support that works with tenants, landlords and community organizations. Where shelters in the HRM have caps on the number of residents they can house and offer services to, HHH has no such caps. They also offer an alternative to individuals unwilling or unable to access shelters.

Elizabeth Fry Society's Holly House is an example of longer-term supportive housing for women in the HRM. Women who have been recently homeless or may require some support to develop skills and stability in independent living can sign a lease, pay rent and live in the home for up to two years. Holly House does not accept women coming directly from a correctional institution. Elizabeth Fry Society staff work with residents to develop plans for moving to new accommodations, maintaining a healthy and stable lifestyle, and accessing necessary community resources. Strict rules prohibit drug or alcohol use on site but residents are free to come and go at their leisure, and are not subject to constant supervision.

Compliance-Based Housing⁸³, used to define the type of affordable housing options available in the HRM, were widely criticized by sources. The Housing First Model⁸⁴ was identified as showing a lot of potential for resolving housing-related issues in the HRM. Sources referenced successful Housing First initiatives in British Columbia and Alberta. One Contact explained that the term "housing first" is being misused by some local organizations, where all aspects of the model have not been implemented. There is currently work being done by Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) to develop a community plan that will bring an effective Housing First model to the HRM. The first obstacle is ensuring enough affordable safe housing units can be made available.

vi) Mental health and/ or substance abuse

Mental health and/ or substance abuse issues were identified as impacting a significant portion of offenders in the HRM community. In fact, a CRF/CCC Representative positioned mental health and addictions as "far and away the biggest issues" that their clients face during reintegration efforts, and that concurrent mental health and substance abuse problems are also common. Subject Matter Experts connected with federal corrections identified that mental health is a problem for at least 26% to 43% of

⁸³ Compliance-Based Housing refers to housing options that have conditions on a tenant's residence. For example, taking medications and not using drugs or alcohol.

⁸⁴ Housing First model is based on the notion that providing safe, sustainable housing is the starting point for addressing the issues and barriers that cause homelessness, such as substance abuse, mental health, criminality, etc. An important component is that a network of social support services is built into the housing plan so that the individual's needs are met (psychological counseling, medical, mental health, addictions treatments, ongoing follow-up, etc) and the life skills training that tenancy requires is included (social skills, cleanliness, banking, budgeting, financial planning, etc).

federal inmates, while other Contacts suggested rates are much higher. Mental health was noted as an increasingly significant issue by Representatives from provincial corrections. Substance abuse was estimated to affect 86% *or more* of inmates. These rates seem to hold true for residents at halfway houses. Although the federal corrections offer some sort of release programming for those with mental health and substance abuse issues, such planning is “non-existent” at the provincial level. This means that those rates are also relatively accurate for offenders in the wider community.

In the past four to six years CSC started maintaining a mental health team to facilitate federal offender reintegration. It is not clear whether this team is only available to CRF and CCC residents, or if all federally released offenders on parole can access it. The team includes a mental health nurse and mental health social worker and CSC also contracts a psychiatrist and two psychologists. Although these resources would seem adequate, the CRF/CCC Representative explained that a disconnect happens when people are transferring into provincial mental health and substance abuse services. There have been instances where provincial workers may direct clients to access CSC resources; however, if the goal is to be safely reintroducing the offender to general society, CSC’s standpoint is that accessing provincial resources is vital to ongoing success and stability in the community.

More generally, uncertainty with community Mental Health Services in the HRM was evident. There is confusion around what programming is available, the differences in services between local offices, and clients were reported as commonly being shuffled between offices due to mandated catchment areas, waiting lists, among other complications. For released offenders that are ineligible for CSC’s mental health team, it is not a straightforward process to access the support and services for mental health.

In terms of community services pertaining to addictions, complaints seemed less about a lack of services and more about the parameters around accessing the services available. For example, abstinence-based programming like that offered by the Salvation Army excludes individuals actively using any type of drug, including methadone. Services offered by Capital District Health Authority’s (CDHA) Addictions Program vary between offices and most accept clients by referral only. CDHA’s counseling is free with no waiting list, but options for evening and weekend sessions are limited. Addictions support requiring medical assistance, such as withdrawal or detoxification, typically see clients on a waiting list for some time before a spot becomes available in programming. Other private, one-on-one counseling is far too expensive for most, and addictions services offered by the emergency shelters require residency at one of the shelters; although this programming permits participants to be actively using substances, the individual must also endure shelter living (discussed elsewhere as inappropriate for reintegrating offenders).

The lack of appropriate services, programming and support for individuals with these issues was troubling for Contacts, particularly those from non-profit community organizations. One Contact explained that in the HRM there are virtually no services available for active and concurrent mental health and addictions cases. Individuals in this position were noted as being among those barred from shelters, unable to access IA, and repeat offenders. Another source criticized that Community Outreach Workers from Addictions Services do not actually leave their office and thus help very few of those who require their services and supports.

vii) Employment and employability programming

Other research on female and male offender reintegration in Canada has identified that employment contributes to “an increased likelihood of successful sentence completion, a longer period of time in the community, and a decreased likelihood of returning to the institution for a new offence or technical violation” (Gillis and Nafekh 2005, 13). Further, the research suggests that “community-based ... readily-accessible employment interventions for offenders” upon release to the community can play an important role in reintegration (13). Roughly two-thirds of male federal offenders are unemployed at the time of their arrest (Boe 2005). Education is a closely related factor, where 78% of all men admitted to federal custody in Canada since April 1995 had not completed a high school education at the time of admission (Boe 2005).

Employment status was consistently identified by sources for the current project as a risk factor for becoming involved with the Criminal Justice System (CJS), and as such it is a factor of successful reintegration. A Representative from Nova Scotia Corrections noted that educational programs have the best payoff in terms of offender reintegration, followed closely by an individual having some legitimate income, whether by employment or government subsidy. A Contact from the HRM’s shelter system commented that the biggest barrier to safe, secure long-term housing is having a job. Education and employability are closely related, where a certain level of education is often listed as a qualifier for a job. Those who have been incarcerated clearly need support in upgrading education and work-related skills both within the institution and upon release. Unfortunately, these two areas are not strong points for programming in the provincial corrections facility in the HRM.

Another factor that complicates a former offender’s ability to find legitimate work upon release is the increasing popularity of criminal record checks and a workplace requirement for employees to be “bondable.” Even in roles where one’s offence would not be relevant, any blemish reported in a criminal record check is enough for many HRM employers to deny employment opportunities to an individual. For

example, an offence related to operating a motor vehicle should not preclude someone from working in general labour, sales or service sectors. However, there are many cases where this has happened.

One Interviewee has observed criminal histories becoming an issue when an employee is caught in a lie after being hired, where they may have initially told their employer that they did not have a criminal record in order to get the position. The Contact had also seen clients, particularly younger ones, who were willing and able to access education at community college for work in certain support service areas but were turned away from programs because they required “clean” criminal record checks. This is despite the fact that some, given their experiences within the system, could be ideal candidates for that line of work. Another Contact reported that male offenders seem to have less difficulty finding and maintaining employment than female offenders, presumably because the labour sector where many men are obtaining work has fewer concerns around criminal backgrounds (landscaping/ snow removal, painting, drywall, concrete, etc). However, HRM-wide there is an identified shortage of work for those with criminal records.

Criminal histories are a major barrier for finding employment in the HRM, even for low-skilled work. As one Interviewee put it, “people [employers] are afraid to take a chance on an ex-offender.” The result is that those with a criminal record are often trapped on income assistance programs, since they cannot access employment to live self-sufficiently. There are recent initiatives working to address deficits in employability and education among the community’s former offender population (for examples, see mention of Our Thyme Café and Employment Readiness Program above). However recently released offenders are not routinely put into contact with employment/ employability services. Although one Source noted that CSC offers Community Employment Services at the local parole office, and that CRF/CCC staff encourage residents to access the community resources (YMCA Employment Centre, Job Junction, Temporary Agencies, etc), there are a lot of offenders in the community without access to that guidance. Further, programs designed to offer education, employability and other skill upgrades are not able to change the policies of local businesses around criminal record expectations.

Sources pointed to a need for programming in the HRM that develops personal and employability skills and offers vocational training while on the job. A Representative from NS Corrections suggested that HRM could play a valuable role in enhancing offender reintegration by developing and offering work programs that would start while offenders are incarcerated at CNSCF and carry over upon their release to the community. Another Contact identified that Youth LIVE is a good model that is currently limited to youth at risk. It was suggested to expand this type of social enterprise programming to adults.

To conclude this section, a common criticism was made about each of the seven priority areas. Data sources named communication and collaboration between and among organizations, agencies, and departments as a weakness at every stage of offender reintegration. This typically referred to relationships between government and non-government groups. Allocation of resources and a willingness to communicate and collaborate on the seven priority areas are barriers to successful reintegration that are far beyond the control of the offender. At the same time, these components are very much at the centre of an offender's chances for long-term and successful rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

2013 Roundtable Review of Offender Reintegration: HRM Recommendations

Drawing from the information presented in this report, the following section outlines five recommendations for tackling the most pressing issues around offender reintegration in the HRM. A set of actions are listed to provide steps for addressing each recommendation.

Recommendation 1: Employment Opportunities and Employability Programming

The HRM needs more employability training and employment opportunities for offenders. The HRM would benefit from social enterprise employment initiatives, the development of a central resource of employment opportunities in the HRM for offenders, and the municipal government should consider developing its own program to employ offenders.

Actions:

- A)** HRM must become informed on this subject, including the rise of criminal record checks as a determinant for employment, the challenges posed by the record suspension process, the number of citizens with criminal records, and the limited number of employment opportunities for former offenders.
- B)** HRM must assume a leadership role to educate employers on realities of excluding applicants with a criminal record (convictions may be irrelevant to position; convictions may be dated; they are excluding a significant number of qualified applicants, etc). HRM should advocate for local businesses to hire former offenders and consider offering an incentives program for businesses who do change their policies.
- C)** Upon release or shortly after release, offenders must be supported in seeking employment. HRM should be the catalyst for the development of a directory of employers willing to hire former offenders, and the resource should be provided to offenders. Community agencies could be engaged to help with this and programs

targeting this objective should be supported. Social enterprise employment is particularly promising.

- D) During incarceration and upon release, offenders need support in accessing programming that offers education and skill upgrades, development opportunities and work experience. HRM and the Province must collaborate on this.

Recommendation 2: Programming and Release Planning at CNSCF

CNSCF needs to be positioned as part of the community; the institution is not external to the HRM as its function has real implications for the wider community. CNSCF must be actively engaged in the safety of the wider community in addition to security of the facility. Inmates need programming opportunities during incarceration. Behaviours will not change without constructive intervention that provides alternative options; risks to the institution and the wider community cannot be mitigated without programming. The relationship between HRM and NS Corrections must be strengthened.

Actions:

- A) HRM must advocate for increased community involvement in provincial programming and balanced programming opportunities for men and women within CNSCF. Where Elizabeth Fry Society, a community organization, is permitted to offer services and programs to female offenders, a similar relationship must be developed to offer supports to male offenders.
- B) HRM and CNSCF must collaborate to develop and implement a functional release planning program for male offenders that will engage community organizations. Exit planning processes must begin prior to release so that issues of income assistance, housing and community programming will be in place upon release. Collaboration with DCS on this matter would also be useful.
- C) Create a Community Support Worker position to coordinate release planning at CNSCF. The Community Support Worker would need to be independent of correctional staff, so that the inmate's release plan is a priority over internal security and labour management within the facility. This position would liaise between offenders, CNSCF and community resources to ensure that offender needs are known and are met upon their release to the community.

Recommendation 3: Community Programming and Services for Adult Men

Ongoing, long-term support must be accessible to all offender groups (youth, women, men and overrepresented ethnic groups). There is a real, identified need for community programs and services for those who have "aged out" of youth programs, particularly men, who have ongoing legal issues and

typically have some level of "learned helplessness." Adult men (25+) represent a large portion of the HRM's offender population, yet there is a shortage of outreach programming and resources available to those ready to make significant changes, during and/or at any point after their incarceration.

Actions:

- A)** HRM must become educated on organizations that target offender populations through outreach services, community programming and other supports. HRM should support and promote those organizations.
- B)** HRM should take on an active role in advocating for increased support and resources from the Provincial and Federal governments on this issue. Particular effort should be put towards resources for adult men.
- C)** Existing community groups that are specialized in supporting and working with adult men with a criminal background need increased support from HRM and the wider community. HRM should work to improve community understanding of the value and intent of services and programs designed for adults with a criminal background.

Recommendation 4: Continuity and Consistency among the Support Network

There is a great need for organizations, agencies and government departments to improve communication lines and to collaborate on issues pertaining to offender needs for successful reintegration. A holistic or "wraparound" approach is widely regarded as being the most effective to engage with and support those with complex needs. Such an approach provides a complete network of support and requires a high level of communication and collaboration between and among organizations so that consistency and continuity of support is maintained. In the HRM, community organizations and government agencies must be involved in order to address the range of needs for offender groups. The network of services must address needs around housing, income assistance, health, mental health/addictions, employment, and education, among others.

Actions:

- A)** HRM should facilitate the development of a strategic action plan that will address service gaps and raise awareness of the services relevant to offender reintegration. Community and government organizations must be engaged with this project.
- B)** HRM should facilitate a symposium that brings together the range of services for the purposes of information sharing, partnership building and coordination or planning of service provision. A resource or directory should be developed and updated annually that outlines the network of support services relevant to offender reintegration. This would be useful to the Community Support Worker and any other

positions responsible for release planning from federal and provincial correctional facilities.

- C) HRM should work to improve community understanding of the value and intent of the services and programs designed for those with a criminal background.
- D) There is a need for true street outreach programs in the HRM, where workers are less office-based and are visible to street-based populations. Such programs are necessary for accessing a wider population of those in need *on their own terms*, without putting the expectation on them to seek out services. Community volunteers could be mobilized and trained as liaisons between target populations and community services. The volunteer program could be run through the municipality, as part of their role in the network of services.

Recommendation 5: Appeal to the Province to Address Service Gaps in their Jurisdiction

Although many areas of deficit relating to reintegration of offenders are under provincial jurisdiction (such as housing, income assistance, mental health and substance abuse), in light of the fact that the HRM is a catchment area for the vast majority of released provincial offenders, it has a vested interest in successful reintegration. The municipality should endeavour to facilitate and coordinate services between the two levels of government and ensure that pressure is put on provincial departments to address the issues outlined herein.

Actions:

- A) Housing units that are separate from the emergency shelters must be made available to offenders upon their release. Provincial offenders, especially males, are particularly limited in appropriate short-term housing options upon their release. Special consideration should be given to those with mental health and substance abuse, for whom strict compliance-based housing options are even less suitable.
- B) There is a need for programming and services for those with a) concurrent mental health and substance abuse issues and for b) substance abuse issues where offenders are still actively using. A harm reductionist approach is widely regarded as the most successful, and is more appealing to the target population.

A program similar to the COSA model⁸⁵ could be especially useful for addressing substance abuse among the federal and provincial offender population upon release. Much like COSA, community volunteers could be mobilized and trained to facilitate this.

⁸⁵ The COSA model (Circles of Support and Accountability)⁸⁵ engages a small group of volunteers to meet regularly with the reintegrating offender to become a source of both long-term support and to hold the offender accountable for their choices and behaviours around substance (ab)use.

- C)** HRM should negotiate with DCS about ways that policies and procedures could be modified to improve offender reintegration. Suggestions include:
- i. At intake, DCS workers should review files of clients with prior IA involvement to identify the information that is already available and know what information needs to be updated or collected. This should speed up the process, since the client will not be demanded to collect information that is already on file.
 - ii. Match past clients with caseworkers that they have previously worked with, where possible and where appropriate.
 - iii. The IA intake process should start while offenders are still incarcerated. Developing a partnership between DCS and HHH/AHANS could address the issue of offenders not having an address upon release, especially considering HHH's trustee program.

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THE 2014 HRM ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

**ADDRESSING YOUTH CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN
THE HRM:
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Stephen Schneider, Ph.D.

Department of Sociology and Criminology

Saint Mary's University

Executive Summary

This report documents the findings of research assessing initiatives in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) that address the problem of serious and chronic young offenders. Based on this research, policy and program recommendations are made to the HRM government to more effectively address this problem.

If police-reported statistics are used as the sole basis to assess whether initiatives implemented in the HRM following the 2008 Roundtable Report have had any impact on youth crime and violence, the answer would be no (or at best, the initiatives have had a negligible impact).

This is partially due to significant gaps in efforts to control youth crime and violence for the regional municipality as a whole and within high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods in particular. These gaps include the following:

- the lack of a collaborative and integrated multi-governmental/multi-sectoral approach at the city-wide and neighbourhood levels,
- the absence of comprehensive strategic plans for the city as a whole and for neighbourhoods with a high rate of crime, violence and criminogenic risk factors,
- insufficient outreach to the most at-risk children, youth and young adults (in part due to an inadequate number of youth outreach workers),
- a shortage of structured, developmentally-based after-school programs and resources (that offer tutoring, mentoring, social competency skills training, sports, recreation) in high-risk environments,
- a lack of co-ordinated strategies, programs, and resources to prevent and treat mental health and substance abuse disorders that are linked to serious and chronic youth criminality,
- insufficient labour market and post-secondary education strategies for at-risk youth and young adults, and
- the absence of evidence-based community crime prevention programs (in particular the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program) in Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority communities.

Given that a small number of adolescent and young adult offenders are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime and violence in the HRM, this report focuses on serious and chronic adolescent offenders (12-17) and young adult offenders (18-25). In its recommendations, the report extols the HRM government and its key partners to do the same in their attempts to control and reduce youth crime and violence. To this end, the over-riding recommendation of this report is to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that mobilizes all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors and resources to work in a collaborative, integrated fashion, especially within high-risk, high-crime neighbourhoods. This

comprehensive, collaborative, and strategic approach must incorporate three complementary components: (1) prevention (social problem-solving initiatives that prevent the onset of criminal and violent behaviour by targeting children and youth who are most at risk of serious and chronic offending), (2) intervention (providing treatment and other meaningful opportunities to youth and young adults who have been in trouble with the law and are at risk of future serious and chronic offending), and (3) suppression (traditional and evidence-based criminal justice approaches targeting chronic and serious offenders).

Notwithstanding the importance of a comprehensive approach to youth and gang violence, the overriding focus should be placed on prevention: in particular, early intervention, social problem-solving initiatives that strive to address the root causes of serious and chronic criminal offending within high-risk communities, families, children and youth. Emphasis should be placed on the direct delivery of programs and services to at-risk children and youth with the goal of enhancing their personal resilience. To this end, there needs to be an increase in after-school programs within (or close to) high-risk, socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Ideally, these developmentally-based after-school programs should include: (i) tutoring, (ii) social competency skills training (e.g., impulse control, anger management, conflict resolution, problem-solving/critical thinking, empathy, etc.), (iii) mentoring, (iv) sports and other physical, leisure or recreational activities, and (v) career and post-secondary education planning.

Another foundational recommendation of this report is that there must be greater cooperation, coordination and collaboration that not only enjoins the HRM and provincial governments, but includes all relevant stakeholders (non-governmental agencies, the private sector, community groups, and other public institutions). This collaborative, coordinated approach should be implanted in high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods using a formal structure. Specifically, this report recommends the implementation of multi-agency Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NISTs), which would strive to be truly comprehensive in their efforts to address youth and gang violence locally (and include prevention, intervention and suppression initiatives). Each NIST would be guided by a long-term strategic plan (specific to its neighbourhood), while on a more tactical basis the NISTs would coordinate responses, in a timely manner, to immediate and emerging youth crime and violence problems, and their root causes, in their respective jurisdictions.

Attached to each NIST should be Youth Outreach Workers, whose responsibilities would include monitoring current and emerging local youth crime and violence problems, identifying at-risk youth and young adults, and coordinating the provision of services to these individuals. Ostensibly, the role of the

youth outreach worker is to coordinate a case management, wraparound approach for each individual identified as high-risk, which would involve leveraging the relevant expertise, resources, and services of NIST members. The NISTs and the attached Youth Outreach Workers would replace the Youth Advocacy Program so that a greater number of high-risk neighbourhoods are covered and more high-risk youth and youth adults are served.

Introduction

This report documents the findings of research to assess initiatives in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) that address youth and gang violence specifically, and serious and chronic youth offending generally. Based on this research, policy and program recommendations are made to the HRM government to more effectively prevent and control this problem.

Scope and nature of youth violence in Nova Scotia and the HRM

The table below summarizes police-reported violent crime rates for youth in Nova Scotia and Canada for 2008 to 2012.

Police-reported youth violent crime rates: Nova Scotia and Canada, 2008 to 2012

	Nova Scotia					Canada				
	Homicide	Robbery	Major Assault	Total Violent Crime	YVCSI	Homicide	Robbery	Major Assault	Total Violent Crime	YVCSI
2008	6	164	411	2,755	NA	2	171	286	1,887	NA
2009	0.0	164	339	2,659	NA	3.1	162	274	1,864	NA
2010	4.6	120	287	2,676	110	2.3	168	247	1,838	93.7
2011	3.1	170	311	2,649	114.2	1.9	311	240	1,756	88.6
2012	0.0	161	294	2,755	100.4	1.4	153	219	1,639	83.0
Avg.	2.74	155.8	328.4	2698.8	108.2	2.14	193	253.2	1796.8	88.43

Sources: Wallace, 2009; Dauvergne & Turner, 2010; Brennan and Dauvergne, 2011; Brennan, 2012; Perreault, 2013

As this table shows, all of Nova Scotia's major youth violent crime indicators during this period are higher than the national rates. The average Youth Violent Crime Severity Index (YVCSI) rate⁸⁶ for the province during this period was 108.2 compared to the national average of 88.43. Accordingly, compared to the national average, Nova Scotia posted higher rates for the more serious violent offences of homicide, robbery, and major assault.

The trends from 2008 to 2012 for the province show that the total violent crime rate remained relatively stable. However, the YVCSI rate dropped slightly between 2010 and 2012, meaning there was less serious violent crimes. In particular, there was also a drop in homicides by youth as well as a significant decrease in major assaults by youth. Data provided by the Halifax Regional Police (HRP) for this research indicates that between 2008 and 2009, violent crime committed by youth in the HRM decreased from 682 incidents to 509. The number increased to 526 from 2009 to 2010 and then increased again in 2011 to 576. Thus, while the violent crime rate among youth declined by 15 percent between 2008 and 2011, it increased by 9.5 percent between 2009 and 2011 (while increasing 11 percent between 2010 and 2011).

Interviews conducted with HRP Community Response Officers who work in high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods provided anecdotal evidence that youth crime and violence has been on the decline in recent years. Those officers assigned to Mulgrave Park, Greystone Court, Uniacke Square, Bayers-Westwood, and Scotia Court in Dartmouth all stated that violence appears to have decreased; in particular, incidents of serious assaults and swarmings appear to have declined in recent years. These police officers stressed, however, that violence associated with "open-air" drug trade does not appear to have abated in recent years.

Gun-Related Violent Crime

Statistics generated from both police reports and victimization surveys indicate that much of the violent crime in Halifax involves less serious common assaults. However, the HRM continues to exceed the national rate with respect to gun-related crimes. Police-recorded statistics for 2011 indicate that, "the vast majority (91%) of firearm homicides that occurred in Canada's census metropolitan areas (CMAs) in 2011 were concentrated in the seven largest CMAs and Halifax. In particular, Halifax (1.72), Edmonton (1.08) and Winnipeg (1.04) reported the highest rates of firearm homicide per 100,000 population in 2011" (Perreault, 2012, 7). Furthermore, police-reported statistics suggests that gun-related violence has

⁸⁶ The Youth Violent Crime Severity Index rate is weighted in favour of more serious violent crimes (murder, robbery, aggravated assault) compared to the Youth Violent Crime rate which applies the same weight to all police-reported violent incidents regardless how serious.

been increasing in Halifax in recent years. In July of 2011, the city recorded its 45th shooting incident, which equalled the total for all of 2010. Const. Brian Palmeter of Halifax Regional Police told the media, "We attribute that to the criminal element ... relying on firearms as their tool of choice to settle their disputes. It's part of the overall escalation ... of violence and power. What may have been settled years ago with a knife is now being settled with a gun" (*Chronicle Herald*, July 7, 2011). According to the HRM Office of Public Safety, "Much of the violent crime that occurs in our community is the result of altercations between individuals or groups of people who are typically involved in criminal activity – often the illegal drug trade – and are intent on using violence to settle a score. More and more often, they're resorting to gun violence. It's not a case of widespread violence but rather individuals or groups targeting one another" (Halifax Regional Municipality, September, 2011, 4).

Gang-related Violence

Police-reported violent crime statistics for 2011 indicate that for Canada as a whole, "one-third of all youth accused of homicide were involved in a gang-related homicide..." (Perreault, 2012, 14). Statistics Canada notes that for the HRM, "there has also been an increase in gang-related homicides in recent years." Since 2001, there have been 16 gang-related homicides in Nova Scotia, 14 of which occurred between 2007 and 2011 (Perreault, 2012, 19).

Local gangs, especially those involved in the drug trade, are attributed at least partial blame for any increase in homicides and gun-related violence in the HRM in recent years. The final report of the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence in 2008 stated that the HRM is "home to small gangs centered in the drug trade and accountable for a number of retaliatory murders and public-frightening drive-by shootings..." (Clairmont, 2008, 22). In 2012, an integrated enforcement team involving the Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP was formed to focus on gangs and gang-related gun violence. According to a 2012 media article, the team's head, Staff Sgt. Jim Butler, indicated this unit is

... watching six to eight gangs, ranging in size from four members up to dozens. Most have six to eight members and most of them are young, some only 15 ... All of the gangs are in the drug business and have firearms, he said. They feel the need to carry weapons to intimidate rivals and protect their own drug-dealing turf and to expand their territory ... When asked to make an estimate, he said about 10 to 12 local gang members have been murdered in Halifax in the last five years (*Chronicle Herald*, March 5, 2012).

Around the same time, Public Safety Canada (2012, 1), estimated that in the HRM “there were 80 youth directly involved in gangs with 20 more youth identified as affiliated with gang members or gang activities. Four HRM Public Housing projects had active gangs or evidence of gang-related violence.”

Summary: Youth Violence in Canada and the HRM

Any discernible trend in violent youth crime between 2008 and 2012 is difficult to identify. The youth homicide rate decreased from 6.0 to 0.0 during this period, although the rate was still above the national average in both 2010 and 2011. The youth robbery rate also declined, but only slightly, with the highest rate occurring in 2011. Perhaps the most perceptible trend was the rate of major assaults by youth, which declined by 28.4 percent between 2008 and 2012. While it is too early to conclude that serious violent youth crime peaked in 2011, there was a decline in 2012 in the rate of youth homicides, robbery, major assaults, and in the youth violent crime severity index rate. However, the total youth violent crime rate for the HRM (which includes less serious offences) was the same in 2012 compared to 2008. Interviews with police also indicate that there has been an increase in firearm offences involving youth in recent years. Finally, the rate of violent youth crime in all categories continues to be higher in the HRM compared to national rates.

In conclusion, if these police-reported statistics are used as the sole basis to assess whether initiatives implemented in the HRM following the 2008 Roundtable Report have had any impact on youth violence, the answer would be no (or at best, they have had a negligible impact).

Benchmarks, Research Findings, Analysis, and Recommendations

This section of the report identifies the benchmarks used to assess youth crime and violence initiatives implemented in the HRM since 2008, discusses and analyzes the findings of the research assessing these initiatives, and provides recommendations that attempt to fill the gaps, while building on the strengths of current initiatives and resources.

Current initiatives are assessed using the following three benchmarks: (i) the extent to which they satisfy the recommendations made in the 2008 report by the Mayor’s Roundtable on Violence (Clairmont, 2008); (ii) theoretical models concerned with preventing, reducing, and controlling serious and chronic youth offending; and (iii) model programs and best practices that have been implemented in other jurisdictions and have realized success in preventing, reducing, and controlling serious and chronic youth offending.

The recommendations made in this report are informed by and reflective of an ongoing seismic shift occurring in North America in relation to how crime and violence are best ameliorated. This shift is represented by the following principles:

- a proactive philosophy that focuses on preventing the onset of criminal and violent behaviour by ameliorating root causes through a targeted, social problem-solving approach,
- a risk-based approach that targets neighbourhoods with high levels of crime and violence, while also focusing on communities, neighbourhoods, families, children and youth with chronic and serious criminogenic risk factors,
- a “problem-oriented” philosophy in which the nature and scope of the intervention is commensurate with the nature and scope of the problem, while being highly individualized to specific circumstances,
- a coordinated, collaborative, multi-sectoral approach that involves all relevant stakeholders and resources within and outside of government,
- a comprehensive strategy, when necessary, that incorporates in a complementary fashion the five pillars of crime and violence prevention and control: (i) crime prevention through social development, (ii) situational (opportunity-reduction) approaches, (iii) community crime prevention, (iv) recidivism prevention, and (v) law enforcement and other criminal justice interventions,
- a community-based approach to addressing localized crime and violence problems, which means that neighbourhoods and communities most affected must be mobilized, and an evidence-based approach in which policies, practices and programs are informed by rigorous theories, research, and best practices.

Benchmark #1: Municipal governments should play a leadership role in mobilizing and coordinating multi-governmental and multi-sectoral responses to youth crime and violence at the city-wide, neighbourhood, and block level.

Research findings and analysis: To some extent, the HRM government has taken on the mantle of leadership in mobilizing and coordinating resources to prevent and control youth crime and violence. However, there continues to be significant gaps, including:

- the lack of a collaborative and integrated multi-governmental/multi-sectoral approach at the city-wide and neighbourhood levels,
- the absence of comprehensive strategic plans for the city as a whole and for neighbourhoods with a high rate of crime and violence and criminogenic risk factors,
- insufficient outreach to the most at-risk children, youth and young adults (in part due to an inadequate number of youth outreach workers),

- a shortage of developmentally-based, structured after-school programs and resources (that offer tutoring, mentoring, social competency skills training, sports, recreation) in high-risk environments,
- a lack of co-ordinated strategies, programs, resources to prevent and treat mental health and substance abuse disorders that are linked to serious and chronic youth criminality,
- insufficient labour market and post-secondary education strategies for at-risk youth and young adults, and
- the absence of evidence-based community crime prevention programs in Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority communities.

Recommendations: The HRM government must take on a greater leadership role in addressing youth and gang violence by mobilizing and coordinating all relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and resources in a collaborative, comprehensive, evidence-based, strategic approach for the HRM as a whole and for individual high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods.

Benchmark #2: Serious and chronic youth offending is most effectively addressed through a comprehensive approach that is guided by a strategic plan

Efforts to address serious and chronic youth offending must rely on a comprehensive approach that incorporates prevention, intervention and suppression initiatives in a complementary and strategic fashion. Each of these three components also has to be developed and implemented in a comprehensive fashion (e.g., the prevention component should include social problem-solving, opportunity reduction, and community development initiatives).

Research findings and analysis: There are numerous prevention, intervention, and enforcement programs, policies, and practices in the HRM (implemented by the HRM government, provincial government and NGOs) that directly target and indirectly impact youth crime and violence (and their causes). That is, collectively, among all the key stakeholders, many of the essential elements for a comprehensive approach to youth crime and violence are in place. Noticeably absent, however, is a plan of action that brings all these elements together in a comprehensive, integrated strategic framework.

Recommendations: The problem of serious and chronic young offenders in the HRM requires a comprehensive response that is guided by a rigorous, systematic, strategic plan, which incorporates, in a complementary fashion, best practices in prevention, intervention, and suppression (adapted to the specific circumstances of the HRM). Corresponding comprehensive strategic plans should also be developed for high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods. Within the context of a collaborative approach, the

HRM government should take the lead in developing and implementing this comprehensive, strategic plan and mobilizing the key stakeholders and resources necessary for effective implementation. A comprehensive strategy for addressing serious and chronic criminality among youth and young adults in the HRM should ensure the following five pillars of crime and violence prevention and control are included:

- social problem-solving / developmental approaches that address the root causes of violence (and predicate criminal activities, such as drug trafficking) by ameliorating factors that put specific neighbourhoods, communities, families, children and youth at risk (stressing early intervention initiatives that target the highest risk families, children and youth),
- situational approaches that reduce the opportunity for violent behaviour to take place in a particular time and (public) place, whether this is the redesign and “hardening” of those (public) physical environments that facilitate violent crime, reducing access to guns and other weapons, or conflict resolution initiatives to mediate violence between rival gangs or competing drug traffickers,
- community crime prevention, which emphasizes the mobilization of neighbourhoods that have both a high level of violence and a concentration of root causes (and which includes both community development and community defence initiatives);
- recidivism prevention to treat serious and chronic young offenders and reintegrate them back into the community (emphasizing cognitive behavioural therapy, social competency and life skills development, mental health and substance abuse treatment, education, and job training and placement);
- policing and law enforcement, which includes effective, evidence-based suppression techniques (e.g., integrated police units, Compstat, hot spot policing) as well as preventative approaches (community and problem-oriented policing, emphasizing the important roles of Community Response Officers and School Liaison Officers);
- interventions for the prevention and treatment of mental health, psychological, and substance use disorders that may give rise to anti-social, criminal, and violent behaviour.

A comprehensive strategic plan addressing serious and chronic criminality among youth and young adults for the HRM should also:

- articulate specific and measurable outcome goals, such as the targeted reduction in youth violent crimes (as measured by police and victimization statistics),
- set out the time frame for this strategic plan (e.g., five years),

- detail specific strategies and tactics (policies, programs, services, etc.) as to how a reduction in youth violence will be achieved (including how existing programs and services in the HRM are integrated into the overall comprehensive strategic plan and how best practices identified in the literature, but not currently implemented in the HRM, can be adapted),
- identify the (high-crime, high-risk) communities and groups that will be prioritized in the plan,
- identify the key stakeholders who will be involved in carrying out the strategies and activities, their respective roles and responsibilities, and the mechanisms and processes in place to ensure a truly integrated, collaborative team approach,
- include strategies on how to mobilize and sustain the involvement of local neighbourhoods, communities, individual citizens, community groups, and other potential partners,
- provide a budget, including sources of funding and in-kind resources, and include an evaluation plan.

Benchmark #3: An effective, comprehensive approach to youth crime and violence requires a collaborative, multi-agency, multi-sectoral approach

Inherent in a comprehensive strategy to preventing, controlling, and reducing serious and chronic criminal offending by youth is a collaborative approach in which all relevant key stakeholders work as a team in a coordinated, seamless fashion.

Research findings and analysis: This research reveals that there are numerous examples of collaboration (formal and informal) among the many governmental and non-governmental agencies, community organizations, and professionals in the HRM that have a stake in controlling youth crime and violence (from a prevention, intervention, and enforcement perspective). However, a truly collaborative, multilateral, multi-sectoral approach continues to be lacking. One of the universal refrains from research participants interviewed for this study was that some of the organizations providing services and programs to at-risk children and youth continue to work in silos. Officials from some key agencies complained there were little or no efforts to involve them in a collaborative effort. Research participants also identified a lack of information sharing, due to privacy concerns, as a significant obstacle to a more fruitful multi-agency, collaborative approach to working with at-risk children and youth.

Other problems identified in this research that obstruct a multi-sectoral collaborative approach to youth crime and violence include the following: most of the inter-organizational partnerships tend to be bilateral

(what is needed is a multi-agency, multilateral team-based approach), many partnerships operate on an *ad hoc*, informal basis (the literature shows greater success can be achieved through a formalized infrastructure), and there is an absence of integrated, multi-sectoral teams at the neighbourhood level (especially those serving high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods).

Recommendations: One of the challenges in making recommendations to the HRM government to prevent and control youth crime and violence is that many of the most relevant policy and program areas fall within provincial jurisdiction. Thus, implicit in many of the recommendations made in this report is that any effort to tackle (youth) crime and violence must be undertaken by the HRM and the provincial government in partnership with one another. Furthermore, a foundational recommendation of this report is that serious and chronic criminality must be addressed in a collaborative, coordinated fashion, which not only enjoins the municipal/regional and provincial governments, but all key stakeholders (including non-governmental agencies, the private sector, community groups, and public institutions). In short, there must be a greater collaborative, coordinated, multi-sectoral team approach to youth crime and violence in the HRM. In particular, current collaborative initiatives and practices addressing youth crime and violence, at-risk children and youth, and young offenders in the HRM should:

- be intensified and expanded (to include all relevant stakeholders across the different levels of government as well as non-governmental and community-based groups),
- be implanted at the neighbourhood level (in high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods),
- using a formal structure (complete with information sharing protocols),
- that is guided by a strategic plan (specific to each neighbourhood), and
- strives to be truly comprehensive in addressing serious and chronic offending by youth and young adults.

Specifically, it is recommended that Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NISTs) be implemented in high crime, high-risk neighbourhoods. Each NIST would be responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive strategic plans for their respective neighbourhoods. On a tactical basis, they would coordinate responses, in a timely manner, to immediate and emerging youth crime and violence problems, their root causes, and at-risk youth (emphasizing flexibility in the application of problem-solving approaches that are individualized to the scope and nature of each circumstance).

These community-based teams should include a wide array of government and non-governmental agencies and professionals. A typical NIST could include the following team members:

- HRM Government (police, Community and Recreational Services, Urban Planning, Engineering, Volunteer Bureau, Fire department, Library)

- Provincial Government (Department of Justice, including public prosecutions, corrections, crime prevention, Department of Community Services, Department of Labour and Advanced Education)
- Health care (the IWK, Capital Health, Youth Health Centres, Public Health)
- Education (Halifax Regional School Board, public schools, post-secondary institutions)
- Youth employment and job training agencies and programs
- Community and faith-based groups
- Non-governmental service providers (family and child welfare, youth advocacy, homeless shelters, sport and recreational groups)
- Private sector firms and associations.

To avoid overlap with the SchoolsPlus program, the proposed integrated service teams should place particular emphasis on identifying and working with high-risk adolescents (13 to 17) and young adults (18-25).

Attached to each NIST should be Youth Outreach Workers, whose responsibilities would include monitoring current and emerging local youth crime and violence problems, identifying at-risk youth and young adults, coordinating the provision of services to these individuals and case managing high-risk youth and young adults (which would entail leveraging and coordinating the services, expertise, and resources of NIST members). The proposed NISTs would replace the Youth Advocacy Program so that a greater number of high-risk neighbourhoods are covered and more high-risk adolescents and youth adults are served.

Each NIST should be implemented in the context of, and responsible for implementing, a comprehensive, community-based strategy for high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods in the HRM. To this end, one promising model that the HRM government could adopt is the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression (Spergel, 1995; Spergel et al., 1999; Spergel, 2007). At the core of this comprehensive model is an integrated, multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral intervention team that works collaboratively to case manage individual gang members, other serious and chronic young offenders, and high-risk youth. Central to this approach are the following inter-related strategies:

- community mobilization – mobilizing all key partners (government agencies, non-governmental agencies, local residents, community groups, faith-based groups, local institutions, the private sector, and youth) to work in a collaborative fashion to plan and address local youth and gang crime and violence,

- coordination – coordinating and integrating the programs and services of each of the key partners to maximize their impact,
- outreach – using outreach workers to identify and actively engage gang-involved youth, other serious and chronic young offenders, as well as high-risk youth,
- developmentally-based, social problem-solving – programs and social services that address risk factors, which include providing and facilitating access to academic, mentoring, labour market, and health care programs or services,
- suppression – traditional criminal justice enforcement activities, as well as informal social control mechanisms, that hold gang-involved youth and serious and chronic young offenders accountable for their actions and behaviours (which include intensive supervision of youth by criminal justice agencies and community-based agencies), and organizational change and development – helping key partners develop the capacity to effectively address youth crime and violence through a strategic, team-based "problem-solving" approach, while developing and implementing policies, processes, programs and services that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources within and across agencies (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2008, 63-64).

Benchmark #4: At the core of a comprehensive, collaborative, multi-sectoral strategy to youth crime and violence must be *prevention*, in particular social problem-solving approaches that address the root causes of serious and chronic criminal offending

Notwithstanding the importance of a comprehensive approach to youth and gang violence that combines prevention, intervention and suppression strategies, the over-riding emphasis should be placed on prevention.

A proactive, preventative approach to crime and violence takes many forms: crime prevention through social development (criminality prevention), opportunity reduction (situational crime prevention, crime prevention through environmental design), community crime prevention, recidivism prevention, as well as community and problem-oriented policing. With that said, crime prevention through social development (CPSD) epitomizes the proactive philosophy and should be at the core of any crime and violence prevention strategy because it is geared towards preventing the onset of delinquent, criminal and violent behaviour. Some of the most effective CPSD interventions directed at high-risk children and youth include enriched pre-school, tutoring, mentoring, social competency skills training, cognitive behavioural therapy, after-school programs, and structured sports and recreation programs. Central to the delivery of CPSD strategies are such principles as: early intervention (targeting high-risk parents and young children), a comprehensive, wraparound approach (addressing as many personal and social environmental risk factors

as possible), case management (interventions that are individualized to the unique circumstances of the child or youth), the use of structured, after-school programs (to deliver tutoring, mentoring, social competency training, sports, etc.) and a multi-modal approach (interventions delivered through multiple agencies and different institutions in an integrated, coordinated, complementary fashion).

Research findings and analysis: An array of agencies, programs, services, and resources, at the governmental and non-government levels in the HRM directly and indirectly address the root causes of criminal and violent behaviour through proactive, problem-solving approaches. Most of these agencies, programs, and services utilize best practices that reflect those in the field of crime and violence prevention, such as early intervention and the wraparound approach. However, there are still major gaps and weaknesses in proactive, social problem-solving initiatives to address youth crime and violence in the HRM. Some of these stem from problems already identified in this report: the absence of a comprehensive strategic plan (which ideally would lay out how proactive, preventative approaches can be coordinated and effectively implemented at the local level), the lack of a collaborative, multi-agency approach, and the absence of a corresponding formal integrated infrastructure at the city-wide and neighbourhood levels. Other problems obstructing a more effective and comprehensive early intervention approach to serious and chronic youth crime and violence include:

- insufficient outreach and service delivery to many high-risk families, children and youth (i.e., many families, children, and youth continue to fall through the cracks),
- a shortage of resources, services and programs for high-risk families, children and youth in such areas as: mental health (assessment, prevention, and treatment); developmentally-based after-school programs, tutoring, social competency training, mentoring, as well as career and post-secondary education planning, and
- when available, relevant services and programs are not being accessed by high-risk parents and youth.

Recommendations: The HRM government, in collaboration with the provincial government and other key stakeholders, must ensure that any comprehensive strategy to address youth crime and violence emphasizes a proactive, early intervention, social problem-solving approach that addresses the root causes of chronic and serious criminal and violent behaviour targeting high-risk neighbourhoods, families, children and youth. In particular, the HRM Government should:

- assume a leadership role in coordinating the inter-agency collaboration of groups and agencies delivering relevant preventative, (early intervention) services for high-risk neighbourhoods, families, children and youth,

- ensure existing collaborative, early intervention, community-based programs and organizations in the HRM (in particular the SchoolsPlus program) have the mandate, resources and expertise to prevent the onset of delinquent, criminal and violent behaviour by addressing the root causes among high-risk children ,
- expand the number of outreach workers to more comprehensively identify and case manage at-risk families, children and youth,
- emphasize services that are delivered *directly* to at-risk children and youth (with the goal of increasing their personal resilience) through enriched pre-school and, for school-aged children and youth, developmentally-based after-school programs that provide: (1) tutoring (2) social competency and life skills training (e.g., impulse control, anger management, conflict resolution, problem-solving/critical thinking, empathy, coping skills), (3) mentoring, (4) sports, leisure and other recreational activities, and (5) career and post-secondary education planning, and
- actively recruit and train volunteers (from local post-secondary institutions) to serve as tutors, mentors, outreach workers, and program activity coordinators.

Benchmark #5: Preventing and treating mental health and substance abuse disorders can play a significant role in preventing youth violence and other serious and chronic criminal behaviour

Psychological and mental health disorders can increase the risk of offending, recidivism, violence (both self-directed and inter-personal) and other antisocial and risky behaviors, such as substance abuse and homelessness. The timely identification, diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems among youth and young adults may reduce the risk of offending and their formal contact with the criminal justice system. Furthermore, curriculum and programs have been developed that can help prevent the onset of mental health and substance abuse disorders by instilling in children and youth strong problem-solving and coping skills that can potentially carry into adolescence and adulthood (Shortt, Barrett, and Fox, 2001; Lowry-Webster et al., 2003; Barrett et al., 2006).

Research findings and analysis: Numerous services and programs are in place to help address psychological, mental health and substance abuse disorders among children and youth in the HRM. Much of the mental health services for children, youth and their families are provided through the IWK Health Centre. This includes court-ordered forensic mental health services for youth that have come into contact with the criminal justice system. There is also the Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team and the Mental Health and Addictions Program of Capital Health (which does treat older youth and young adults). In 2012, the provincial Health and Wellness Minister released a government-wide strategy for mental health and addictions care, which includes an early intervention approach in which mental health clinicians are

attached to the SchoolsPlus program. Notwithstanding these existing services and programs and recent initiatives by the provincial government, this research identified limitations and weaknesses in regards to ameliorating mental health and substance abuse risk factors that are linked to serious and chronic criminal offending by youth and young adults in the HRM:

- a lack of early intervention programs that can help prevent the onset of mental health and substance abuse disorders that may occur during adolescence and adulthood,
- insufficient early assessments, diagnosis and treatment of school-aged children who may suffer from a psychological disorder,
- long wait times for assessments and other mental health services through the IWK, and
- an increase in court-ordered mental health assessments, which means the IWK must increasingly ask for extensions from the court to complete the mental health assessments.

Recommendations: To effectively address mental health and addiction risk factors that contribute to serious and chronic offending among youth, it is recommended that the HRM Public Safety Office, along with other key stakeholders (Department of Health, Department of Justice, IWK, Capital Health, Public Health Officer, the School Board, relevant NGOs) develop a comprehensive strategy on reducing mental health and addiction risk factors that are linked to violent offending by youth. This strategy should include both treatment-based services for youth and prevention-based programs and services for school-aged children. Some issues to consider as part of this strategy are the following:

- include social competency training for children and youth in schools or as part of after-school programs that nurture skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, coping, self-esteem, assertiveness, etc.) essential to preventing mental health and addiction disorders later in life,
- more specifically, implement anxiety prevention programs (such as “FRIENDS for Life” or “Coping Power”) on a universal or targeted, risk-based basis,
- dedicate more resources to identifying and assessing risk factors for mental health and substance abuse disorders among children and youth in high-risk, socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods,
- increase delivery of mental health assessment, prevention, and treatment services for children, youth, and young adults *within* high-risk neighbourhoods,
- develop and implement a comprehensive, city-wide substance abuse prevention program, directed at children and adolescents modelled after the “Midwestern Prevention Project,” and undertake more research into the correlation between

mental health and addiction disorders and chronic and serious criminal offending by youth and young people in the HRM.

Benchmark #6: Schools are crucial institutions in the prevention of criminality and violence

Research shows that poor cognitive development, academic failure, as well as a lack of attachment to schools, are all significant risk factors for future criminal offending and violence. These school-based risk factors can set in motion a chain of negative events and conditions (e.g., persistent truancy, school expulsion, dropping out of school, lack of adult supervision, association with anti-social peers, chronic unemployment) which can potentially lead to criminality, violence and other anti-social behaviors. Statistics and empirical research have established a particularly strong correlation between dropping out of school or permanent expulsion, on the one hand, and violent behaviour and/or formal contact with the criminal justice system, on the other. Given the above, as a crime and violence prevention institution, schools are second only to families in their potential contribution to reducing risk factors that give rise to serious and chronic criminal offending by adolescents and young adults.

According to Gottfredson, Wilson and Najaka (2006), school-based criminality and violence prevention interventions can be demarcated into two broad categories: (1) “environmental change strategies” (altering school or classroom environments) and (2) “individual-change strategies” (changing the knowledge, cognitive development, behaviors, skills, and attitudes of individual students). Based on their review of the research, the authors conclude that school-wide environmental strategies are generally more effective than those focusing on individuals’ attitudes, behaviors, or beliefs (the one exception to this rule is truancy and dropping out, which are more effectively addressed through personal change strategies and material incentives for at-risk students). The most effective school-based crime and violence prevention strategies are “school and discipline management interventions; interventions to establish norms and expectations for behavior; and instructional programs that teach social competency skills using cognitive-behavioral methods.” Those school-based strategies that appear to be least effective are “instructional programs that do not use cognitive-behavioral methods; counseling, social work and other therapeutic interventions, and [unsupervised] recreation and leisure programs” (Gottfredson, Wilson and Najaka, 2006, 145).

Research findings and analysis: The philosophies, strategies, and specific initiatives implemented by the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board reflect best practices as far as the role of schools in crime and violence prevention is concerned. In particular, this includes:

- A proactive approach to school discipline management (Positive Effective Behaviour Supports) that establishes and enforces norms and expectations for behavior, while recognizing and rewarding positive behaviour (rather than relying on reactive, punitive, disciplinary measures),
- The development of a “restorative approach” to conflict management, which is geared toward nurturing within students the ability and proclivity to “think about themselves and how they deal with one another, and to work on developing healthy relationships and learning how to manage conflict” (Government of Nova Scotia, Restorative Approaches in Schools Project, Fact Sheet),
- An individualized, case management approach to students at risk of academic failure that includes specialized teaching support (e.g., resource centres, junior high support teachers), programs (e.g., IPPs, Reading Recovery, Youth Pathways and Transitions),
- Professionals, such as psychologists, counsellors, speech pathologists, who can provide specialized services to students to identify, assess and help treat behavioural, cognitive, psychological, and mental health factors that put children and youth at risk of academic failure, and alternative learning opportunities for students at risk of academic failure and dropping out (e.g., the Options and Opportunities (O2) program, credit recovery, correspondence courses, and greater flexibility in allowing students to finish credits within their own time frame).

There are also community-based tutoring programs that are available to struggling students and at-risk youth, which fill the voids left by finite school budgets and resources. The most impressive and comprehensive of these after-school programs is Pathways to Education in Spryfield, which provides academic tutoring, immediate material incentives (e.g., bus passes, gift certificates), long-term financial incentives (i.e., post-secondary scholarships), and advocacy (Student-Parent Support Workers help students and parents access school-based and other social services).

Less positive developments in school-based approaches to crime and violence prevention are the threats posed by cuts to education funding at the provincial level, which may mean fewer teachers, larger classes, and less support to at-risk students, according to the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (Canada News Wire, May 20, 2011). There is also a significant lack of structured, community-based, after-school tutoring programs for most high-risk neighbourhoods and students.

Recommendations: Specific recommendations for the Department of Education and the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) that buttress current policies and practices to help ensure academic success and school attachment (while minimizing drop-out rates) for struggling students and at-risk youth including the following:

- the implementation of social competency skills training curriculum which research shows can increase academic success, while also ameliorating criminogenic risk factors,
- the use of material incentives for struggling and at-risk students at the secondary school level, (which can be offered for regular attendance, completion of assignments, improved grades, etc.),
- closer coordination between the HRSB (and individual schools) and the Pathways to Education program in Spryfield, particularly in regards to students who are at most risk of academic failure and dropping out; the HRSB as well as the HRM and provincial governments should also do what is necessary and feasible to support the expansion of Pathways (or similar after-school programs) into other high-risk communities,
- providing schools with adequate space, staff, and programs for in-school alternatives to out-of-school suspension, while ensuring these alternatives provide meaningful activities for learning, credit recovery and include, when necessary, appropriate social competency skills training for the student,
- ensuring O2 and other alternative school completion programs follow best practices in the area of drop-out prevention and recovery, which may mean augmenting these programs with other evidence-based practices that have shown to be successful in promoting academic success and graduation among high-risk students (e.g., case management/wraparound approach, social competency skills training, mentoring, community service, material incentives),
- piloting a drop-out recovery centre modelled after the Massachusetts Re-integration Center,
- encouraging post-secondary institutions in the HRM to play a greater role in reaching out to and supporting struggling students and at-risk youth to achieve academic success, high school completion, and a post-secondary education, and
- to help address bullying, violence, and misbehaviour within schools, complement PEBS and the restorative approach with specific lesson plans and curriculum that teach relevant social competency skills (anger management, empathy, impulse control, conflict resolution).

Benchmark #7: Specific interventions should be developed for older adolescents (15-17) and young adults (18-25) who are at high-risk of serious and chronic criminality or who have been in contact with the criminal justice system due to violent behaviour

Young people spanning in age from mid teens to early twenties are particularly challenging as far as crime, delinquency, and violence prevention is concerned. Research and statistics show that these are the crime-and-violence-prone years, especially for males. Older adolescents and young adults are susceptible to a number of heightened risk factors compared to children, including peer pressure, less parental control and adult supervision, school truancy and expulsion, the onset of mental health

problems, more exposure to violent images in the media, increased access to weapons, and greater opportunities to consume alcohol and drugs.

How best to deal with the controversial and polarizing issue of youth crime and violence has traditionally been characterized by “two complementary and often contradictory positions that view youth, on one hand, as young people who are developing and need protection, and on the other, as responsible persons who must answer for their actions” (International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, 2008, 82). Much of the responses to youth crime and violence can be subsumed under these two broad categories. The premise that young people are maturing, developing, and in need of protection is the foundation for social problem-solving approaches that attempt to prevent the onset of criminogenic conditions during childhood and adolescence. For older youth and young adults who have been in trouble with the law and are at risk of chronic or serious offending, treatment of risk factors and the provision of opportunities for positive and meaningful life experiences (that leverage the particular strengths and assets of individual youth and young adults) can also be included under this social problem-solving category. The argument that young people must be responsible for their actions is a fundamental premise of both the criminal justice system (that seeks to suppress crime and violence through punitive sanctions) and restorative approaches (in which offenders acknowledge their actions, the harms caused by them, and the need for reparations to victims).

Research findings and analysis: Research for this report indicates that a small number of adolescent and young adult offenders make up a disproportionate amount of crime in the HRM. Many of these chronic, offenders are the product of numerous social environmental and personal risk factors. There are a number of institutions, agencies, programs, and resources in the HRM that are available for at-risk youth as well as chronic and serious adolescent and young adult offenders. However, there are significant gaps in the programs and services in the HRM that can prevent and control youth crime and violence. Among these gaps are:

- the absence of a comprehensive strategy for preventing and treating chronic youth criminal and violent offending,
- unacceptable wait times for the assessment and treatment of youth with (suspected or diagnosed) mental health and substance abuse disorders,
- insufficient outreach efforts within high-risk neighbourhoods and communities targeting older adolescents and young adults by relevant governmental and non-government agencies; by extension, there are a limited number of outreach workers for (at-risk) older adolescents and young adults,

- a disproportionate number of high-risk youth and young adults, who could potentially benefit from existing developmental programs and services, but are not accessing them,
- insufficient community-based, adult-supervised after-school programs, activities, and “hang-out” centres for (at-risk) older adolescents and young adults,
- a lack of tutoring programs,
- a lack of and mentoring programs that specifically cater to older youth and young adults at risk of serious and chronic criminal offending or those who have already been in trouble with the law, and
- insufficient locally-available labour market (job training and placement) opportunities and programs for (at-risk) older adolescents and youth adults.

Recommendations: Notwithstanding the importance of early intervention programs that addresses criminogenic risk factors among children, a comprehensive approach to addressing serious and chronic offending must target high-risk adolescent males and young men, especially in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods. At the core of these initiatives would be an integrated strategy that includes the following components: (i) education (completing high school, attending and completing a post-secondary education), (ii) labour market approaches (job training and placement, career planning, small business development), (iii) the delivery of other personal development interventions that overcome factors that obstruct adolescent males and young men from completing school, entering the legitimate labour market, and other pro-social behaviour, and (iv) programs that groom young men and women for community activism and leadership roles. Specific recommendations with respect to interventions for adolescents and youth adults who are at high-risk of criminal and violent behaviour or who have been in contact with the criminal justice system are as follows:

- incorporate into the proposed comprehensive strategic plan a component that focuses specifically on high-risk youth and young offenders (15-17) as well as young adult offenders (18-25),
- conduct more research into chronic and serious young offenders in the HRM, with particular emphasis on identifying prevalent risk factors,
- conduct a more thorough “gap analysis” that compares the needs of at-risk youth and young offenders and the current developmentally-based, social problem-solving programs and services being offered in the HRM,
- mobilize existing or create new resources that address the gaps identified in this and subsequent research, taking into consideration the following recommendations:

- increase the delivery of developmental programs and activities for (at-risk) adolescents and young adults within high-risk neighbourhoods (stressing sports and recreation, social competency skills training, tutoring, mentoring)
- develop more comprehensive and integrated education/labour market strategies and opportunities for at-risk youth, young offenders and young adult offenders (that integrate education, career and post-secondary education planning, job training and placement, and transitional support),
- intensify outreach of the HRM's Step up to Leadership and Youth Leadership programs within high-risk neighbourhoods and among at-risk youth,
- increase the number of outreach workers for older at-risk adolescents and young adults,
- decrease wait times for the assessment and treatment of youth and young adults with mental health and substance abuse disorders (and deliver more assessment and treatment services within high-risk neighbourhoods), and
- involve (at-risk) youth in program development, delivery, and evaluation.

It is also recommended that the HRM and the provincial government work collaboratively to investigate the possibility of establishing a network of youth centres (beginning with a limited number of test cases), which follows Quebec's *centres jeunesse* model. These youth centres would be quasi-governmental bodies and constitute a more structured, purposeful, social developmental augmentation of the youth "hang-out" centres recommended in the 2008 Roundtable report. Like the *centres jeunesse*, the proposed centres would cater to youth and young adults who have been identified as high risk for serious and chronic criminal offending or have been processed through the criminal justice system for one or more serious criminal offences. As such, the proposed centres would be both proactive (working with high-risk youth) and reactive (reintegrating youth serving court-ordered sanctions). In both cases, the emphasis would be placed on a social problem-solving, developmental, case management, wraparound approach (co-ordinated by youth outreach workers). In addition, these proposed youth centres would:

- be located in high-crime, high-risk neighbourhoods so they are highly visible and easily accessible as drop-in centres,
- be integrated into the overall (outreach) approach to identifying high-risk youth,
- be closely aligned with the Neighbourhood Integrated Service Team located in that

neighbourhood,

- serve as the primary working location for the Youth Advocacy Workers,
- provide emergency and crisis services to high risk youth as well as referrals to other agencies for more complete, long-term service provision, and
- when necessary, provide community-based programs and services (job training, education, detox and substance abuse counselling, social and life skills training).

The HRM government, in collaboration with the provincial and federal governments, relevant private sector organizations (e.g., Halifax Chamber of Commerce, Black Business Initiative), and relevant non-governmental organizations (e.g., CEED, YouthLive, Matrix) should also develop a comprehensive employment strategy specifically targeting at-risk youth (youth who have dropped out of school, youth who have been in trouble with the law, homeless youth, the chronically unemployed) as well as African Nova Scotian youth. Some proposed principles of this comprehensive labour market strategy are as follows:

- intensive outreach to the most at-risk youth and those who have been in trouble with the law (job training and employment should be used as an alternative to criminal justice sanctions),
- a case management, wraparound approach to help youth and young adults overcome those risk factors that obstruct stable employment (as well as criminal and violent behaviour),
- an integrated approach that connects high school completion, post-secondary education, job training and job placement (while providing material incentives and support throughout the process), and
- the delivery of the labour market strategy through the proposed NISTS and the Youth Centres (i.e., Youth Advocate Workers would refer clients, while the Youth Centres would be central facilities for promoting the program and providing some of the job training and placement services).

Benchmark #8: A risk-based approach targets and mobilizes neighbourhoods with a high rate of crime and violence

Crime rate statistics, national victimization surveys, and scores of other studies focusing on “street” violence show that this problem is not randomly distributed within urban centres in North America. Violent street crime among young men between the ages of 15 to 25 “tends to be concentrated geographically in areas of disadvantage, social exclusion and relative poverty” (Institute for the Prevention

of Crime, 2009, 25). Research in Canada also reveals that crime and violence in urban centres are concentrated spatially within more socially disadvantaged, inner-city neighbourhoods (Fitzgerald, Wisener, & Savoie, 2001; Savoie, Bédard, & Collins, 2006; Wallace, Wisener & Collins, 2006; Savoie, 2008).

In response to theories and research that link high levels of crime and violence with community disadvantage, there has been an increased emphasis placed on mobilizing residents in poor, socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods to address crime and violence and their underlying social causes. A community-based approach to crime prevention is predicated on the assumption that private citizens play a major role in maintaining order in a free society and therefore should be encouraged to accept more responsibility for ensuring safety and security. An underlying doctrine of community crime prevention (CCP) is that residents must become involved in proactive interventions aimed at reducing or precluding criminal opportunity from occurring in their neighborhoods. To mobilize neighborhoods to combat crime, violence, and their root causes successfully, there must be a strong sense of local social cohesion and informal social control, which can either develop organically or be induced through deliberate community organizing and development initiatives.

Research findings and analysis: A geo-spatial analysis of crime and violence in the HRM undertaken by Statistics Canada reveals that crime and violence is not “evenly distributed across the city but rather clustered in certain areas ...” (Savoie, 2008, 9). The areas of the HRM that have the highest density of violent crime “appear in the downtown and northeastern areas located near the harbour” and in Dartmouth. This study also found that property crime and violent crime rates correlate with certain socio-economic factors. Violent crime rates are higher in neighbourhoods with a high proportion of males, where populations have lower levels of education and higher rates of unemployment, where more people live alone, where the housing situation is poor, where there is a higher proportion of residents spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, and where there is a higher concentration of single-mother families (“these families tend to be living in low-income situations”)(Savoie, 2008, 9). In short, violent crime rates are higher in neighbourhoods with lower rates of socio-economic status and higher rates of social disadvantage.

Data from Halifax Regional Police, as well as interviews with individual police officers conducted for this study, also indicate that crime and violence tend to be concentrated in certain parts of the city: the downtown business and entertainment district, north Halifax, parts of Spryfield, Bayers-Westwood, North Dartmouth, and North Preston.

Recommendations: The implications of the above research findings are threefold. First, efforts to prevent and control serious and chronic (youth) crime and violence must focus on those regions and neighbourhoods with the highest rates of crime and violence. To this end, neighbourhoods that should be particularly targeted are Mulgrave Park, Uniacke Square, Bayers-Westwood, Greystone Court, North Dartmouth (Scotia Court), and North Preston. Second, ongoing efforts must be made to promote a broad-based, representative, and inclusive mobilization of residents in these neighbourhoods around crime and other local social problems. Third, neighbourhood-based crime and violence prevention and control initiatives must be comprehensive and strategic, relying on an integrated social and community development approach that includes early interventions for high-risk children and youth (developmentally-based pre-school and after-school programs), an integrated education and labour market approach (career and post-secondary education planning, job training and placement), community organizing and leadership training (mobilizing and empowering local residents), community development (fostering social cohesion and informal social control), local economic development (small businesses and entrepreneurial training and development), and community clean-up and beautification projects.

It is also recommended that the Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority adopt the Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program for its communities. This comprehensive crime prevention program is geared specifically for multi-residential housing and can be adapted to specific environments. Some of the key elements of this program are a site assessment (that identifies the nature and scope of local crime and disorder problems, which then serve as a basis for site-specific crime prevention strategies), training of resident managers or site supervisors, education and mobilization of residents, and measures to identifying and remove problem tenants.

With respect to (youth) crime and violence prevention specifically, greater decision-making power over HRM government and police policies, programs and resource allocation should be delegated to residents living in high-risk (Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority) communities. Community leaders and other residents from these neighbourhoods should also play a leading role in the proposed Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams.

Benchmark #9: A youth crime and violence strategy must address the problem of disproportionate minority contact and its underlying causes

As Fitzgerald and Carrington (2011, 450) point out, “the problem of disproportionate minority contact with the criminal justice system has been well documented in Canada.” Research has consistently

demonstrated that Aboriginal peoples and African-Canadians in particular “are over-represented as offenders at various points in the criminal justice system compared to their share of the general population.” Statistics demonstrate that African Nova Scotian youth make up a disproportionate number of offenders, gang members, and youth- in-custody relative to their population size (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006; Clairmont, 2008).

In the American literature on the subject, there are two dominant explanations for disproportionate minority contact (DMC), according to Fitzgerald and Carrington (2011, 451). The “differential offending” hypothesis suggests that DMC results from “differences in the incidence, seriousness, and persistence of offending.” In other words, members of certain racial minority groups are more frequently involved in criminal offending, engage in more serious criminal offences, and are over-represented as far as chronic offenders are concerned. In contrast, the “differential treatment hypothesis” suggests that the over-representation of racial minority groups in the criminal justice system results from “intended and/or unintended inequities” (i.e., racial profiling and discrimination) by the criminal justice system.

The deeper, more structural causes of DMC, in both Canada and the United States, can be traced to historically-ingrained and institutionalized racism and discrimination against people of colour, not simply by the criminal justice system, but by the broader society. In turn, racism and discrimination contribute to other criminogenic risk factors. For example, as stated in the 1994 Black Learners Advisory Committee report on education for African Nova Scotians, “Racial discrimination, overt or covert, has played a major part in denying African Nova Scotians equal opportunity to education. This in turn has had disastrous consequences in employment and access to other services. As a result, most African Canadian children are from birth trapped in a vicious cycle of societal rejection and isolation, poverty, low expectations and low educational achievement” (Black Learners Advisory Council, 1994, 13).

Research findings and analysis: A number of initiatives and organizations exist at the provincial and municipal government levels, including those undertaken by public safety and policing agencies, that can benefit African Nova Scotian youth generally and, more specifically, can decrease their contact with the criminal justice system. Perhaps the most important initiative has been educational policies and programs at the provincial and municipal level to increase the academic success and graduation rates of African Nova Scotian students, which are key protective factors in the context of youth crime and violence prevention (EnidLee Consultants, 2009; Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Education, 2010; Halifax Regional School Board, 2011; 2012).

Despite these initiatives, this research identified problems that continue to contribute to the disproportionate number of young black men who are involved in serious and chronic offending in the HRM:

- African Nova Scotia adolescents and young adults (males in particular) continue to be underserved by the HRM government and its agencies. This is due to one or more of the following reasons: (i) an absence of meaningful after-school recreational, sports, tutoring, cultural and employment opportunities, (ii) inaccessibility of these programs (a lack of local programming); and/or (iii) a lack of participation in these programs by these youth – especially the highest risk African Nova Scotian children and youth – which is due to a number of factors, including the lack of intensive outreach,
- Institutionalized racism and racial stereotyping continue to exist within the private sector, leading to a lack of (meaningful) jobs and career opportunities that are available locally,
- “deficiencies still exist in policies and programs to support African Nova Scotia students and overcome racial barriers that continue to exist in the educational system and individual schools” (EnidLee Consultants, 2009, 11),
- HRM social housing policies continue to segregate and “ghettoize” African Nova Scotians, which contributes to criminogenic risk factors, such as marginalization and social exclusion,
- there is a lack of resources to identify and assess risk factors specific to African Nova Scotian children and youth (living in high risk environments) in the HRM, and
- there is no comprehensive strategy that addresses the many factors that place African Nova Scotian children and youth at risk of criminal offending, violence, and formal contact with the criminal justice system.

Recommendations: The disproportionate number of African Nova Scotian youth and young adults as criminal offenders is a complex issue. The scope, nature and complexity of the problem, and its root causes, demands a comprehensive, strategic, and re-invigorated approach that brings together all key partners in a formal, inter-governmental, multi-sectoral forum. At the core of this strategic approach should be two areas of focus: (1) addressing long-standing racial discrimination in Nova Scotia (in housing, education, and the labour market), and (2) a targeted, culturally-sensitive delivery of social, socio-economic, and community development initiatives specifically for African Nova Scotian children and youth.

As stated in the 2009 *Reality Check* report “in order to uproot the causes of educational failure, there must be an institutional and community commitment to naming racism and wrestling it to the ground

in all those educational settings in which it is found” (Enidlee Consultants Inc., 2009, 10). This same institutional and community commitment needs to be extended to all aspects of the public and private sphere in Halifax and the HRM government must take the lead in mobilizing and coordinating anti-racism initiatives to this end.

This research supports the recommendations of the 2009 *Reality Check* report as well as the initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Education and HRSB in response to the report. As part of the proposed comprehensive strategic plan addressing youth crime and violence in the HRM, there should be a specific strategy dedicated to African Nova Scotian youth. This section should be informed by extensive consultations with members of and organizations representing the African Nova Scotian community. Notwithstanding these consultations, social problem-solving initiatives specific to reducing criminogenic risk factors among African Nova Scotian children and youth in the HRM must make up a significant component of this strategy and should include the following:

- implement NISTs in communities with a high proportion of African Nova Scotia residents, with particular emphasis on developing comprehensive, integrated, localized social problem-solving strategies (with significant input and leadership from community members and youth in particular)
- dedicate youth outreach workers to the African Nova Scotian community, which would include connecting clients to the agencies, services, and programs that cater to African Nova Scotians
- recruit more African Nova Scotia adults to serve as youth outreach workers, tutors, and mentors
- create more developmentally-based, after-school programs (tutoring, mentoring, sports and recreation) targeting African Nova Scotia adolescents and young adults (men in particular), ensuring these programs are culturally appropriate, extensively promoted, and delivered locally (or made more accessible to these youth by offering transportation)
- develop a comprehensive and integrated education (high school and post-secondary) and labour market strategy (which includes identifying risk factors that obstruct young African Nova Scotian males from completing high school, entering a post-secondary institution and/or landing a meaningful career)
- re-develop the Saint Patrick Alexandra school as a community and cultural centre for African Nova Scotians
- explore the potential of creating an Afro-centric high school in the HRM
- work with private sector companies to increase opportunities to train and hire African Nova Scotian adolescents and young adults (and to reduce discrimination in

the local labour markets), and encourage post-secondary institutions to intensify their outreach to and recruiting of African Nova Scotian youth (and couple this outreach with tutoring, mentoring, and advocacy work to better ensure they finish high school with a GPA to enter a post-secondary institution)

Benchmark #10: Situational (opportunity reduction) crime prevention approaches should be part of a comprehensive strategy

Clarke (1997, 4) defines situational crime prevention as “opportunity-reducing measures that: (1) are directed at highly specific forms of crime; (2) involve the management, design, or manipulation of the immediate environment in as systematic and permanent a way as possible; (3) make crime more difficult and risky, or less rewarding and excusable as judged by a wide range of offenders.” In short, situational crime prevention entails measures that involve managing, designing, or manipulating the physical environment to reduce the opportunities for crimes to occur.

Situational approaches to violence prevention incorporate an important principle of opportunity reduction crime prevention: deflecting offenders. This involves measures that attempt to steer would-be offenders away from a particular location and, more generally, to deter people from the temptation to engage in criminal or disorderly behavior at a particular time or place. The deflection of offenders is a highly appropriate situational strategy for violence reduction and prevention, especially given the public nature of (gang- and drug-related) gun violence. One opportunity reduction approach to gun violence, and drive-by shootings in particular, is street closures, which has been implemented in numerous American cities. Another offender-deflection technique that has been used to stem gang activity and violence in a particular time and place are civil injunctions, whereby selected individuals are prohibited from engaging in certain activities or frequenting a certain location. Finally, a situational approach that controls the “facilitators” of crime and violence can be applied to the proliferation of firearms; the most common of these are gun buy-back programs, whereby illegal and legal guns are turned over to police in exchange for money or some other type of remuneration.

Research findings and analysis: Within the Halifax Regional Police there is a unit responsible for conducting safety audits and recommending safe design principles and strategies. To date, however, there have been no specific projects that have applied safe design principles as a way to reduce the opportunity for gun or gang violence to occur. There is also no evidence that street closures or civil injunctions have been used to prevent violent offenders or activities in the HRM or Nova Scotia. Gun buy-back programs

have been implemented in the HRM; in particular, the Pixels for Pistols campaign, which was launched in November of 2009.

Recommendations: A comprehensive strategic plan addressing youth crime and violence in the HRM should include a situational crime prevention component that begins by applying different opportunity reduction principles and strategies (increasing effort, increasing risks, reducing rewards, removing excuses, controlling facilitators) to youth, gun and gang violence. In addition, crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied to “crime hot spots” in the HRM as well as physical environments that are deemed to promote or facilitate violence. The HRM should also consider the use of street closures as a means to deter and prevent gun violence in neighbourhood hot spots. While research in the U.S. may suggest that gun buy-back programs do not have a significant preventative effect on gun violence (Sherman, 1997, 30–31), they do represent one cost-effective approach to taking guns off the street. Thus, the Halifax Regional Police should consider future gun buy-back programs, but also include rigorous research to assess whether such initiatives have any impact on gun violence in the HRM. Indeed, any situational violence prevention measure implemented by the HRM should include an evaluation component to assess whether it is effective (and whether it has actually prevented a violent crime or simply displaced it to another time and place).

Benchmark #11: Specific strategies should be developed and implemented to address youth gangs and youth gang violence

According to the U.S. Surgeon General’s 2001 report on youth violence, “involvement with delinquent peers and gang membership are two of the most powerful predictors of violence” (p. 12). The focus of most efforts to control youth gangs and related activities can be demarcated into two broad categories: (i) limiting gang membership either by preventing individuals from joining gangs or inducing the departure of gang-involved individuals (thereby preventing the formation or sustainability of gangs), and (ii) preventing, controlling, disrupting and minimizing criminality and violence by gangs and individual gang members. Like other crime and violence problems, there is widespread agreement in the literature that prevention, intervention, and suppression must be combined to most effectively combat gangs. That is, efforts to control gang problems, according to the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency and Prevention (OJJDP), “must be comprehensive, long-term strategic approaches that contain the spread of gang activity, protect those youth who are most susceptible, and mitigate risk factors that foster gang activity.” Specifically, the four-pronged approach of effective anti-gang strategies promoted by the OJJDP entails “targeted suppression of the most serious and chronic offenders; intervention with youthful gang

members; prevention efforts for youth identified as being at high risk of entering a gang; and implementation of programs that address risk and protective factors and targets the entire population in high-crime, high-risk areas” (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative Internet web site).

Research findings and analysis: Youth gangs are a concern in the HRM, although there is no reliable data on the extent to which gangs are responsible for (gun) violence. In recent years, police in the HRM have undertaken important enforcement initiatives that focus specifically on suppressing gangs and related violence. Most importantly, the HRP and the RCMP are increasingly embarking on suppression initiatives through an integrated, task force approach (in particular, the Gangs and Guns Unit) which the research shows is necessary for serious, gang and organized crime-related problems. Also relevant are more general innovations in policing by the HRP and the RCMP (Compstat, GIS-based crime mapping, hot spot policing) that can have an impact on gang activity and violence.

Recent initiatives implemented in Halifax have also experimented with the “deterrence supplemented with social service provisions” model that has proliferated in the United States in recent years (McGarrell et al., 2013, 34). In particular, the Uptown Drug Market Intervention (DMI) is currently being piloted in Uniacke Square to address the ongoing issue of open market drug dealing. The Uptown DMI which uses a two-pronged approach to the drug trade and traffickers: traditional criminal justice measures targeting hard-core, violent drug traffickers “coupled with an offer of help and support for those who wish to exit the criminal lifestyle” (Halifax Regional Municipality, February 2013, 2; Halifax Regional Police, Uptown Drug Market Intervention Pilot Project Internet web site).

Recommendations: The literature on youth violence, and gun and gang violence in particular, as well as research conducted for this study, indicate that the illegal drug trade is a significant source of this violence. The implications of these findings for efforts to prevent youth and gang violence is that specific interventions should revolve around the illegal drug trade. This means supplementing traditional arrest and punishment of chronic, serious and violent offenders with other measures aimed at: (1) preventing young people from entering the drug trade and/or joining gangs (with particular focus on African Nova Scotians who are disproportionately represented among such offenders), (2) diverting younger drug traffickers into legitimate career opportunities (through post-secondary education, job training and placement, etc.) and (3) mediating conflict between rival drug dealers and gangs.

Many of the social-problem solving initiatives recommended throughout this report (including early intervention, greater outreach targeting the most at-risk youth, more community-based opportunities for

children and youth in high-risk environments, establishing youth centres, enhanced labour-market and post-secondary recruitment strategies delivered locally, etc.) can contribute to efforts to prevent young people from becoming involved in gangs and the drug trade. With that said, it is recommended that specific social problem-solving strategies be developed for those at risk of becoming involved in drug trafficking. Given that research indicates that many retail (“street-level”) drug dealers are chronic users who suffer from mental health and/or substance abuse disorders, a particular emphasis of this social-problem strategy should be addressing these risk factors.

Diverting younger drug traffickers into more legitimate opportunities means that integrated labour market and (post-secondary) education strategies should also be adapted to those less serious, offenders involved in the drug trade (through a comprehensive strategy that addresses personal risk factors while channelling their “entrepreneurial” assets into more legitimate forms of employment or small business opportunities).

Police and other public safety officials also need to explore the application of different situational techniques to youth, gang and gun violence, including the use of civil injunctions, the application of safe design principles, and the use of mediation to quell conflict and violence among rival drug dealers and gangs.

In order to suppress gangs, gang violence and gun violence, the Halifax Regional Police and the RCMP should continue to apply best practices in the field of policing and law enforcement. This includes the use of community policing, problem-oriented policing, Compstat, intelligence-led policing, hot spot policing, and geo-spatial crime mapping. Police must start subjecting their gang, drug trafficking, and violence suppression strategies to rigorous evaluations in order to determine whether the strategies are in fact working.

At the time of this report, it appears that the provincial government has received funding from the federal government to expand the Uptown Drug Market Intervention strategy. And while this approach has realized success in the U.S., it does have significant limitations (in particular, it does not entail an early intervention approach that the literature indicates must be at the core of efforts to address the root causes of criminality and violence). Moreover, unlike in the U.S. which has the threat of highly punitive penalties to leverage drug dealers and gang members into more legitimate occupations, Canadian authorities do not hold as big a hammer, so they may not be as successful in their diversion efforts (itself a good reason why American programs are not always applicable to Canada). The inherent limitations of

this strategy accentuate the need to implement it only as part of a larger, more comprehensive approach to youth and gang crime and violence in the HRM.

Finally, from an enforcement/suppression perspective, some of those interviewed for this research stressed the need for greater enforcement efforts directed at removing adult tenants—including residents and guests—from Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority communities if they are involved in criminal and violent offending (or counselling others to do the same). Complementary techniques that may be applied to accomplish this goal include: (1) implementing anonymous tips lines (such as crime stoppers) specific to public housing communities to help identify tenants and guests involved in criminal and other problem activities, (2) having all (adult) tenants sign a contract stating that they agree to be evicted if they are engaged in any illegal activity, (3) applying civil injunctions to individuals that prohibit them from entering (let alone residing in) MRHA communities, and (4) implementing the Crime-Free Multi-Housing Program in these public housing communities.

Conclusion

The rate of crime and violence among youth and young adults can be reduced in the HRM, if at least only some of the recommendations of this report are adopted. We have yet to reach our full potential as far as initiatives to address this problem are concerned. Despite the substantial progress made in applying effective, evidence-based approaches to youth crime and violence, there continues to be significant gaps and weaknesses that should be filled. First and foremost is the absence of strategic, comprehensive plan at both the city-wide and neighbourhood levels that mobilizes all sectors of society to work together in a collaborative, integrated fashion. Within this context there exists other significant gaps in programs and services for at-risk children, youth, and young adults, including a shortage of outreach workers, mental health and substance abuse prevention initiatives, community-based after-school programs, social competency and life skills training, mentoring, structured tutoring programs, and integrated educational and labour market strategies.

A collaborative, strategic approach to youth crime and violence must be comprehensive. This means that prevention, intervention and suppression approaches must be implemented in a coordinated and complementary fashion, utilizing all relevant institutions (the family, schools, the community, labour markets, health care facilities, and the criminal justice system). While comprehensive, this strategy must place particular emphasis on preventing criminal and violent behaviour by addressing root causes. This is best accomplished through developmentally-based interventions that deliver protective factors directly

to children and youth who are at risk of serious and chronic offending with the goal of increasing their personal resilience in the face of criminogenic risk factors.

Justice Nunn summed it up best when he said, “It would be foolhardy to suggest that we can prevent all youth crime. However, we can prevent a great deal by reducing the causes, and we can control others by instituting programs and systems to cut down on further criminal activity by those already in the system. We are not starting from ground zero. We already have much in place and many first-class people involved. With some changes and adjustments, we can move ahead to a greater level of success in preventing youth crime. I cannot think of any area of human concern where the adage “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is more apt (Nunn, 2006, 169).

APPENDIX

Case Studies: Model Crime and Violence Prevention Programs Recommended for Adoption in the HRM: Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gangs and Youth Violence

In 1987, the OJJDP initiated the Juvenile Gang Suppression and Intervention Research and Development Program. Led by Dr. Irving Spergel, from the University of Chicago, the research entailed an assessment of existing agencies and programs dedicated to combating gangs and gang-related crime and violence in the U.S. Based upon his review, Spergel concluded, “neither a single minded suppression nor a single-minded social-intervention approach has demonstrated success in reducing gang crime, especially gang violence” (Spergel, 2007, 25). Spergel and Curry (1993) argue that since the causes and proximate factors contributing to gang membership, gang existence, and gang activities are complex and multifaceted, an equally complex and multifaceted approach is required. As a result of their research, in 1994 Spergel and his colleagues created the Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression, commonly known as the “Spergel Model” (Spergel and Curry, 1993; Spergel et al., 1994; Spergel, 1995). This model is one example of how a comprehensive, multi-agency, multi-sectoral approach to addressing significant youth crime and violence problems can be pursued at the community level.

The Spergel Model is premised on the Social Disorganization Theory of crime and criminality, and, more specifically, the premise that “gangs become chronic and serious problems in communities where key organizations are inadequately integrated and sufficient resources are not available to target gang-involved youth” (Public Safety Canada, n.d., 1). As such, according to Spergel, Wa, and Sosa (2014, 452):

The comprehensive gang program model required criminal justice and social agencies to integrate and collaborate on key elements of control and social development, with participation from local neighborhood groups. Focus was not primarily directed to strategies of general community development, political or social reform, community policing, inclusive youth socialization, or even mediation of conflicts between gangs. These strategies were subsidiary to reducing the gang problem through an integrated social development, control, opportunities provision, and interorganizational mobilization approach. The model required the development of a lead agency and a street team of police, probation officers, and outreach youth workers (some former gang leaders) – interacting and working together – targeting delinquent/criminal gang youth and youth at high risk of gang membership who were also involved in delinquent activity.

At the core of the Spergel Model is a comprehensive approach to gangs, gang crime, and gang violence, executed through an integrated, multidisciplinary intervention team, composed of law enforcement agencies, probation agencies, social welfare agencies, street outreach workers, and community organizations. All are expected to work together to case manage individual gang members using five interrelated strategies: (1) community mobilization (2) social interventions, (3) opportunities provision, (4) suppression, and (5) organizational change and development of local agencies and groups. The National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada (2008) summarizes the broad interventions delivered through the Spergel Model as follows

- community mobilization - mobilizing local residents, youth, community groups, civic leaders and agencies to plan, strengthen, or create new opportunities or linkages to existing organizations for gang-involved and at-risk youth; and, coordinating programs and services as well as the functions of staff within and across agencies,
- social intervention - providing programs and social services (via youth serving agencies, schools, faith-based and other organizations) to gang youth and those at high risk of gang involvement; also, using outreach workers to actively engage gang-involved youth,
- opportunities provision - providing and facilitating access to educational, training and employment programs or services targeted to gang youth and those at high-risk of gang involvement,
- suppression - conducting suppression activities via formal and informal social control mechanisms and holding gang-involved youth accountable for their actions and behaviours, including close supervision or monitoring of gang youth by criminal justice agencies and also by community-based agencies, schools and grass-roots groups, and
- organizational change and development - facilitating organizational change and development to help community agencies better address gang problems through a team “problem-solving” approach that is consistent with the philosophy of community and problem-oriented policing; also, developing and implementing policies and processes that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources within and across agencies (National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada, 2008, 63-64).

This comprehensive model was piloted as the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project in Chicago, starting in 1992. As part of this project, the intervention team targeted approximately 200 hardcore gang members, ages 17 to 25, from two of the largest, most violent gangs in Chicago. The goal of the program was aimed at controlling violent or potentially violent youth gang offenders through surveillance and

suppression activities by police, intensive supervision and monitoring by probation officials, and the delivery of social services (such as counseling, job training and referrals, drug and alcohol treatment, etc.) to help gang-involved youth exit gangs and lead more pro-social lives (Spergel et al., 1999; Spergel, 2007).

Evaluations of the Little Village Gang Reduction Project found, over the course of four years, that serious gang violence (aggravated assaults and homicides) and other crimes committed by gang members targeted by the project were lower compared to members of gangs that were used as control groups. The project appeared to be effective in helping youth reduce their violent and criminal behaviour—in part by diverting gang-involved youth into educational programs and employment— although these results were largely confined to older youth the project did not seem to have a similar impact on younger gang members) (Spergel et al., 1999; Spergel, 2007).

Other notable principles and project evaluation findings of the Little Village Gang Reduction Project include the following:

- A “mobilized community is the most promising way to deal with the gang problem.” A “community must first recognize the presence of a gang problem before it can do anything meaningful to address the problem.” The community must also “systematically articulate and implement rationales for services, tactics, or procedures” and then must “organize effectively to combat the youth gang problem. In a “typical community, the mobilization process evolves through several stages before fruition” (National Gang Center, 2010, 2).
- While youth gang members must be held accountable for their criminal acts, they must at the same time be provided an opportunity to change or control their behavior (National Gang Center, 2010, 2).
- Youth gang intervention and control efforts require a thorough understanding of the complexity of gang activity in the context of local community life (National Gang Center, 2010, 2).
- Youth outreach workers, whose primary role was to build relationships with at-risk and gang-involved youth and then develop an intervention plan and find relevant services so they can adopt more pro-social behaviour, was also considered critical to program success (National Gang Center, 2010, 21).
- A combination of various social interventions involving youth outreach workers and suppression tactics was more effective for chronically violent youths, while the sole use of youth workers was more effective for less violent youths (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2008, 65).

According to the National Gang Center (2010), evaluations of the “Spergel” model reveal the importance of the outreach component to that program’s success. The outreach workers’ responsibilities as part of this program include:

- identifying appropriate clients and recruiting them for the program (outreach workers are the intervention team’s eyes and ears on the street and often constitute the primary recruitment tool for the program),
- identifying youths’ needs, strengths, and goals to help the intervention team develop a more comprehensive case management plan,
- referring program clients to service providers and then helping to manage this relationship,
- coordinating appropriate crisis responses to program clients following violent episodes in the community,
- coaching and providing role models for each youth,
- providing assistance to families in distress, ranging from accessing basic needs to helping resolve family conflicts,
- visiting clients who are incarcerated and helping to reconnect them to services when they are released from custody,
- resolving conflicts and/or mediating between clients, their families, other youth, and/or agencies,
- working with clients who are seeking employment (which may include helping with résumé writing and applying for jobs or job training programs), and conducting gang awareness presentations in schools (National Gang Center, 2010, 21).

With some subsequent modifications, the Spergel model evolved into the OJJDP Comprehensive Community-Wide Gang Model that, beginning in 1995, was implemented and tested in five other sites in the U.S. Since its initial pilot testing, the OJJDP has implemented this model in more than 25 urban and rural locations in the U.S. (Wyrick, 2005; National Gang Center, 2010).

One example of the OJJDP comprehensive model is the Gang Reduction and Intervention Program [GRIP], which was implemented in Richmond, Virginia. Specifically, the neighbourhood in which GRIP was implemented was a community of single-family homes and apartments that at the time was “transitioning from a middle-class to a working-class population, with an increase in Hispanic residents.” Both traditional “homegrown” African-American gangs and Hispanic gangs with roots in the western U.S. and Central America were also present in the community (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2007, 9). According to the OJJDP (2007, 9) preventative activities implemented as part of the GRIP project were

“aimed at the broad population of families and youth who are at risk of becoming involved in gang and delinquent activity” and included the following:

- One-Stop Resource Center (an information and referral case management entry point to prevention services),
- Prenatal and infancy support,
- English as a Second Language for Hispanic residents,
- Spanish as a Second Language, with an emphasis on providing language skills to those serving the Hispanic population,
- Class Action Summer Camp,
- Richmond school resource officers train the Class Action curriculum in target-area schools under the auspices of the Gang Reduction Program,
- Public awareness programs and community events,
- School-based educational and family wraparound services,
- Sports and life-skill activities and training,
- Theater group to showcase issues involving gang-involved youth,
- Gang awareness training to community and service providers,
- Hispanic liaison to link the program to local Hispanic residents,
- Mentoring/tutoring for youth at risk of gang involvement,
- Immigration services to Hispanic residents,
- Afterschool and summer programs for elementary and middle school youth, and
- Arts and recreation for at-risk youth.

Intervention activities of the project were “supported by a multidisciplinary intervention team that conducts case-management activities, including street outreach to support gang-involved youth, with the goal of providing an alternative to gang membership.” Interventions that specifically targeted gang-involved and other high-risk youth included the following:

- Job training development and placement through public/private partnerships,
- Entrepreneurial training for at-risk youth,
- Role modeling and mentoring,
- Truancy and dropout prevention programs,
- Mental health and substance abuse services,

- Educational support and GED services,
- Tattoo removal, and
- Community service projects (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2007, 9).

Other social developmental initiatives were offered to youth who were returning to the community from a correctional facility or another form of court-ordered supervision. These re-entry initiatives were “closely tied to the multidisciplinary intervention team and include self-sufficiency skill training and job training and placement.” Support services for these youth and young adults, including transportation, food, and other services, were also made available (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2007, 9).

Law enforcement suppression and other policing activities undertaken as part of GRIP entailed “directed police patrols, community policing, community awareness, supporting increased law enforcement intelligence sharing, establishing a multiagency law enforcement and prosecution response to target gang leaders, increasing the number of school resource officers in target area schools, and expanding neighborhood watch teams in partnership with the Richmond Police Department and community members” (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2007, 9).

The evaluations of the Little Village project and other applications of the comprehensive model revealed that project implementation was not without its challenges. It is highly ambitious and complex to implement, in part due to the comprehensive, multi-modal, inter-agency approach combined with the need to mobilize local communities (which is a significant challenge in itself). Studies of the different comprehensive models that were applied produced mixed findings, which, according to McGarrell et al., (2013, 34), is partially blamed on inadequate implementation of the theoretical model that neglected at least one of its five essential components.

Neighbourhood Integrated Services Teams

One collaborative model adopted by the City of Vancouver to tackle crime and other local problems is the Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NIST). A NIST is comprised of staff from different municipal departments and agencies that work in an integrated and coordinated fashion to address problems within each of the city’s official communities. The mission statement of the NIST is “To lead, to provide and to facilitate integrated community-based service delivery.” According to the City of Vancouver, more than 200 City employees work on 16 teams, each of which represents a particular area of the city. Initiated in 1994, the NIST program takes advantage of the network of city powers, expertise, facilities and services

that already existing in communities, including police, the fire department, planning, inspections, garbage collection, engineering services, schools and the school board, the health department, city legal services, permits and licenses, the liquor control board, libraries, and the recreation department. The teams are expected to work with residents to help solve problems relating to a wide range of quality-of-life issues, from sanitation, crime, drug trafficking, problem houses, noise, physical infrastructure problems, etc. A NIST is particularly useful when a local problem arises that may involve more than one City department. In 1997, the Institute for Public Administration of Canada awarded the City of Vancouver its Innovative Management Gold Award for the NIST program and, in 2003, the program garnered the City of Vancouver a United Nations award for “Innovation in Public Service” (City of Vancouver, Internet web site).

Targeted Social Competency Program for At-risk Children

Coping Power is a multi-component social competency training program for children who exhibit or are at risk of conduct problems. The theoretical basis for this program “assumes that aggression in children is the product of distortions in their social–cognitive appraisals” (they interpret situations or the actions and intentions of others negatively) and “deficiencies in their social problem solving skills,” combined with parents who have deficiencies in their parenting skills and behaviors (Lochman and Wells, 2002, 945).

Given the assumption that the causes of conduct problems are rooted in both the child’s social perceptions and skills as well as the parent’s parenting skills, the program includes components for both the at-risk child and his or her parent. The component for children—which is offered to fifth- and sixth-graders, usually in an after-school setting—teaches coping skills to deal with anxiety and frustration, anger management skills, impulse control skills, and problem-solving skills (including peer-related interpersonal problem solving). To support this skill training, the child’s component includes “a focus on behavioral and personal goal setting, awareness of feelings and associated physiological arousal, use of coping self-statements, distraction techniques and relaxation methods to use when provoked and made angry, organizational and study skills, perspective taking and attribution re-training, social problem solving skills, and dealing with peer pressure and neighborhood-based problems by using refusal skills” (Lochman and Wells, 2002, 951).

Parents are trained in such areas as “(a) identifying prosocial and disruptive behavioral targets in their children using specific operational terms, (b) rewarding appropriate child behavior, (c) giving effective instructions and establishing age-appropriate rules and expectations for their children in the home, (d) applying effective consequences to negative child behavior, (e) managing child behavior outside the

home, and (f) establishing ongoing family communication structures in the home (such as weekly family meetings).” Parents also learn how to support the social competency skills that children learn and to use stress management skills to remain calm and in control during stressful or irritating disciplinary interactions with their children (Lochman and Wells, 2002, 951).

In its full form, the program takes between 15 to 18 months to complete (a truncated version is also available that lasts about 12 months). The children’s component consists of 34 group sessions. Each session is approximately 50 minutes in length and includes five children. Individual sessions between the trained facilitator and the child may also be held. The parent component consists of 16 group sessions in addition to periodic home visits and other forms of contact between the parent and a professional facilitating the training.

An experiment that tested Coping Power with pre-adolescent boys who were at risk of aggressive and disruptive behaviors, concluded that the parent component of the Coping Power program “was instrumental in helping parents set more consistently clear expectations for boys’ behavior and provide more consistent consequences for negative and positive behaviors. In a similar way, it is plausible that the child component of the Coping Power program assisted the boys in more carefully and accurately identifying the reasons for peers’ and adults’ reactions toward them” while helping them better manage “their escalating arousal and anger when experiencing problems in their social interactions” (Lochman and Wells, 2002, 964).

Anger Management Prevention and Treatment for Children and Youth

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a cognitive behavioral anger management prevention and treatment program for children and youth, which trains them to understand and replace aggression and anti-social behavior with positive alternatives. The systematic lesson plan is built on a three-pronged approach: (1) training in pro-social skills, (2) anger control training, and (3) moral reasoning training. Social skills training is the behavioral component of ART and is intended to promote skills and competencies that can help avoid aggression when dealing with a conflict. The social skills taught in the program include basic social competencies (starting a conversation, introducing oneself, asking for help), understanding feelings and emotions (recognizing one’s own feelings and emotions, expressing affection, dealing with fear), and alternatives to aggression (responding to teasing, dealing with an accusation, peaceful conflict resolution). The anger control training component is meant to impart in children the skills and techniques necessary to understand and control anger and aggression. Students are taught how to recognize and

control the “anger continuum,” which includes recognizing triggers (external events and internal self-talk that can start the slide into and perpetuate anger and aggression) and cues (physiological signs that one is becoming angry). This component also provides students with practical skills and techniques that can reduce their anger, such as self-talk (positive statements that reinforce appropriate behavior), critical thinking (anticipating the consequences of one’s actions and searching for positive alternative solutions), social skills (implementing the social skills taught in the first third of the curriculum) and evaluation (reflecting on the anger control continuum and assessing how well it was implemented). The moral reasoning component trains students to use proper value judgments to overcome thinking and perception errors that might lead to aggression, such as self-centered thinking (“it’s all about me”), assuming the worst (“it would happen anyways” or “they would do it to me”), blaming others (“it’s their fault”) and mislabeling or minimizing (“it’s not stealing, I’m only borrowing it” or “everybody else does it”) (Goldstein, Glick and Gibbs, 1998).

Two studies measuring the impact of ART on incarcerated youth (ages 14 to 17) in New York in the 1970s indicated that those in the treatment group exhibited a higher level of skill in controlling their anger and aggression while in the correctional facility. They also exhibited fewer and less severe instances of acting out behavior compared to a control group. The research found these skills also transferred outside the correctional facility. Youth who underwent ART could better function in their communities in a pro-social manner compared to paroled youth who did not undergo the ART program. Based on these findings, the study’s authors conclude, “ART is a viable intervention for aggressive, assaultive youths who are incarcerated. We have been able to demonstrate over the past 2 years that many of the youngsters who participate in a program of ART learn what to do instead of being aggressive, learn how to control their anger, and more frequently perceive value in choosing socially acceptable alternatives to resolve their problems” (Glick and Goldstein, 1987, 361).

A more recent assessment of the ART program implemented with children and youth in Norway with varying behavioral problems also produced positive results. According to the authors of this study, those in the “ART group indicated significant improvement following the intervention, both in terms of increased social skills and reduced behavioural problems; in contrast, informants in the comparison group did not generally indicate improvement” (Gundersena and Svartdal, 2006, 63).

A Mentoring Program for At-risk Youth

In the United States, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) administers the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), which is designed to provide one-on-one mentoring for youth at risk of delinquency, gang involvement, educational failure, or dropping out of school. Through the JUMP program, the OJJDP awards three-year grants to community organizations to support the implementation and expansion of collaborative mentoring projects. What makes JUMP unique in the field of mentoring is that mentors are encouraged to work in partnership with other community agencies and institutions to help provide a “multi-dimensional intervention” that maximizes a “comprehensive continuum of care for the youth they are serving” (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998, 14). Typically, such coordination involves schools, medical service providers, mental health facilities, substance abuse treatment programs, and employment training and placement programs, among others. Many JUMP projects also supplement their core mentoring activities with additional services for youth participants and their families, including parent support groups, self-help groups, and referrals to other community organizations (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1998).

One example of a JUMP-funded initiative is the Los Angeles-based RESCUE Youth mentoring program. Developed and implemented by the Los Angeles County’s District Attorney’s Office and Fire Department, it targets youth between the ages of 12 and 14 who display early signs of high-risk behavior. The district attorney’s staff matches a young person with volunteer firefighters who act as mentors and help the youth with their communication and conflict resolution skills, while providing training in fire prevention and first aid. Another JUMP initiative is Project Caring Connections in New York City, which offers a range of services to youth from academic enrichment to cultural experiences, to a safe environment in which they can learn important social skills. Mentors work with students on a one-on-one or group basis to provide academic support, job shadowing (going to the mentor’s workplace), and social and cultural enrichment (Baldwin, Grossman & Garry, 1997, 5).

A Comprehensive, Developmentally-based After-school Program for At-risk Children

PALS, a social developmental program, is for children (ages 5 to 13) who live in high-risk, disadvantaged environments in the HRM. Based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Social Development, the program was developed to address factors that put children at risk of future criminal and other anti-social behaviour by enhancing their resilience. The specific criminogenic risk factors targeted by the PALS program are: (1) poor cognitive (reading and literacy) skills, (2) low self-esteem, (3) aggression/anger

management/conduct problems, (4) hyperactivity and impulsivity, (5) poor critical thinking and problem-solving skills, (6) a lack of empathy, and (7) problems with social participation (i.e., poor social networking skills, inability to work in a group context).

The PALS program was implemented at Saint Mary's University between 2008 and 2009 under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Schneider. The acronym "PALS" reflected the comprehensive approach to delivering risk factors and promoting resilience in children and youth: **P**ositive role models and mentors, **A**cademic tutoring, **L**eisure, recreational and physical activity, **S**ocial and life skills development. Specifically, the protective factors delivered by the PALS program fall into five categories: (1) tutoring, (2) social competency and life skills training, (3) nurturing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, (4) sports and other forms of physical and recreational activity, and (5) mentoring and positive role models.

Each child in the program was matched with a Saint Mary's University student who served as a mentor, a tutor, and a positive role model. As part of the academic component of the program, the mentor read with the child and provided help with homework. The program was also meant to promote positive behaviour, attitudes and life skills essential to a child's development. Participating children took part in structured activities in the classroom and engaged in sports-based activities with SMU men's and women's varsity teams. In addition to exposing the children and youth to positive role models, while encouraging a physically active lifestyle, the activities were structured to address such positive behaviours and life skills as: self-esteem and self-confidence, empathy, emotional awareness, team work and cooperation, critical thinking and problem-solving, impulse control, and anger management. With the exception of some field trips, all PALS activities took place on the Saint Mary's University campus.

A Universal Anxiety Prevention and Treatment Program for Children and Youth

FRIENDS for Life is a school-based anxiety prevention and treatment program that is meant to instill in children (ages 7 to 11 years) and adolescents (ages 12 to 16 years) the skills and capacities to effectively deal with fears, worries, anxieties, and depression by building their psychological resilience, self-esteem, coping skills, problem-solving skills, while promoting their ability to foster positive relationships with peers and adults.

The program name (FRIENDS) is an acronym for the systematic lesson plan delivered by the curriculum (**F**eeling Worried?; **R**elax and feel good; **I**nnner thoughts; **E**xplore plans; **N**ice work so reward yourself; **D**on't forget to practice; and **S**tay calm, you know how to cope now). The idea behind the acronym is to help children remember the strategies they can use to cope with stressful situations. The concept of friendships

is also central to the program in that the curriculum “encourages children to (a) think of their body as their friend because it tells them when they are feeling worried or nervous by giving them clues; (b) be their own friend and reward themselves when they try hard; (c) make friends, so that they can build their social support networks; and finally (d) talk to their friends when they are in difficult or worrying situations” (Shortt et al., 2001, 526).

The FRIENDS for Life program is based on cognitive behavioral therapy principles. According to Paula Barrett, a psychologist who developed the program, children are “taught to be aware of somatic cues when they are feeling anxious, and learn relaxation techniques so as to eliminate tension, remain calm and think clearly. Children are also taught to recognize negative self-talk and challenge unhelpful thoughts in positive ways” (Barrett and Sonderegger, 2005, 42).

The program was designed for use in schools by teachers during normal class time. The curriculum consists of ten regular sessions and two “booster” sessions. The first two sessions include an introduction to the program. The remainder of the sessions entail sequential steps in which the children learn to “feel confident and brave.” These are also based on the FRIENDS acronym and are as follows:

1. Feelings (understanding one’s feelings and how others are feeling)
2. Relaxation techniques (specific techniques to learn to relax in stressful situations)
3. Inner thoughts (recognizing how our thinking or “self-talk” can promote anxiety or confidence)
4. Exploring solutions and coping plans (fostering a specific coping plan for and by each child)
5. Nice work! Now reward yourself (for positive reinforcement)
6. Don’t forget to practice (to inculcate the skills for use outside the FRIENDS group)
7. Stay calm or smile (a summary of the skills taught in the entire program)

The curriculum is highly interactive; much of the learning is done in a small group context that encourages discussion and peer support. Each child is provided with a workbook in which he/she can complete exercises at home with a parent, and a personal diary, which can be used to record thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

In addition to the curriculum implemented with children, FRIENDS for Life also includes a family skills component to nurture the ability of parents to help their child with the skills learned through the program (including practicing the skills at home) while encouraging a positive supportive family environment. In addition, the program also emphasizes peer support and peer learning; children are

encouraged to learn from each other's experiences, to make friends, and to build their social networks, while parents are encouraged to facilitate their children's peer networks.

The long-term goal of the program is to "reduce the incidence of serious psychological disorders, emotional distress and impairment in social functioning by teaching children and young people how to cope with, and manage, anxiety both now and in later life" (Barrett, 2007, 4). FRIENDS for Life can be particularly beneficial for children from high-risk environments because it promotes their resilience through coping and other social competency skills necessary to deal with a negative environment they cannot always control. In the long run, the skills promoted by the program can potentially help stave off psychological or mental health problems that can result in criminal and other antisocial and self-destructive behavior.

According to a 2007 publication, more than 300 schools and 200 hospitals and health services in Australia have implemented the FRIENDS for Life program and since 1998, more than 150,000 Australian children have completed it. Through a number of studies, the program has proven effective in increasing coping skills, reducing anxiety symptoms, and preventing the onset of anxiety and depression for up to 36 months following initial exposure to the curriculum (Shortt, Barrett, and Fox, 2001; Lowry-Webster, Barrett, & Lock, 2003; Barrett et al., 2006).

A Comprehensive, Community-Wide Substance Use Prevention Initiative

The Midwestern Prevention Project (MPP) is a community-based, multi-component, multi-year, universal substance abuse prevention program that was initiated in 1984 in Kansas City (and originally known as Students Taught Awareness and Resistance or STARR) and then later replicated in Indianapolis. The program targets students in early adolescence (grades seven and eight) because this age group is considered to be most susceptible to gateway drug use (i.e., alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana).

The goal of the MPP is to help youth recognize the tremendous social and peer pressures to use drugs and to train them to acquire the skills in how to resist drug use. This comprehensive, scientifically-developed drug prevention program includes components for the school, parents, the media, community groups, the private sector, and the local government. Each of these program components are introduced in sequence at a rate of one per year (for a total of five years), with the mass media component occurring throughout all the years.

The prevention messages and skills training are delivered through the school-based component of the program and are reinforced and supported by a consistent community norm against drug use through a system of coordinated, community-wide strategies that involve parents, the media, the wider community, and local governments. The underlying premise of this systematic, multi-modal approach is that the more channels used in disseminating a prevention message, the greater the likelihood that positive behaviors will be adopted.

At the core of the school component is a specially designed curriculum that is integrated into classroom instruction by trained teachers over a two-year period. During the first year, a 13-lesson curriculum is taught, followed by five booster lessons delivered in the second year. The curriculum focuses on increasing students' resistance skills and includes instruction on the consequences of drug use, resisting peer and other pressures to do drugs, problem-solving in difficult situations, and assertiveness. Effective pedagogical techniques (i.e., behavioral modeling, role playing, and discussion) are used alongside homework assignments designed to involve family members. To complement this curriculum, an anti-drug culture is promoted throughout the school (and community). This is accomplished through school-wide policies on drug use and student "skill leaders" who serve as role models for the skills being taught.

The parental program is initiated in the second year and involves parents in a number of ways to increase the impact of the program on their children. Parents are encouraged to participate in the school component by working with their children on homework assignments they are required to complete together. Parents are also encouraged to become involved in a school-based group that plans and implements strategies and activities that limit young people's accessibility to drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, carries out fundraising projects, and helps school officials develop substance abuse policies. The parent component also includes two, 2-hour training sessions that help them understand the program and the skills imparted to their children, how to support the skills taught through the program at home, how to effectively communicate with their children, and other techniques that can be used to help their kids avoid using and abusing substances.

The media component, which is introduced in the first year of the program, entails the use of the local media to introduce, promote, and reinforce the implementation and maintenance of the program and the drug prevention message. The media is used to increase exposure of the project and relevant substance abuse issues to youth and the community as a whole. The community organizing component, implemented in years three through five, is meant to mobilize broad-based support for the program and its goals and to use local citizens to help oversee the implementation and maintenance of the

program. Community organizing is carried out by parents and local leaders who are responsible for quality control, providing advice on the development of relevant health policies, helping to maintain community support for substance abuse prevention, and identifying funding sources.

The health policy component of the project involves the development and implementation of local public policies and by-laws on drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. These policies can include measures that create drug-free school zones and workplaces, restrict smoking in public places, restrict the display and availability of cigarettes and alcohol in retail stores, set up drug treatment facilities and services, and establish guidelines for referring young people to counseling and treatment programs.

Evaluations of the MPP have demonstrated positive results. Youth attending schools in communities where the program was fully implemented were less likely to smoke on a daily basis and there was also less use of marijuana and alcohol by youth in the treatment group within a year of completing the school-based training. Three years following completion of the program, youth in the treatment group continued to use less tobacco and marijuana than those in the control group, although the program's impact on alcohol consumption was not as strong at that point (Johnson et al., 1990; Chou et al., 1998; Pentz et al., 1998).

Dropout Recovery

The State of Massachusetts operates a Graduation and Dropout Prevention and Recovery Commission, which recommended that the state government conduct “active recovery, including reaching out to dropouts and providing them with support and alternative pathways to graduation” (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2012, 1).

The result of this recommendation was the creation of the Massachusetts Re-integration Center (REC). Located in Boston, the REC is “a dropout recovery center that strives to re-enroll out-of-school youth through outreach, personal connections, and a variety of educational options that support students to graduation” (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2012, 7). The REC is neither a traditional nor an alternative school. Some of the premises upon which the REC operates are:

- out-of-school youth, especially those who are a little older, are not comfortable returning to the school they left,
- returning out-of-school youth benefit from non-traditional programs, settings, and educational options, yet they are often unaware of what options are available,

- providing a range of options is essential to keeping re-engaging students interested in continuing their education, and
- re-engaging an out-of-school youth is a time sensitive matter; students must be provided with viable options when interest is initially expressed.

The REC helps high school drop-outs by providing a supportive environment that allows them to find a suitable alternative option to make up the credits they need to graduate. These options include:

- Twilight School is a night school option where students can take up to two classes on two evenings per week for 15 weeks.
- Summer Review is a summer school option where a student can retake up to two classes five days per week for six weeks.
- Online Credit Recovery is an option for students to both retake courses they have failed and to acquire credit in new content areas.
- REC Recovery Courses offer students the option to retake up to two courses they have previously failed with REC staff teachers, two days per week for 15 weeks.

During the course of their alternative studies, or if a student chooses to return to school, the REC will offer “follow-up and mentoring support to re-enrolled students at some district schools.” It also “has established relationships with community partners, such as mental health providers and child care centers that are able to provide non-academic wraparound services.” In addition, the REC helps students prepare for and take the test required to obtain their grade 12 equivalency diploma (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2012, 8).

Community-based Youth Centres

DeGusti et al. (2009) point out that “historically, the province of Quebec has had a unique approach to youth justice. More than the other Canadian provinces, Quebec has promoted a child welfare/child protection approach to youth at risk of offending. Quebec has consistently espoused a social development philosophy where rehabilitation and reintegration are primary goals” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 6). This unique approach to youth crime and justice, according to DeGusti et al., is reflected in the province’s “third lowest police reported youth crime rate in Canada in 2006. In addition, it had the lowest youth charging rate in the country, and the lowest youth charging rate for violent crime” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 10).

Guided by this philosophy, the province of Quebec operates a network of youth centres or *centres jeunesse*, located in communities across the province, which are quasi-governmental agencies, funded

almost entirely by the provincial Ministry of Health and Social Services, and “are responsible for both youth in need of protection as well as those in conflict with the law ... They provide a range of services to children, youth, and their families, including young people up to 18 years of age who are subject to the [*Youth Criminal Justice Act*] and/or the *Youth Protection Act* in Quebec” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 6-7).

Most of the *centres jeunesse* in Quebec “have embraced a differential clinical intervention approach” that provides a full and varied range of services to at-risk youth and young offenders. “This often results in a case-by-case intervention strategy for chronic and persistent youth offenders. The implication of this is that chronic and persistent youth offenders receive services on the basis of their dispositions and individual assessments during intake” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 7). In addition to this case management approach, the youth centres offer a variety of specialized programs for young offenders. In Montreal, for example, the youth centre has a specific program for young offenders, who are on an intensive probation supervision order or post-custodial community supervision, which emphasizes a wraparound, social developmental approach. One study found that the Montreal youth centre was effective in preventing recidivism among 76 percent of high-risk offenders referred to them, compared to a control group of 47.7 percent of young offenders who were given open custody dispositions (Cournoyer and Dionne, 2007 as cited in DeGusti et al., 2009, 8).

According to DeGusti et al. (2009, 8), almost all of the medium to large youth centres also “offer special intervention programs to youth offenders in custody. Several provide the cognitive/behaviour interventions previously referred to, while others focus more on approaches encouraging intervention negotiation strategies or control-related elements. “ Two of the youth centres also have “special intervention programs for youth offenders receiving deferred custodial sentences because they believe these youth are at high risk of re-offending and require differential intervention.” Other youth centres “offer similar programs to youth offenders completing their custodial sentence through community supervision.” The youth centre in Laval, for example, has a program that pairs youth offenders with the case workers who work with them and their families. Another centre “provides specialized group counseling to youth offenders found guilty of sexual offences. However, the more serious or chronic youth offenders involved in sexual offences are excluded from this program” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 8). A youth worker at the centre in Montreal “arranges meetings with neighbourhood police officers and young people being released from custody when they are beginning the community supervision portion of their custodial sentences. The objective of this initiative is to provide police officers with access to

better information on youth residing in the neighbourhood to improve supervision” (DeGusti et al., 2009, 7).

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