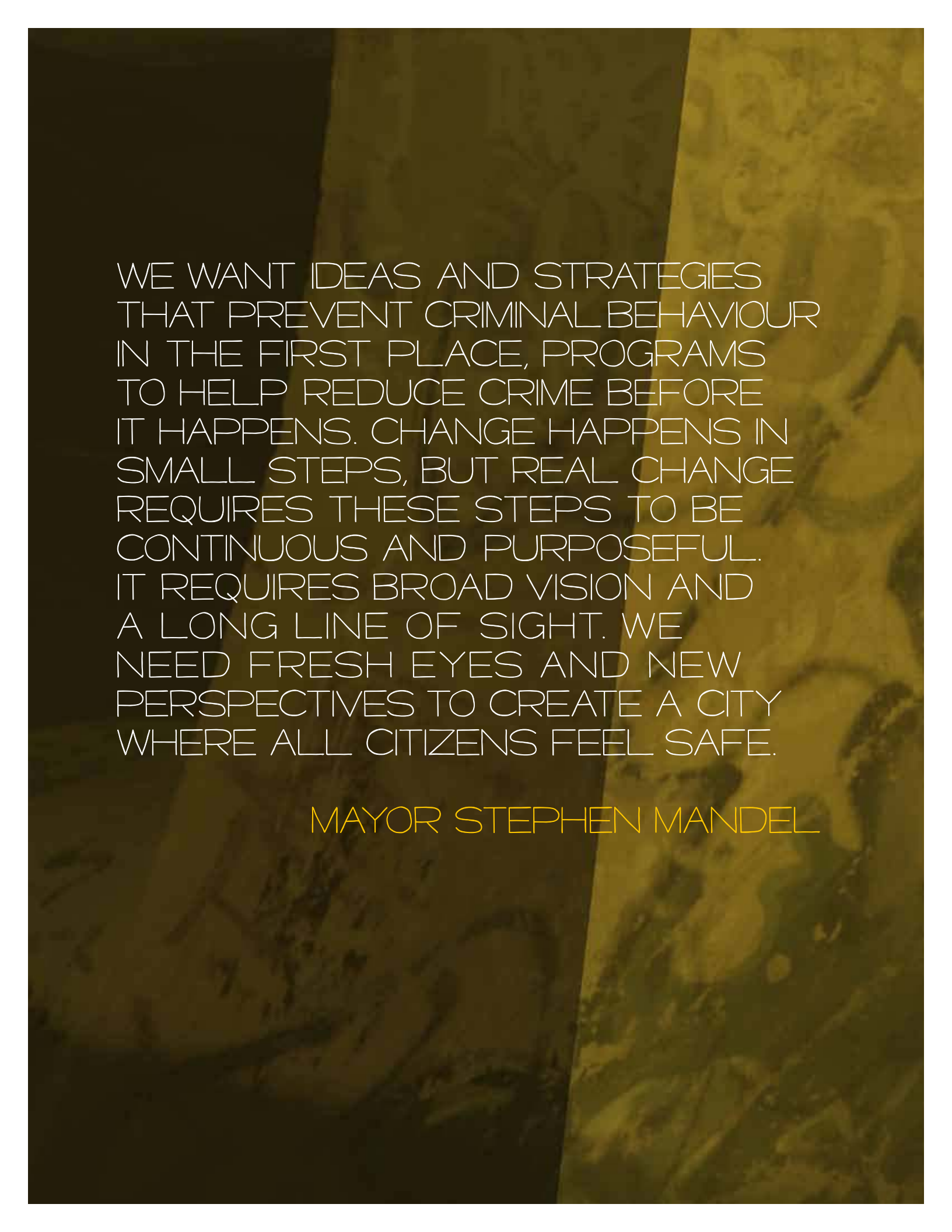




REACH

BUILDING A CULTURE
OF COMMUNITY
SAFETY IN EDMONTON
IN ONE GENERATION
SEPTEMBER 2009
REACHREPORT.CA



WE WANT IDEAS AND STRATEGIES
THAT PREVENT CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR
IN THE FIRST PLACE, PROGRAMS
TO HELP REDUCE CRIME BEFORE
IT HAPPENS. CHANGE HAPPENS IN
SMALL STEPS, BUT REAL CHANGE
REQUIRES THESE STEPS TO BE
CONTINUOUS AND PURPOSEFUL.
IT REQUIRES BROAD VISION AND
A LONG LINE OF SIGHT. WE
NEED FRESH EYES AND NEW
PERSPECTIVES TO CREATE A CITY
WHERE ALL CITIZENS FEEL SAFE.

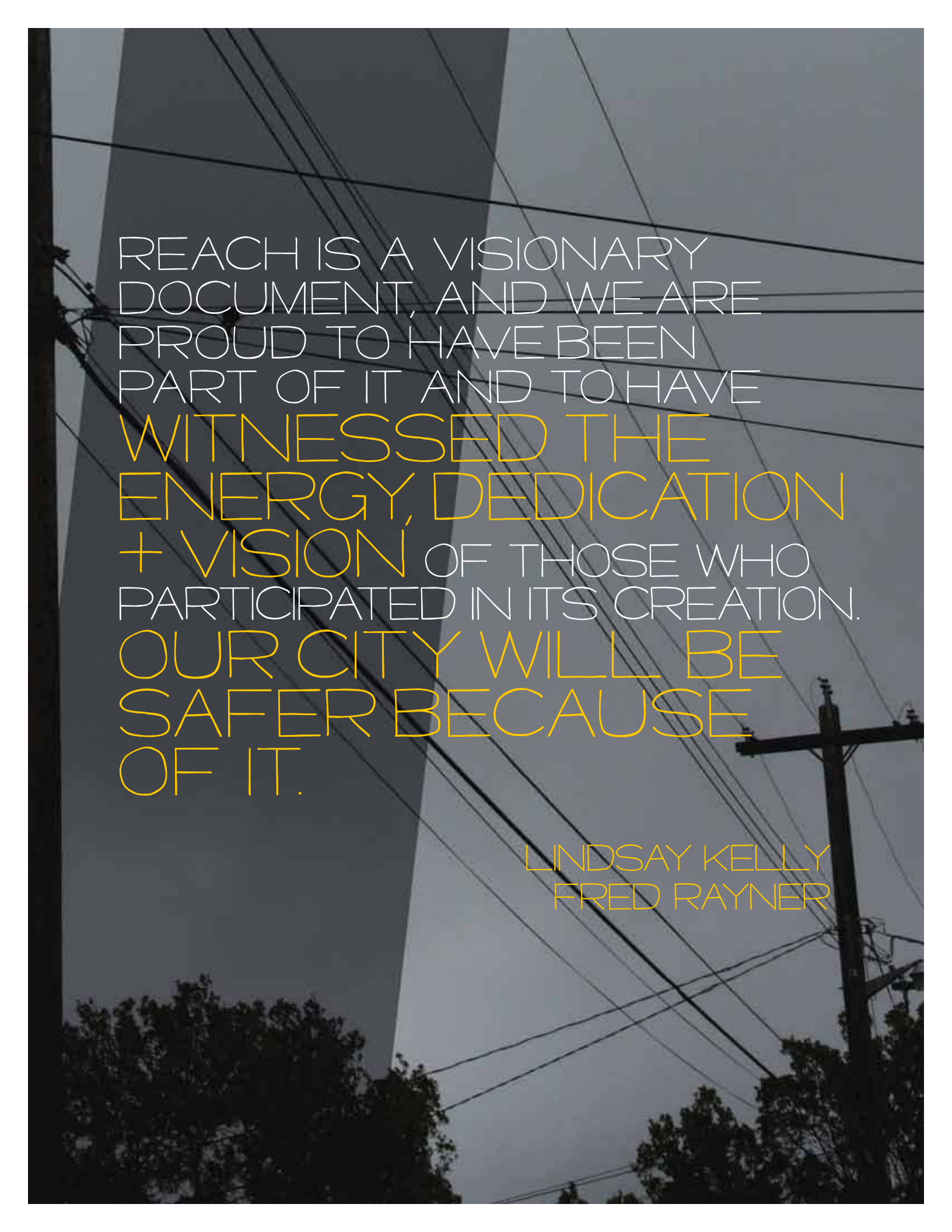
MAYOR STEPHEN MANDEL

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REACH IS A VISIONARY
DOCUMENT, AND WE ARE
PROUD TO HAVE BEEN
PART OF IT AND TO HAVE
WITNESSED THE
ENERGY, DEDICATION
+ VISION OF THOSE WHO
PARTICIPATED IN ITS CREATION.
OUR CITY WILL BE
SAFER BECAUSE
OF IT.

LINDSAY KELLY
FRED RAYNER

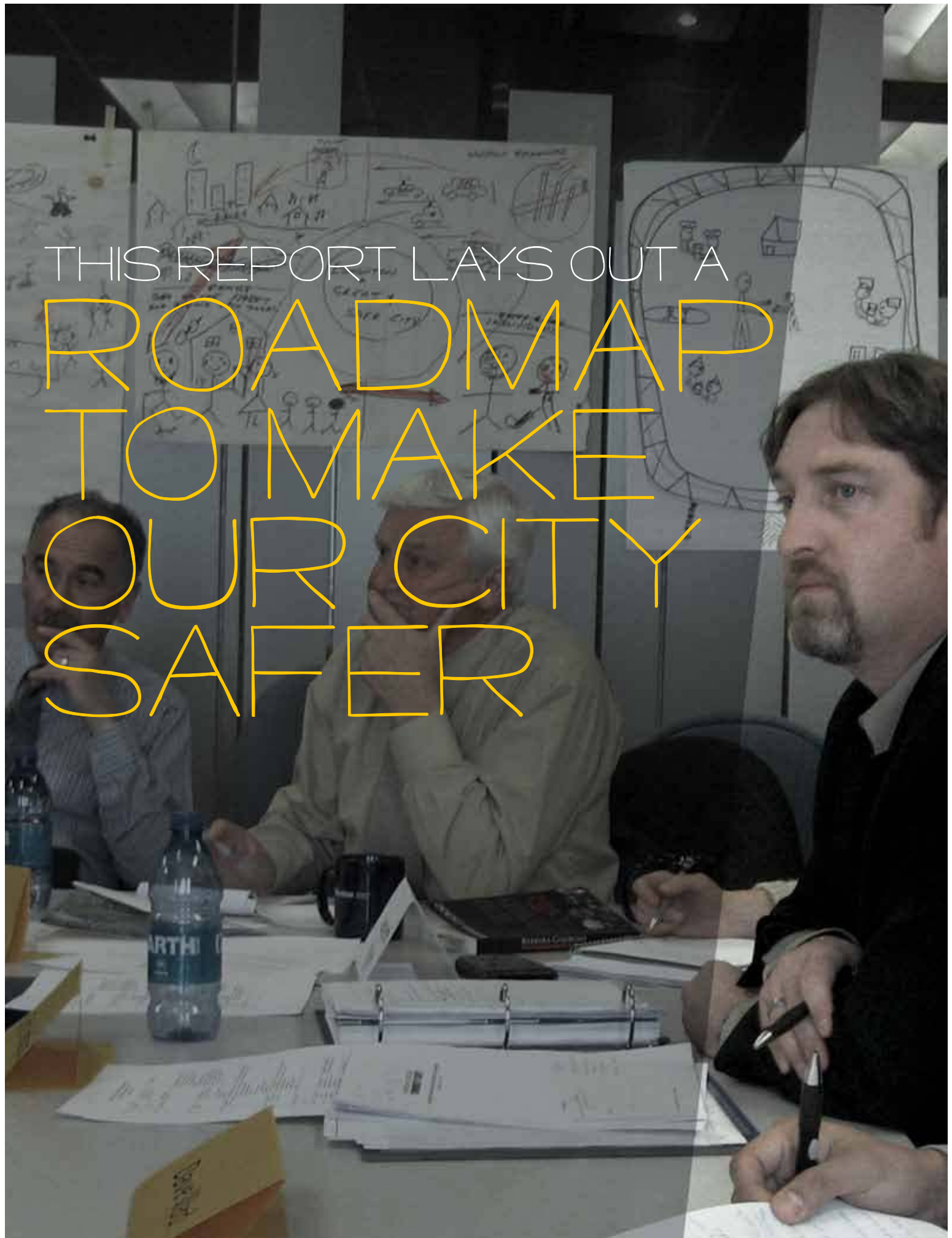
MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

When Mayor Stephen Mandel asked us to co-chair the Edmonton Taskforce on Community Safety, we understood immediately that he was presenting us with both a great responsibility and a genuine opportunity. The Mayor did not want yet another report to sit on the shelf; instead he opened the door to create something innovative and unique, something that would stimulate a cultural change in Edmonton. We took his early direction and set to work.

We were fortunate indeed to have the help of so many gifted and passionate Edmontonians on our Taskforce, and to receive such enthusiastic replies. In turn, each subcommittee and working group sought the advice and input of dozens of Edmontonians and it was inspiring to witness their dedication throughout this process. We want to take this chance to say thank you to those who worked on the Taskforce, the subcommittees, the working groups, the City of Edmonton staff, and last but not least, the hundreds of Edmontonians who participated in the community engagement process that was so enriching for us all. We are honoured to have had the chance to work with you all in laying the foundation for greater community safety in the years to come.

And a solid foundation it is. From the very start of this process, we believed that a focus on prevention would best support the goal of increasing community safety in Edmonton. We blended this viewpoint with another core belief, namely that our key "investment" ought to be in our children and youth. REACH will make Edmonton safer today, and this investment will pay exponential "safety" dividends in the years and decades to come.





THIS REPORT LAYS OUT A
ROADMAP
TO MAKE
OUR CITY
SAFER

IN ONE GENERATION

If adopted and shared, this strategy can ensure individuals, families and neighbourhoods work together with social agencies to address the root causes of crime in Edmonton. This report acknowledges that we need law and order to bear on the results of crime, but it is grounded in the belief that the best results, the greater efficiencies and the greatest social returns come from *preventing* crime.

This strategy sets a clear and very ambitious goal – to significantly reduce Edmonton’s rates of crime, increase our citizens’ sense of safety and engage our citizens as crime prevention activists – within *one* generation. We believe that with the model and focus laid out in this strategy, Edmonton will be a North American leader in crime prevention by the time today’s newborns reach their teens.

How will we do that? The report identifies nine fundamental recommendations that reframe our city’s approach to crime and safety and recommends some initial key steps in building a new crime “prevention culture” for Edmonton.

These recommendations focus on investing in youth and children, driving change in the coordination and delivery of programs to reduce crime, and seeking out and supporting leadership in the common cause of crime prevention within communities. The recommendations also ensure that Edmonton works collaboratively to:

- Further the reach of current programs and funding*
- Launch new programs where there are important gaps*
- Integrate the current array of programs, services and strategies*
- Engage citizens in solutions and evaluate initiatives*

We heard time and again from the many Edmontonians in our consultations that Edmonton needs a hub for coordination, action, funding and focus on crime prevention. We heard that a central agency, properly positioned and supported, would make the pivotal difference in achieving our ambitions for a safer city in a single generation.

IT’S ABOUT YOU

Edmonton has always been a place in which community matters, and where neighbour is more than a word. Improving the culture and practice of community safety affects us all. Because you live in Edmonton, because you care about the principles of community safety, REACH is both about you and for you. You are an integral part of this strategy. Each Edmontonian deserves to be safe and feel safe, but also shares accountability to one another, to his or her community, and to future generations to enable and to enact safety.

THE WORK BEGINS TODAY

It’s time for Edmonton to create a homegrown model for real change, to enhance what’s already working here and marry it to the most innovative practices in community safety from around the world. We have the energy, a strong frame of mind, and the political will through the joint efforts of the City of Edmonton and the Province of Alberta’s Safety Secretariat.

It will require all our passion and ambition to reach our goals. This report is the starting point, and we need to get to work now in order to achieve measurable results within our 10-year target.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Taskforce on Community Safety was created in September 2008 with the goal of producing an action plan – known as "REACH" – with recommendations and implementation strategies by early autumn 2009. The vital role of law enforcement and the criminal justice system was clearly acknowledged and supported, but the Taskforce members were mandated to concentrate on the inter-generational change that a focus on prevention can bring. The aim of REACH is to effectively coordinate a long-term, community safety strategy for Edmonton. In addition, the Taskforce has also made efforts to collaborate and ensure close alignment with both the City of Edmonton's vision and the approach of the Provincial Safety Secretariat (SafeCom). >>

>> PROCESS

Mayor Stephen Mandel asked Lindsay Kelly and Fred Rayner to co-chair the Taskforce, and they assembled a team of innovative and energetic thinkers.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The Taskforce was organized into four sub-committees (Healthy Individuals, Supportive Networks and Families, Safe and Connected Neighbourhoods, and System Integration and Sustainability) that developed a number of recommendations for initiatives to improve both the perception and the reality of community safety. To guide this process, the Taskforce used three themes which the community told us were central to the success of REACH:

Investing in children, youth and families who often need support and guidance as they deal with life's challenges, traumas and transitions.

Catalyzing change in our community. Building on what exists, while encouraging greater community engagement and caring, and making best use of the resources available.

New leadership to take responsibility for a plan and to measure Edmonton's progress in becoming a safer and more livable and civil community.

The sub-committee chairs engaged many members of the public, as well as recognized experts, to assist them in the detailed work of researching the issues relevant to Edmonton's current and predicted state of community safety. From the start, the Taskforce sought to "change the game," to ask new questions, and to find solutions that drew inspiration from home or around the world but which will be Edmonton's own in execution.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

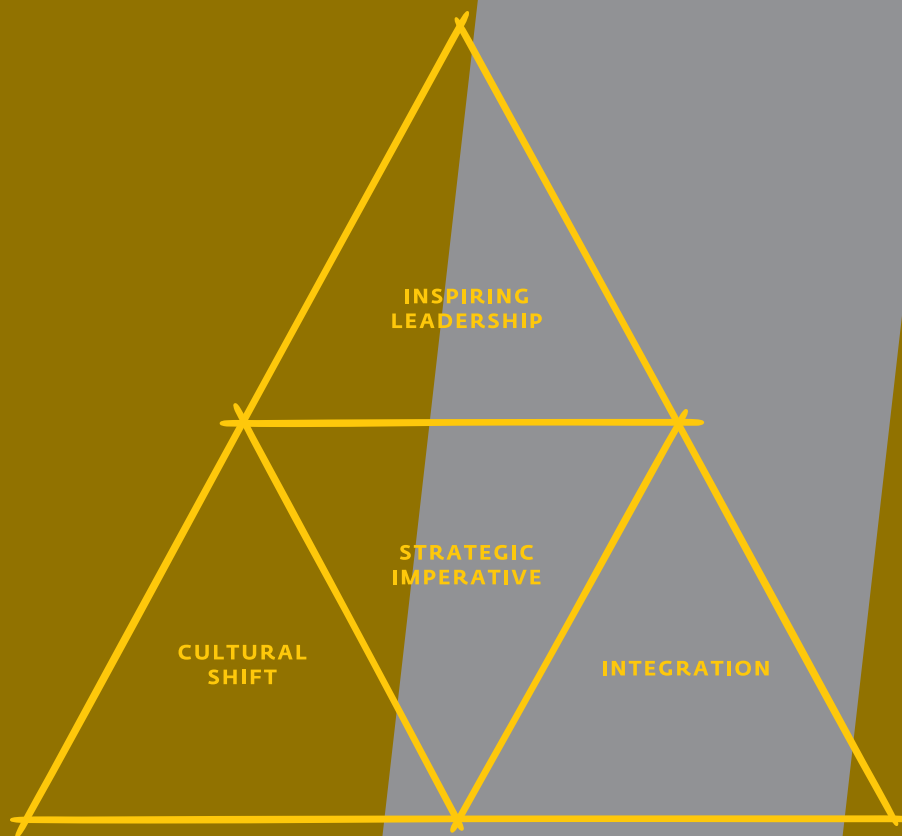
The Taskforce's Research Advisory Panel commissioned an Environmental Scan to assess the current safety situation in our city, and to identify the existing information and knowledge about crime prevention in Edmonton, Alberta, and Canada. The Environmental Scan provided the base of research, evidence and information that guided the work, and ultimately the recommendations, of the Taskforce. Overall crime statistics in Edmonton and across Canada continued to decline in 2008 from 2007 levels and surveys (including our own conducted in early 2009) show that most Edmontonians believe ours is a safe community. But despite majority belief, the perception that our community (or parts of it) is unsafe - and becoming more so - is growing.

What Can I Do?

We are all part of the solution when it comes to community safety.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Between February 24 and March 20, 2009, the Taskforce hosted a comprehensive series of discussions, interviews, panels and focus groups with over 500 stakeholders. The Taskforce came away reassured that Edmontonians believe the time is right for this action plan. The community told us that a strong "responsibility centre" for community safety should be established with four vital duties, represented in the following diagram:



RECOMMENDATIONS

In keeping with the Taskforce mandate, the nine recommendations identified in this report focus on prevention, are evidence-based and represent innovative approaches to community safety. They cover ideas for change at all four levels of community safety: individual, family, neighbourhood and community-wide. Finally, they speak to the three strategic areas for action that Edmontonians told us are critical to success: Investing in Children, Youth and Families, Catalyzing Change and New Leadership. These Taskforce recommendations blend vision and practicality in order to reframe Edmonton's approach to community safety.



Investing In Children, Youth and Families

RECOMMENDATION 1

A New Model of Family and Community Safety Focusing on Schools as Hubs

Build on and nurture an integrated community-wide partnership that positions schools as key access points, or hubs, for high-needs families, children and youth.

Develop and implement a coordinated drop-in program during the critical after school hours for at-risk school aged children and youth in Edmonton.

RECOMMENDATION 2

A "Turn Away from Gangs" Initiative

Source long-term funding and staff support to build on the work done by community partners in Community Solution to Gang Violence coalition.

Support the evaluation of specific initiatives that address the risk factors for gang involvement.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Community Coordination on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Bring together a coalition of frontline experts to create an action plan to support a comprehensive community-wide strategy to help families and youth struggling with FASD.

Facilitate the delivery of an innovative outreach team approach to young girls (ages 11-15) at risk of pregnancy and FASD.

Catalyzing Change

RECOMMENDATION 4

A 24/7 Service Delivery Model for High-Needs Populations

Lead development of comprehensive, coordinated access to 24-hour services for those at highest risk – youth, sexually exploited individuals, street gang members, et al.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Cultural Community Groups

Develop innovative models for engagement within Edmonton's Aboriginal and multicultural communities that support their cultural ties, practices and communities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

Neighbourhood Organizing Initiatives

Implement a Neighbourhood Organizing Model in several distinct areas of Edmonton to develop a new cadre of grassroots community leaders who support a preventive approach to community safety.

New Leadership

RECOMMENDATION 7

A New Community Safety Coordinating Council to Integrate Sustainable Community Safety Efforts

Create and sustain a new Community Safety Coordinating Council to lead a more integrated, grassroots and collaborative approach to community safety in Edmonton and to implement this 10-year Plan.

Create and sustain a multi-dimensional strategy to shift from law to order and build support for prevention-focused solutions.

Host a semi-annual summit of key civic agency leaders and orders of government to identify shared prevention priorities in safety, encourage change and foster strategic integration.

RECOMMENDATION 8

A Sustainability Strategy for Prevention

Work with local funding agencies and leaders, including the business community, to support long-term sustainable investment necessary for a preventive approach to community safety.

Seek sustainable funding for existing innovative community initiatives that contribute to community safety. Recommended initiatives include:

- *Reduce knife related crime and violence in Edmonton*
- *Plan proactively for safe crowd and event management*
- *Support the Edmonton Drug Treatment and Restorative Justice Court*
- *Support affordable housing and safe places and shelter for homeless youth, particularly those with concurrent disorders (mental health and addictions)*

RECOMMENDATION 9

An Innovative Evaluation Framework to Measure Success

Use the Social Return on Investment evaluation model to measure success, assess the impact of community safety initiatives in Edmonton and report progress annually to Edmontonians.

Measure the success of two innovative community initiatives as models – the Urban Games Project and the Gang Intervention and Diversion Program.

Successful implementation of these recommendations will have a lasting and significant impact on our city. It will fuel and sustain a cultural shift towards prevention that engages and enlists the energy and commitment of Edmontonians.

TASKFORCE VISION, VALUES + PHILO- SOPHICAL FOUNDATION

With a focus on *preventative* rather than *punitive* solutions, the Taskforce's goal is to coordinate a long-term community safety strategy with our partners that makes Edmonton a safer place for all.

The vision of the Taskforce on Community Safety is the product of many impassioned discussions about our city today and what it can be tomorrow. The Taskforce also paid attention to the vision of the City of Edmonton. >>

VISION OF THE CITY OF EDMONTON

"Edmonton is the capital of Alberta, a northern city of art and ideas, research and energy... a city of many cultures, educational opportunities, and all political and social orientations; yet its citizens are inspired by a shared vision and the certainty that this city on a river is one of the most special places on earth."

- The City of Edmonton's Vision Statement

VISION OF THE EDMONTON TASKFORCE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

"A city in which every Edmontonian, through a collective commitment to prevention, justice, and civility, contributes to the vital work of building and sustaining a community where everyone feels safe – and *is* safe."

EDMONTON TASKFORCE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY VALUES

We believe that building a safe community...

is a shared responsibility that engages partners from all sectors as well as clients served

focuses on root causes and issues to ensure sustained long-term change

engages diverse voices and perspectives

builds on the rich fabric of Edmonton's existing, effective programs and services and its vibrant human infrastructure

recognizes the need for both long-term vision and collaborative sustained action, visible to the public and concrete in nature

develops action plans that are evidence-based, measurable and collaborative

The work of Dr. Irvin Waller, the author of *Less Law, More Order: The Truth about Reducing Crime* and head of the Institute for the Prevention of Crime in Ottawa, has been at the core of the development of this strategy. Some of the central themes emerging from Dr. Waller's work are that focusing on prevention activities for youth is prudent, cost-effective and provides the greatest return on investment. Furthermore, Waller supports the pivotal leadership role of municipalities in this area and the establishment of what he calls a sustainable "centre of responsibility" as a key to success. In the recently released Action Briefs entitled "Making Cities Safer", Dr. Waller and the Institute for the Prevention of Crime encourage communities to "Find at least one dollar per citizen to plan how to invest smartly in safety for the city and so be able to allocate and leverage additional funds to tackle safety successfully in the city," (www.ipc.uOttawa.ca).

OUR PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

There is considerable academic and on-the-ground research that supports and dovetails with the themes and goals presented by the Taskforce.

There is a growing body of evidence that supports the principle of prevention that any investment we make in parenting, child development, mentoring and educational success is a cost-effective way to lessen risk factors for crime in the future.

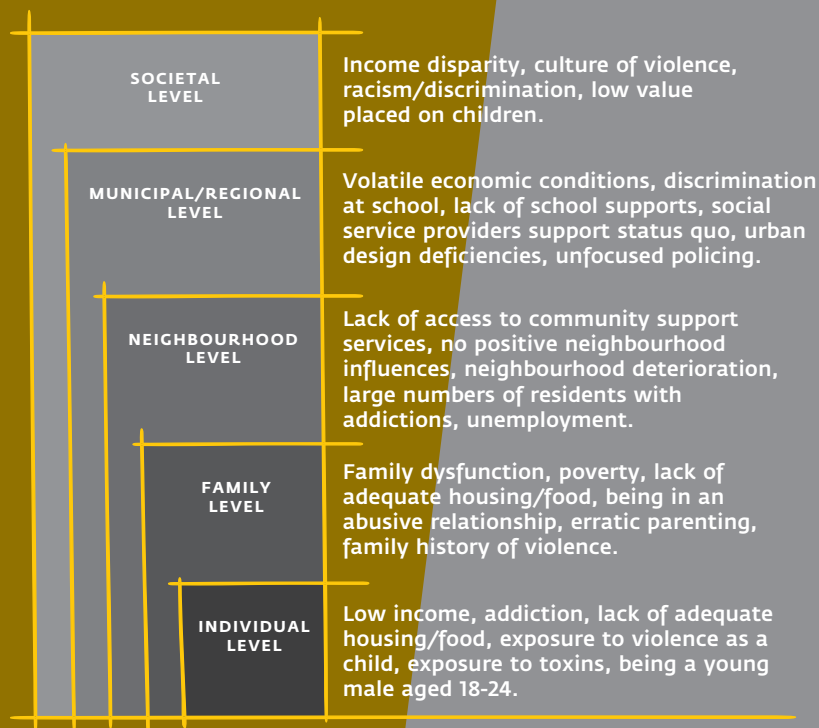
For a comprehensive listing of research sourced in the development of Taskforce recommendations, see the Environmental Scan posted on the REACH website.

THE TASKFORCE APPROACH

The Taskforce was organized into four sub-committees representing the spectrum of community safety: Healthy Individuals, Supportive Networks and Families, Safe and Connected Neighbourhoods, and Systems Integration and Sustainability. A detailed list of the community members of the Taskforce and its subcommittees can be found in Appendix 3.

Over 45 community partners were engaged in these four groups and supported by the work of the Taskforce's Research and Communications and Engagement Advisory Panels. The chart below, created by the Waterloo Region Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council, illustrates the spectrum and levels that a crime prevention strategy must acknowledge and address in order to be effective and sustaining.

COMMUNITY SAFETY SPECTRUM AND RISK FACTORS





THE CURRENT SITUATION: SAFETY IN EDMONTON

All of the following factors were researched and considered in developing the recommendations of the Taskforce. More detail on sources and statistics quoted can be found in the Taskforce Environmental Scan posted on the REACH website. >>

CRIME AND VICTIMIZATION

Understanding current crime rates helped the Taskforce justify the urgent and important need for a different approach to combating crime.

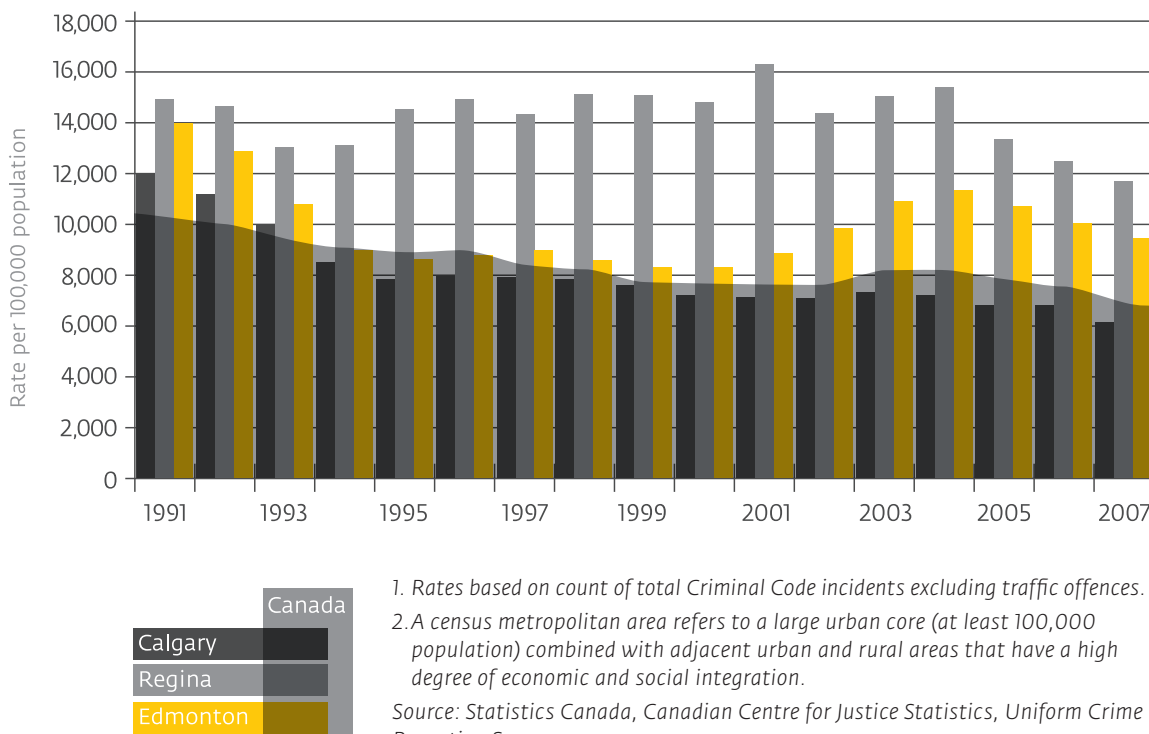
A July 2009 release of police-reported crime severity values by Statistics Canada showed a decline in total crime in Edmonton in 2008 by 5 percent over 2007. However, violent crime increased by 2 percent during the same time period.

Further, surveys by Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security in 2008 revealed that one in three Albertans were victims of a crime in the preceding year. Similarly, the Taskforce's own 400 person telephone survey in January 2009 found that 33% of respondents have been, or know someone close to them who has been, a victim of crime in the past 12 months. These figures are comparable to 2007 data, indicating that each year the number of Albertans victimized is significant, in spite of some perceptions that we are safe. In Edmonton, aggregate crime rates are higher than in Calgary and other Canadian cities as outlined in the Statistics Canada chart below.

What Can I Do?

You can now text your anonymous tips to Crime Stoppers @ #8477.

Crime rates in selected census metropolitan areas, Canada, 1991 to 2007



Looking more closely at crime and victimization data, Albertans in general are more likely to be victims of vandalism, followed by motor vehicle or parts theft, and theft of personal property.

What Can I Do?

Get to know your neighbours - have a block party! Or hold a neighbourhood yard sale and use the proceeds to improve the community. Anything that brings neighbours together helps to build a safer community.

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY

When it comes to community safety and crime, perception and reality often differ. A survey conducted for the Taskforce in late January 2009 found that:

Generally speaking, Edmontonians feel safe with respect to crime

Feel safe in their neighbourhoods

Believe Edmonton is a safe place to live

77% OF
EDMONTON
RESIDENTS

61% OF
EDMONTON
RESIDENTS

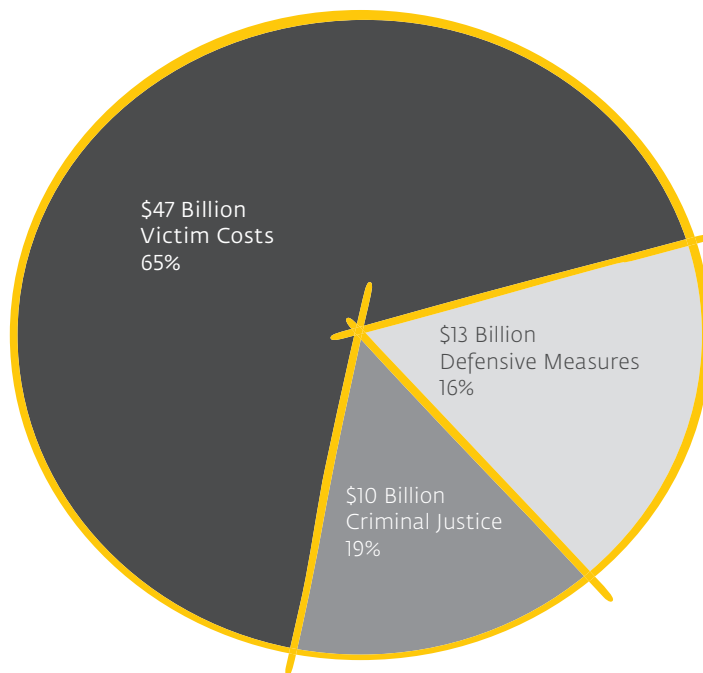
The 2007 Edmonton Police Survey revealed that most citizens (54%) believe our city has "the same amount" of crime as other cities in Canada. However, the percentage of Edmontonians who believe we have more crime than other Canadian cities has risen to 38% (in 2008), a dramatic increase over 18% in 2004.

Furthermore, in that same survey, residents who reported feeling "somewhat" or "very" unsafe cited reasons such as people on the street, crime high in the area, drugs and robberies. Reports of increasing use of knives and other weapons over the past year (2008-09) have Edmontonians concerned and have generated strong calls for action and change by community leaders.

The challenge, therefore, is to ensure that REACH addresses reality as well as perception, looks at the underlying causes of violence, and builds a framework that will result in Edmontonians both feeling and being safe. By addressing the underlying causes, we have a better chance of preventing crime before it happens.

THE COSTS OF CRIME

Virtually all the existing research demonstrates that the most logical path to reducing the cost of crime to society is to focus on prevention. Our own survey in January 2009 also told us that 85% of Edmontonians believe it wise to work on crime prevention. As outlined below in the pie chart taken from Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Taskforce 2007, the costs of crime, including costs to communities and to victims, are staggering.



What Can I Do?

Join Capital City Clean
Up as a Block Captain
and enlist your family or
neighbours to keep an
eye out for litter, or just
pick it up yourself!

The federal Department of Justice has estimated that the cost of crime might be as high as \$47 billion annually, including hard costs and pain and suffering. The Government of Alberta report *Keeping Communities Safe* estimates the direct and indirect cost of crime in Alberta as \$5 billion annually. Research has also shown that preventive solutions (which avert incarceration, and costs to victims among other social costs) can return anywhere from \$4 to \$20 in savings for every one dollar spent. (*Less Law, More Order*, Dr. Irvin Waller, 36)

Investing in programs which increase social cohesion, even if they may not be directly related to crime reduction, can dramatically reduce the cost of crime simply because they contribute to community safety at the most efficient and socially beneficial moment possible: *before a crime is committed*.

SUPPORT FOR INVESTING IN PREVENTION

The Taskforce Survey (January 2009) asked Edmontonians about ways to reduce crime in the city. Citizens clearly demonstrated their support for an approach that aligns with the Taskforce's focus on prevention. Edmontonians called for:

Addressing drug and alcohol addictions	91% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE
Investing in child education and development	88% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE
Making public spaces safe by design	88% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE
Addressing mental health issues	85% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE
Developing a collective spirit and commitment	83% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE
Investing in parenting skills	83% OF RESPONDENTS AGREE

Other solutions noted by those surveyed included: increasing the number of police, engaging new Canadians and immigrants, and improving access to recreation and leisure activities.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Taskforce research, outlined in detail in the Environmental Scan, indicated that issues of safety, crime and victimization are interwoven with and influenced by an array of personal, individual and demographic factors. These factors offer focus to preventive efforts by highlighting special challenges to consider and overcome when addressing risk and protective factors in our community.

The *Crime and Victimization* report released by the City of Edmonton in 2006 noted the following demographic factors relevant to crime and victimization:

Women and particularly young women are subjected to the highest rates of violence

Child victims account for nearly two-thirds of all sexual assaults reported to police

There is a clear correlation between the age a youth first commits an offence and the total number offences that youth will commit (the younger the first offence, the more likely to become a chronic offender)

94% of all admissions to the federal corrections system are male

Gays and lesbians have a higher rate of victimization than heterosexuals

The likelihood of violent victimization is highest for those 15 to 24 years and decreases with age

Aboriginal peoples are vastly over-represented in the correctional system, and Aboriginal women are at acute risk of victimization

What goes on inside the family home also has an enormous impact on individual and community safety. Low-income families tend to live in higher-crime areas, and the data shows that children who grow up near or below the poverty line struggle in school and are more likely to become entangled in the justice, health and social service systems. Clearly, poverty underlies the many risk factors we know need to be addressed in our community to make it safe for all. Statistics from 2008 reveal that one in six children in Edmonton live in poverty (*We Can Do Better*. Edmonton Social Planning Council. November, 2008). Aboriginal children are twice as likely to live in poverty as non-Aboriginal children.

A considerable amount of research shows that family relationships and parenting also play a key role in the rate of delinquency and youth crime.

Further studies reveal the significant role that schools play in safety and long-term success in life, and note that programs offered in school settings aimed at reducing violent or aggressive behaviour prove effective. (Report on Edmonton's Children and Youth 2008, Success by Six and City of Edmonton Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative). Sports involvement and positive recreation activities, such as after school sports and critical hours programming, have been clearly shown to help youth at risk by providing positive role models, a sense of community and teaching social skills and teamwork (Benefits of Sports and Recreation Catalogue, 1997). More demographic statistics and research are listed in the Taskforce Environmental Scan on the REACH website.

THE CHANGING FACE OF EDMONTON

Edmonton has experienced a great deal of change and growth in recent years. The population has grown 10% in the last five years, with 1,600 newcomers arriving each month at the peak. Visible minorities now constitute almost 20% of our community. Much of that growth is driven by immigration from other provinces, increasing numbers of international immigrants and refugees and migration from rural areas including those of Aboriginal heritage. These populations increase the cultural diversity of our city and contribute valued skills and expertise, but many newcomers go through significant life transitions and are potentially at risk of encountering issues such as homelessness, substance use, prejudice, psychological challenges, neighbourhood disorganization and other life challenges. These factors increase the risk that an individual may be victimized or engage in criminal behavior.

LEADING PRACTICES AT HOME AND ELSEWHERE

The best practices of municipalities across Canada were reviewed by the Taskforce Research Panel, as well as initiatives from other countries. Canadian programs we studied included the Regional Municipality of Kitchener Waterloo's Violence Prevention Plan, Crime Prevention Ottawa, the Red Deer Crime Prevention and Policing Strategy, and Ontario's project The Roots of Youth Violence.

Taskforce research also shone a light on community safety and preventive initiatives in Edmonton. These local initiatives, agencies and programs provide a solid network of community partners and good models of best practices on which to build further:

Since 1990, Edmonton has actively pursued crime prevention and social development, through its Safer Cities Taskforce and more recently the Safedmonton Advisory Committee.

Over two decades, many efforts have spun off, including the Spousal Violence Intervention teams, the John School, Youth Justice Committees, and a Safe Needle Disposal Program to name just a few.

The City of Edmonton provides significant support for preventive social services. It has also led the way with strong and innovative projects that encourage community safety such as: the new Great Neighbourhoods Program, fostering safe public spaces through the Responsible Hospitality initiatives, and its innovative approach to engaging Aboriginal and multicultural Edmontonians.

The Support Network and its 211 phone lines connect Edmontonians with services and volunteer opportunities through one phone call. A connected community is a safer community.

What Can I Do?

Become a member of your local Community League – get involved, be a leader in your neighbourhood.

Other innovative community approaches to prevention also point in new directions. The Way In project, coordinated by Edmonton Public Schools, offers a wrap around team approach that focuses on building positive relationships with children and their families, and includes a unique mental health component. An innovative project by Edmonton Catholic Schools, One Hundred Voices, reaches out to pre-kindergarten children and families within a multicultural context.

Another longstanding feature of the Edmonton landscape is the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL), an umbrella organization of geographically based neighbourhood associations.

The Edmonton Police Service has built innovative partnerships around crime prevention in the community. The Neighbourhood Empowerment Teams target at-risk communities affected by poverty and escalating perceptions of crime and disorder. This collaborative initiative engages the City of Edmonton, the United Way and The Family Centre. It offers a real and accessible way for citizens to build their own capacity to address safety issues. Other examples of police and community working together include the Public Safety Compliance Teams, the Elder Abuse Intervention teams, and the School Resource Officer initiative.

A wide range of strong not-for-profits, community-based organizations and active corporate sector companies in Edmonton supports services and programs that enhance community safety through prevention.

On a provincial level, Alberta leads the country with an integrated approach to community safety and crime prevention. From the Safe Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which provides citizens with legislated tools to address neighbourhood disorder issues, to the provincial initiatives on homelessness, gangs and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, work at the provincial level is leading in the country.

From the start, the intention of the Taskforce was to ensure that REACH aligned with the broader aspects of Keeping Communities Safe, the report and recommendations from the Province of Alberta's 2007 Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Taskforce. SafeCom, the cross-ministerial body created to implement the recommendations of the 2007 Taskforce, is a sound model for an integrated, sustainable approach to crime reduction and building safer communities.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The Edmonton landscape is rich with innovation and examples of caring and collaboration in both the not-for-profit and corporate sectors.

During the key stakeholder engagement sessions in March 2009, we heard clearly that our most vulnerable citizens of all ages are challenged by a fragmented patchwork of services, often finding that they:

- are not aware of what's out there to support them;*
- encounter challenges in accessing services;*
- cannot access the type of services they need when they need them;*
- don't always "fit the mandate" of siloed service providers and as a result, fall through the cracks.*

The Taskforce heard many times that these initiatives and programs need an overarching common vision led by a "strong responsibility" centre. This hub or centre is necessary to build linkages, connect Edmontonians with accessible services, and build shared capacity among service providers.

Those who are calling for an overarching centre of responsibility see an opportunity to leverage existing initiatives and programs and take them to the next level. "It is not enough to continue working in silos on excellent programs," we heard. "It's time to create a common framework for action and establish a more integrated approach to community safety."

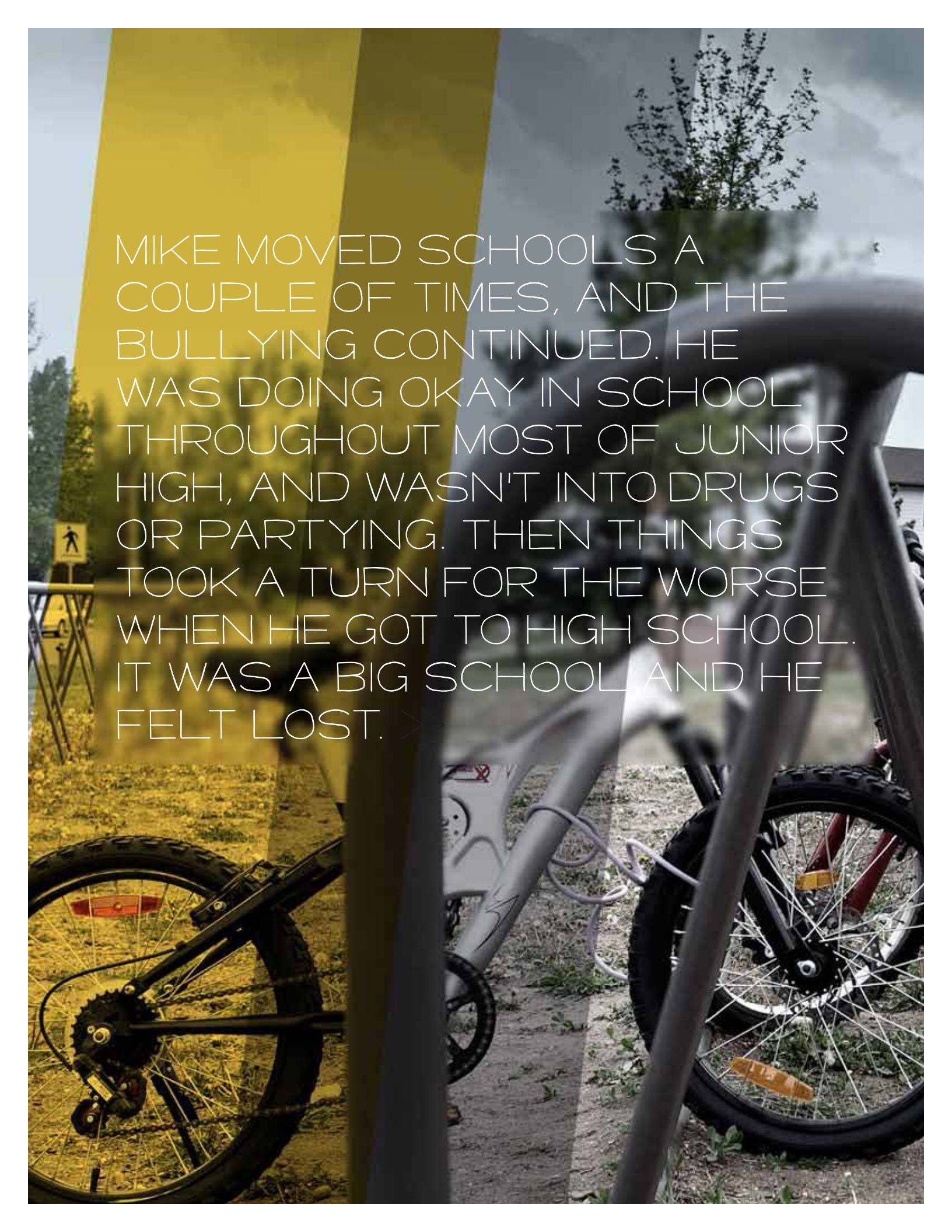
A CITIZEN SPEAKS - MIKE'S STORY*

FAMILIES CAN RARELY DO IT ALL ON THEIR OWN

Raising a child is hard enough at the best of times, but it can just be too much when things don't go according to plan. Mike looks like any 17-year-old you'd see walking down the street: a backpack slung over his shoulder, funky hair, and headphones one with his ears. Even though he's still not that big, he says he was a lot thinner when he was young. "I was really skinny and pretty small when I was in elementary school. And that's where most of the bullying started," he says, pausing. "I think it might have been because I was little and not very strong, but also because it might have got started when I turned a fight down. I wouldn't fight, so they picked on me even more. I had some friends, but they didn't help me out. They didn't protect me." He shrugs. "I don't know why." His mother and father weren't very helpful. "There wasn't anything they could do, really. I don't remember if they tried or not to help, but nothing changed anyway." >>

* Note that the name of the young man has been changed to protect his identity.





MIKE MOVED SCHOOLS A COUPLE OF TIMES, AND THE BULLYING CONTINUED. HE WAS DOING OKAY IN SCHOOL THROUGHOUT MOST OF JUNIOR HIGH, AND WASN'T INTO DRUGS OR PARTYING. THEN THINGS TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE WHEN HE GOT TO HIGH SCHOOL. IT WAS A BIG SCHOOL AND HE FELT LOST. >

He gravitated back to his old gang from junior high. "It was my Grade 8 crowd," recalls Mike, "and they accepted me. No one else did. I guess I felt like I needed to belong to something. It was stupid, but at the time I guess I just wanted to feel cool. I was trying to impress the guys, and maybe the girls too."

Not far into Grade 11, he got kicked out of school and then out of the house, which led to a year of wandering back and forth between the houses of various friends and the occasional stay back at the Youth Emergency Shelter. It all came to a head in January 2008 when he decided to celebrate his sister's birthday. He went home drunk and got into a fight with his parents. Mike then spent a week at the Edmonton Young Offenders Centre.

"What turned things around was ihuman. They put me in counseling, and started trying to teach me ways to cope, to deal with my feelings. I got work, went to YRAP (Youth Restorative Action Project). That's where I started laying down some beats, doing my music. It's taken a while, but just being in a place where I can do stuff without being judged has helped."

Mike is asked what might have changed things back then, what might have prevented it all from starting in the first place. He shrugs. "I don't know. One thing that might have really changed things would have been if my mom had known there was somewhere she could go, someone she could talk to, besides the cops. But she didn't know how to deal with me, where to go or what to do."

YRAP and ihuman helped, says Mike, because they gave him a community, a place to belong, a structure, which he readily admits was something he wanted and needed. Mike says he's starting to feel as if he belongs in his family, too, and his parents are starting feel the same way. "It's coming back," he says. "It's good. I realized when I was in EYOC and starting back with ihuman that I didn't want to sit around and stare at walls for the rest of my life. Why would anyone want that?"



WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

Examining and rethinking community safety in Edmonton has meant involving people from all walks of life, not just the “experts” like the agency workers, funders, and those in the law enforcement community. It has meant giving voice to newcomers, immigrants, business owners, the victimized, youths, families, and individuals at risk. Between February 24 and March 20, 2009 the Taskforce hosted a comprehensive series of discussions, interviews, panels and focus groups that engaged over 500 stakeholders. The process tailored discussion to fit the topic of community safety, and then empowered the community to carry out the process. See Appendix 1 for a list of groups consulted and visit the REACH web site for the full Community Engagement Report. >>

Overall, there was strong consensus that right now in Edmonton there is both an urgency and a window of opportunity we must not let pass by.

What We Heard

"This is not just an on-the-ground shift. It is an entire system shift into prevention. We need a leader, a champion, someone to own the "R" (responsibility) ... we need to have ONE clear strategic direction that other initiatives hang off of."

What We Heard

"It is about accountability. We cannot look outside to have other people fix things. We need to look within and start with ourselves – our neighbour, our business and our community."

The breadth and richness of input across the consultation has been distilled and summarized under these key headings:

Critical Factors for Success

How to Make it Happen

Consistency Across Diversity

– A Summary of Key Inputs by Audiences

CRITICAL FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

Edmonton is a diverse and vibrant collection of energies, vocations, intellects and spirits. The Taskforce was greatly encouraged to hear overwhelming support for its mandate and it was told there are four critical components needed to accomplish its goals:

Inspiring Leadership - Clear leadership with the vision and mandate to support change. Stakeholders told us there are as many visions and strategies as there are organizations, but no overarching direction that declares and focuses a shared purpose which everyone can drive toward.

A Strategic Imperative - Edmontonians also said developing a coherent and collaborative city-wide service provision strategy is necessary. There is too often overlap and confusion about who does what and where.

A Cultural Shift - Edmontonians support the power of prevention to effect long-term change. They know a cultural shift is necessary and that it means building a new model for coordinating and delivering community safety in Edmonton.

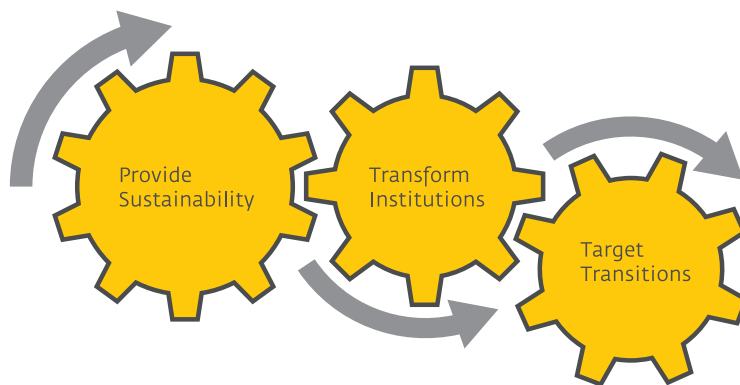
Integration of Effort - Integration of policies, programs and services means that pathways are networked and connected so everyone can reach their destination as quickly and effectively as possible. We heard that a strong responsibility centre needs to coordinate the services currently being delivered and identify where there are gaps to fill.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

The four critical components above can be considered the "What" of the community's advice to the Taskforce, and there was also a "How" contained in their feedback. The themes from the consultation draw a picture of three key elements for implementations:

- Sustainable Funding
- Transforming Institutions
- Targeting Transitions

A MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION



Sustainable Funding The number one issue identified by our stakeholders was sustainability. We heard that “Too many good programs suffer death by pilot project”. Pilot projects are funded because they are innovative and creative, then funding dries up once the pilot phase is complete. People and issues don’t change overnight. Funding needs to be provided for the long haul. We heard that only by addressing sustainability will we be able to embed prevention and community safety as a way of life in Edmonton.

Transforming Institutions There was a general consensus that society has changed faster than the institutions that are traditionally responsible for creating safe and welcoming communities. Schools, community leagues and churches were identified as institutions which have been most impacted by the changing demographics and demands of the city. At the same time, they have the greatest potential to evolve into new models and agents for change.

People were excited about looking for newer models of community representation and engagement. These new models would recognize cultural communities and engage more directly in community organization and programming.

They saw a transformative role that schools can play as community hubs and expressed the hope that churches build their significant social capital into a tool to reach out and connect Edmontonians and build a safer community.

The need for 24/7 services for high-risk populations was also cited as an example of how civic institutions and service providers must change the way they work to meet changing needs.

Targeting Transitions People need help most during times of change – whether coming to a new country or city, returning after incarceration or struggling to change unhealthy lifestyles. These points of transition are critical and vulnerable times in the crime prevention cycle. Other such transition points include:

When the lure of gang life is stronger than the lure of school and family

When wanting to make a lifestyle change but not knowing where to go

Major life changing events – like underage pregnancy

When transitioning from home to kindergarten, grade 6 to 7, and from grade 9 to senior high

Front line service experts identified these transitions as times of high-risk and of high motivation.

They also expressed deep frustration at being able to predict problems during these transitions, yet not being able to find the right services at the right time. The community’s finite resources need to be most targeted. Citizens called for a more integrated, nimble approach in Edmonton that can respond effectively to changing needs and catalyze action when most needed.

Officials acknowledged they often are frustrated by the inability to share and connect information across disciplines, and yet Police, Transit, Fire and Emergency Medical Services, as well as schools, have leading-edge information and data tracking systems that create “great intelligence platforms.”

What We Heard

“We don’t always need new. Mostly we need stability...and just when we get to work with our clients, the six month program draws to a close and we have to do it all over again. How do we expect our clients to adopt sustaining habits when we as agencies have no sustaining habits? We are continually letting them down.”

What We Heard

“We lost a kid to a gang this week. We just couldn’t get him what he needed fast enough. We need to find or identify the points of intersection and name the agencies, draft the protocol and get it done!”

What We Heard

"We need to act like a highly functioning Emergency Room and start triaging immediately. The bureaucracy is killing us."

What We Heard

"There are many kinds of families: families of origin, chosen families, foster families. We need to strengthen them all."

What We Heard

"There needs to be a coordination of services. There will be a lot more funding available because there would be no repetition. There would be lots more available if it was pooled."

They see themselves as early warning systems for troubled kids – the "canary in the coal mine" for the community.

CONSISTENCY ACROSS DIVERSITY

Here are just a few highlights and suggestions we heard from some of our key stakeholder groups that have shaped the direction of the report and its recommendations.

1. Aboriginal Community

For today's urban Aboriginal Edmontonians, family takes many forms. A key theme from these groups was to ensure young people have a solid "family" to go to when they move to the city. The role of housing was noted as particularly important in this vulnerable transition period to a new urban environment, along with the need to be able to intervene immediately and provide just-in-time support. Paying close attention to spiritual and cultural practices was also seen as vital to the success of any community safety program, especially if it involves prevention through healing. Collaboration and open lines of communication were also seen as vital. Despite a "consultation fatigue" in First Nations communities, there was a strong response to the Taskforce, expressing hope that the feedback they provide is not ignored, but forms the basis for change and action.

2. Business Community

The business community expressed the greatest worry around what it sees as our community's decreasing safety and escalating disorder. Businesses are harmed if the community is unsafe, and business owners' impression is that Edmonton is not as safe as it needs to be. The business community recognized that merely hiring more police is not the answer and felt significant action is needed now – any new programs and approaches around prevention (which the business community supported) should build on work already underway through the Business Revitalization Zones and other initiatives. Immigrants and newcomers were seen as an important group to support in their transitional periods, and the need for sustainable funding was highlighted.

The business community expressed a strong sense of seeking solutions and of responsibility for solving our common problems. The community proposed a guide to what needs to be done to coordinate community safety more effectively in Edmonton (under the acronym LIFE):

- L** – Leverage existing programs and launch new ones only where there are gaps
- I** – Integrate programs, services and strategies
- F** – Further the reach of existing programs and funding
- E** – Evaluate all programs and engage the community in solutions

3. Edmonton's Newcomers: Immigrants and Refugees

We heard that the early years are difficult and challenging for many newcomers. Poverty and access to housing are significant issues. Strong support is needed for children who often feel torn between two cultures. In an unknown environment, immigrants and refugees often feel unsafe and at risk of being exploited. Parents often have to work more than one job to support their families.

Many immigrants and refugees supported the need for mentors to help newcomers – whether young children or parents – to adjust and to access services. They called for new ways of promoting and delivering services to an increasingly diverse population. Others suggested creating hubs in local schools as access points and program centres for youth and families, and to help children and adults connect in their communities. They also stressed the need to engage parents of different cultures in program development from the start. Newcomers had a hopeful and positive approach to improving community safety.

4. Families

The place of the family in creating safe communities lies at the centre of the Taskforce recommendations. A sampling of 32 at-risk or struggling families was interviewed by Catholic Social Services and The Family Centre as part of the Taskforce consultation. When asked to define “safety,” parents invariably related it to the safety of their children. Creating a safe environment together with neighbours is needed, they said, and they also pointed out the critical need to find the right services at the right time. The worries of some families centered on those times of day when they felt their children were most vulnerable – on the way to and from school, and later at night if the children were out. They stressed the importance of making sure the physical environment in neighbourhoods is safe. Although the term “wrap around service” was not used, many of the ideal circumstances families described for service delivery would be met with this type of model.

5. At-Risk and High-risk Youth

Many of those we spoke to were people born into addiction, abuse, violence, poverty or dysfunctional families. With these individuals, the theme of having services and people available during times of crisis or transition arose again and again. Some even stated bluntly that “transition support” would be their single greatest need. Youth told us that it’s all too easy to get lost in their community, and that they need accessible structures to help them find their way, and a safe and tolerant place they can go to connect with others. The idea of having a sense of belonging, of “home”, and of someone to trust was vital to them. Almost all of those trying to turn their life around identified the role of one significant adult or person who made that difference to them.

A Housing First concept (a safe and tolerant space for at-risk youth), with wrap around services, shelter and just-in-time help available 24/7 was a priority. These youth identified new moms in particular as highly motivated to change and suggested that, with the right supports readily available, the young mothers could succeed in making positive changes.

6. The Justice Community

Members of the Justice community included front line workers from Mediation and Restorative Justice, and representatives from the Young Offenders Branch and Youth Restorative Action Project. They expressed a strong commitment to early intervention and prevention strategies, and supported the concept of an inclusionary process. Ensuring communication between both those harmed and those causing the harm was identified as an important factor in a prevention model. Community development initiatives to engage neighbours and build cohesion were supported to create safer communities. The Justice Community expressed the need for clarity in terms of who provides what service in the city. They also requested that the Taskforce ensure sustainable funding for programs, services and supports related to family violence.

THE ESSENTIAL MESSAGE

Hundreds of Edmontonians inspired the Taskforce to reach with them for a new level of prevention and integration in community safety. The community told the Taskforce that what was required was vision, leadership, accountability and creation of a delivery system that is responsive to changing needs and urban demographics. Hundreds of Edmontonians offered tangible stories and solutions, some of which can be found on the REACH website. These priorities guided the work of the Taskforce and the recommendations that follow.

What We Heard

"Kids have a right to play and be kids without worrying and being scared...late afternoon is worst. Bullies come out to bother the kids."

What We Heard

"What helps me most? Someone who believes in me and is non-judgmental. Someone I can call 24/7."

What We Heard

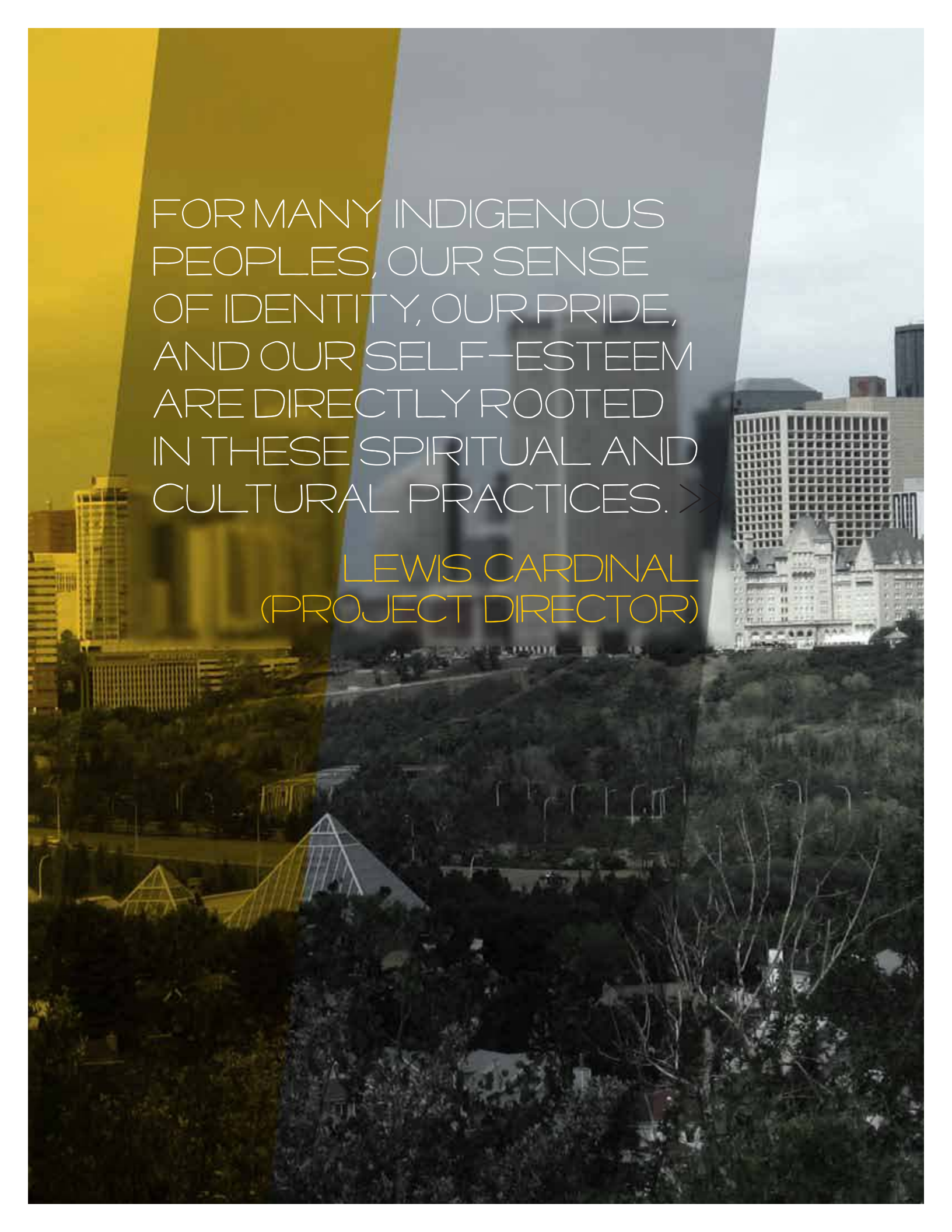
"Get rid of the expression 'tough on crime'. We need to get tough on the causes of crime."



SHINING A LIGHT ON EDMONTON –
KIHCI ASKIY (SACRED EARTH)

AS OUR
COMMUNITY
MATURES + EXPANDS ITS
ABILITY + WILLINGNESS TO
CREATE BONDS,
OUR CITY IS BEGINNING TO
UNDERSTAND WHAT IT
OWES TO ITS
ABORIGINAL
HERITAGE



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Minneapolis, showing a dense urban area with various skyscrapers and a large green park area in the foreground. A large, semi-transparent yellow and grey diagonal band runs across the image from the top left to the bottom right. The text is overlaid on this band.

FOR MANY INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES, OUR SENSE
OF IDENTITY, OUR PRIDE,
AND OUR SELF-ESTEEM
ARE DIRECTLY ROOTED
IN THESE SPIRITUAL AND
CULTURAL PRACTICES. >

LEWIS CARDINAL
(PROJECT DIRECTOR)

One program that will make Edmonton a better, safer community in the long term is Kihci Askiy, an initiative of the Indigenous Elders Cultural Resource Circle Society (IECRCS). Kihci Askiy means "Sacred Earth" and it is rooted in the relationship Aboriginal peoples have with Mother Earth, the Creator, the Universe, and the Aboriginal belief in the inter-connectedness of all things.

The IECRCS understands how closely linked individual and collective wellness are to Aboriginal cultural and spiritual foundations. "If we want Aboriginal youth to grow up and lead a healthy life," notes Cardinal, "they have to know who they are, where they came from, and what their relationships are." He also adds that this initiative is not just for Aboriginal people. A big part of the program is about reaching out to non-Aboriginals to welcome them in to come and learn about indigenous cultures and worldviews.

Most Aboriginal people living in Edmonton today have no central place in which to exercise and reflect upon their traditions. Typically they have to travel away from the city, and often significant distances. The reality is that most Aboriginal youths and their families don't have the capacity to make these journeys, which means they don't access their cultural heritage and don't become enmeshed with their community.

Kihci Askiy will be a focal point for cultural resources. It will also provide access to Elders for youth. Located at Fox Farms, Kihci Askiy will be a cultural and ceremonial space, and in its urban setting will be especially valuable to Aboriginal youth trying to come to grips with the challenges of city life. Kihci Askiy will be an essential resource to support Aboriginal persons during transition periods, particularly in moving to the city.

"Healing and cultural revival are tied together, and that process is what Kihci Askiy is about," says Cardinal.



TASKFORCE RECOMMEN- DATIONS FOR CHANGE

Informed by research, its environmental scan and a very broad community engagement, the Taskforce identified nine Recommendations for Change as the foundation for REACH.

The following questions helped guide the Taskforce in choosing the recommendations:

Does it speak to preventing crime before it happens and target some point along the prevention spectrum?

Is it innovative, offering new ways to support and engage children, families or neighbours?

Does it enhance an integrated and collaborative approach to community safety?

Is it evidence-based and measurable?

Does it enhance the protective factors we know make for safe children, families and communities?

The recommendations essentially provide a platform for a journey to a safer community. Each idea for change offers an opportunity to address the positive protective factors most vital in creating a safe community. Many build on existing provincial, municipal and community initiatives and partnerships. The recommendations are primarily intended to forge connections and ensure that information is shared and new solutions developed and tested. Others propose new ideas that rely on strong collaborative leadership. Together they paint a picture of innovative and collaborative concepts around community safety that will reinforce Edmonton's place in the forefront of community safety in Canada.

The nine recommendations are grouped under the three primary themes that emerged in the community engagement process:

Investing in Children, Youth and Families

Catalyzing Change

New Leadership

Establishing a new leadership body for community safety - a Community Safety Coordinating Council - is a fundamental recommendation of REACH in order to create, nurture and sustain a strong community safety network for decades to come.

The community-driven model it exemplifies would be **a coordinating centre of excellence responsible for integrating, promoting and sustaining community safety in Edmonton.**

The new Community Safety Coordinating Council would be:

An independent, incorporated society with a governing Board of Directors;

A community-based organization with broad and diverse voices at the table and a membership which includes individual Edmontonians, community agencies involved in safety and prevention, as well as representatives of all sectors of the community and orders of government;

Accountable to its members, to Edmontonians, and to City Council; and

Sustained by a municipal service agreement but able to leverage many sources of funding from other orders of government and from the private sector.

The Council (see recommendations section) will be critical in implementing the recommendations outlined in REACH and the 10-year plan recommendations to imbed cultural change across our community.

What Can I Do?

Read Less Law, More Order by Dr. Irvin Waller to find out more about the value of investing in prevention.

RECOMMENDATIONS THEME 1: INVESTING IN CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Compromised family dynamics create risk for children and youth, which inevitably places the community at risk. However, a knowledgeable community that is connected to families can help identify risk and make a positive intervention. We need to help families do the best job they can to raise healthy, caring and resilient children who will not be drawn to criminal behaviours and who will be less likely to become victimized by criminal actions. Not every family has this ability, and many families require help to understand the needs of their children and to access the support to address those needs.



Edmonton is fortunate to have a diverse range of services it can offer these families, but during our engagement sessions we heard from families, youth and front-line workers that these services are not always easy to identify and access. We also heard that many families don't know what it is they need, or are unwilling to seek help for themselves or their children.

The following three recommendations wrap services around children, youth and families in their neighbourhood setting and develop new service models which can be tested and improved over time. They focus specific attention on individuals at risk of gang involvement, the issue of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and on an innovative use of schools as hubs for community safety. At the same time, these new models will offer tested approaches for new ways to engage and support other at-risk groups in our community.

RECOMMENDATION 1: A New Model of Family and Community Safety Focusing on Schools as Neighbourhood Access Points to Social Support Services

Build on and nurture an integrated, community-wide partnership that positions schools as key access points or hubs for high-needs families, children and youth.

Develop and implement a coordinated physical activity, homework and skills drop-in program during critical after school hours for at-risk, school-aged children and youth in Edmonton.

MAKING THE CASE

At-risk children, youth and families struggle with social issues such as addictions, mental illness, poverty and abusive relationships. At the same time they are often dealing with issues such as lack of child care support, lack of transportation, language barriers or lack of education that can limit their access to services they require. According to the Families First Edmonton 2007-08 Progress Report, families know there are services available to them, but they face challenges accessing them. They encounter different eligibility criteria and complicated applications processes and often are lost in the system.

This recommendation proposes building a community model of schools as neighbourhood hubs. Schools are important access points for families in a community and can provide a focal point for support and community connection. The hub will act as a navigator to connect with families and provide a spectrum of services in their community before a crisis point is reached.

This recommendation also proposes an investment in child development, mentoring and educational success by enabling a more coordinated access to community-based, accessible programming during critical risk hours.

School hubs with innovative critical hours programming will offer a place for the community to come together to provide proactive, positive support for children, youth and families. This recommendation envisions a transformative and evolving role for neighbourhood schools, along with other natural community hubs like community leagues and churches.

OUTCOMES

Greater awareness and access to services needed by children and families

Access to services for at-risk youth during critical hours

Safe, accessible places for preventive programs for at-risk children

More coordination among those services provided through hubs

Optimal use of community facilities

Decreased neighbourhood crime by youth

ACTIONS

Create a partnership of lead agencies

Inventory and identify needed resources, services and potential hub locations

Identify school hub sites and critical hours programs needed

Develop an action plan and charter

Hire coordinators to implement pilot sites and evaluate success

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Edmonton Public and Catholic Schools

City of Edmonton

Alberta Education

SafeCom

Families First Edmonton

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Partners for Kids

The Support Network

RECOMMENDATION 2: Develop "Turn away from Gangs" Initiative Focused on At-Risk Youth

Source long-term funding and staff support to continue to build on the work done by the Community Solution to Gang Violence (CSGV) coalition.

Support the evaluation of specific initiatives developed to address the risk factors for young people on the cusp of gang involvement.

What Can I Do?

*Between 18 and 40?
Find out more about
Edmonton's Next
Gen initiative and get
involved in civic affairs
and social issues.
Find them on
Facebook today!*

MAKING THE CASE

This recommendation addresses the vulnerability of youth to being drawn into drugs and criminal activity through street gangs. Current research into at-risk behaviour and gangs points to a need for a strengths-based prevention and public health model to encourage young people to resist problem behaviour.

Resources should be identified and directed by the new Coordinating Council to address the issues of youth crime, violence and gang involvement by leveraging the collaborative partnerships of the Community Solution to Gang Violence community coalition. The responsibility centre would facilitate and evaluate ongoing outreach, educational and intervention activities aimed at diverting youth from gangs. It should also align with the Provincial Anti-Gang Initiative.

Tools, like the new Prevention Resource Toolkit on Gangs (www.csgv.ca), and other innovative initiatives to support parents, youth and at-risk families should be coordinated and promoted.

OUTCOMES

Parents are more aware of resources and support to increase youth resiliency

Youth are encouraged to turn away from gang involvement

Anti-gang efforts and initiatives are coordinated both locally and provincially

Anti-gang initiatives are evaluated

ACTIONS

Seek resources to support youth resiliency and anti-gang prevention initiatives of the CSGV coalition

Develop, implement and evaluate gang prevention and youth resiliency initiatives

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Community Solutions to Gang Violence partner agencies

At-risk youth and parents

Provincial Anti Gang Initiative

Diverse communities of interest and front-line agencies

City of Edmonton

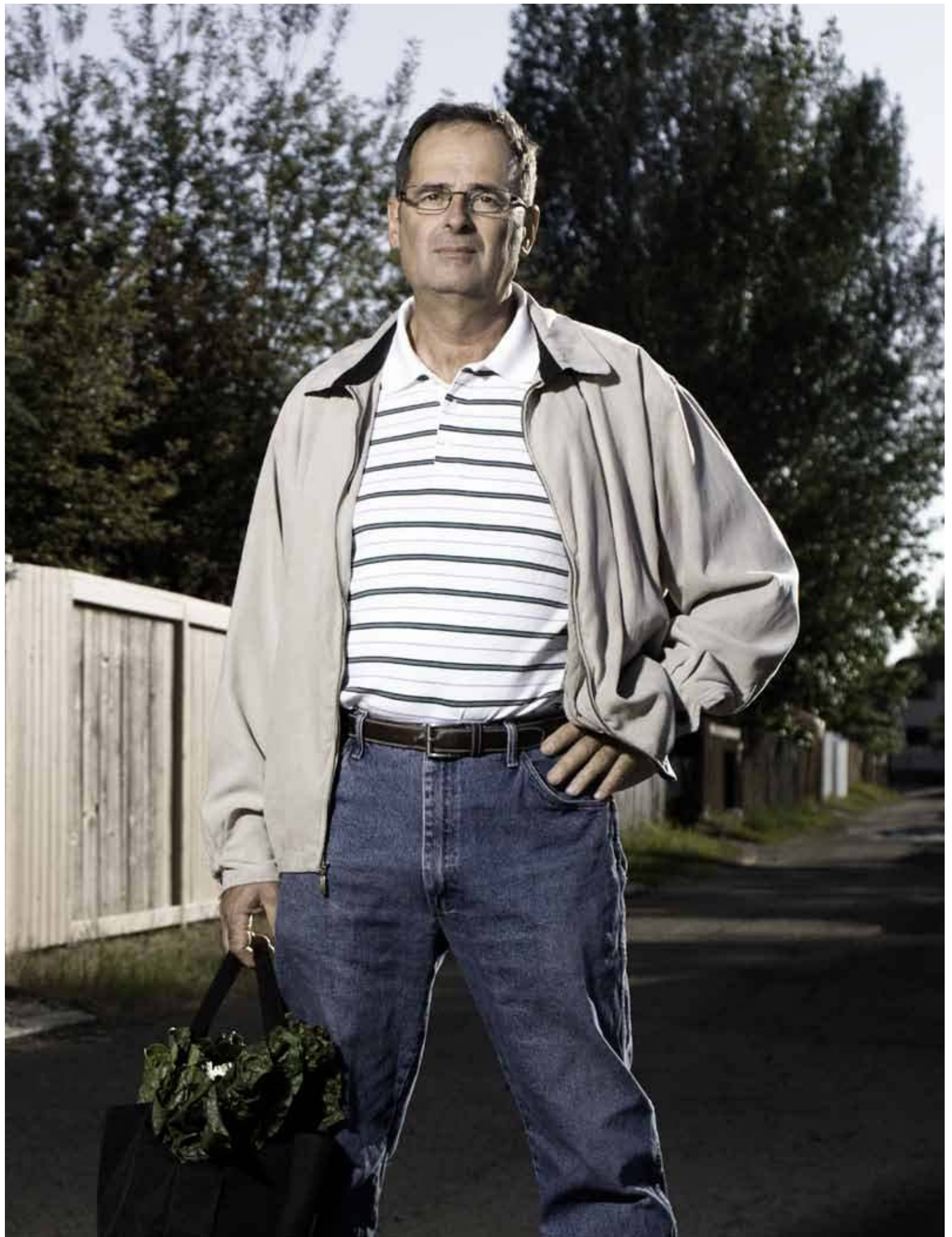
Edmonton Police Service

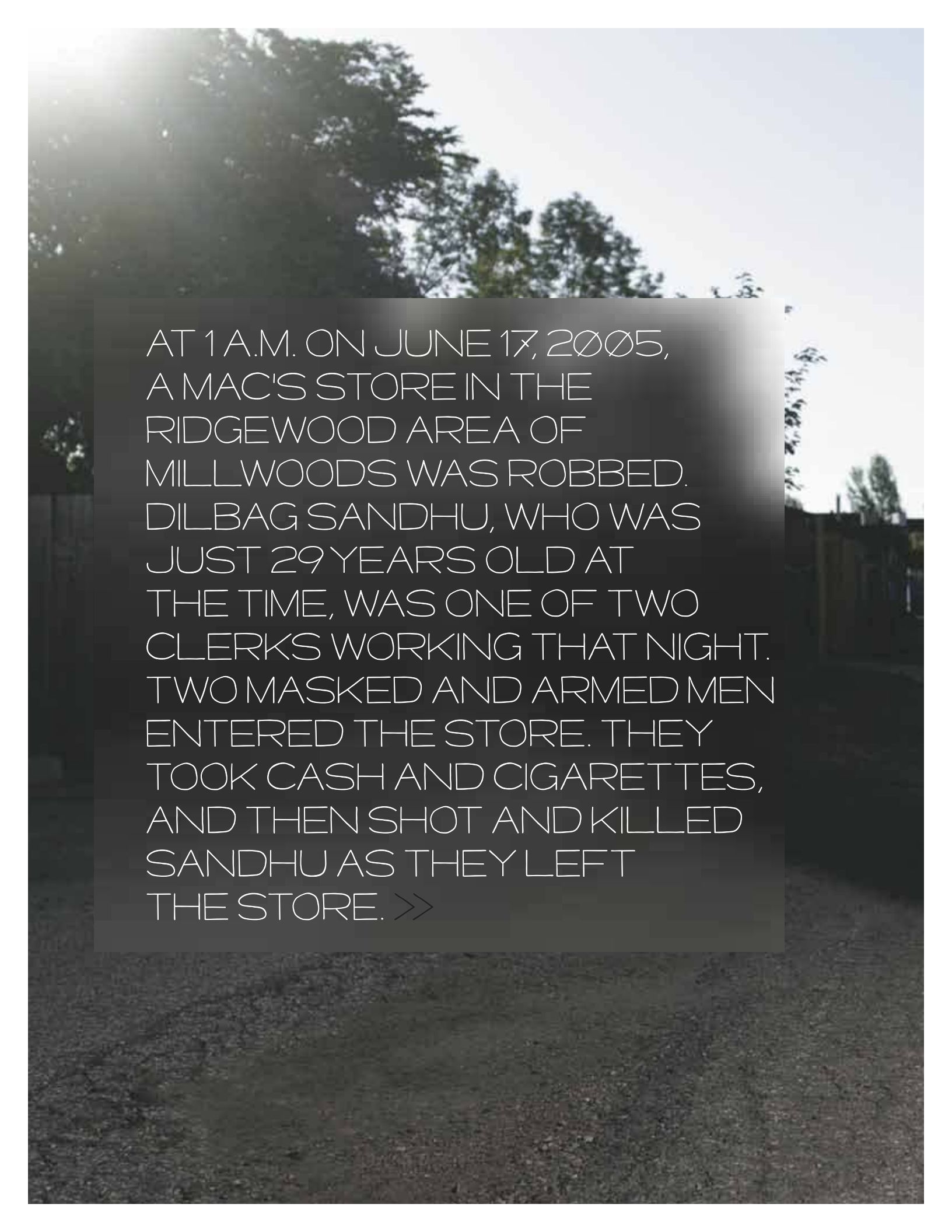
The background of the entire page is a photograph of a wooden fence with vertical slats. Behind the fence, there are dense green trees and foliage. The lighting is somewhat dim, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded area.

SHINING A LIGHT ON EDMONTON –
THE MILLWOODS CRIME COUNCIL

A CORE
PRINCIPLE
OF REACH IS THAT
NEIGHBOURHOODS
ARE CENTRAL TO
CREATING
SAFETY

One project that exemplifies this is the Millwoods Crime Council (MWCC).
The MWCC is a group that was forged from tragedy and has evolved into a
strong voice for community cohesion and outreach. >>





AT 1 A.M. ON JUNE 17, 2005,
A MAC'S STORE IN THE
RIDGEWOOD AREA OF
MILLWOODS WAS ROBBED.
DILBAG SANDHU, WHO WAS
JUST 29 YEARS OLD AT
THE TIME, WAS ONE OF TWO
CLERKS WORKING THAT NIGHT.
TWO MASKED AND ARMED MEN
ENTERED THE STORE. THEY
TOOK CASH AND CIGARETTES,
AND THEN SHOT AND KILLED
SANDHU AS THEY LEFT
THE STORE. >>

Sandhu had been in Edmonton only two years, having arrived from the Punjab region of India in 2003. He hoped to find work in Canada, marry, and settle down. His murder remains unsolved to this day.

One product of this tragedy was the formation of the MWCC. "The community really had its sense of peace and security badly shaken," says MWCC spokesperson Steve Bradshaw. "So one of the things we decided to do was to try and make a difference as a group of concerned neighbours."

Since that time, the MWCC has focused its energy addressing the underlying causes of crime in the community. They have focused on partnering, organizing and lobbying for human, infrastructure and financial resources – all directed at making Millwoods safer for its residents.

The MWCC recently succeeded in bringing a Neighbourhood Empowerment Team to the Southwood area of Millwoods. They also were part of the negotiations with Western Canada Mac's Stores to implement more neighbourhood-friendly hours of business at the Ridgewood store where Sandhu was murdered. The MWCC also recently co-hosted the Edmonton premiere of a documentary by Vancouver filmmaker Baljit Sangra called "Warrior Boyz," an event that generated discussion around the issue of youth violence in the community. "The MWCC is clearly a success," says Steve Bradshaw, "and we actually feel like we're just getting started."

RECOMMENDATION 3: Community Coordination on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

Bring together a coalition of frontline experts to create an action plan to support a community-wide strategy to help families and youth struggling with FASD.

Facilitate the delivery of life skills programs for young females (ages 11-15 years) at risk of pregnancy and FASD.

MAKING THE CASE

Although there are FASD programs in existence, evidence indicates increasing numbers of young at-risk girls in Edmonton are becoming mothers of the next wave of FASD children in our city. Without life skills and coaching, the young at-risk girl is on a trajectory of becoming a mother herself. A mother's at-risk lifestyle during pregnancy greatly increases her chance of having a baby born with FASD and other health problems. It is estimated that \$1.5 million is spent on each FASD child in his or her lifetime. Over 60% of these children will not complete school. Help at critical points in the young girls' lives (before heavy addiction and gang entrenchment) will save lives and render cost savings for every baby not born with FASD and for every young at-risk girl who does not choose to pursue an at-risk lifestyle.

At the same time, the new Coordinating Council would facilitate support to a coalition of frontline experts from the Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network and the Provincial Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Strategy in order to create a sustainable, comprehensive community approach to FASD.

What Can I Do?

Looking to volunteer or trying to find what services there are in our community? Dial 2-1-1 today and ask The Support Network to connect you.

OUTCOMES

Fewer girls having babies with FASD and other health problems

Fewer girls with gang affiliations

Strong healthy relationships with healthy role models

Increased knowledge of resources for help and increased self worth from completing the program

ACTIONS

Create a community action plan for FASD

Identify the number of girls eligible and in need of this support

Survey girls about existing programs and needs

With support of like minded community service agencies, develop, implement and evaluate the life skills initiative

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Engaged community organizations, (e.g. Elizabeth Fry, ihuman Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters)

Group homes and foster homes

At-risk young girls

City of Edmonton

Government of Alberta

Volunteer mentors

Edmonton Fetal Alcohol Network

RECOMMENDATIONS THEME 2: CATALYZING CHANGE

In today's digital world, change moves at the speed of light. It gives birth to new leaders and provides a chance for exciting ideas to surface and different approaches to be explored. Edmonton is a community that respects its history and nurtures its citizens and sense of community, yet never hesitates to take bold steps to lead change.



At the heart of REACH is the need for a profound change in the way we pursue preventive community safety in Edmonton. The following three recommendations propose significant, innovative models for change that will alter the way we think, how we work together and how Edmontonians engage in civic life and community safety.

RECOMMENDATION 4: A 24/7 Service Delivery Model for High-Needs Individuals

Lead development of a comprehensive, coordinated response to at-risk populations such as youth, sexually exploited individuals and street gang members who need access to services 24 hours a day.

Implement specialized training for front-line staff working with at-risk clientele.

MAKING THE CASE

Taskforce interviews with at-risk clients revealed gaps in around-the-clock support and challenges in accessing night time resources. For example, at-risk youth have difficulties finding treatment, and accessing independent living and other services during the night.

Edmonton needs an innovative, community-integrated, 24-hour service provision to serve youth, sexually exploited individuals and street gang members who may be at risk and need access to services 24/7.

A model for 24/7 service delivery is recommended which will leverage existing services, streamline existing daytime services and increase capacity for night support. This type of 24-hour service model, coupled with customized training for staff, will address a variety of crises and needs, including: medical, mental, emotional, physical and basic needs services.

OUTCOMES	ACTIONS	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<i>Reduced need and cost for medical, judicial and police intervention</i>	<i>Conduct a needs assessment of existing services for at-risk clients</i>	<i>At-risk Youth Project</i>
<i>Clarification of roles and responsibilities and elimination of duplication of services</i>	<i>Consult with front line service providers to assess needs, roles, development of shared protocols</i>	<i>EPS Child at Risk Response Teams</i>
<i>Better access to services for high-risk clients</i>	<i>Develop action teams to implement staged 24/7 service provision model</i>	<i>Police and Crisis Teams</i>
<i>More resilient clients (social skills, sense of belonging, access to support services, attachment to the community)</i>	<i>Develop and implement training modules developed and delivered for action teams</i>	<i>Government of Alberta (Solicitor General, Child and Youth Services)</i>
	<i>Ongoing evaluation to measure success</i>	<i>Mental Health Teams</i>
		<i>Educational Institutions</i>
		<i>The Support Network</i>
		<i>Community Organizations (e.g. Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Catholic Social Services)</i>

RECOMMENDATION 5: Cultural Community Groups

Work with community leaders from Aboriginal and multicultural communities to develop and implement innovative models for engagement within cultural contexts.

MAKING THE CASE

Evidence suggests that there are key groups in Edmonton who may benefit from specific consideration when it comes to prevention. The Aboriginal community in particular is over-represented in the criminal justice system and faces specific challenges. At the same time, they are often under-represented in civic life and in the development and delivery of preventative services.

A new model of a culturally-based organization called a Cultural Community Group is recommended. These groups will transcend traditional neighbourhood boundaries and play a critical role in supporting safe communities, no matter where members of the cultural community live. Cultural Community Groups will provide forums for individuals of a particular cultural community to engage and make their voices heard in civic life. They will build individual and cultural group leadership capacity, shape community priorities, build community relationships, and give voice to community needs.

The Cultural Community Group is different from existing culturally-based forums that bring together alternate agencies or organization. Its focus is on individual people who choose to be engaged. To facilitate the development of networks and relationships, it is recommended that a Community Organizer be hired for each identified Cultural Community Group.

What Can I Do?

Visit www.fightviolence.net today to find out more about standing up for non-violence, or join the Fight Violence group on Facebook.

OUTCOMES

Cultural and ethnic groups more engaged in community safety issues and practices at the governance, strategic and operational levels

A stronger sense of community and individual voice and empowerment among cultural groups

The opportunity to develop and foster innovative and preventive solutions from a uniquely Aboriginal or multicultural perspective

Greater leadership capacity for targeted groups within the greater community

ACTIONS

Invite high priority cultural communities to host a community engagement process to inform and engage their support (Edmonton's Aboriginal community was identified as an initial priority, along with immigrant and refugee communities)

Develop the concept and plan, hire a Community Organizer to work with first group identified

Implement and evaluate the initial project

Expand the model for other high-needs communities

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Aboriginal organizations and members (Métis Nation, Treaty 6, Treaty 8 First Nation, Métis Settlements General Council)

City of Edmonton Aboriginal Advisory Board, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Community Services

Existing Aboriginal service providers

Multicultural Community Organizations and leaders

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL)

Greater Edmonton Alliance

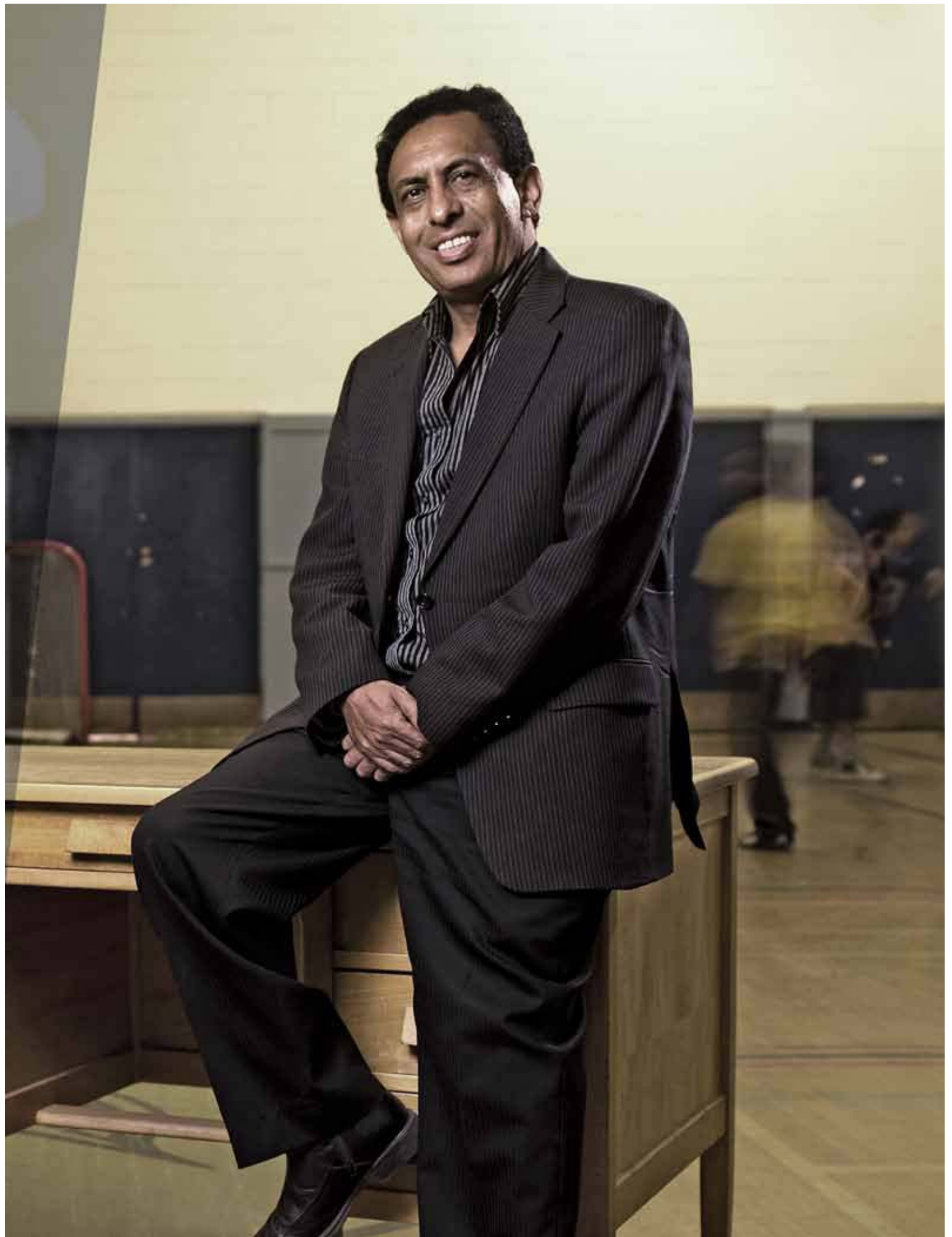
The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of an indoor space, likely a community center or a school. In the foreground on the right, there is a wooden cabinet with three drawers, each with a small handle. In the background, several people are visible, including a child in a white shirt and dark pants standing in the center, and another person in a white shirt and dark pants walking towards the right. The floor is polished and reflects the light. The overall atmosphere is warm and community-oriented.

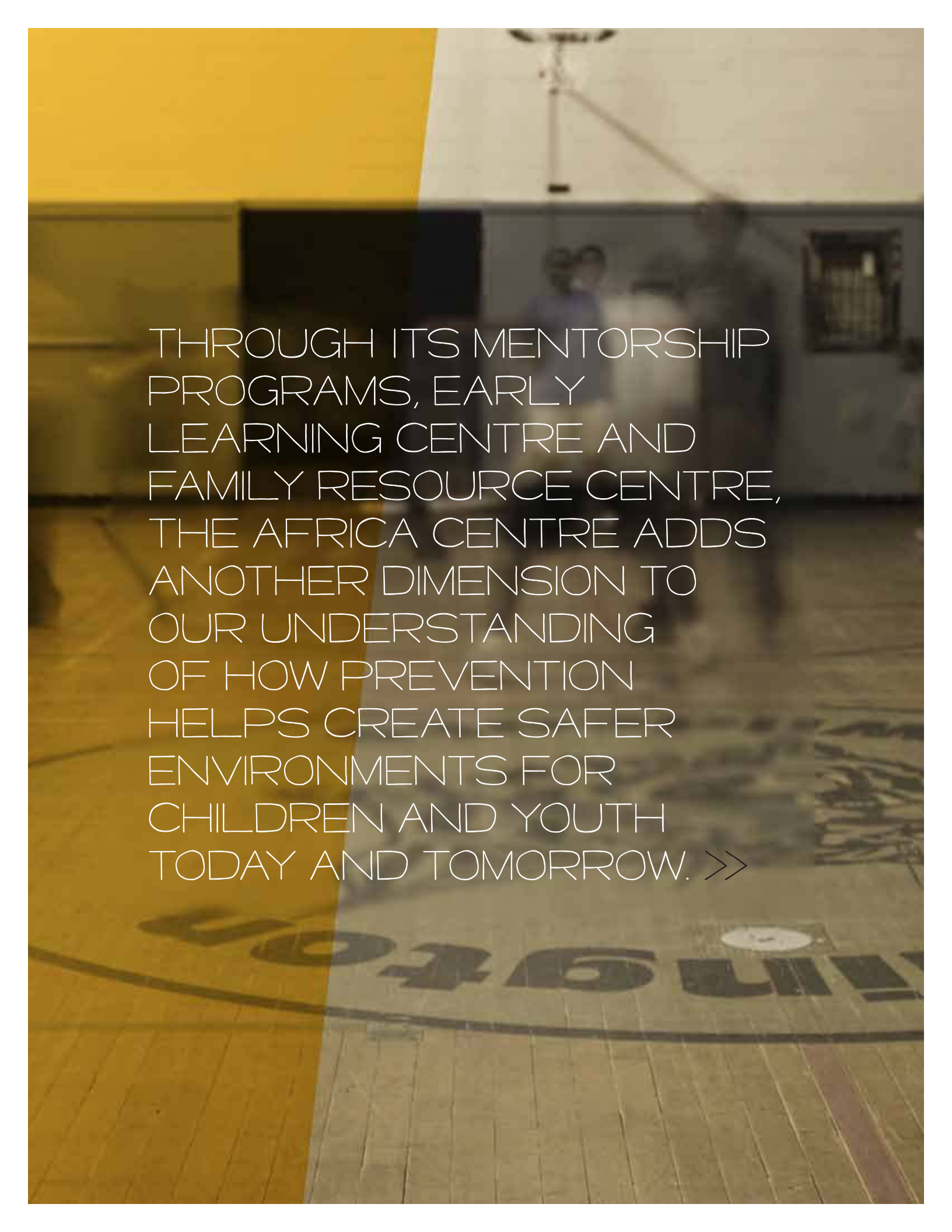
SHINING A LIGHT ON EDMONTON -
THE AFRICA CENTRE

WE'RE HERE TO BE A FOCAL POINT FOR THE AFRICAN COMMUNITY

TESFAYE AYALEW

One of the core principles underlying REACH is that cultural communities, wherever its members live, can play crucial roles in creating a safe community. The Africa Centre represents one such community. >>





THROUGH ITS MENTORSHIP
PROGRAMS, EARLY
LEARNING CENTRE AND
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE,
THE AFRICA CENTRE ADDS
ANOTHER DIMENSION TO
OUR UNDERSTANDING
OF HOW PREVENTION
HELPS CREATE SAFER
ENVIRONMENTS FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
TODAY AND TOMORROW. >>

The Council for the Advancement of African Canadians (CAAC) is an Alberta society that joined forces with The City of Edmonton to create a public space for African communities in Edmonton. The Africa Centre is designed to create a safe and supportive environment, and to provide resources and integrated services to those in need. "A big part of what we're about," says the Centre's executive director Tesfaye Ayalew, is to encourage Africans in Edmonton to fully and actively participate as citizens."

The Centre supports many of the principles at work in REACH, especially through programs which address the diverse needs of African youth in the city, such as after-school programs, stay-in-school

initiatives, peer support and mediation, crime prevention, business training, health, leadership development, and recreational and sports activities.

The goal is to increase civic participation and to create educational, social and cultural integration and opportunity. It's a meeting place, a hub for a growing non-geographic community, a support system, and a resource portal.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Neighbourhood Organizing Initiative

Implement a new Neighbourhood Organizing Model in several diverse areas of Edmonton to develop grassroots community leaders who support a preventive approach to community safety.

MAKING THE CASE

There is a need for greater connectivity in neighbourhoods to address issues of safety and crime. Today, communities in Edmonton and across Canada face declining numbers of traditional “volunteers” at the neighbourhood level as people struggle to balance the multiple demands on their time and energy.

This recommendation proposes implementing a new model of engagement to increase the number of citizens who take an active role in creating safe neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Organizing Model is rooted in community organizing principles and powered by Community Organizers who engage citizens as leaders, build new relationships, and identify the issues they wish to address together.

This model creates a culture of ownership among neighbours. This model is nimble and does not rely on bureaucratic structure; rather, it helps citizens take collective community action.

What Can I Do?

If you're planning a party, be sure to monitor alcohol consumption and the crowd. Have a security and emergency plan in place so your event doesn't get out of control. Be safe and be responsible.

OUTCOMES

New and engaged neighbourhood leaders

More inclusive and welcoming communities where citizens work together to influence change and address problems

Greater neighbourhood connectivity

Enhanced public perception of safety due to a greater sense of citizen ownership and control

ACTIONS

Build a funding strategy to resource the initiative, a personnel strategy to define Neighbourhood Organizer skills and role, and a partnership strategy to identify those who will oversee the project

Identify diverse neighbourhoods, hire community organizers and evaluate the success

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Great Neighbourhoods Program, City of Edmonton

Greater Edmonton Alliance

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Neighbourhood Empowerment Teams

RECOMMENDATIONS THEME 3: NEW LEADERSHIP

Edmonton today has many dedicated participants in community safety, but no central conduit to channel our collective energy. To make Edmonton a safer community, greater collaboration and better communication are required. Leadership is the driver to address our changing reality in agile and innovative ways and to nourish hope. The new leadership model recommended in this section offers a hopeful new vision of a community-led, grassroots organization to lead and sustain community safety. The following three recommendations speak to leadership through coordination, measuring success, and sourcing sustainable funding for a new approach to community safety that will reach across generations.



RECOMMENDATION 7: A New Community Safety Coordinating Council to Facilitate and Integrate Sustainable Community Safety Efforts

Create and sustain a new Community Safety Coordinating Council as a strong Responsibility Centre to implement this 10-year Plan and lead a more integrated, grassroots and collaborative approach to community safety in Edmonton.

Create and sustain a multi-dimensional strategy to shift from law to order and build support for prevention-focused solutions.

Host a semi-annual summit of key civic agency leaders and orders of government to identify shared prevention priorities in safety, encourage change and foster strategic integration.

MAKING THE CASE

Research tells us that a dynamic, well-resourced responsibility centre is necessary to develop a culture of safety. The Taskforce looked at best practices and working models for centres of responsibility all across Canada - from Kitchener-Waterloo to Surrey to Halifax to Ottawa. This research led the Taskforce to define and recommend a made-in-Edmonton model that is:

nimble and flexible

focused on root causes and prevention

reflective of our richly diverse community

action-oriented

results-based

An independent, membership-based society (which would replace the current Safedmonton model that resides within the City administration) will take the community safety model to the next level and lead implementation of the recommendations in this report. Integration does not mean that everyone must take the same path to achieve a safe community and to build a resilient community safety network. What it does mean is that the paths would be community-led, networked, and aligned towards a common vision.

What Can I Do?

Just Say Hi!
The "Just Say Hi" program started in Kitchener-Waterloo as a crime prevention slogan. Just saying "hi" to people in your neighbourhood can help build a safer community.

Taking advantage of the strong legacy of Safedmonton, the new Community Safety Coordinating Council will work to capture the energy of Edmontonians and create numerous opportunities for every citizen to be part of creating a legacy of community safety. Seniors, newcomers, the Next Gen crowd, long-time residents, business executives and workers will all have ways to get involved.

In order to support the coordination and integration necessary for success, a semi-annual summit will permit senior civic leaders to maximize the impact of community safety initiatives by determining areas of synergy and common interest, and by considering collective action.

What Can I Do?

A walkable community is a safe and connected community. Check out the Walkable Edmonton toolkit at www.edmonton.ca/walkableedmonton.

OUTCOMES

A more integrated and effective infrastructure to build bridges across service and client-focused silos that currently exist

Greater engagement of all citizens in safety

Reduction in the gap between perception and reality of safety in Edmonton

Increased emphasis on preventive solutions

A comprehensive and continued commitment to prevention in Edmonton

ACTIONS

Create and sustain a new Community Safety Coordinating Council

Create and sustain a culture shift from law to order and build support for prevention focused solutions

Host a semi-annual summit of key civic agency leaders and orders of government to identify prevention priorities and direct funding in a concerted and strategic way

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Citizens of Edmonton

Community-based organizations

Faith and culture-based organizations

Non Governmental Organizations

Public Sector

Private Sector

City of Edmonton

SafeCom, Government of Alberta

Community Safety Leadership Council

RECOMMENDATION 8: A Sustainability Strategy for Prevention

Work with local funding agencies and leaders, including the business community, to support the long-term, sustainable investment demanded by a preventive approach to community safety.

Advocate and seek sustainable support for existing innovative initiatives that contribute to community safety.

MAKING THE CASE

Sustainability of crime prevention programs was the number one critical issue identified by all groups in our engagement process.

As a result, it is recommended that the new Community Safety Coordinating Council move quickly to develop an innovative sustainable funding strategy that addresses the current financial burden on agencies and long-term funding. This would include the creation of new models and mechanisms for funding (such as a grants clearing house), ways to leverage existing dollars, and new ways of doing business.

Citizens in our engagement process also identified the need to initiate some practical ways to streamline the grant application process, address “the pilot project syndrome” that consistently sees promising and successful programs scrapped for the “next new thing,” and advocate for improved wages for front line staff.

What We Heard

“Creating a crime-free community will not be a free ride. We need to put our money where our mouth is. Maybe each business and each household should pay somewhere between a loonie and a twenty every year that will be earmarked for community safety. It can't go into general revenue, and we should get an accounting of how that money is applied.”

What We Heard

“We need a marketing initiative to convince people to contribute to the cost of creating a safer community. Something like: ‘a penny a day is cheap, a safe community is priceless.’ We could collect a penny a day for each year from every household.”

This recommendation also calls for the new Community Safety Coordinating Council to advocate and seek sustainable support for the following initiatives that can significantly impact community safety:

What Can I Do?

School is a place to learn, chill with your friends and be involved. You shouldn't have to worry about someone attacking or bullying you at school. If someone is making you feel uneasy, talk about it! Tell a teacher, your friends, or someone you trust.

Reduce knife related crime in Edmonton. Build on and support existing partner networks and initiatives to develop a multi-pronged action plan to reduce the sale, promotion and use of knives in Edmonton. (www.fightviolence.net)

Support the Edmonton Drug Treatment and Community Restoration Court. Support the need for sustainable funding for this Court as a strong example of an innovative alternative to the court process that breaks the cycle of substance abuse, destructive behaviours and crime. (www.edtcrc.ca)

Plan proactively for safe crowd and event management. Support additional resources for Responsible Hospitality Edmonton to proactively plan and manage a range of safe public and private events and crowds. (www.responsiblehospitalityedmonton.ca)

Support affordable housing and safe places and shelter for homeless youth, particularly those with concurrent disorders (mental health and addictions).

Support the implementation of the recommendations in "A Place to Call Home: Edmonton's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness." (www.endedmontonhomelessness.com)

OUTCOMES

More accessible, streamlined and long-term funding for prevention and leading-edge, long-term initiatives

Leveraged funding and support from many sectors with an interest in supporting community safety

ACTIONS

Work with local funding agencies and leaders to develop new mechanisms to streamline funding processes and to support collaborative prevention efforts

Engage business leaders to bring their expertise to bear on community safety

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Funders' Forum

Chambers of Commerce

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Business Community

Council of Business Revitalization Zones

Association of Convention Hotels

United Way Business Partners

Next Gen Business cohort

RECOMMENDATION 9: An Innovative Evaluation Framework to Measure Success

Develop an evaluation framework that includes both quantitative and qualitative components.

Use the Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation model for the quantitative measurement of social impacts. Use a range of tools for qualitative measurement (focus groups, interviews, surveys, etc.).

Use this combined model to measure success and as a basis for reporting progress annually to Edmontonians.

Support and measure the success of two innovative community initiatives, the Urban Games Project and the Gang Intervention and Diversion Model.

What Can I Do?

Get involved in the Safety or Crime Council in your neighbourhood. Don't have one? Take the first step and see about starting one.

MAKING THE CASE:

We need to know what works and why it works in order to effect real change in our community. While there is no one generic approach to the evaluation of social programs, we must work towards integration of a common evaluation framework, language and processes to improve consistency among and allow for comparisons between programs.

The expert Research Advisory Panel of the Taskforce recommended the use of the Social Return on Investment model to measure success and effectiveness. SROI measures success in monetary (quantitative) terms and in human (qualitative) terms. The new Community Safety Coordinating Council would institute the SROI model to ensure valuable and objective measures on the outcomes of programs and initiatives and identify potential changes and improvements.

The SROI model will measure cost effectiveness and the success of community safety outcomes in terms of:

Improvement in crime rates and victimization trends

Cultural shift towards community caring and prevention

Improvement in citizens' perception of safety

The SROI model may also be used to provide specific evaluation support to two innovative community safety initiatives:

The Urban Games Project, a new annual event showcasing creative, artistic and athletic urban youth culture (urban art and poetry, skateboarding, rap and hip hop) along with an education fair and bursary program for participants.

The Gang Intervention and Diversion Model, a collaborative, community pilot program to reduce the vulnerability of Aboriginal youth at risk for gang recruitment and involvement.

What Can I Do?

Reach out to young people and get involved in their lives by becoming a mentor, coach or youth leader. They are the future of every neighbourhood.

OUTCOMES

More effective and focused investment in prevention for a safe community

A common understanding, language and process model for comparing and evaluating impact

Measurement of success and a tangible gauge of the return on investment in prevention

Identification of areas of improvement and change in prevention programs

ACTIONS

Develop an evaluation framework for all REACH initiatives to measure their effectiveness

Build community capacity through training around SROI

Track and measure all initiatives

Support and measure success of two innovative community initiatives

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

School of Business, University of Alberta

Community Partners of special projects being evaluated

City of Edmonton

Funders' Forum

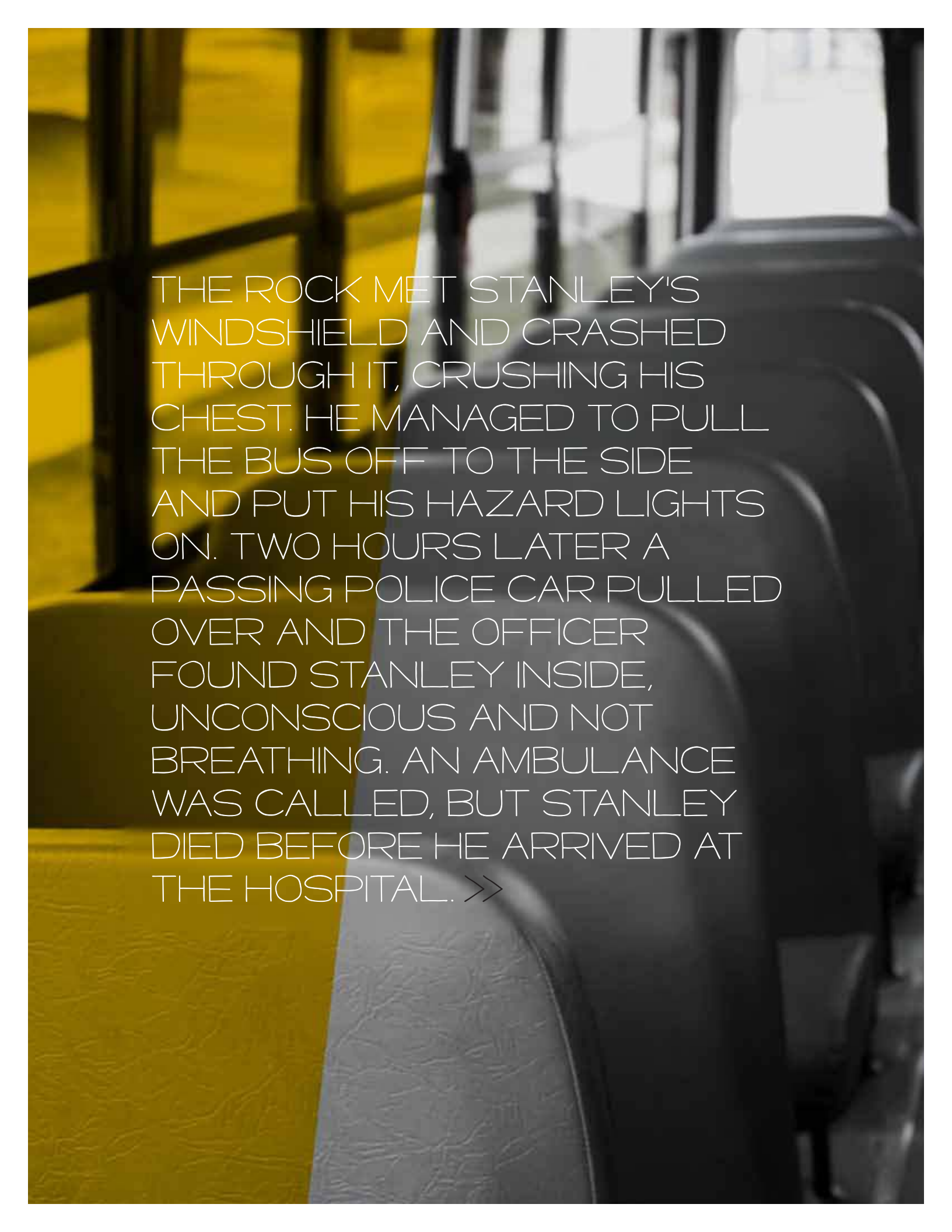
A photograph of a school bus interior. A person's hand is visible resting on a grey seat. The background shows the bus's interior structure and windows. The text is overlaid on the image.

A CITIZEN SPEAKS: **THE STANLEY FAMILY**

A CRIMINAL ACT CAN TAKE MANY FORMS, AS CAN JUSTICE + HEALING

On June 1, 2002, Robert Stanley was driving his Golden Arrow school bus on Whitemud Drive. He was well-liked by the kids he drove to and from school, often joking around with them and chatting as he drove. It was just after midnight, as he'd been driving his bus for the extra work he loved to do. Unbeknownst to the seventy-five year old Stanley, a group of teenagers was out celebrating their Grade Nine graduation. Alcohol was a factor and so was peer pressure. As he drove, Robert Stanley passed under a pedestrian overpass on Whitemud Drive. Above him, two fifteen-year-old boys had hauled a 14-kilogram paving stone onto the overpass and proceeded to drop the rock over the edge into traffic. >>





THE ROCK MET STANLEY'S WINDSHIELD AND CRASHED THROUGH IT, CRUSHING HIS CHEST. HE MANAGED TO PULL THE BUS OFF TO THE SIDE AND PUT HIS HAZARD LIGHTS ON. TWO HOURS LATER A PASSING POLICE CAR PULLED OVER AND THE OFFICER FOUND STANLEY INSIDE, UNCONSCIOUS AND NOT BREATHING. AN AMBULANCE WAS CALLED, BUT STANLEY DIED BEFORE HE ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL. >>

Bruce Stanley heard about his father's death on the news. "It was as if the bottom had dropped out of my life," he says. It was more than three years before the Stanley family found out who had killed Robert, and during that time an innocent man was charged with the murder. Finally, one young man, stricken with guilt, came forward and confessed. (A second teen did so later on.) This was where the Alberta Conflict and Transformation Society (ACTS) came into play, and used a community conferencing model of justice. In June of 2006, four years after their Robert's death, the Stanley family decided to pursue resolution through the ACTS.

What it all boiled down to, says Stanley, was one very simple question. "As a family, we asked ourselves, 'Can this person be saved?' If the answer is 'yes' then you have to give that person a chance to reform and lead a positive life. Otherwise, all you're doing is creating a lifetime criminal. After we met the kid, we actually weren't sure he'd have survived jail. Almost for sure he'd have become criminalized."

The Stanley family met with the perpetrator and his family for a grueling seven-hour session. "I had normal thoughts of anger and revenge," recalls Stanley, "but it was the authenticity of his remorse that changed me." "We made the right decision," says Stanley today. "We stay in touch with the youth through a mediator and we know that he has work, he's nearly done his university degree. He's on his way to becoming a productive member of society."



REACHING
AHEAD

The report does more than identify the need for a new overarching leadership body. It proposes a vision and model for success. The creation of a new Community Safety Coordinating Council will see significant changes to the way we address community safety in Edmonton over the next decade. The Coordinating Council would:

work with existing organizations and coalitions in our city to better serve our community;

be fortified with strong leadership and a community-based membership, sustained resources and a clear mandate to invest more effectively as a community in prevention. With these assets, the new Coordinating Council will have enhanced capacity to galvanize, monitor and sustain projects;

support shifts in thinking in Edmonton to facilitate innovation and encourage personal accountability;

guide changes to the way resources are dispersed – all with a view to greater impact on our community safety;

offer greater flexibility and independence of action than an internal corporate committee, so it can truly act as a catalyst to innovative ideas and change. It will mobilize a broader umbrella of Edmontonians. It will build awareness and capacity of citizens and community organizations around what it takes to build and grow a safe community together; and,

be resourced through several means including reorientation of existing funds from the municipality, and by securing support from other community partnering agencies and orders of government.

The Community Safety Coordinating Council will not usurp or challenge the independence of existing organizations. Rather, it will assist members to be more inclusive, cost effective, or 'targeted' in their community safety efforts. Because of its central position within the community safety network, the new Coordinating Council will have the potential to assist members to realize efficiencies through collaboration. Over time, the new Coordinating Council may take on the role of fostering more effective and coordinated investment in initiatives that target prevention.

HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING: 2009-2010

The new Community Safety Coordinating Council will oversee the long term implementation of recommendations in this report. Two key recommendations are foundational to the successful implementation of the other recommendations:

*Creating a New Community Safety
Coordinating Council (#7)*

An Innovative Evaluation Framework (#9)

These two recommendations will be undertaken as initial steps in the fall of 2009 and early 2010 to build a strong coordinating platform. The Transitional Board of the new Council will also identify priority recommendations to resource and act on immediately.

With City Council's approval and support in early fall 2009, the Coordinating Council's Transitional Board will hit the ground running, so Edmontonians will see tangible action in three focus areas:

1. INTEGRATION

ACTIONS

- Form the new Community Safety Coordinating Council, recruit founding Board members, finalize governance and resource details, and host the Council's foundational meeting in 2010
- Identify, monitor and anticipate trends that impact risk factors and the incidence of crime
- Begin implementation of REACH recommendations as identified by the new Council's Transitional Board
- Work with communities of interest and neighbourhoods to further identify needs for support, resources and connection and to identify gaps and overlaps in services

The governance model, as outlined in Recommendation #7, will be that of an independent, membership-based society which would replace the current Safedmonton model that resides within the City's administration. Late 2009 and early 2010 will see key governance building blocks put in place as a new community-driven organization is born. The above actions, supported with adequate human and financial resources, will lay a solid and sustainable foundation for the new Community Safety Coordinating Council and implementation of the REACH recommendations.

2. PROMOTION

ACTIONS

- Create community safety tools to link, connect, inform and engage Edmontonians (e.g., a website, Facebook, e-newsletter etc.)
- Host a series of learning opportunities in 2010 on innovative approaches to community safety and engagement of citizens in new ways
- Become a one stop shop for on-line information on current community safety resources and best practices
- Provide an annual report card to Edmontonians, members of the new Community Safety Coordinating Council, and to City Council

The new Community Safety Coordinating Council will begin the process of guiding a cultural shift in attitude over the next decade and beyond, which will have citizens asking not "What can be done?" but "What Can I Do?" In fostering social change, it will help build community engagement capacity and support an array of social marketing initiatives.

3. SUSTAINABILITY

ACTIONS

- Seek out multiple sources of funding for the new Coordinating Council and for the implementation of the REACH recommendations
- Build the nascent partnership with the University of Alberta School of Business to create the benchmarks for measuring social return on investment
- Engage the business and funding community in identifying and supporting effective community safety initiatives

Safety is everyone's issue. The new Coordinating Council will seek resources and support from multiple orders of government, agencies and sectors. The transitional period of 2009-2010 will see core seed resources provided by the City of Edmonton and other key partners as a nucleus for future growth. Over time, the new Council will evolve, taking on new roles and responsibilities around community safety. The new Council will start quickly to promote innovative and evidence-based programs. It will study best practices from at home and abroad, and share that knowledge with Edmontonians. This critical initial period will also see the establishment of benchmarks for the Council's work as a new way of measuring success.

THE TIME IS RIGHT

The message inherent in REACH is this: a focus on prevention and innovation, particularly in relation to the children and youth of tomorrow, will produce a safer and more caring community today and in the years ahead. The recommendations presented here will alter the landscape of community safety in Edmonton, and will set an example for communities elsewhere. The new Community Safety Coordinating Council and the Social Return on Investment framework will be a blueprint to guide our work together. This is a unique and uniquely Edmontonian action plan.

The Taskforce knows that REACH is but a platform from which we must now begin the real work of making our community safer. As leaders, we must pave the way and engage Edmontonians in concentrating our investment of time, expertise and resources in our children and youth, and the families around them. >>

reachreport.ca

APPENDIX 1: GROUPS CONSULTED

Over 500 people participated in the Taskforce community consultation process. The process included large and small groups, as well as one-on-one interviews. The following groups were consulted:

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Aboriginal Forum of over 55 community partners

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Alberta Avenue Revitalization Project

Association of Convention Hotels

Chamber of Commerce

Entrepreneurs Association of Edmonton

Council of Business Revitalization Zones

Rotary Edmonton

TELUS

United Way Board and Supporters

West Edmonton Mall

PUBLIC SECTOR

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Chief Mike Boyd, Edmonton Police Service

Chief Ken Block (Fire)

City of Edmonton and Police Services Staff

City Staff and Edmonton Police Service

Deputy Chief Dale Weiss (EMS)

Edmonton Catholic Superintendent and Chair

Edmonton Transit Security

Edmonton Public Superintendent and Chair

COMMUNITY

Community Service Advisory Board

Disability Services, Catholic Social Services

Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues

Gay & Lesbian Community, Pride Centre

Immigrant Serving Agencies,
Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Mental Health Partners

Millwoods Presidents' Council

Old Strathcona Area Community Council

Safedmonton Advisory Committee

Seniors, Westend

Seniors Strathcona

Urban Core Support Network

Community Safety Leadership Council

Community Solutions to Gang Violence (submission)

AT-RISK AND HIGH-RISK YOUTH

iHuman High-risk Young Mothers

iHuman Youth

High-risk Social Worker Unit

Success Coaches, Family Centre

Youth Therapists, Family Centre

VOICES OF THE UNHEARD

Families at Risk, Catholic Social Services
& The Family Centre

Family Violence Victim Assistance,
Edmonton John Howard Society

Family Violence Community Advocates (CIAFV)

Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation
of Edmonton (PAAFE)

Young Offenders, Edmonton John Howard Society

FRONT LINE WORKERS

130 people from 50 + community agencies

JUSTICE COMMUNITY

Mediation and Restorative Justice

Young Offenders Branch (Solicitor General)

Youth Restorative Action Project (YRAP)

APPENDIX 2:

GLOSSARY

To ensure common meaning and understanding of terms and concept used by the Taskforce, the following glossary of terms was developed. Many of the terms and concepts in this section are drawn from the work of Alberta's Safe Communities Secretariat.

At-risk A term denoting a group or area that is particularly subject to risk factors that make them susceptible to crime, victimization, social disorder, and a lower quality of life. For the purposes of the Taskforce the term at-risk can be used interchangeably with high-risk.

Community safety A broader concept than "crime prevention", community safety refers to the sense of well-being and quality of life of a community or neighbourhood. It also suggests the collective nature of creating a safe community and building community cohesion.

Crime prevention Strategies and measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes. Crime prevention does not mean deterring crimes through sentencing or other judicial systems.

Social disorder This term refers to graffiti, destruction of public property, public gathering of individuals seen as menacing, abusive or intimidating language, excessive noise, littering, drunken behaviour, panhandling, homelessness, drug dealing, prostitution and other behaviours perceived as having a negative influence on the quality of life and livelihood of certain areas.

Community A group of individuals living in an area, having a common interest, or belonging to the same organization. A community of interest or shared background or common culture.

Community Policing A strategy and philosophy based on the notion that community interaction and support can help control crime and reduce fear, with community members helping to bring problems to the attention of authorities.

Diversity The range of human difference. Each person has layers of diversity which make his/ her perspective unique.

Inclusion Involves valuing human differences and viewing such differences as strengths.

Resiliency A concept that proposes a recurrent human need to weather periods of stress and change successfully throughout life. The ability to weather each period of disruption and reintegration leaves the person better able to deal with the next change.

Risk Factors Interconnected social and economic factors that can make an individual, family, or community/group more susceptible to crime, victimization, social disorder, and a lower quality of life. For the purposes of the Taskforce, root causes can be used interchangeably with risk factors.

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

A methodology that expresses the value of social and economic benefits to individuals, families and communities created through any type of activity. Value is expressed in monetary terms wherever possible.

High-needs Groups that are at-risk (see definition for at-risk).

UNIVERSAL (PRIMARY) PREVENTION

Interventions that are targeted at the general public or to a whole population group that has not been identified on the basis of increased risk. Activities often associated with universal prevention include awareness campaigns, social marketing, school education programs, parenting programs, multi-component community initiatives, and various security measures. In addition, however, interventions aimed at addressing root causes of crime and unsafe behaviour (e.g., poverty, homelessness, etc.) could be classified as primary prevention, as these seek to prevent disorder, crime and unsafe behaviour from arising at all.

SELECTIVE OR TARGETED (SECONDARY) PREVENTION

Selective or targeted (secondary) prevention engages individuals or subgroups of the population whose risk of criminal involvement is significantly higher than average, as evidenced by biological, psychological or social risk factors. Some individuals and families experience particular challenges due to substance abuse and/or addiction, exposure to family violence, abuse and neglect, low attachment to school and may be targeted for more intensive programming on the basis of these risk factors. Selective or targeted prevention aims to generally reduce the influence of these risks and to prevent or reduce criminal behaviour and social disorder by building on strengths such as coping strategies and other life skills (e.g. enhancing protective factors).

Examples of targeted prevention include providing mentors for Aboriginal children and youth, parenting supports to at-risk families, mental health and addiction services to at-risk individuals and their families, and alternative school/vocational programs for youth at-risk of dropping out.

INDICATED (TERTIARY) PREVENTION

Indicated (tertiary) prevention targets high-risk people who are identified as having minimal but detectable criminal or antisocial behaviour. They may or may not have come to the attention of the criminal justice system. Examples of indicated prevention include gang prevention programs, impaired driving remediation programs, family violence treatment programs, victim offender conferences, Circles of Support and Accountability, diversion programs, and specialized courts.

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES

A term used to describe a process by which service providers take an individualized and interdisciplinary approach to meet the full spectrum of client needs.

APPENDIX 3:

TASKFORCE MEMBERS AND PARTNERS

EDMONTON TASKFORCE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY TASKFORCE MEMBERS

Fred Rayner, Co-chair

Lindsay Kelly, Co-chair

Hassan Ali, Somali-Canadian Cultural Association

Kathy Barnhart, City of Edmonton

Allan Bolstad, Edmonton Federation
of Community Leagues

Mike Bradshaw, Community Solution
to Gang Violence

Sandra Bromley, Artist

Harry Buddle, retired

Judy Buddle, retired

Mark Cherrington, Youth Criminal Defence Office

Linda Cochrane, City of Edmonton

George Dawson, Colliers International

Marisa Etmanski, Norlien Foundation

Jon Hall, REALTORS® Association of Edmonton

Ron Kuban, Pegasus Emergency
Management Consortium

Gerald Lamoureux, Government of Alberta

Chris Leung/Chris Simonson,
Catholic Social Services

Lloyd Lewis, CTV Edmonton

Dan MacLennan, Bantrel Constructors

Nancy McCalder, The Support Network

Mike Percy, University of Alberta

Amarjeet Sohi, City Councillor

Dave Ward, Homeward Trust

Bart West, retired

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

SYSTEMS INTEGRATION AND SUSTAINABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE

Nancy McCalder (co-chair), The Support Network

Ron Kuban (co-chair), Pegasus Emergency
Management Consortium

Kathy Barnhart (taskforce member),
City of Edmonton

Shane Bergdahl, Millwoods Crime Council

Jim Gurnett, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Jon Hall (taskforce member), REALTORS®
Association of Edmonton

Chris Leung (taskforce member),
Catholic Social Services

Robin Murray, Edmonton John Howard Society

Rod Rode, The Family Centre

Dave Ruptash, Community Representative

Delmarie Sadoway, Alberta Health Services

Rick Semel, Alberta Child and Family
Services Authority

Marianne Stewart, Alberta Health Services
Rob Tarulli, Edmonton Catholic Schools
Allan Undheim, United Way Capital Region

SAFE AND CONNECTED NEIGHBOURHOODS SUBCOMMITTEE

Allan Bolstad (co-chair), Edmonton Federation
of Community Leagues

Bart West (co-chair), retired

Lynn Biggs, Edmonton Apartment Association

Dale Brenneis, Edmonton Police Service

George Dawson (taskforce member),
Colliers International

Dawn Freeman, Alberta Avenue
Community League

Gary Godziuk, City of Edmonton

Shirley Lowe, Edmonton Council of Business
Revitalization Zones

Jennifer Miller/Jessica Robertson, Bennett Jones

Olive Sydor, Edmonton Neighbourhood Watch

Michael Walters, Aspen Gardens
Community League

HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mike Bradshaw (co-chair), Community Solutions to
Gang Violence

Mark Cherrington (co-chair), Youth Criminal Defence
Office

Sandra Bromley (taskforce member), ihuman Youth
Society

Marisa Etmanski (taskforce member),
Norlien Foundation

Kelly Michetich, ihuman Youth Society

Giselle Rosario, National Crime Prevention Centre

SUPPORTIVE NETWORKS AND FAMILIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Chris Simonson (co-chair), Catholic Social Services

Dave Ward (co-chair), Wichitowin

Bob Atcheson, Parents Empowering Parents

Perdita Baier, Families First Edmonton

Harry Buddle (taskforce member), retired

Judy Buddle (taskforce member), retired

Colleen Burton-Ochocki/Monica Wichman,
City of Edmonton

Nancy Douglas, The Support Network

Margaretha Ebbers, Edmonton Public Schools

Marisa Etmanski (taskforce member),
Norlien Foundation

Donald Langford, Métis Child and Family Services

Gary Nelson, Citizen-at-large

Liz O'Neill, Big Brothers and Big Sisters

Pauline Smale, The Family Centre

Rhonda Holloway, Government of Alberta

Jehane Wassef, Changing Together

RESEARCH ADVISORY PANEL

Mike Percy (chair), University of Alberta

Kim Armstrong, Government of Alberta

Dave Hill, Government of Alberta

Lindsay Kelly (taskforce member), retired

Harvey Krahn, University of Alberta

Gerald Lamoureux (taskforce member), Government
of Alberta

Paul Loosley, City of Edmonton

Sue Paul, City of Edmonton

Sue Ludwig, MacEwan

Brad Odsen, John Howard Society of Alberta

Fred Rayner (taskforce member),
Rayner Consulting Services

John Warden, Edmonton Police Service

Cam Wild, University of Alberta

Diane Wishart, University of Alberta

Charlene Butler, University of Alberta

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY PANEL

Marisa Etmanski (chair), Norlien Foundation

Lloyd Lewis (taskforce member), CTV Edmonton

Dan MacLennan (taskforce member),
Bantrel Constructors

Katie Soles, Soles and Company

CITY STAFF SUPPORTING TASKFORCE/SUBCOMMITTEES

Kate Gunn, Community Services

Shari Johnson, Community Services

Wendy Kinsman, Community Services

John Muir, Community Services

Paul Loosley, Community Services

Helmi McHenry, Community Services

Patricia Misutka, Office of the Mayor

Brad Stromberg, Office of the Mayor

Jeannette Wright, Community Services

Bin Lau, Communications

Adele Towns, Community Services

Shirley Birch, Community Services

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