

## Public Safety Canada Funded Programming: Bridging High-Risk Gang-Involved Youth to Labour Market Participation

### Key Points and Issue:

- At its April 27, 2012 meeting, the Budget Committee considered a report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA), recommending the approvals required to accept funds from PSC for this follow-up initiative, Bridging High-Risk Gang Involved Youth to Labour Market Participation (hereafter referred to as the "Bridging Project").
- In considering the report, the Budget Committee adopted staff's recommendations to conclude and execute a program funding agreement with Public Safety Canada (PSC) directed staff to provide additional information regarding the geographically targeted nature of the Bridging Project to the Executive Committee for their consideration in conjunction with the original report.
- On May 4, 2012, following a shift in PSC staff and funding priorities, SDFA staff were informed by federal representatives that PSC was only able to support a Bridging Project model of limited scope and capacity. Due to the reduced funding available, the Bridging Project model could not include some significant Project components originally envisioned at the time the Executive Director submitted his report to the Budget Committee. However, PSC staff confirmed their intention to continue negotiations on a revised Bridging Project model to provide limited programming in the neighbourhoods of Weston-Mt Dennis, Rockcliffe-Smythe and Dorset Park.
- SDFA staff expects the terms of Program funding agreement to be finalized with PSC by the end of May. Public Safety Canada staff have also cautioned that failure to conclude, sign and begin executing an agreement by June 30, 2012 will require PSC to reassess proceeding with the Bridging Project.

### Questions & Answers

**Q: Why was City staff unable to provide revised Bridging Project information to Executive Committee?**

A: On May 4, 2012, City staff was informed of changes in PSC staff and funding priorities. As a result, PSC staff clarified that PSC was only able to support a Bridging Project model of limited scope and capacity, requiring City staff to undertake a full-scale revision of the Bridging Project's budget, project model and work plan for negotiation with Public Safety Canada. As all elements of the revised Bridging Project's design have not yet been finalized and approved by PSC, City staff are not yet in a position to provide Project details. The Bridging Project is fully funded by Public Safety Canada, which must sign off on all aspects of the Project's budget, program model and areas of operation before the Project can proceed.

**Q: What is the profile of the youth the City is attempting to engage through the Bridging Project?**

A: Under the original Bridging Project proposal submitted to PSC, the City would have sought to engage 100 youth who match the following criteria:

- Male or female, between 17 - 24 years of age
- Acknowledge being a gang member

- Associate regularly with acknowledged gang youth
- Have family members who are or were gang members
- Occasionally wear gang colors, use gang symbols, or flash gang signs
- Are performing poorly in school or if out of school, are unemployed
- Have one or more arrests, have been convicted of gang-related offenses and/or who are currently on probation (a particular focus will be given to those youth who have served time in a detention or correctional setting and/or who have been on parole for a gang-related offense)
- Use drugs

Currently, the City and PSC are negotiating to finalize a revised number of youth to be engaged by the Bridging Project based on the reduced available program resources. Once finalized, City staff will report on the Project's youth engagement target as part of staff's report to the June 6-7, 2012 meeting of City Council.

Potential youth participants who do not meet the Bridging Project's participant criteria will be referred to other appropriate youth development community programs identified by Project staff prior to the Project's program implementation. No youth seeking to participate in the Bridging Project will be refused without a referral to an alternative program being provided. The City will focus its efforts on those youth residing in the Dorset Park, Rockcliffe-Smythe and Weston-Mt Dennis areas for the duration of the Project.

**Q: Why were the Bridging Project's three neighbourhoods selected for focused outreach?**

A: City staff selected three neighbourhoods for the Bridging Project's focused community outreach efforts on the basis of:

- i) the presence of high concentrations of youth gang members; and,
- ii) community-based crisis response, community safety and youth development practitioners' recommendations identifying communities that would be responsive to intensive gang intervention efforts, followed by sustained coordinated service partnerships facilitating labour market entry for gang involved youth.

The Project will seek to develop sustained coordinated service partnerships strictly focused on enhancing opportunities for gang involved youth that will include all orders of government, neighbourhood residents, community-based service providers, local Police, School Boards' representatives, Toronto Community Housing representatives and local businesses. These partnerships will focus their efforts in addressing barriers to labour market entry in three areas:

- Employment, Education and Pro-Social Skills Development
- Engagement
- Safety (both personal and community safety issues for gang-involved youth)

The Bridging Project's community-focused efforts will also include a review of the PIT Pilot Project's learnings to ensure the Bridging Program's provides an effective, high quality support program for gang-involved youth and the outcome metrics provide value-added analysis to ensure wrap-around program evaluation.

*Dorset Park & Rockcliffe-Smythe*

These neighbourhoods were identified by the Bridging Project's stakeholders as communities that provide the potential of reaching a diverse group of youth gang members that would benefit from the Bridging Project's supports. The Project's stakeholders particularly identified the Canlish and Glamorgan

communities of Dorset Park and the Jane St/Woolner Ave area as communities with gang-involved youth that would particularly benefit from the Project's efforts.

*Weston-Mt Dennis*

Although this neighbourhood was one of the communities involved in the PIT Pilot Project, the Bridging Project's stakeholders emphasized a continuing need for focused engagement with gang-involved youth to effectively address the ongoing challenges facing the neighbourhood. The Bridging Project will differentiate its efforts from the outreach efforts of the PIT Pilot Project, insofar as the Bridging Project's efforts will be exclusively focused on gang-involved and gang attached youth.

**Q: Is the final evaluation for the Prevention-Intervention Toronto Pilot Project available?**

A: The original Prevention-Intervention Toronto (PIT) youth gang diversion pilot project which concluded March 31, 2012 included a thorough, in-depth evaluation by researchers from the University of Toronto's Centre for Criminology. The PIT Pilot Project's evaluation is currently in its final draft stages, but must be submitted to PSC prior to being released to the City or the public. However, PIT Pilot Project researchers have provided City staff with preliminary analysis of best practices identified from the PIT Pilot Project, which formed the basis of PSC's interest in extending program funding for one year. The Bridging Project's focus, program model and neighbourhood selection is a result of the preliminary best practices of the PIT Pilot Project, reinforced by the feedback of police, community safety and crisis response staff, and the PIT Pilot Project youth participants.

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- 4 -  
APPENDIX I

**Timeline: Public Safety Canada – City of Toronto Negotiations on Bridging Project Funding**

Date	Action
Mar 12, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSC staff provide City staff preliminary notice of PSC's interest in extending its agreement with the City to provide adapted program activities based on the preliminary evaluation of the PIT Pilot Program. PSC's original agreement with the City concludes Mar, 31, 2012.</li> </ul>
Mar 29, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PSC and City sign amendment to its agreement to extend the original agreement until June 30th, 2012 for the purposes of negotiating a program funding extension for the period of July 1, 2012 – Mar 31, 2013.</li> <li>• City authority to sign amendment to original funding agreement consistent with Council delegated authority to Executive Director, SDFA. (Council Decision CD18.4 <i>Government of Canada Investment to Establish Youth Gang Prevention Project in Toronto – 2008.</i>)</li> </ul>
Apr 16, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City staff submit report on Bridging Project to Budget Committee, based on Project proposal submitted to PSC staff. Report submitted to Budget Committee's April Committee cycle in order to meet PSC deadline for signed agreement of June 30, 2012 (City staff report would be considered at June 6-7, 2012 City Council.)</li> </ul>
Apr 18, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City staff submitted Bridging Project program proposal accepted by PSC staff with minor reviews.</li> </ul>
Apr 27, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Budget Committee considered report on Bridging Project, recommending adoption of staff recommendations and directing staff to report to Executive Committee on additional information regarding "i) the identification and targeting of selected neighbourhoods and/or wards for this program; and ii) a process for other Wards to access funds for programming and strategies under this spending envelope."</li> </ul>
May 4, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City staff was informed of shifts in PSC staffing and funding priorities impacting Bridging Project funding. PSC staff clarified to City staff that Public Safety Canada would only be able to support a Bridging Project model of limited scope and capacity that would not include some significant Project components originally included by City staff in the Bridging Project's proposal to PSC and staff report to the Budget Committee. Public Safety Canada staff also confirm their intention that the Bridging Project be delivered in the communities of Dorset Park, Rockcliffe-Smythe and Weston-Mt Dennis.</li> <li>• PSC staff reiterated to the City that despite the shifts, negotiations on the revised Bridging Project must be concluded, an agreement signed and the City prepared to proceed with implementation the Project as of June 30, 2012.</li> </ul>
May 8, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to PSC's May 4, 2012 clarification of funding available to support the Bridging Project, City staff submit a revised supplementary Action Report to Executive Committee (EX20.10a <i>Bridging High-Risk Gang Involved Youth to Labour Market Participation – Additional Requested Information</i>), recommending staff report directly to the June 6-7, 2012 City Council with amended recommendations and details on the revised Bridging Project budget, staffing, program model and areas of operation.</li> </ul>