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January 13, 2014

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RE: City Council:CD 25.14 Youth Equity Strategy Funding in 2014 Budget

Dear Deputy Mayor Kelly, Mayor Ford and Members of Council

This is to express the support of the community members of the 53 Division Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) for the inclusion of Youth Equity Strategy Funding of \$494,000 as part of the 2014 Budget. This initial action plan, comprises several prevention and intervention initiatives (see attached) designed to reduce youth violence in our city.

We are mindful that issues of youth frustration and dissatisfaction sometimes turn into violence, and to tragic loss of life. Past reports including The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence by Dr. Alvin Curling and the Honourable Roy McMurtry have provided recommendations on the evidence based actions needed. The Youth Equity Strategy under development provides a framework to implement these reports and move forward in Toronto.

The community members of the CPLC believe that the full participation of police and community in the process of developing and implementing the Strategy is very important to its effectiveness. As an issue that cuts across city divisions and uniformed services a positive attitude of collaboration and sharing by all is critical.

Thank you for the opportunity to support these recommended actions to build the momentum of this important work.

Regards

Geoff Kettel

Geoff Kettel
Community Co-Chair
53 Division CPLC

c.c. Scott Gilbert, Unit Commander, 53 Division
Community Co-Chairs, CPLCs and CCCs

TORONTO YOUTH EQUITY STRATEGY SUMMARY

The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy is focused on youth who are at highest risk of involvement in serious violence or crime. The Strategy takes this focus because these youth are being missed by our anti-violence programs and strategies.

Since June 2013, an interdivisional staff committee comprising staff from 9 divisions, agencies, and corporations have worked with an external advisory panel of youth and youth-serving community agency staff to develop the Strategy. Staff are building the Strategy upon the foundation of the Roots of Youth Violence report, incorporating promising practices identified in research and consultation with community groups and other orders of government. Finally, the Strategy is being developed to reflect youth's experiences.

A modest investment of resources in the 2014 operating budget would ensure that the first phase of work can begin immediately upon Council's approval of the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy. Resources to implement both prevention and intervention initiatives will help to reduce instances of youth violence.

The following initiatives have been identified as key opportunities to carry the work of the Strategy forward into 2014. These criminal justice and social development activities allow for cross-corporate engagement in priority areas of mental health, skills development & economic opportunity, justice & community safety, and accountability. In total, they can be achieved for a combined 2014 investment of \$494,000.

TORONTO YOUTH EQUITY STRATEGY – PHASE 1 ACTIONS A: PREVENTION Initiatives

Mental health: Toronto Community Housing Post Traumatic Stress Project Pilot

The pilot will work with youth from areas plagued with recent high occurrences of violence through an intensive intervention model of support to move from trauma to healing both at an individual and community level. The pilot will be launched in three communities across the city with a goal of supporting high risk youth in finding alternative means of channelling and unpacking the trauma that they have experienced.

Program Costs: \$50,000: Toronto Community Housing Corporation

Geographic focus: Ward 9

Family support and skills development: Storybook Parents High Risk Youth Pilot

The pilot will deliver the Storybook Dads program model to enable imprisoned parents aged 18-29 to maintain family contact, develop their literacy, and engage in training and volunteering opportunities, thus improving their skills and chances of rehabilitation.

Program Costs: \$50,000: Toronto Public Library

Geographic focus: City-wide

Economic opportunities: High-Engagement Employment Strategy for Youth with Criminal Records

The City will implement a high-engagement employment strategy for youth with criminal records. A criminal record presents a significant barrier to gaining employment, but the right job can be a very important support for a young person. A high engagement program sets clear expectations for both youth and employers, to develop good matches between and strong supports for both youth and employer. This program would include twice-annual high-engagement recruitment fairs and a review of barriers to participation in existing employment programs for youth with criminal records.

Program Costs: \$10,000: Toronto Employment and Social Services
Geographic focus: City-wide

Accountability and Impact: Youth Equity Strategy implementation and evaluation tools
Coordinate delivery of the Youth Shared Outcomes Framework, work with community organizations to develop shared metrics for programs looking to reduce youth violence and assist Equity, Diversity and Human Rights in development of a youth equity lens.
Program Costs would be covered under the PREVENTION initiatives staff position below.
Geographic focus: City-wide

Staff coordination for PREVENTION initiatives would be supported by a one-year temporary staff position.

Staff Costs: \$117,000: Social Development, Finance & Administration

B: INTERVENTION Initiatives

Alternatives to criminalization: Restorative Justice Pilot

The pilot will engage a community partner to consult on a City-wide restorative justice model that includes mediation between City staff, residents and community partners and youth, to create alternatives to exclusion, expulsion and eviction policies and practices from City facilities such as libraries, recreation facilities, and Toronto Community Housing.

Program costs: \$50,000: Community partner

Geographic focus: City-wide

Alternatives to criminalization: Pre-charge Diversion Pilot

This pilot will work in two communities in partnership with Toronto Police Services to provide supportive interventions and programming as an alternative to a criminal charge. Supportive interventions and programming assist young persons in accepting responsibility and addressing the impact of their actions on themselves, their family, the victim and the community.

Program costs: \$100,000: Community partner

Geographic focus: TPS Divisions 12 & 14

Risk-driven community safety: FOCUS model expansion

The pilot will deliver the FOCUS Rexdale program model in Scarborough. FOCUS responds immediately to individuals, families, groups at high risk for involvement in serious violence or crime with co-ordinated and integrated intervention by government and community partners.

Program Costs would be covered under the INTERVENTION initiatives staff position below.

Geographic focus: TPS Division 42

Staff coordination for INTERVENTION initiatives would be supported by a one-year temporary staff position.

Staff Costs: \$117,000: Social Development, Finance & Administration