

What is effective crime prevention for municipalities?

Strategic Overview

Decision makers in Canadian municipalities can use effective crime prevention to reduce street violence and other violent crime significantly – thus saving lives, stopping pain and suffering, and reducing taxes. However, they must come to grips with the proven prevention solutions and make the investments to implement them.

In 2018, high profile shootings in Toronto focused attention on how to get gun violence under control. Yet, the problem is broader. Canadians' peaceful quality of life is still too often broken by violence and property crime. Meanwhile, cities in other countries are implementing successful strategies that are pushing their crime rates well below Canada's.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) points to the load on municipal budgets for policing as “unsustainable” and “crowding out early intervention and prevention”. Parliamentary Committees, Mayor's task forces and many more have stressed the importance of the municipal role in effective crime prevention. The key role of municipalities requires support from other orders of government.

Violence prevention science demonstrates that early intervention and prevention with youth, families, and schools reduces violent crime in a cost-effective fashion. Decision makers and the public have access at their finger tips to the prevention science through CMNCP's short action briefs, videos, and social media tools.

Internationally, cities like Glasgow in Scotland have reduced youth violence by 50% within 3 years and sustained further reductions into the future. Their winning service mobilization strategy respects implementation guidelines agreed by governments and cities across the world.

In the USA, mayors of major cities, including New York, Philadelphia and Seattle, have formed a network to be smart on crime that focuses on better policing and comprehensive, evidence-based strategies.

Buying into the municipal role in crime prevention by investing in a permanent planning unit and seeking funding from other orders of government for expanding effective solutions stops tragedies and saves taxes.

Actions for Municipal Stakeholders

1. Use CMNCP's Action Briefs, videos, and social media tools to raise awareness among decision makers and the public regarding the potential of violence prevention science to reduce crime;
2. Establish a permanent municipal crime prevention board or unit to lead evidence-based and comprehensive strategies to reduce crime and engage services for youth, families, and schools in partnership with proactive policing;
3. Advocate for support from other orders of government to expand cost-effective solutions to prevent violent and property crime.



Unsustainable Growth in Municipal Budgets for Policing

City councils still increase the police budget as their routine response to crime. The US guru on policing, Barry Friedman, has stated that “we spend \$100 billion on policing. We have no idea what works. Police are more likely to adopt new technology because another department has it than because of reasoned cost-benefit analysis.”

This has serious consequences for municipal budgets. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the unsustainable growth in municipal expenditures on public safety are crowding out early intervention and prevention. The load on municipalities to pay for policing in Canada is now close to \$10 billion or \$270 million for a city of one million (total cost to Canadians was \$14.7 billion in 2017).

Policing expenditures are not the silver bullet for community safety. In the USA, cities with high crime rates spend more on policing than cities with lower crime rates. For instance, in Chicago – which has fewer citizens than Toronto – policing expenditures have been increased to double those of Toronto, but homicides are still ten times higher. Across the pond, in London, government austerity cut police and other services by close to 20% with no significant change in rates of violent or property crime.

Government Committees Recommend Municipal Role in Crime Prevention

Canadian committees have a long history of recommending investments in early intervention and prevention at the municipal level. The committees of the federal parliament that deal with justice and public safety recommended an enhanced municipal role in 1993 and 1996, as did the Quebec task force. Multiple task forces at the municipal level have led to action on the ground.

The committees called for an increased municipal role, but with support from other orders of government. They recommended an investment equivalent to 5% of what is spent on reacting to crime in order to prevent

crime and therefore save costs of policing and incarceration. These led to the creation of the national crime prevention strategy, but only to a 1% investment which eventually encouraged projects, not programs. None of this was directed towards municipalities.

Solid Violence Prevention Science Confirms Early Intervention is Cost Effective

More than 50 years of research confirm the early interventions that prevent crime. The solid violence prevention results are available at our finger tips – for free – through multiple government websites, such as the British College of Policing, the US Department of Justice and the World Health Organization. Public Safety Canada released its own Repertory in 2018.

However, these websites are not immediately easy to use for decision makers. Smarter Crime Control (Waller, 2014) was written to provide a guide to politicians and communities on actions that decision makers can take. Moreover, CMNCP has taken several initiatives to translate these remarkable resources into actionable steps for municipal decision makers.

In AB 2016.1, CMNCP showed the savings to victims and taxes from investing in these effective solutions, knowing that many of these programs get a return of \$7 for every \$1 invested. In AB 2016.3, CMNCP shared examples including youth and family services, as well as school curricula such as life skills, Sex Ed, and enriched pre-school and parenting programs. Furthermore, situational opportunities reduce property crime by making the offense harder to commit, the offender more likely to be caught or the benefits of theft less attractive. Proactive policing strategies such as focused deterrence and hot spot policing also have an important role.

Internationally, Cities have Reduced Youth Violence by 50% or more

In AB 2016.4, CMNCP shared the results from city-wide strategies. These are not just programs in one area of a city; they are

strategies that cover an entire municipality. For instance, Winnipeg showed how diagnosis and planning combined with adequate funding reduced auto theft and saved the insurer substantial sums. Likewise, Glasgow (Scotland) provides an impressive example of a public health model to end youth violence.

In 2002, Canada with all the other governments who are members of the UN adopted a set of guidelines for the successful implementation of effective crime prevention strategies. There are seven essential elements that are listed in the table.

Glasgow followed all seven of the essential elements. Its permanent violence reduction unit became the permanent board for the whole of Scotland. This is further described in AB 2017.2. Glasgow's violence reduction unit used data and was very much informed by the solid violence prevention science discussed above. It undertook the fundamental "diagnose, plan, implement and evaluate" model that is described in AB 2017.1. It mobilized key sectors such as schools, youth services and hospital emergency departments that are able to tackle the risk factors and collaborated with the police around a focused deterrence model to get youth to seek help. Finally, it had adequate and sustained funding, the violence reduction unit had the human talent to make the process work,

and mothers and parents were mobilized to push youth to collaborate.

It is not just CMNCP that has drawn attention to Glasgow. The British Parliament had an all-party commission work with a university to identify solutions to reducing youth violence. It has recommended six actions, of which the first is both a national and local public health model inspired by the success of Glasgow.

In USA, cities are working on preventing urban gun violence

The underlying logic for the success of strategies to prevent urban gun violence in the USA are the combination of proactive policing and targeted social services. These have received important technical and financial support from some pioneering state governments. In Connecticut, combined gun violence rates have dropped by more than 50% in three major cities since 2011, with help from a state-funded violence intervention program that brings together a powerful partnership of law enforcement officers, community members, and social service providers. At a total cost of less than \$1 million per year, this program has prevented shootings while generating annual savings of \$7 million.

However, these cities often do not follow the UNODC essentials. Boston, for example, was

Essential elements for cities to deliver and sustain significant reductions in crime

	Glasgow	Your City
1. Permanent Violence Prevention Board		
2. Informed by Violence Prevention Science and Data		
3. Diagnosis, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation		
4. Mobilizing Sectors Able to Tackle Causes		
5. Adequate and Sustained Funding		
6. Standards and Training for Human Talent		
7. Public Support and Engagement		
<i>City Wide Reductions</i>	50 %	
<i>Sustained Success</i>	Yes	

successful in reducing gun violence, but only for a few years. It had to restart the process ten years after its success because gun violence came back. It did not have a permanent prevention board, sustained funding, the human talent or a city-wide plan.

The "US Mayors for Smart on Crime" initiative is new in 2018. The 12 mayors who joined initially included New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. They will focus every 6 months on one of four pillars to prevent crime city wide. These include fair enforcement of laws, comprehensive investments, as well as data and evidence-driven solutions

City Investment in Effective Crime Prevention Will Save Lives and Taxes

The logic is compelling for making the investment in a permanent crime prevention planning board. For the equivalent of \$1 per adult, a city can direct the investment in effective solutions that result in extensive crime reductions. The board can mobilize the key sectors and advocate for support from other orders of government. It is the critical ingredient in the Ontario Community Safety and Well-being plans.

With adequate and targeted investments, reductions in costs to victims and taxes

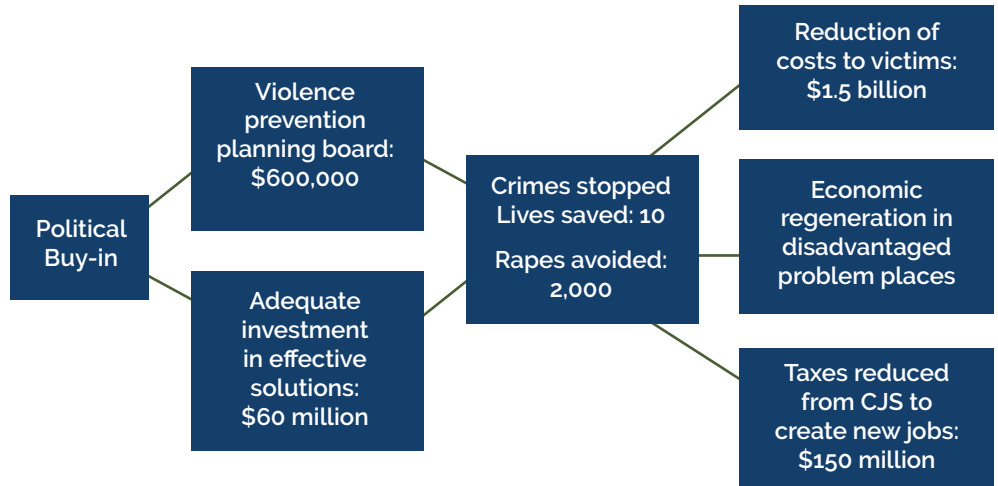
The evidence used in this action brief are based on the list of resources available on www.safercities.ca which provides the full references for abbreviated citations.

The action brief was prepared by Irvin Waller at the University of Ottawa with assistance from Jeff Bradley. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of individual members of the CMNCP.

for reactive policing and incarceration are significant. Less crime in high crime areas regenerates those communities. This model was developed for the CMNCP training course on investing for effective crime control.

Return on Planned Investment in Effective Violence Prevention Solutions for a City of 1 Million

assuming investment is equivalent to 10% of CJS expenditures and a 50% reduction in violent crimes



Important Tools Available

Getting buy-in often seems difficult. CMNCP has developed a number of tools to ensure that decision makers and the public have easy access to the bottom lines of the prevention science. The short Action Briefs are fundamental, but videos and social media tools are also available. CMNCP's cutting-edge workshops and webinars provide sources never available before in Canada.

Learn more:

www.safercities.ca |  twitter.com/safercitiesca



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