



## ***Taking Action Together: Addressing Gangs in Our City***

***Public Forum, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012***

***Leadership Symposium – October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012***

### **Record of Proceedings**

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## **1 Event Summary**

In October 2012, the Ottawa Police Service, Crime Prevention Ottawa, the Youth Services Bureau, and Ottawa Community Housing co-hosted a Public Forum and a Leadership Symposium jointly entitled “Taking Action Together: Addressing Gangs in Our City”, with the aim to engage community members and stakeholders to collectively propose strategies to address gangs in Ottawa.

The Public Forum was held at Ottawa City Hall and was attended by over 200 community stakeholders. Participants heard from key agencies that provided background information, the local landscape and an assessment of the current state of gangs in the City of Ottawa. They also heard a personal account of the Toronto experience and their programs dealing with gang members at its grassroots.

The Forum and subsequent Leadership Symposium built on five key themes that together start to define the complexity and the multiple facets of this issue. These are:

- Working with families for prevention
- Identification of those at risk of gang involvement
- Building a trusting relationship between the community and police
- Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth
- Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over

Through a series of breakout sessions to address each of these themes, over 150 community members shared their perspectives and insights to:

- better understand the current situation and key issues in our community;
- envision desired outcomes; and
- propose strategies to address these issues, collectively.

### **1.1 Key Messages**

A number of common messages emerged from the most frequently cited comments during the two events and the online surveys. These stem from both the panels and the community inputs, as follows (in no particular order):

- A community-based approach is the most promising way to address the problems and find solutions – *“this is not a problem we can arrest our way out of”* – OPS Chief
- Collaboration and partnerships between all community stakeholders is required and enabled through a shared understanding of existing resources and individual roles and responsibilities

- A coordinated, resourced and sustainable effort is needed, which could include common assessment tools, clear agreement for sharing information, seamless referral processes, and a common set of outcomes
- Increased efforts in prevention is required, with an emphasis on early identification and early intervention
- Efforts should be youth-centric, culturally responsive, and grassroots to align with the needs
- Exit strategies should include skills development and meaningful opportunities
- Multi-level government efforts are required to build a shared vision and a common framework for addressing gangs in our communities and for leveraging successes

## **1.2 Proposed Strategies**

A total of 28 priority recommendations emerged from the Leadership Symposium, which were further prioritized by the participants based on what they believe would have the greatest impact on addressing gangs in our city. The two highest voted strategies by theme are presented in the following table. A full list of proposed strategies is available in Table 1 and many other suggested improvements raised during the breakout sessions are provided in the summaries by theme in Section 3.3.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Proposed Strategies of highest priority by theme (top 2)</b>
Working with families for prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create support networks for parents before problems arise (e.g. addictions, mental health, integration services)</li> <li>• Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to support the needs of families.</li> </ul>
Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.</li> <li>• Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.</li> </ul>
Building a trusting relationship between the community and police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.</li> <li>• Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.</li> </ul>
Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy for the City and NCR taking a youth centric approach.</li> <li>• Build on existing approaches and successes and leverage existing resources.</li> </ul>
Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take an asset based approach to skills development and meaningful opportunity.</li> <li>• Improved sharing of information and enhanced communication at a systems level with better sharing of information among and between organizations and agencies to break down silos.</li> </ul>

## **1.3 Next Steps**

Building on the proposed strategies and the overall outcomes of the Public Forum and Leadership Symposium, Crime Prevention Ottawa, Ottawa Police Service, Youth Services, and Ottawa Community Housing will put forward a set of recommendations on next steps.

## **2 Public Forum**

### **2.1 Overview**

The first of two events, the Public Forum was attended by over 200 community stakeholders on October 17<sup>th</sup> from 7p.m. to 9p.m. in Andrew Haydon Hall, Ottawa City Hall. The forum served to unite speakers, experts, officials, and the public to discuss concerns surrounding youth involvement in gangs, and ways to work together to build healthier, more vibrant communities. Adrian Harewood of CBC served as moderator for the event.

Mayor Jim Watson and Councillor Eli El-Chantiry, Chair of the Ottawa Police Services Board, welcomed all participants and provided the context for the event. They emphasized the complexity of the issue and importance of collective action, expressing their desire to see a diversity of players and stakeholders working together to build a safety net for youth wanting to belong and to contribute in the Ottawa community.

Participants then heard from key agencies that provided background information, the local landscape, and an assessment of the current state of gangs in the City of Ottawa. They also heard a personal account of the Toronto experience and their grassroots programs dealing with gang members.

The following section describes the key messages given by each presentation, as well as summary themes and comments from the Q&A session that followed the presentations. Participants were also invited to submit their comments in writing, both in the room and through an online survey. These comments are available in Appendix A: Puzzle Pieces.

### **2.2 Key Messages**

#### **Chief Bordeleau, Ottawa Police Service**

Chief Bordeleau emphasized that resolving the gang and gun problem is one of the most important issues for the City of Ottawa and that a mobilized community working together is the most promising way to deal with gangs. While suppression and enforcement efforts have been effective, the police cannot arrest a way out of the problem but, rather, must collaborate, communicate, and coordinate with a diversity of stakeholders from across the community. He offered that the symposium is an opportunity to discuss and answer important core questions

and issues, such as the social factors contribute to youth being involved in gang activity, the nature of gangs and their methods of recruitment, and the ways in which gangs can affect the lives of members and families. He expressed his desire for the event to help produce a collective plan for collective efforts moving forward – a multifaceted solution involving the entire community.

### **Nancy Worsfold, Executive Director, Crime Prevention Ottawa**

Nancy Worsfold provided the context for gangs and youth gang prevention work that has happened for the last 5 years in Ottawa. She emphasized that gang issues in Ottawa existed in a different context and scale than cities like Los Angeles, and that the Ottawa Youth Gang Prevention Initiative (OYGPI) has been looking at engaging younger children, focusing on research and education initiatives.

While the federal and provincial governments have done some work on youth, gun, and drug files over the past few years, there is not yet a coordinated national strategy for Ottawa to use. The very diverse membership of the OYGPI has developed a holistic framework for addressing gangs, which includes:

- Health Neighbourhood Cohesion: building positive relationships and community capacity and reducing fear
- Prevention: activities and supports, which engage young people before they are attracted to gang life.
- Intervention, working with youth who are involved or beginning to be involved in youth gang activity
- Suppression: targeted enforcement aimed at criminal gang activity

The key to addressing gangs, and the drug consumption that helps drive the gang problem, is fully engaging all members of the community – to this end she expressed her strong hope for concrete ideas and suggestions to emerge from the symposium that could be actioned in the coming years. A copy of Nancy’s presentation is provided at <http://www.crimepreventionottawa.ca/Media/Content/files/Pdf/Ottawa%20Youth%20Gang%20Prevention%20EN-October%202017.pdf>

### **Mark Patterson, Staff Sergeant, Guns & Gangs Unit**

Mark Patterson outlined the police role in dealing with gangs, as well as the current state of gangs within Ottawa. With a multitude of potential definitions for “gangs” available, he offered one developed in 2010 by the Criminology Service of Canada, which is currently being adopted throughout Canada:

*Gang: Any group of three (3) or more people, formally or informally organized, which may have a common name or identifying sign or symbol, whose members individually or collectively engage in or have*

*engaged primarily in street level criminal behavior, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation within the community.*

Ottawa Police Service currently refers to Criminal Intelligence Service Canada's seven point legal criteria for gangs, whereby three of the seven criteria must be met in order to be considered a confirmed gang member, and whereas #4 must be one of the criteria:

- 1. Reliable information that a person is a gang member*
- 2. Police office observes person associating with known gang members*
- 3. Person acknowledges gang membership*
- 4. Person is involved directly or indirectly in gang motivated crimes*
- 5. Court finds the person to be a gang member*
- 6. Person found to be displaying common or symbolic gang identification or paraphernalia (street name, tattoos, colours, etc.)*
- 7. Physical evidence, including photographs, documents, data or items of evidentiary value that speak to street gang membership, which are not outlines here*

There has been a 30% increase in shootings this year in Ottawa, with half of them being street gang related. There are currently 15-19 identifiable gangs in Ottawa with approximately 473 known members, 95% of whom are male. The average age is 24.5 years, though members can be as young as 13 and as old as 37. Most gangs are very transient, as Toronto and Montreal share gang members with Ottawa gangs easily. Even boundaries within Ottawa are vague and not well defined – gangs are less about fighting each other, and more about making money.

### **Lindsay Jabari, Manager of Youth Development, City of Toronto**

Lindsay Jabari gave his personal account of his experience in Toronto, and its grassroots programs dealing with gang members. He encouraged all in attendance to speak their truths, as the results of doing so in Toronto public forum have been pronounced. He emphasized the importance of becoming an ally to those affected, and to foster relationships that can increase cooperation for all of those involved.

To the experience of youth, he stressed the importance of both opportunities and a sense of belonging – youth need to see this and recognize themselves in this in order to make choices other than gangs. Many youth will at some point have a “change thought”, and it is important to build relationships and institutions that enable you to be there for the youth when that happens. There are many victims involved in the gang issue, and it is important to be compassionate. Healing is important for everyone involved, including those involved in gangs, their families, the victims, and the social workers and police officers working to help change the situation.

## **Open Discussion**

A wide-ranging set of topics were discussed during the open discussion portion of the event. They included the status and safety of various neighbourhoods, as well as the origins of the guns and drugs being used in gang activity. Participants also discussed the importance of the education system, and the role that police and others can have in improving identification of at-risk youth, as well as providing richer services, support, and opportunities.

Some other comments and themes from the discussions are found below:

- Working to address issues around gangs is all about building trusted relationships, having authenticity, and caring about the people that you are working with.
- There are links between guns/drugs and gangs, and there are links between poverty and gangs. It is important to remember to see victims on all sides, and offer opportunities and 'ways out' for everyone who is involved in gangs and touched by their activities.
- It is important to start to provide opportunities for young people, and use their entrepreneurial skills, particularly those developed while in gangs, to provide real opportunities. Enable business people and companies to trust and hire youth, particularly those who are looking to get out of gangs. This can also include hosting youth entrepreneurship summits, and investing more heavily in broader youth entrepreneurship programs.
- Fund grassroots initiatives and invest in prevention. After school programs and clubs, even if not formally labeled as part of a gang exit strategy, offer significant benefits in reducing gang involvement and providing better environments for youth.
- Drug legalisation, or decriminalisation, could potentially have an impact on gangs in Ottawa and the potential of such measures should be explored.
- Sit down with the mothers – in many ways the silent victims – and listen to what they have to say. The men involved in gangs really respect their mothers, and every mother has solutions and ideas to help fix her community on the tip of her tongue.
- It is the shared responsibility of all people present to work together to make our communities safer and more prosperous. Participants encouraged each other to get involved as best as they could, and to be relentlessly proactive in securing a better future for their youth.



### **3 Leadership Symposium**

#### **3.1 Overview**

Following the public forum, a one-day leadership symposium was held on October 18th from 8a.m. to 4p.m. at the Ottawa Travelodge Hotel and Conference centre. Over 140 participants gathered to understand the gangs situation in Ottawa; gain clarity on the role of the judicial system; engage in dialogue to identify the key issues and concerns around gangs in Ottawa; and brainstorm strategies in response to these issues.

Participants heard from Nancy Worsfold and Mark Patterson, who gave the same presentations as outlined above. They also heard from Dr. Ross Hastings, who stressed the complexity of the issue, the need for more imaginative solutions and approaches, and the importance of providing youth and gang members a viable chance of joining the 'legitimate' economy and contributing to their communities in positive ways. Finally, participants heard from Cst Jeffery Gonzales, who shared his very personal and touching story of his life growing up in Canada, his journey towards becoming a police officer, and how having a real, viable, tangible goal helped keep him focused and out of gangs throughout his youth.

Following these presentations, participants heard from a diverse panel representing the judicial system who provided an overview of the roles and responsibilities of each player in the process. Panelists included:

- Mark Holmes (Crown Attorney),
- Douglas Baum (Defence Counsel),
- Louise Logue (Justice of the Peace), and
- Hugh Fraser (Judge).

Overall, the panelists explained how the judicial system lacks the ability to change people for the better. While the defendant may demonstrate willingness to reform, which would be considered in a judge's sentencing, there are a limited number of options within the justice system itself, particularly with the introduction of new mandatory minimum sentences. Despite the aim to assist and rehabilitate, once a charge is laid, the system is designed to deal with the charge, and not the comprehensive rehabilitation of the individual.

Following these presentations, the Leadership Symposium built on the five key themes that together start to define the complexity and the multiple facets of the gang issue:

- Working with families for prevention
- Identification of those at risk of gang involvement
- Building a trusting relationship between the community and police
- Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth

- Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over

Through a series of breakout sessions to address each of these themes, community members shared their perspectives and insights to better understand the current situation and key issues in our community, envision desired outcomes, and propose strategies to address these issues, collectively. Finally, participants voted in a prioritization exercise to help determine the key recommended strategies that would emerge from the event.

### **3.2 Key Messages from the Judicial Panel**

#### **Panelist 1: Mark Holmes (Crown Attorney)**

Mark Holmes outlined his role as an agent of the attorney general, where his work is often constrained by policies that try to ensure consistency across the province, with the overall objective of increasing public safety. At the stage of charge, when the case gets to the crown attorney, it is generally too late for rehabilitation (in the context of that offence).

Being labeled as a “gang member” reduces the possibility of individuals being released on bail, meaning that offenders have a disinterest in being labeled as gang members. Additionally, if the offence is committed in support of a gang or organised crime, it results in harsher sentences. However, the Crown’s interest is public safety, and so the overall interest is to see youth no longer in gangs – resolutions between the Crown and defence via a plea can help encourage different sentencing and treatment, and the Ottawa community can help trials be resolved in this fashion via provision of information.

Overall, it is unrealistic to think that one counselling or intervention will change the life – often the offender returns to the environment after serving time with neither the offender nor the environment changed in any meaningful way. It is therefore not a sustainable or long-term solution to try and arrest our way out of the gang issue.

#### **Panelist 2: Douglas Baum (Defence Counsel)**

Douglas Baum discussed elements of the accused’s journey through the system. He outlined how the defendant faces significant challenges when the bail court hearing begins with the Crown saying “person x is a well known gang member”. In particular, what happens if a non-gang member is involved or near gang members? The accused knows the consequences of being identified as a gang member, and many of the people that associate with the accused run the risk of being followed – it greatly complicates their lives. Additionally, Crown is less likely to release on bail anyone with a gang or gun-related crime.

Many changes coming from Bill C-10 have instituted mandatory minimums for some sentences, which has made it much less likely for the client to engage in resolutions or plea bargains. The bill has served to remove discretion from the judge and put the discretion of the crown attorney (who is beholden to the attorney general).

**Panelist 3: Louise Logue (Justice of the Peace)**

Louise Logue discussed the role of the Justice of the Peace, particularly concerning one of the core questions of her job: Will the public's confidence in the administration of justice be diminished if the accused is released? No one factor is conclusive, but Justice of the Peace must consider all evidence presented inside the courts; consider the factors and grounds of the argument and weigh the decision.

Crown has discretion to release on consent an individual on certain conditions; and the Justice of the Peace will generally agree and release. If they do not agree, there are bail proceedings. If the plea is guilty, the individual goes straight to judge. All members of the public are allowed into the court, though the justice of the peace can order publication bans. Under Canadian law, a young person's identity cannot be published.

Evidence heard in bail hearings includes ties to community, engagement to school/work/family, engagement in family, and facts relating to allegation. There is a presumed increase of flight risk when accused is involved in drug cases – reason being that those accused at being in the business of drugs have access to larger amounts of money. Drugs seem to be a common thread that flows through many of those involved in gang activity. Other factors include risk of reoffending, prior convictions to similar offences, stability of individual, terrorism ties, demonstrated ongoing allegiance to ongoing gang battle, and membership or affiliations with criminal organisation.

Ms. Logue concluded by posing the following question: What if it was your child that became entangled in criminal activities associated with gangs, what would you want this city to do together for you and your child? We all play a role, big or small, to play a part in the life of a child or mother or victim.

**Panelist 4: Hugh Fraser (Judge)**

Hugh Fraser explained how the involvement of the judge is at the end or near the end of the journey through the justice system. The fundamental purpose of the judge is to contribute to a safe society, and as part of this the judge strives to ensure that the sentence is proportionate to the offence. Judges have broad discretions, but cases involving weapons or affiliations with criminal organisations are limited by case law and statutory minimums. A question to be asked is whether or not there was the ability for the individual to get out of the gang, what resources are available for someone wanting to change the track of their life?

He emphasized the need for parents, educators, and community leaders to demonstrate alternatives to the gangs lifestyle. Parents can pay attention to their kids' lives, habits, and incomes in order to better understand what is going on. Educators can engage and provide opportunities for individual kids, and they can provide encouragement and affirmation. Positive reinforcement from both parents and teachers can greatly assist youth. Community leaders can provide an important role, not only as examples, but through also providing resources and opportunities to help youth grow.

Mr. Fraser concluded by telling the story of a youth who had been previously convicted for a gang related crime, but yet reappeared in court again years later for a similar offence. When asked why he returned to the gang and criminal activities after cleaning up his life, the man responded "because that's where I felt a family again". Mr. Fraser stressed that nothing breaks the spirit of man like being irrelevant, and the Ottawa community needs to find ways to ensure that these men and youth are and feel relevant.

### **3.3 Key Messages from the Breakout Sessions**

Participants spent the afternoon in two rounds of breakout sessions that focus on the five conference themes, with the aim of producing suggested strategies. Summaries and key messages from the breakout sessions are given below, and the final strategies list is presented in Section 3.4 Proposed Strategies.

#### **1. Identification of those at risk of gang involvement**

Young men and women who become members of criminal gangs grow up in our neighbourhoods, attend our schools, and are involved with multiple services. While many young people share the general risk factors of poverty and social exclusion, only a small number of those young people get involved in a gang.

There are often signs that an individual is at-risk of future gang membership but we are not always consistent nor as skilled at clearly identifying the youth who are most vulnerable. How can we work towards better identifying those individuals most at risk and how can we be doing it together so fewer youth fall through the cracks?

As it relates to the identification of high-risk children and youth, the following themes emerged when discussing key issues and concerns that define the current situation:

- There is no current holistic model for identification. Current ways of identifying include emulation of popular gang culture, including clothing and music; literacy levels, particularly in elementary schools; and past criminal history.
- The lack of resources for identifying presents a serious risk, particularly for the misidentification of kids at risk.
- The current language of "at risk" has a stigma involved. (For youth seeking alternatives, for families, for youth with siblings in gangs, etc.)

- Requirements to improve from the current situation include: engaged parents and school system, overcoming of stereotypes, mobility out of the norm for peer group, and physical environment.
- Linkages can be made – nutrition, family attitudes towards police and police uniforms, and availability of role models in family, school, and community.
- It is important to understand the police and kids' perceptions of police in the culture (of first/second generation immigrants).

When asked to identify ideal future outcomes, participants identified the following opportunities and vision:

- Respect as a two way process.
- Accountability, both for parents and the kids themselves.
- Life within a gang not seen as a desirable option.
- Adequate at rapid response for kids at risk.
- Families not stigmatized for asking for help.
- At least one adult role model present in their life.
- Kids are empowered, and community schools are a hub of community activity.
- There is a strategy in place to share information.
- There are specific criteria that can be used to help get an early ID, IDing youth with complex needs through formalized protocols.
- Everyone working together to support kids and community.
- All efforts are building on existing collaboration, including all stakeholders.

While considering the gaps between the ideal future and the current state, and converging on a set of strategies that would have the greatest impact on identification for high-risk children and youth in our community, the following six recommendations were identified:

- Common Criteria or tool to identify the children/youth early on
- Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.
- Police and others to work as outreach workers to work with young people and build relationships. (More school resource officers.)
- Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.
- Build on the existing momentum and collaboration. (Don't create another table!)
- Increase the capacity of youth workers to help identify youth (i.e. lifeguards, community houses, etc.).

## **2. Intervention and Service coordination for high risk children and youth**

Ottawa has many excellent services for young people. There are after-school programs, homework clubs and recreation opportunities in our neighbourhoods; and there are specialized services in the education, mental health, child protection and youth justice systems. Once a child or youth starts getting into trouble there are often multiple agencies intervening, trying to help. Unfortunately, those agencies don't always know what the others are doing. For example, youth probation appointments might inadvertently get in the way of youth employment services. Schools might be giving different messages than the police.

We need to be working together collectively to help put our most high-risk youth back on track. Yet there are many complex issues of confidentiality, service eligibility and accountability, which often get in the way. How can we work together effectively while respecting our different practices and policies?

As it relates to intervention and service coordination of high-risk children and youth, the following themes emerged when discussing key issues and concerns that define the current situation:

- Lack of a common vision, strategy, understanding of the problem and approach
- Challenges with sharing of information among stakeholders to support early intervention and service coordination and integration
- Fragmentation of services (silos), service gaps, long waiting lists, and duplication
- Lack of youth, family and community engagement
- Need for enhanced coordination and communication
- Lack of awareness of available services and of shared understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Challenges with the inflexibilities of the judicial system
- Inadequate funding and resources, including a lack of investment in early identification and intervention, grass roots community-driven initiatives, and sustainable funding to address long term initiatives
- Lack of options for youth at risks such as skill development programs, mentoring opportunities, physical activity programs that are accessible (cost, time, location)
- Lack of sustainable funding and funding based on ROI (return on investment), e.g. the cost of not having services

When asked to identify ideal future outcomes, participants identified the following opportunities:

- Better information sharing:
  - There is agreement that sharing of information is important and plays a key role, for instance, in delivering better and more integrated services, coordinating services around the needs of those seeking assistance, and enabling better decision making and early intervention and preventative measures; however, information is often not shared for a number of reasons such as uncertainties

around lawful sharing of information; no clear protocol to address how information can be shared; and also knowing who should receive the information. Success for those at risk of poor outcomes depends in part upon the relationships and partnerships of community stakeholders and appropriate, accurate and timely information sharing between them.

- An approach to early intervention (e.g. in schools)
- Better collaboration between stakeholders
- Increased physical activity programs that are accessible (cost, location, time) to the community
- For kids at risk, consider directed volunteering opportunities as part of the mandatory 40 hour volunteer credits
- Engagement and inclusion of a broader network – look to other related youth issues and leverage opportunities
- A one stop shop approach to eliminate duplication and streamline services
- A common oversight agency and supporting toolkit for community stakeholders to assist in referring youth to the right services
- Common training opportunities
- A holistic approach using a problem solving approach to achieve the desired outcomes
- Engage parents of youth 18 and older
- Promote and leverage success stories
- Break generational cycles

While considering the gaps between the ideal future and the current state, and converging on a set of strategies that would have the greatest impact on intervention and service coordination for high-risk children and youth in our community, the following six recommendations were identified:

- To build a relationship between stakeholders and the community; develop a formal process to share information and communication between stakeholders, in the context of an overall strategy and framework.
- To develop a sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy (for the city and NCR) taking a youth centric approach.
- To focus on prevention using a holistic approach by building a practical toolbox (based on lessons learned / evidence based) for frontline and stakeholders (parents, youth, schools, faith groups, etc.) removing stigma and common language and create a one stop access point (e.g. service/website)
- Need strategic coordination of the system and services available (i.e. navigation project, single point of contact/agency/one body/org) to enhance seamless coordination and coordination of what is available, creating clear pathways, establishing cross-sectoral protocols and the result would foster collaboration at all levels.
- To develop a framework to achieve multi-agency MOUs to engage a collaborative partnership approach.

- To build on existing approaches/successes and leverage existing resources (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch).

### **3. Exit Strategies, especially for 18 years and over**

Once a young person has become involved in a gang, getting out can be a daunting prospect. Specialized help is needed for those involved in a gang or on the periphery of gang activity, to change their life. They need help with safety, housing, finding a new income source through employment or returning to education, repairing relationships with family and, often, dealing with trauma. The Provincial government through the Ministry of Children and Youth is working on some initiatives for justice-involved minors, but for those who are not yet involved in the justice system, or for those 18 years or older, right now, in Ottawa, there is not a gang exit program. How can we develop a program to give new hope and an opportunity for change?

As it relates to exit strategies for youth aged 18 years and over, the following themes emerged when discussing key issues and concerns that define the current situation:

- Gangs are a means of survival. Gang membership and crime pays.
- Communities often fear gang members and potential retaliation
- Many gang members have a strong desire to get out
- There are many barriers to re-integration and acceptance (by the community/business), including:
  - Stigma (when returning to neighborhood)
  - No means of declassification (of an individual as a gang member)
  - No known pathway out
  - No programs in place
  - No information on programs (that are in place)
  - No collaboration / coordination (between programs)
  - Nowhere to go
  - Lack of alternatives and lack of skills
  - Lack of role models
- There is a lack of coordination across programs and support groups
  - There is a lack of continuity in support (transition from at risk youth to gang member to conviction to incarceration to release to re-integration)
  - Disconnects and silos
- Gaining access to and information on available resources is challenging (for both gang members, families and support groups)
- There is a need to build a relationship with gang members wishing to exit (a bridge to the system based upon personal relationship)
- Difficult to identify targets - gang members wishing to exit
  - Risk/liability/trust issues between programs/support groups within the system which is trying to help (file sharing/info sharing)
- (Program) Funding is tied to specific issues (addressing symptoms/special groups)



When asked to identify ideal future outcomes, participants identified the following opportunities:

- The gang member was the agency of change
- There was an inventory of programs and services available from across the jurisdictions
- There were more services for people who are abused (considered a source of gang members)
- We could communicate (freely)
- There was someone to navigate gang members through the system
- There was a way to identify those who need and want help (as they exit the judicial/prison system)
- Employers (private sector) are at the table (with volunteer and paid opportunities).
  - There are more meaningful and intensive opportunities
- There is more community involvement.
- Justice partners are working together to identify member who want to exit (to link to sponsors/advocates).
- The gang member has been mentored to utilize their life experiences, the respect they have from younger persons and their accomplishments to become role models and resources for prevention/exit.
- The gang member has exited and become part of the solution for younger members exiting.
- There is funding/manpower for individual case management of gang member and their families.

While considering the gaps between the ideal future and the current state, and converging on a set of strategies that would have the greatest impact on youth in gangs, the following four recommendations were identified:

- Provide or enable continuous, integrated support for transition, through building long-term, trusting relationships and case management.
- At a systems level, improve the sharing of information among and between organisations and agencies. Break down the current information “silos” and broaden the understanding of shared resources.
- Foster Skill Development and provides meaningful opportunities for youth through an asset based approach.
- Understand and develop common notions of “community” (Hook for change – culture, faith, values)

Additional strategies and actions that did not make the final list of recommendations include:

- Assess and adapt the Toronto Police Service Gangs and Guns Program
- Extend (the support programs) into the community
  - Informal information sharing
  - (Support for) Improved transitioning (back into the community)

- Apply the social worker (case worker) analogy
  - Provide a continuous, integrated support program
- Create links between outreach (providers) and advice (providers)
  - Create this liaison via the CPC
- Develop a holistic approach to supporting gang members that:
  - Includes sponsors/mentors
  - Includes culture, faith, family and (community) values to develop self-esteem
  - Is an asset-based approach (identifies and exploits the skills, experience of the gang member)
  - Addresses the skills gap
- Exploit tools/services such as Volunteer Ottawa

#### **4. Building a Trusting Relationship Between the Community and Police**

The City of Ottawa, like many other North American cities has become increasingly multicultural and multi-faith in our makeup. With the diversity of our community, comes challenges in policing and relationship building. The police are only as effective as the community will let them be. The police need the community to provide information, to bear witness and to promote the value of safety and of obeying the law. The community needs the police to assist with crime and disorder in gang-affected neighbourhoods and to bring those who commit crimes to justice. We need each other, but to work together, we need to trust each other. There is a lot of good work already happening to build these relationships. What steps are needed to take this to the next level?

As it relates to building a trusting relationship between the community and police, the following insight emerged when discussing key issues and concerns that define the current situation:

- "Trust" was a win/lose proposition – and that since you never have full trust, it would always be seen as a failure. The proposition and title does not seem to put equal responsibility on both parties – the police were seen as the ones having to do all the work to "build trust."
  - The revised issue title, which the group believed would be far more useful as an engagement/communications tool going forward, was "Enhancing the reciprocal relationship between the community and police."

When asked to identify ideal future outcomes, participants identified the following opportunities:

- Communications, education and ongoing, reciprocal efforts on the part of both communities and the OPS.
- Sharing more success stories – to reinforce the positives, to minimize the negatives. If possible, engage the local media to minimize negative stereotypes – they might sell newspapers, but they don't help build safer communities.

- Looking for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue – focusing on safer, healthier communities, in addition to crime solving efforts. In particular, looking for ways to engage meaningfully with youth.
- Changing community perceptions of the OPS and their roles, in order to increase trust (and in particular, ethnic communities where the perceptions of police forces in their country of origin may not have been trustworthy).
- Engaging in "succession planning", formalized in OPS HR processes – developing a transition plan whereby, when there is a changing of the guard in the community police role, the outgoing and incoming officer meet with members of the community for a warm transition, not a cold one as sometimes currently happens.
- Police and community leaders to jointly presenting identical information sets into the community after any adverse occurrence.

While considering the gaps between the ideal future and the current state, and converging on a set of strategies that would have the greatest impact in enabling a stronger, more trusting connection, the following six recommendations were identified:

- Police and Community Partner to give joint feedback to increase trust.
- Communities build programs that engage youth from a young age.
- More effort put into finding and celebrating positive events.
- Succession planning – planned transition when CPC officers change positions.
- Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.
- Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.

## **5. Working with Families for Prevention**

Blaming and shaming parents is not going to fix the problem. Children and youth experience multiple risks which are outside of parents' control. In fact, some parents of gang members have other children who are successful and law-abiding. How can we better support parents with the bewildering array of services available? How can parents interact constructively with legal interventions against their son or daughter? How do we assist mothers who are afraid of their criminally involved children, children whom they nevertheless still love? How can we best protect the younger siblings of gang members - younger siblings who may be blameless but who are at a very high risk?

As it relates to working with families for prevention, the following theme emerged when discussing key issues and concerns that define the current situation:

- Parents who are confronted with the fact that a child has become involved with a gang face a sense of powerlessness and their inability to trust authority brings an additional layer of challenge to an already difficult situation.
- Interventions at the earliest possible moment are best and even a more active participation to build the trust and relationships from day 1.

When asked to identify ideal future outcomes, participants identified the following opportunities:

- Networks and relationships need to be built that encompass the full range of possible connections and support and that there should be multiple access points all of which have a common understanding of what tools and services might be available.
- It was suggested that we should not be labeling and pointing fingers at others and that it should be made clear that this is OUR problem.
- An effort to identify and connect those that might be partners in supporting the family. Those partners could include communities based on faith, geography, LINK, School counselors, peer mentors, settlement orgs, government organizations and services, cultural and businesses in the private sector
- Bring the partners together to help create a shared narrative and a common understanding. Centralized training in areas of mental health, addictions and justice would reinforce this process.
- Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. Addressing thorny issues such as confidentiality.
- Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to address the needs of families
- Target resources to sibling of gang members as these might be more vulnerable to negative influence.
- Create a multi-disciplinary support network for parents so that regardless of what the needs are, the team will know how and where to find the needed resources.

While considering the gaps between the ideal future and the current state, and converging on a set of strategies that would have the greatest impact on supporting families, the following six recommendations were identified:

- Identify and connect potential partners (i.e. faith, family, peer mentors, ESL, cultural, services, geographical, businesses, link, Y centre, school counsellors, settlement organisations, etc.)
- Bring partners together to create a common narrative, to create a plan to build awareness, and to create centralized training for mental health, addiction, and justice services.
- Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. i.e. Concerns with confidentiality provisions, and municipal/provincial/other services.
- Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to support the needs of families
- Target resources for siblings of gang members
- Create support networks for parents (i.e. Addictions, Mental Health, integration services) before problems arise.

### 3.4 Proposed Strategies

Building on the themes, a total of 28 strategies were brought forward from the 2 rounds of discussions in each of the 5 themes. The following table summarizes the strategies by theme:

**Table 1: List of Proposed Strategies, by Theme**

Ref	Theme	Proposed Strategy
1-1-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Common Criteria or tool to identify the children/youth early on
1-1-2		Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.
1-1-3		Police and others to work as outreach workers to work with young people and build relationships. (More school resource officers.)
1-2-1		Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.
1-2-2		Build on the existing momentum and collaboration. (Don't create another table!)
1-2-3		Increase the capacity of youth workers to help identify youth (i.e. lifeguards, community houses, etc.)
2-1-1		Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth
2-1-2	Develop a sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy (for the city and NCR) taking a youth centric approach.	
2-1-3	To focus on prevention using a holistic approach by building a practical toolbox (based on lessons learned / evidence based) for frontline and stakeholders (parents, youth, schools, faith groups, etc.) removing stigma and common language and create a one stop access point (e.g. service/website)	
2-2-1	Need strategic coordination of the system and services available (i.e. navigation project, single point of contact/agency/one body/org) to enhance seamless coordination and coordination of what is available, creating clear pathways, establishing cross-sectoral protocols and the result would foster collaboration at all levels.	
2-2-2	Develop a framework to achieve multi-agency MOUs to engage a collaborative partnership approach.	
2-2-3	Build on existing approaches/successes and leverage existing resources (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch).	
3-1-1	Exit strategies,	

	especially for 18 years and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building long-term. Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Case management, outreach worker</li> </ul>
3-1-2		Information sharing and communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a systems level, sharing information among and between organisations and agencies</li> <li>• Breaking down “silos”; information on resources</li> </ul>
3-2-1		Skill Development and meaningful opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset based approach</li> </ul>
3-2-2		Notions of “community” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook for change – culture, faith, values</li> </ul>
4-1-1	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Police and Community Partner to give joint feedback to increase trust.
4-1-2		Communities build programs that engage youth from a young age.
4-1-3		More effort put into finding and celebrating positive events.
4-2-1		Succession planning – planned transition when CPC officers change positions.
4-2-2		Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.
4-2-3		Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.
5-1-1		Working with families for prevention
5-1-2	Bring partners together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a common narrative</li> <li>• To create a plan to build awareness</li> <li>• To create centralized training for mental health, addiction, justice services</li> </ul>	
5-1-3	Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. i.e. Concerns with confidentiality provisions, and municipal/provincial/other services.	
5-2-1	Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to support the needs of families	
5-2-2	Target resources for siblings of gang members	
5-2-3	Create support networks for parents (i.e. addictions, mental health, integration services) before problems arise.	

### 3.5 Prioritization

To close the Leadership Symposium, participants were invited to help prioritize the 28 proposed strategies each group had developed. Every participant was given four votes, which they could allocate as they saw fit, to the proposed strategies that they believed would have the greatest impact on addressing gangs in the Ottawa community.

Building on the themes, 28 strategies were brought forward and prioritized. The following table captures the vote (sorted by theme).

**Table 2: Vote Count by Proposed Strategy**

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes
1-1-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Common Criteria or tool to identify the children/youth early on	4
1-1-2		Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.	38
1-1-3		Police and others to work as outreach workers to work with young people and build relationships. (More school resource officers.)	5
1-2-1		Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.	19
1-2-2		Build on the existing momentum and collaboration. (Don't create another table!)	6
1-2-3		Increase the capacity of youth workers to help identify youth (i.e. lifeguards, community houses, etc.)	1
2-1-1	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	To build a relationship between stakeholders and the community; develop a formal process to share information and communication between stakeholders, in the context of an overall strategy and framework.	1
2-1-2		Develop a sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy (for the city and NCR) taking a youth centric approach.	36
2-1-3		To focus on prevention using a holistic approach by building a practical toolbox (based on lessons learned / evidence based) for frontline and stakeholders (parents, youth, schools, faith groups, etc.) removing stigma and common language and create a one stop access point (e.g. service/website)	7
2-2-1		Need strategic coordination of the system and services available (i.e. navigation project, single point of contact/agency/one body/org) to enhance seamless coordination and coordination of what is available, creating clear pathways, establishing cross-sectoral protocols and the result would foster collaboration at	4

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes
		all levels.	
2-2-2		Develop a framework to achieve multi-agency MOUs to engage a collaborative partnership approach.	7
2-2-3		Build on existing approaches/successes and leverage existing resources (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch).	9
3-1-1	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Continuous, integrated support for transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building long-term. Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Case management, outreach worker</li> </ul>	3
3-1-2		Information sharing and communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a systems level, sharing information among and between organisations and agencies</li> <li>• Breaking down “silos”; information on resources</li> </ul>	18
3-2-1		Skill Development and meaningful opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset based approach</li> </ul>	21
3-2-2		Notions of “community” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook for change – culture, faith, values</li> </ul>	3
4-1-1		Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Police and Community Partner to give joint feedback to increase trust.
4-1-2	Communities build programs that engage youth from a young age.		5
4-1-3	More effort put into finding and celebrating positive events.		2
4-2-1	Succession planning – planned transition when CPC officers change positions.		3
4-2-2	Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.		29
4-2-3	Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.		7
5-1-1	Working with families for prevention		Identify and connect potential partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic to community</li> <li>• Faith, family, peer mentors, ESL, cultural, services, geographical, businesses, link, Y centre, school counsellors, settlement organisations</li> </ul>
5-1-2		Bring partners together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a common narrative</li> <li>• To create a plan to build awareness</li> <li>• To create centralized training for mental health, addiction, justice services</li> </ul>	1
5-1-3		Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. i.e. Concerns with confidentiality provisions, and municipal/provincial/other services.	1



#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes
5-2-1		Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to support the needs of families	17
5-2-2		Target resources for siblings of gang members	3
5-2-3		Create support networks for parents (i.e. Addictions, Mental Health, integration services) before problems arise.	27

The tables below reflect the results sorted from highest to lowest vote, and from highest to lowest vote clustered by theme, respectively.

**Table 3: Results of Priority Vote (sorted from highest to lowest)**

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
1-1-2	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.	38	1
2-1-2	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Develop a sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy (for the city and NCR) taking a youth centric approach.	36	2
4-2-2	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.	29	3
5-2-3	Working with families for prevention	Create support networks for parents (i.e. Addictions, Mental Health, integration services) before problems arise.	27	4
3-2-1	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Skill Development and meaningful opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset based approach</li> </ul>	21	5
1-2-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.	19	6
3-1-2	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Information sharing and communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a systems level, sharing information among and between organisations and agencies</li> <li>• Breaking down “silos”; information on resources</li> </ul>	18	7
5-2-1	Working with families for prevention	Invest in the creation of community intervention teams to support the needs of	17	8

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
		families		
2-2-3	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Build on existing approaches/successes and leverage existing resources (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch).	9	9
5-1-1	Working with families for prevention	Identify and connect potential partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic to community</li> <li>• Faith, family, peer mentors, ESL, cultural, services, geographical, businesses, link, Y centre, school counsellors, settlement organisations</li> </ul>	8	10
2-1-3	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	To focus on prevention using a holistic approach by building a practical toolbox (based on lessons learned / evidence based) for frontline and stakeholders (parents, youth, schools, faith groups, etc.) removing stigma and common language and create a one stop access point (e.g. service/website)	7	11
2-2-2	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Develop a framework to achieve multi-agency MOUs to engage a collaborative partnership approach.	7	11
4-2-3	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.	7	11
1-2-2	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Build on the existing momentum and collaboration. (Don't create another table!)	6	12
1-1-3	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Police and others to work as outreach workers to work with young people and build relationships. (More school resource officers.)	5	13
4-1-2	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Communities build programs that engage youth from a young age.	5	13
1-1-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Common Criteria or tool to identify the children/youth early on	4	14
2-2-1	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Need strategic coordination of the system and services available (i.e. navigation project, single point of contact/agency/one body/org) to enhance seamless coordination and coordination of what is available, creating clear	4	14

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
		pathways, establishing cross-sectoral protocols and the result would foster collaboration at all levels.		
4-1-1	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Police and Community Partner to give joint feedback to increase trust.	4	14
3-1-1	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Continuous, integrated support for transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building long-term. Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Case management, outreach worker</li> </ul>	3	15
3-2-2	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Notions of “community” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook for change – culture, faith, values</li> </ul>	3	15
4-2-1	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Succession planning – planned transition when CPC officers change positions.	3	15
5-2-2	Working with families for prevention	Target resources for siblings of gang members	3	15
4-1-3	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	More effort put into finding and celebrating positive events.	2	16
1-2-3	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Increase the capacity of youth workers to help identify youth (i.e. lifeguards, community houses, etc.)	1	17
2-1-1	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	To build a relationship between stakeholders and the community; develop a formal process to share information and communication between stakeholders, in the context of an overall strategy and framework.	1	17
5-1-2	Working with families for prevention	Bring partners together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a common narrative</li> <li>• To create a plan to build awareness</li> <li>• To create centralized training for mental health, addiction, justice services</li> </ul>	1	17
5-1-3	Working with families for prevention	Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. i.e. Concerns with confidentiality provisions, and municipal/provincial/other services.	1	17

**Table 4: Results of Priority Vote (sorted from highest to lowest and clustered by theme)**

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
<b>1-1-2</b>	<b>Identification of those at risk of gang involvement</b>	<b>Develop formal protocols and partnerships for working with youth with complex needs.</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>
1-2-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Shared training to improve communication and opportunities to connect.	19	6
1-2-2	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Build on the existing momentum and collaboration. (Don't create another table!)	6	12
1-1-3	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Police and others to work as outreach workers to work with young people and build relationships. (More school resource officers.)	5	13
1-1-1	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Common Criteria or tool to identify the children/youth early on	4	14
1-2-3	Identification of those at risk of gang involvement	Increase the capacity of youth workers to help identify youth (i.e. lifeguards, community houses, etc.)	1	17
<b>2-1-2</b>	<b>Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth</b>	<b>Develop a sustainable (resourced and ongoing) youth/community engagement strategy (for the city and NCR) taking a youth centric approach.</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>
2-2-3	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Build on existing approaches/successes and leverage existing resources (i.e. Neighbourhood Watch).	9	9
2-1-3	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	To focus on prevention using a holistic approach by building a practical toolbox (based on lessons learned / evidence based) for frontline and stakeholders (parents, youth, schools, faith groups, etc.) removing stigma and common language and create a one stop access point (e.g. service/website)	7	11
2-2-2	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Develop a framework to achieve multi-agency MOUs to engage a collaborative partnership approach.	7	11
2-2-1	Intervention and service coordination for high risk children and youth	Need strategic coordination of the system and services available (i.e. navigation project, single point of contact/agency/one body/org) to enhance seamless coordination and coordination of what is available, creating clear pathways, establishing cross-sectoral protocols and the result would foster collaboration at all levels.	4	14
2-1-1	Intervention and service	To build a relationship between stakeholders	1	17

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
	coordination for high risk children and youth	and the community; develop a formal process to share information and communication between stakeholders, in the context of an overall strategy and framework.		
<b>3-2-1</b>	<b>Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over</b>	<b>Skill Development and meaningful opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Asset based approach</b></li> </ul>	<b>21</b>	<b>5</b>
3-1-2	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Information sharing and communication. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At a systems level, sharing information among and between organisations and agencies</li> <li>• Breaking down “silos”; information on resources</li> </ul>	18	7
3-1-1	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Continuous, integrated support for transition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building long-term. Trusting relationships</li> <li>• Case management, outreach worker</li> </ul>	3	15
3-2-2	Exit strategies, especially for 18 years and over	Notions of “community” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hook for change – culture, faith, values</li> </ul>	3	15
<b>4-2-2</b>	<b>Building a trusted relationship between the community and police</b>	<b>Change the community perception of the role of police officers to increase trust.</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>
4-2-3	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Look for positive opportunities to engage in dialogue. In particular, involve youth.	7	11
4-1-2	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Communities build programs that engage youth from a young age.	5	13
4-1-1	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Police and Community Partner to give joint feedback to increase trust.	4	14
4-2-1	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	Succession planning – planned transition when CPC officers change positions.	3	15
4-1-3	Building a trusted relationship between the community and police	More effort put into finding and celebrating positive events.	2	16
<b>5-2-3</b>	<b>Working with families for prevention</b>	<b>Create support networks for parents (i.e. Addictions, Mental Health, integration services) before problems arise.</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>4</b>
5-2-1	Working with families	Invest in the creation of community	17	8

#	Theme	Proposed Strategy	# Votes	Rank
	for prevention	intervention teams to support the needs of families		
5-1-1	Working with families for prevention	Identify and connect potential partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organic to community</li> <li>• Faith, family, peer mentors, ESL, cultural, services, geographical, businesses, link, Y centre, school counsellors, settlement organisations</li> </ul>	8	10
5-2-2	Working with families for prevention	Target resources for siblings of gang members	3	15
5-1-2	Working with families for prevention	Bring partners together <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a common narrative</li> <li>• To create a plan to build awareness</li> <li>• To create centralized training for mental health, addiction, justice services</li> </ul>	1	17
5-1-3	Working with families for prevention	Improve collaboration by identifying and resolving barriers and gaps. i.e. Concerns with confidentiality provisions, and municipal/provincial/other services.	1	17

#### **4 Next Steps**

Building on the proposed strategies and the overall outcomes of the Public Forum and Leadership Symposium, Crime Prevention Ottawa, Ottawa Police Service, Youth Services, and Ottawa Community Housing will put forward a set of recommendations on next steps.

## **Appendix A – Puzzle Pieces**

All participants were invited to respond to the key question of Taking Action Together: How can we address gangs in our city? The following represents all of the responses participants of the Public Forum, as well as respondents of the online consultation:

- Be “truthful” in your considerations of the question above. (e.g. how many of all Ottawa gangs are Caucasian? What percentage of the gangs are black? Only when we address this can we start to find solutions.
  - Why do the police pursue innocent citizens who are gun owners rather than the gangs who are the danger?
- We discussed not moving the problem into another neighbourhood but rather dealing with the problem and helping those people who need it. Why then is all the social programming (rehab, mission, needle drops, etc) in the downtown core? I know people say “I don’t want that in my neighbourhood”, but shouldn’t we try to get these people away from temptation?
- Better funded homework and afterschool programs in at risk neighbourhoods.
- I am very disappointed that people with disabilities were not heard here tonight and totally ignored. A complaint will be filled.
- Consider early prevention programs such as prenatal, postnatal, nursing programs for at-risk families.
- Forge stronger connections with partners such as Correctional Service of Canada to help prevent gang memberships which will eventually spill out to the community.
- The city’s initiative to promote prevention and intervention is extremely commendable. My question is how do we / are we dealing with youth gang members at the point of arrest today? If we are working under the assumption that we need to help at risk youth build communal ties at the prevention and intervention stage, how can we do the same at the point of arrest? Do we deliver these people out of the traditional incarceration model and move them towards community-based alternatives of punishment so they can build and sustain communal ties (and perhaps prevent reoffending)?
- Present options for leaving gangs, as well develop a real hands on preventative program for at risk youth. Prior to developing rec-centres which may just provide another area for recruitment and trafficking.
- More seriously consider drug decriminalization as a grassroots way to prevent gang proliferation (and simultaneously address addiction/associated social problems). Lack of criminalization and even state-regulated drug production would effectively eliminate profiteering from the illicit drug trade. Much more empirical evidence for these initiatives than currently popular “tough of crime” areas – the war on drugs has failed,

the illicit drug trade is flourishing, and we need to start looking at more holistic, empirical solutions.

- There are many youth workers in Ottawa that share the same passion as our speaker Jabari from Toronto. Our youth workers here in Ottawa unfortunately do not have the time to focus on the necessary youth (identified youth) who need one to one care and counseling. Bottom line, the YOB and its community partners require more funding to continue the programs we have in place. If youth and gangs are such a huge problem (as they are) stop spending so much time on less important issues such as Landsdowne, LRT, etc. Prioritize the issues and focus more on the problem areas. You know youth and gangs is a problem focus more on that.
- Is enough being done to eradicate the drug problem because as I see it in my neighbourhood Besserer and Nelson not enough is being done to stop the dealing.
- National Capital Area Crime Stoppers can provide an “alternative” for individuals to offer information about criminal behaviour with total anonymity. This can overcome the “fear” of dealing with authorities directly and even more real “fear” of retribution. Awareness is the key to helping young people and people at risk. In 2011 15 of the 60 firearms recovered by OPS came from TIPS provided through CS. That’s 25% and so far in 2012, it’s an even higher percentage.
- Hire more police!
- Increased involvement by the police and community services with youth before, during, and after these youth become involved in gang activity. Youth commonly (in Ottawa) have a “glorified” view of gangs and more work needs to be done to address this.
- Better fellowship programs in prison’s reintegration programs. More trauma focused training, implement trauma CBT. More programs in low income housing areas. More social resource officers. More educational programs. Communities and parents need to get together and speak out. Immigrant family services. Parenting programs teach adequate supervision and more assistance for single parents. Taking ideas of gang prevention from other cities that hire more multi-cultural police officers.
- As taxpayers rights sit on a back bench here – more power to the police. More warrants quicker against local crack dealers. Evict from residence and give back the street to the good. If and when illegal guns are seized, why can't the government and police charge the gun makers? I do believe that the Canadian market is being flooded in order to keep their employees working.
- Less police officers or a funding cut. Youth officers for aged > 21 years. Youth perspectives (I think I’m the only 20 year old here). More S.R.O. for schools S.R.O.s to make more appearances and stop bullying.
- Start with the youngest generation. More neighbourhood cohesion.
- What about the Kennedy solution that was a success in other cities (i.e. Boston). For police: Where does the crack cocaine come from? How can the source be targeted?



- By making breeches in court be taken seriously. Kids need to be made accountable. Probation doesn't work!
- By addressing the parent on how to do proper parenting. The parents are the first response of the youth. Therefore, telling the parents to be strict, supervise and monitor their children can possibly deter the youth to join gangs. Getting in contact with parents would make it possible to change the youth's mind.
- Gang exit strategies. Give access for former gang members to recreation opportunities as a participant but hopefully also as a leadership opportunity to help develop self-esteem and confidence. Could we grant some money to "gang members" to who want to exit and encourage them to share, develop ideas for the program to "break the cycle" and prevent kids at risk from joining gangs. Province seems to be rolling out an integrated electronic record management system where info shared amongst service providers about individuals with special needs – could a system like this be developed to help identify vulnerable youth?
- Have conferences or workshops specifically for teachers and school workers with resources available if or when a student does come to us, we are able to help and refer them then and there. As one of the speakers said, you may not get a second chance with these individuals. We can pack their lives with extracurricular but it may not be enough... we need specific resources. As it stands now there are so many channels to go through it takes far too long to get actual help.
- Nobody took notes when the idea of the Youth Committee was being discussed (show you care) but I think that's a really good idea. Leadership (True Leadership) is needed to change this thing around you know.
- According to your own information, criminal activity represents 3.6% of the world domestic product. Therefore it is a large force to go against. Global action has to include: income capacity, provide self-esteem, provide sense of belonging, and encourage productivity. But it must also have coaching or mentoring in order to achieve that. Possibly many of those youth prefer manual work. Improve accessibility to diagnosis and treatment for addiction and mental health for all age groups. What about shadowing trade workers about to retire? Explore different projects and entrepreneurship and provide mentorship.
- We need to work towards connecting resources.
- Implement a similar program as Chicago where former gang members are brought together in intervene in youth gang activity.
- How can faith groups help or assist in the initiatives to reduce gangs in the city of Ottawa?
- Be more vocal and proactive – hold more "tough on gangs" and crime community conferences. Have people informed of progress, and use public service advertisements.

- Start listening to what they need: education, available jobs, feeling like they belong, feeling like they're part of the solution.
- Increase amount and accessibility of psychological support for youth at risk of becoming involved in gang activity.
- End the criminalization of people through drug laws. Take the profit out of drug markets by regulating instead of criminalizing. Ask why no-one is trading Molson Canadian cases for guns.
- Consider the microloans program where citizens can donate small amounts to assist at-risk youth programs.
- Consider a program of YouTube videos / communication products based on the pointless nature of gang activity.
- Increase funding (from all levels) for mental health initiatives for youth, families, and those with concurrent (addictions + mental health) concerns.
- Grassroots programs starting now!
- "Gang exit strategy" & communications approach targeted towards youth.
- Identify "problematic" youth at an early age and hold on to these youth and not punish them by kicking them out of the programming. We need to connect with these young men and create lasting and important relationships.
- This is a very broad question. However; I think it comes down to programming for at risk kids and youth to keep them busy and away from negative influences. I am working on a project @ Donald St. and have noticed lots of kids, mostly boys running amuck after school. I worry that they are at risk...all it takes is one thug to offer them something free to run drugs for him. We are offering some after school programming but the problem is that this program is not sustainable. We tend to plug services in for a while and then the funding is cut so we are yanked out.
- I think we are doing a great job. It just takes time. I truly appreciated what the youth worker speaker said about how to reach out to the individuals in gangs.
- Better collaboration between agencies and partners (specifically cross-training and awareness) with regards to Youth and Street Gangs. Examples could be secondments of either police personnel with CPO / Boys and Girls Club / YSB etc and vice versa in order to better understand the issues these agencies are facing when attempting to tackle this problem.
- I think it is important to get to the youth before they become involved with gangs. This can be achieved through education and youth programs.
- Citizens are very passive and wait for "official" agencies to look after the problem for them. More time and work needs to be done on engaging communities at the grassroots level and highlighting that gangs are everyone's problem and everyone has to be part of the solution. This can be done on a very caring and compassionate level - see

a kid at loose ends? Mentor them. - See a single mom struggling, or parents working long hours? Reach out - see someone new to your community? Talk to them! Strong communities are built by the people who live in them, and community-building outside of a formal framework is a skill that we are rapidly losing.

- Gang issues cannot be addressed by a few sitting far away from where the action happens. The solution is difficult, if determinants of health are not addressed (mainly jobs, school attainment, hope, mentorship/ sense of belonging (having a say). This speaks to larger systemic challenges that are beyond us. We have communities in trouble, which leads to youth in trouble. We need to work with communities, empower them to address their own issues as they see fit. I am incredibly disappointed by the fact that those who are in the front line work are not included in steering, planning and working group membership. We are losing/neglecting the experience and expertise that already exists in our community. Also, the organizers are missing or unaware of very successful programs in the community such as the Somali Youth Basketball League, Community Houses, employment programs etc., the work of individual community members). I sense is a divide between those affected by gang issues (mothers, siblings, frontline service providers) and those trying to find solutions (Police, CPO, YSB etc to name a few). I don't know, if it is intentional or not but there seems to a systemic exclusion of those closest to the issues (Immigrant Led Organizations, CHC/CRCs, Youth Led Organizations, Community Houses). There is a visible mistrust and divide that needs to be addressed. It is very interesting how the communities that have been speaking out on these challenges for decades are all of sudden absent from these discussions AND LEADERSHIP. Solutions: 1.Organize/identify outreach workers into hot spots and document some of the unique realities of families, gang members/associates/ youth at higher risk. This can be done through existing resources with minimal additions (it depends on the region, some have more resources). 2. Organize services providers to meet the needs of gang involved youth (knowledge centre/tool box) 4.Work with youth/community leaders in these communities (STOP the TOP DOWN PROCESS) 5.Invest in the many struggling role models in these communities (Black, Middle Eastern, mainstream youth coming from difficult circumstances (e.g. Cycle of poverty, mental health etc..)) 6.Have Ottawa housing neighbourhoods grounded model (most of the gang identified members come from OCH communities) 7.Invest in community/place based (sustainable, credible) 8.Invest in youth led organizations 9.Invest in racialized youth leaders (to do research, front-line work and mentorship) 10 Stop re-inventing the wheel (there are good grassroots programs, additions and mentoring for larger organizations are needed) 11.EXPAND the WORKING GROUP to young professionals, community workers who understand the on the ground realities. Finally, Large/mainstream organizations should assume the role of supporting struggling/small grassroots groups or agencies. This allows both groups to learn from each other (on one end it provides small agencies to expertise and systems support on the other hand it allows for mainstream groups to reach the hard to reach groups. Thank you for reading this. I have great hope... WE NEED SOLUTIONS THAT ALL HAVE A STAKE.

- As a volunteer with Crime Stoppers, I believe there is a role that anonymous reporting of criminal behaviour can play in helping young people who may or may not be part of a gang and who may fear contact with police to provide information that may help police and front line workers deal with guns and gangs in our community.
- I really do not believe that the city can fully address the "street" gang issues in this or any city, without considering how these organizations fit into higher-level criminal organizations, such as the "biker" gangs. For example, street gangs do not have the wherewithal to manufacture their own drugs, so must be supplied, and therefore facilitated, by higher-level gangs. If one looks at the issue from a business organizational structure point of view, these street gang members are just the retail-sales force for the criminal organizations that manage the manufacturing and importation - the supply side functions, and warehousing and distribution - the logistics functions. If the community manages to shut down these street gangs, all that will do is leave a vacuum that will be filled some other way, since the demand for drugs will never abate. From how I understood the presentation, it was stated that Ottawa has 473 gang members, according to a definition that specifically excludes bikers like the Hells Angels and Ottawa Outlaws, the various Asian gangs, and traditional Mafia gang members, though I do understand that policing these organizations is outside the direct purview of the OPS Guns & Gangs and DART groups. In the presentation, numbers of gang members from other cities was used for comparison to Ottawa, but it is not clear that these other cities have the same constraint on their definition of gang membership. Without being sure of the source of those numbers, any comparison of Ottawa to other cities is not useful.
- One person at a time. The message I heard is that it takes a community and that everyone needs to "step up". Also, kindness matters.
- There needs to be better outreach by Police officers and justice professionals to the various, ethnic communities and associations in strategically developing crime prevention programs and in collectively constructing an exit strategy. The various communities should have an increased influence in the supporting the diversion programs and extra-judicial measures of the criminal justice system.
- Certainly the last comment was important - to talk to the families and the mothers. Perhaps they can be a key to this. The speaker from Toronto was very good and brought some direct experience. Perhaps it does take a community to raise a child and we all play a part.
- I feel that addressing issues of sustained funding for programs that have been demonstrated to work such as Fourth R., Breaking the Cycle, the Boston Project and others need to be seriously considered by those involved in this panel. I believe that if the police, our municipal leaders and the social service groups demand a portion of the funding currently used for policing in our community to invest in prevention programs such as those listed above, and that some of this money is also used for evaluation, that we can in fact see a real change in violence in our community.

- I feel extra work needs to be done in regards to collaboration and partnerships amongst various agencies. We need to work better together in regards to this issue. We need to reduce barriers for families to access various services. We need to increase community police presence in each neighbourhood. Not only their presence but have OPS be involved, engaged and committed around various key committees - have OPS be working closer together with residents. Solidify youth programming as it is a proven gang prevention strategy. Solidify meaning core funding for youth programs, increased partnerships in order to offer enhanced programming and reduce cost. Maintain communication with parents. Work directly with youth and their families.
- Include Ottawa Public Health.
- Put a grass roots program into place of "The Way to Happiness" like has been done in major cities with high crime all over the USA, Mexico, South America and Europe. The results of these programs have been very impressive to calm neighbourhoods and watch the crime stats go down. Have the police and the community work together to distribute the booklets all over the city. Hold workshops, events, projects and contests all over the city based on the 21 common sense precepts of the book. Have a Way to Happiness community delegation in the Christmas Parade hand out free booklets. The Way to Happiness is a non-profit foundation from Los Angeles California who have developed impressive teacher's kits, posters, banners, shirts and tools to get this movement out to cities all over the world. They have public service announcements of the 21 precepts that young people really like. They have won awards for their videos. You can change whole cities with this program. Cartagena, Colombia introduced this program to its crime ridden city and completely changed the city to one of relative safety and the crime stats went down 40% in a short time. One individual military policeman spear-headed the whole program and has now helped in three countries of South America to do the same program. This program is cheap, easy and works all over the world.
- I noted my comments and concerns on the puzzle piece last night.
- Selon moi, je dirais que c'est bien beau d'avoir des fonds supplémentaires soient créés, mais il faut penser à parler aux victimes invisibles, telles les mères qui travaillent des longues heures et surtout après 17h, et cela fait en sorte que les enfants se retrouvent seuls, ne fassent pas de devoirs, traînent dehors, et finissent par joindre des personnes mal vues. Aussi, aider les familles à faible revenus afin de subvenir au minimum de leurs familles, créer des activités durant les 4 saisons comme pour tous les enfants des familles des classes moyennes. Les mères sont celles qui souffrent les plus quand leurs enfants sont arrêtés et incarcérés et j'en connais des choses sur cela, parler aux mères des familles pour au moins qu'elles ne perdent pas les plus jeunes et leur donner les moyens de détecter ces malaises dès le début. C'est bien beau de les incarcérer, mais il ne faut pas oublier qu'ils apprennent à être des meilleurs criminels en prison. Faites des suivis après leurs sorties des prisons, essayer d'engager des anciens jeunes des rues pour qu'ils fassent de la sensibilisation aux autres jeunes. Ils ne veulent pas voir des hommes qui ont l'âge de leurs parents les sermonner. Aussi d'engager des policiers qui

ressemblent à eux. Je dirai beaucoup plus, mais je ne veux pas vous soûler avec mes commentaires.

- Getting more involved with teens.
- I believe we need a city strategy for addressing the issue of gangs in the city. Community police liaison officers could consider being more visible in the surrounding communities - this way, youth will get use to them in a more positive way, rather than negatively.
- C'est un travail a long terme, il faut une équipe que puisse examine les programmes qui sont en place, et faire de propositions aussi pour nouvelles interventions. Il y a eu des points importants qu'y on ressorti de la réunion qu'il faut essayer de répondre comme, quoi faire pour arrêter le trafic d'armes dans notre ville, les interventions auprès des mères de jeunes, le trauma, l'étiqne pour certains communautés etc. Certaines gens veulent aider à contribuer à vivre dans une ville sécuritaire.
- I asked to speak and was totally avoided and yet as we all know that people with disabilities are the most bullied via gangs leading to their death, I had questions on this but refused to ask them. Now I want it public as many of those with known gang related issues got to ask their questions I have never been more disappointed in attending an event in my life as this one so please feel free not to invite me to any further events if people with disabilities are not to be heard.