

From: ["Levitt, Karen" <karen.levitt@vancouver.ca>](mailto:karen.levitt@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

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Subject: Update: Building Safer Communities Program Update and Imminent Invitation to Vancouver Youth Voice: Violence Prevention Forum (March)

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find below an update from Sandra Singh, GM of ACCS on the Building Safer Communities Program (BSCP), Vancouver's youth violence prevention initiative supported through federal funding.

We are sending this to you because you will be receiving invitations shortly to attend the March 30th Vancouver Youth Voice: Violence Prevention Forum, and the information below may serve as useful background for those of you who attend.

BSCP seeks to promote individual and community well-being, safety, and belonging in the city. Through this 4-year program, the City, youth, community organizations, and public partners will work together to prevent and address the root causes of youth violence, create safe spaces, and empower young people and communities to develop and implement solutions. Initiatives will focus on developing a Youth Safety and Violence Prevention strategy, administering a granting program to support community-based early violence prevention programs for youth in alignment with the strategy, and strengthening the capacity of youth sector to collaborate and provide services. Some current actions and partnership activities are highlighted below:

Vancouver Youth Voice: Violence Prevention Forum

- Hosted in partnership with the Vancouver Public Library Teen Services, and in collaboration with VSB and VPB, on Thursday March 30th from 9:00am - 4:00pm, 150 youth from across the city will be invited to attend the *Vancouver Youth Voice: Violence Prevention Forum*.
- The BSCP Youth Community Developers and planning team would like to invite Mayor and Council to attend the event to hear the perspectives and experiences directly from youth on issues related to community safety, including: the nature of youth violence in the city and ideas for solutions for effective community based youth violence prevention strategies.
- Opening remarks will take place between 9:00am-10:00am, followed by youth dialogues.
- In the afternoon, skill building workshops led by community partners will focus on identifying and reflecting on different forms of violence and learning strategies to safely address violence

VPD – City Partnership

- The Vancouver Police Department Youth Service Unit is a member of the Building Safer Communities Program (BSCP) .Vancouver Public Partners reference group. Youth involved in gang activities and the exploitation of children and youth have been identified as knowledge gaps in our needs assessment. VPD is providing data and research support focused on incidences of violence related to the Youth Criminal Justice Act and has been keen in connecting us with the organized crime unit and sexual offences unit for research on these two topics as they relate to youth.
- VPD attended and presented at an in-person all partners meeting to discuss VPD's youth unit supports and share high-level community trends based on their violence intervention services. There was an impromptu Q&A session where community partners and youth questioned

the VPD youth lead about the role, the impact and the need for policing services within the school context.

- VPD is supporting the project's community engagement efforts by conducting one on one interviews with youth who are part of their restorative action programs supported by their civilian youth worker and case manager. This allows us to gain a perspective from young people currently involved in the justice system about their experiences in their communities, perceptions of safety and community supports.

BSCP Community Based Research Projects and Policy Work

- This year, 15 community based research projects will take place at the neighbourhood level to explore the nature, trends, incidence and prevalence of youth violence in the city, as well as the characteristics of effective community based violence prevention strategies. Projects will explore:
 - Youth wellbeing and the social determinants of health
 - Youth engagement and the connections to safety and belonging in the city
 - Place based early intervention and violence prevention focused on middle childhood development
 - Targeted, identity based and culturally specific primary prevention strategies to prevent gun and gang violence
 - Prevention of child and youth sexual exploitation
 - Youth service sector capacity building for wraparound service delivery model of prevention services
- The Social Policy Research and Data Team will be supporting the roll out of the community research projects providing tools for informed consent, best practices around data equity and youth engagement in research frameworks
- These research projects along with the other BSCP program initiatives are generating a lot interest in the youth community around community-based safety.
- BSCP Project team is hoping to present the youth engagement report to Council this summer and a Phase 1 report on the Youth Safety and Violence Prevention Strategy development process in the fall.

The Building Safer Communities Program is providing an opportunity to begin a conversation within youth and the youth serving sector about the very complex issues related to youth safety and countering youth violence in Vancouver. However, it is important to highlight that the scope of BSCP focuses primarily on violence prevention for children and youth 8-19 and to build the capacity of the youth services sector for the provision of upstream violence prevention programs.

Please contact Sandra with any follow up questions you may have.

All the best,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager (she/her)
karen.levitt@vancouver.ca

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Skwxwú7mesh/Squamish and səlilwətaʔ/Tsleil-Waututh nations.