



**Toronto Integrated
Police Gang Prevention
Service Task Force**

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TORONTO GANG PREVENTION

WHAT WE LEARNED & WHERE WE'RE GOING

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THE INTEGRATED GANG PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Founded in December of 2016 by (then) **Deputy Chief Jim RAMER #4951**, the Toronto Police Service's Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force was formed to solve the following problem statement: ***"How do we get a gang member out of a gang?"***.

Since that time, the Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force has conducted extensive research, global benchmarking, and the development & execution of several evidence-based pilot projects in efforts of successfully identify a sustainable, and real world, solution.

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EXECUTIVE BACKGROUND

THE GANG PREVENTION TOWN HALLS

Funded by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Proceeds of Crime (POC) Front-line Policing (FLP) 2018-20 grant, the Toronto Police Service's Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force aimed to host 31 Gang Prevention Town Halls in the City of Toronto's 31 lowest equitable, and gang impacted, neighbourhoods with the following intent and goals:

1. To facilitate internal, stakeholder, and community education on gangs and gang prevention
2. To identify areas of improvement on the strategic deployment of front-line uniform officers and focused community outreach, and
3. To promote the Toronto Police Service's Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force and the gang-exit strategy.

GANG PREVENTION TOWN HALL OBJECTIVES

1. To educate front-line uniform officers of the Toronto Police Service, partners stakeholders of the Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force, and engaged community members in the City of Toronto's 31 lowest-equitable neighbourhoods on various aspects of gang prevention.
2. To provide networking opportunities with agencies working in the community domain to build protective factors, such as; bringing people together, promoting positive interactions between adults and youth, and integrating various cultural communities.
3. To provide support for social agencies and community members to come together to discuss and develop plans to address issues of gang risk factors, gang recruitment, gang membership, and gang violence to increase their capacity to deal with the issues of gangs at the community level.
4. To utilize community insights and input from youth, and the community as a whole, to guide the development of programs and services to help youth avoid gang recruitment, criminality, victimization, and involvement in the criminal justice system.
5. To assist organizations to deliver services to fill identified gaps in services by acting as a convenor to link services to gang prevention and intervention initiatives to ensure new services developed are integrated into a comprehensive approach to prevent youth involvement in gangs.

6. To develop systems and supports to sustain an asset-based network of support around families and to support collaborative practices around gang prevention and intervention.
7. To develop and implement action plans and strategies directed towards the prevention, intervention, and suppression of gang violence.
8. To provide collected data and guidance to funding agencies, community departments, and community groups that will help develop policies and programs to support the reduction of gang victimization, gang violence, and gang membership.
9. To facilitate the development of protocols which would articulate the relationships, level of partnership, and information sharing among impacted stakeholders.

GANG PREVENTION BENEFICIARIES

1. The Toronto Police Service and local police services.
2. Gang involved persons, including: youth at risk for gang involvement, gang associates, and gang members.
3. Community members, including: parents of gang involved persons, siblings of gang involved persons, community members living within gang impacted neighbourhoods, victims of gang violence and crimes, and local businesses, employees, and owners.
4. Social service agencies.
5. Various criminal justice entities.

GANG PREVENTION TOWN HALL FORMAT

All of the Gang Prevention Town Halls were conducted in the following format and manner:

6:00 PM - 6:30 PM	Doors were open for community members, social service agencies, and other stakeholder agencies and attendees - who were all spoken to individually to determine their reason(s) for attending the Gang Prevention Town Hall.
6:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force presentation and engagement.
7:30 PM - 9:00 PM	An open, confidential, and moderated open discussion involving all of the participants to gather their insights and experiences. The large majority of the insights shared in this report were gained during this period of conversation.

GANG PREVENTION TOWN HALL REPRESENTED ORGANIZATIONS & PARTICIPANTS

Over **1,600 participants** and **75 government and non-government organizations** attended the Gang Prevention Town Halls. Below is a breakdown of the participating body.

ORGANIZATIONS

Toronto Police Service
Toronto Police Services Board
Community Policing and Liaison Committee Members
Peel Regional Police Service
Hamilton Police Service
City of Toronto
City of Toronto Parks, Forestry, and Recreation
Toronto Community Safety and Wellbeing Unit
Toronto Community Housing Corporation
Halton Community Housing Corporation
Safe & Caring Schools Toronto
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Catholic District School Board
Service Canada
Ministry of the Attorney General
Toronto Anti-Gun & Gang Probation & Parole
Safe City Mississauga
Liberal Party of Canada
Green Party of Canada
Conservative Party of Canada
National Democratic Party of Canada
Canadian Nationalist Party of Canada
Ryerson University
University of Guelph-Humber
Humber College
Fleming College
Centennial College
Yorktown Family Services
Albion Neighbourhood Services
The John Howard Society
For Youth Initiative
Project iRise
The One by One Movement
The Toronto Youth Cabinet
Unison Health & Community Services
Bible-Way Pentacostal Church
Community Action Resource Centre
Toronto Children's Aid Society
Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Club
Delta Family Resource Centre
West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre

United Way Greater Toronto Area
East Scarborough Storefront
Progress Place Mental Wellness
Toronto Artscape Foundation
Midaynta Community Services
Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services
Give Proof To Our Youth
Toronto Globe & Mail
Mindfulness Everyday
Operational Pre-Frontal Cortex
Black King Entertainment
Urban Promise Toronto
Brampton FOCUS
George Brown College
Fred Victor Organization
Toronto Public Library
Salvation Army
Community Benefits
Big Brothers Big Sisters Toronto
TAIBU Community Health Centre
Youth Speak Performance Charity
International Women Achiever's Award
Jamaica Diaspora Advisory Board of Canada
Mozia Professional Business Centre
Black Youth Helpline
Griffin Centre
Hope and Happiness Counselling Toronto
The Stelex Centre BBS
University Health Network
Zero Gun Violence Movement
Crossroads of Danforth Business Improvement Area

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Neighbourhood residents
Gang members
Ex-gang members
Human trafficking survivors
Families of gang members
Families of victims of gang violence
Gang violence victims
Gang violence witnesses

GANG PREVENTION TOWN HALLS CONDUCTED

DIVISION	NEIGHBOURHOOD	DATE CONDUCTED
23	Mount Olive - Silverstone - Jamestown	September 5th, 2019
41	Ionview	September 11th, 2019
51	Regent Park	September 12th, 2019
31	Humber Summit	September 19th, 2019
12	Keelesdale - Eglinton West	September 26th, 2019
41	Oakridge	October 3rd, 2019
31	Humbermede (Jamaican Canadian Association)	October 8th, 2019
12	Beechborough - Greenbrook	October 9th, 2019
33	Flemingdon Park	October 10th, 2019
43	Morningside	October 17th, 2019
31	Glenfield - Jane Heights	October 23rd, 2019
14	South Parkdale	October 24th, 2019
12	Weston	November 20th, 2019
31/32	York University Heights	November 21st, 2019
23	Elms - Old Rexdale	November 28th, 2019
41/43	Eglinton East	December 5th, 2019
31/32	Downsview - Roding - CFB	December 11th, 2019
53	Thorncliffe Park	December 12th, 2019
12	Rockcliffe - Smythe	December 19th, 2019
23/31	Thistletown - Beaumont Heights	January 2nd, 2020
33/54	Victoria Village	January 9th, 2020
12/13	Rustic	January 16th, 2020
43	West Hill	January 23rd, 2020
54	Crescent Town	January 30th, 2020
23/31	Kingsview Village - The Westway	February 6th, 2020
12	Mount Dennis	February 12th, 2020
41	Kennedy Park	February 13th, 2020
43	Woburn	February 20th, 2020
31	Humbermede	February 27th, 2020
43	Scarborough Village	March 5th, 2020
31	Black Creek	CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19
11/12	Weston - Pellam Park	CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Violent crime in Toronto has been relatively low compared to other major urban centres around the world. According to the Safe Cities Index 2019 (SCI), Toronto ranked 6th, trailing only Tokyo, Singapore, Osaka, Amsterdam and Sydney, on the ability to provide safety to citizens (Safe Cities Index 2019, Economist). In determining what is meant by safe, the SCI draws on a number of factors such as the level of police engagement, street crime data, gun regulations and enforcement, rate of drug use, organized crime and citizen's perception of safety. Despite the impressive ranking, Toronto like other cities in Canada, has recently faced an increase in violent crime.

VIOLENT CRIME IN CANADA

The National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) deems gang activity and gun violence as a notable concern for many Canadian communities (Public Safety Canada, 2018). This is understandable as Canada continues to experience an increase in violent crime that is specifically related to street gang activity. In 2014, there were 497 homicides across the country that had a known link to organized crime or a street gang. Over the span of four years ending in 2018, there was a 7.62% increase in homicides in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2020). In response, the Federal Government allocated \$328 million over five years, and \$100 million annually thereafter, for a multi-level government action plan to tackle gun-related violence and gang activity on a national level. Furthermore, the Summit on Gun and Gang Violence, hosted by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, met to discuss national trends in violence, identify priority actions, and determine how to advance efforts in the prevention, intervention, and suppression of gun and gang violence (Public Safety Canada, 2018). With over 180 representatives from the law enforcement, criminal justice, academic, and government sectors, the Summit made clear the significance of gun and gang-related violence in Canadian communities (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

VIOLENT CRIME IN TORONTO

The Mayor of Toronto, John Tory, noted that about 65% of gun-related homicides in Toronto were linked, in one way or another, to gang activity (Public Safety Canada, 2018). Recent statistics support the urgency for action. Toronto saw 96 murders in 2018, a record number, surpassing the so-called 'summer of the gun' murder rate by 20%, recorded 13 years earlier. Notably, approximately 14% of the number of people killed in 2018 were the result of two dreadful incidents - the North York van attack and the Danforth shooting. Additionally, in 2019, while the number of homicides in Toronto fell slightly and those killed by a gun also decreased, there was a 16% increase in shootings from the previous year (Statistics Canada, 2019). Arguably, the latter statistics provides a clearer picture of the extent of gun violence in Toronto.

The Toronto Police Service (TPS) has prioritized combatting gang violence and is actively addressing the issue by implementing the Transformational Task Force's objectives outlined in the *TPS's Action Plan: The Way Forward*. The document sets out criteria aimed at modernizing policing practices and cultures with an emphasis on the active integration of the diverse perspectives of Toronto's residents and communities in shaping neighbourhood-centric policing practices. The report stressed the necessity of inviting the communities most affected by violent crime to share their concerns as to how to combat gun and gang violence.

The Toronto Integrated Gang Prevention Task Force (IGPTF) has been responsive to the need for a greater community voice. The IGPTF's mandate is to reduce gang membership and violence through a multi sectoral approach focused on education, prevention, intervention, and suppression in partnership with like-minded stakeholders (Toronto Police Service, 2020). To enhance community engagement, the IGPTF partnered with students from the University of Guelph-Humber Justice Studies program and organized Community Town Hall Meetings (CTHM) in 30 low equitable and Toronto Strong 2020 Neighbourhood

Improvement Areas. These meetings offered insight into what the residents had to say about gun and gang activity in their neighbourhoods.

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The IGPTF officers and students from the University of Guelph-Humber organized 30 CTHM at various locations throughout the Toronto Strong 2020 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. The purpose of these meeting was to establish a coordinated response to the complex needs of high-risk and gang involved youth. Studies suggest that, “the best results in addressing the youth gang problem come from the community working together” (Dunbar 2017). The community members who attended these meetings were asked to register, however, this was strictly voluntary and consequently, the number of participants recorded may not be an accurate indication of the true number of people who attended. Furthermore, the listed participants included the organizing police officers and students. Nevertheless, the total number of registered people in attendance at the 30 meetings totalled 1,353.

Initially, the organizers planned to host 31 CTHM and distribute community surveys to attendees at the final seven sessions. However, the COVID-driven social and physical distancing measures forced the organizers to cancel the final two meetings. Therefore, surveys were available for participants at five meetings, at which there were 264 attendees and of those, 86 completed the community surveys. Furthermore, 15 individuals who worked in a sort of social outreach capacity in these neighbourhoods completed social agency surveys. These surveys had slightly different questions than posed to the community members. All participants were advised that the purpose of the surveys was to ascertain their perspective in what they believed to be the contributing factors leading to gang activity, as well as what they considered to be possible solutions or preferred next steps to address the problem of gang activity in their neighbourhood. All participants were advised that the surveys would remain anonymous.

Demographically, out of the 86 community members who completed the surveys, 60 identified as female

(70%) and 26 identified as male (30%). On the question regrading race/ethnicity, the majority identified as White (45%), followed by Black/Canadian African (19%), East/Southwest Asian (12%), and South Asian 10%).

To the question: *Please pick the top three concerns that you have about your community, if any*, the majority of community members indicated robbery/theft (51%), drugs (45%) and gang activity (38%) (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Top Concerns of the Community

1. Robbery/Theft (51.2%)
2. Drug Dealing/Use (45%)
3. Gang Activity (37.5%)
4. Unemployment (30%)
5. Homicide (23.8%)
6. Insufficient Street Lighting (22.5%)
7. Low Police Activity (21.3%)
8. Unkept Property (17.5%)
9. Domestic Violence (12.5%)
10. Vandalism (12.5%)
11. Graffiti (10%)
12. Loud Music (7.5%)
13. High Police Activity (1.3%)
14. Sexual Harassment (1.3%)
15. City Planning (1.3%)
16. Income Inequality (1.3%)
17. Speeding (1.3%)
18. Shooting (1.3%)
19. Lack of Youth Safe Space After 6 PM (1.3%)

Of the 78 community members who responded to the question: *Do you feel safer in the community now than you did two years ago?* The majority responded that they did not feel safer (60%). Some of the reasons offered for their unease was an apparent increase in gun related incidents, such as shootings or shots fire in the building in which they lived. To the question: *In the past year, has gang activity in your community increased, decreased or remained about the same?* the majority of community members indicated that there was an increase (54%) while fewer felt it remained the same (40%). Very few community members believed gang activity was declining in their neighbourhood. Interestingly, although most

community members believe that gang activity was increasing in their neighbourhood, for those with children, the majority felt that their children would not be involved (72%). As for the social agency members working in the neighbourhoods, to the question: *Among the youth that you serve, do you believe that gang activity is increasing, decreasing or staying the same?* the majority (73%) believed that there was an increase, while fewer felt gang activity had remained the same (27%). No social agency worker believed that gang activity was declining in the neighbourhood in which they worked.

To the question; *Please pick the top three reason you believe gang activity exists in your community*, the top responses were poverty (58.4%), lack of activities (32%) and family problems (32%) (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Contributing Factors

1. Poverty (58.4%)
2. Lack of Activities (32.1%)
3. Family Problems (32.1%)
4. School Problems (29.8%)
5. Family/Friends in Gangs (27.4%)
6. To Feel Love/Sense of Belonging (26.2%)
7. Boredom (22.6%)
8. Power (22.6%)
9. Police Labeling (14.3%)
10. Protection (14.3%)
11. Gangs Are Not A Problem Here (4.8%)
12. Toxic Masculinity (1.2%)
13. Everything (1.2%)
14. Income Inequality (1.2%)
15. Family Legacy (1.2%)

Comments by community members and social agency workers to this question included, little encouragement to pursue education or employment, family breakdown, peer pressure, racism, discrimination, lack of mentors, underfunded initiatives to assist youth, and a lack of accountability in the justice system. The major strategies that community members felt would alleviate the gang problem in their area was an increase in mentorship (73%), increase in job training (61%) and tutoring (35%) (see figure 3).

Figure 3: Notable Strategies

1. Mentoring (72.6%)
2. Programs/Recreation (65.5%)
3. Job Provision and Job Training (60.7%)
4. More Police Protection (36.9%)
5. Tutoring (34.5%)
6. Gangs Are Not A Problem Here (8.3%)
7. More Educational Programs (1.2%)
8. School Intervention (1.2%)
9. Focus Table (1.2%)
10. Education (1.2%)
11. Prison (1.2%)

Out of the 84 community members who answered the question on solutions, only one indicated that an increase in incarceration was a feasible option for solving the problem.

Finally, community members were asked what they were willing to do, if anything, to address gang activity in their community. Encouragingly, the majority of community members responded that they were eager to get involved. For instance, many were willing to help with mentorship (54%), assist in teaching skills (41%), neighbourhood outreach programs (40%), and were prepared to become youth group leaders (35%). A few community members (13%) indicated that they had no desire to assist in anyway (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Areas of Community Involvement

1. Mentor (54.4%)
2. Teach Skills (41.2%)
3. Neighbourhood Outreach (39.7%)
4. Become a Youth Group Leader (35.3%)
5. Tutor (22.1%)
6. Form/Coach Sports Leagues/Teams (22.1%)
7. Nothing (13.2%)
8. Other (11.8%)

APPROACHES TO SUPPRESSING GANG VIOLENCE

There is considerable debate as to how to effectively tackle gun and gang violence. Reasonable approaches include regulations and restrictions on gun ownership, a stronger stance at the border, reflective sentences for those illegally in possession of guns and

those who use them for violent crime, as well as providing positive alternatives for youth, especially the most vulnerable. Clearly, from the perspective of the people who live and work in vulnerable neighbourhoods and who are negatively impacted by gang violence, the focus should shift to the positive alternatives for youth. Citing poverty, lack of activities and family problems as the reasons why their neighbourhoods are disrupted by gang activity, the community members logically point to increased social services such as mentoring programs, job training and tutoring as viable solutions to make a dent in the problem.

While we know that the vast majority of young people are not involved in criminal activity or gangs, there are a number of Canadian and American studies that suggest certain risk factors that contribute to gang involvement (Howell 2019; Rossiter and Rossiter 2009). The risk factors include negative influence in the lives of youth, limited attachment to the community, over reliance on antisocial peers, alcohol and drug abuse, limited employment opportunities as well as a lack of sense of (community) belonging (Howell 2005). It has also been documented that those living in the greatest levels of inequality and social disadvantage are the most susceptible to gang association (Ngo et al. 2013). For instance, in one study surveying individuals with a history of criminal gang involvement, the results suggest that those living in poverty with family and school problems are more likely to be involved in gang activity (Ngo et al. 2017). These risk factors identified in studies mirror those opined by the community members.

In the Canadian study directed by Ngo et al., the gang-involved respondents were primarily from working class or low-income families. Approximately 33% of the respondents indicated that they had lived in poverty for an extended period of time. The majority of the respondents disclosed inadequate parental guidance and the absence of fathers was identified as being particularly problematic. In fact, the respondents had difficulty in identifying *any* positive adult figures in their lives. Almost all of the respondents endured persistent academic struggles that started early in their education. The majority expressed negative

perceptions of the community in which they lived and they did not have a sense of belonging. Finally, the majority of respondents were either unaware of services in their community or did not access them. The few who did connect with social services, did so because of a court order (Ngo et al. 2017). These studies and the concerns raised by the individuals at the CTHM suggest that, “there is a need for a wide range of policy and service strategies to provide family-based, school-based and community-based support to high-risk and gang involved youth” (Ibid).

POLICE/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

While the organizers of the CTHM were alive to the fact that they would have to accept the rough with the smooth, they were uncertain as to how the CTHM would play out. While some police agencies offer open-house presentations on gang violence, this was the first time in Canada that a police service organized this many engagements with so many neighbourhoods focusing on a single issue. Nonetheless, the sessions ran relatively smoothly after some slight modifications. For instance, on a number of occasions, the meeting commenced with some community members voicing their negative experience with the police. This triggered others to complain and while it is understandable that people wanted to express their opinions about the police, this changed the purpose of the meeting. The IGPTF officers allowed the members to express their opinions and then reminded the audience that the focus of the meeting was on gang violence. Second, the community members made it known that they were uncomfortable speaking with officers in uniform and preferred that they attend in casual dress. Third, the community members were sceptical of city counsellors or police senior officers attending for self-centred reasons. If the officials were there to contribute to finding effective solutions to the problem, then the community members were more than willing to discuss their concerns. At a few of the sessions, senior officers, members of the Police Services Board and city counsellors were well accepted as they positively participated in discussions. While some sessions were less agreeable than others, the organizers of the CTHM believe that every meeting ended on a positive note.

The main hurdle for the organizers was the difficulty in notifying members of the public of upcoming sessions. Information about the CTHM were posted on the IGPTF website and city counsellors passed on the information through their social media outlets, however, many community members advised that they heard about the event at the 'last minute'. Most of the residents said that they became aware of the event after noticing a poster in the lobby of their building. Better communication of the events and more widely publicized information are the goals for future sessions.

FOCUSSED DETERRENCE STRATEGIES AND CRIME CONTROL

Increasingly in the United States, focused deterrence strategies have been used as an approach to address gun and gang violence. Briefly, the intent of these strategies is to change the behaviour of the offender through mobilizing efforts of the police, community and social services (Kennedy 2011). These approaches include direct communication of increased enforcement risks as well as social service assistance to the targeted individuals (Braga 2018). Some researches see great potential in this approach in not only reducing violent crime, but also improving relationships between community members and the police officers who serve them (Meares 2009). On the other hand, these types of methods aren't without critics, primarily due to weak evaluations (Seabrook 2009). Nevertheless, there are studies to suggest that the implementation of these programs has been associated with a statistically significant reduction in crime (Braga 2018). Researchers conclude, "focused deterrence strategies, designed to change offender behaviour through a blended enforcement, social service and opportunity provision and community-based action approach, are effective in controlling crime" (Braga 2018, P. 240). While it may be countered that due to cultural differences between Canada and the United States, Canadian police services should be skeptical of introducing American programs, there are studies to suggest that this approach is effective in reducing gang violence in other countries as well (Deuchar 2013). Therefore, programs should be motivated by evidence-based studies as well as remaining broadminded when considering the different approaches.

At the CTHM, the organizers had invited guest speakers to share their experiences with gangs and to offer practical deterrent strategies. One such speaker was film producer Rico King, best known for producing *Tears in the Bayou*, a documentary recounting the non-stop gun violence in Houston, Texas. His charitable work also includes 'No Shoot Zones', an initiative dedicated to assisting communities play a greater role in addressing gun violence in their neighbourhoods. The community members were responsive to these types of initiatives and saw the importance in actively helping to restore order and quality of life to their neighbourhood. The organizers intend to include other community-focused initiatives in future meetings.

CONCLUSION

Gun and gang violence is a reality in many of the disenfranchised neighbourhoods in Toronto. At the CTHM, community members identified poverty, and a lack of activities for youth and family problems as the underlying causes of gang involvement and see mentorship, job training and education as key factors for protecting youth. These protective factors to confront gang violence are supported by a number of studies that suggest stable families, job training, educational achievement and employment are essential insulators against gang involvement (Howell 2019).

There is no single cure for gun and gang violence in Toronto or any city for that matter, however, any gang reduction approach must include city officials, social agencies, police and the community members themselves. The CTHM provided a welcoming platform, where all concerned can work together to establish a comprehensive campaign to provide help to those who need it to stop those who continue their violent behaviour.

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CATEGORY & STRATEGICAL BREAKDOWN OF INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

- The involvement of community members, including former gang-involved persons, community groups, social service agencies, and the coordinations of programs and staff functions within and across stakeholder agencies.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

- The development of a variety of specific education, training, and employment programs targeting gang-involved youth and their families.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION

- Involving community social service agencies, schools, grassroots groups, faith-based organizations, police, and other justice entities in “reaching out” to gang-involved persons and their families, and linking them within conventional world and needed social services.

SUPPRESSION

- Formal and informal social control procedures, including close supervision and monitoring of gang-involved persons by justice entities and community-based agencies, schools, and grassroots groups.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

- The development and implementation of policies and procedures that result in the most effective use of available and potential resources, within and across all internal units, stakeholder agencies, and social services to better address the gang problem.

As suggested and outlined in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Comprehensive Gang Model: Best Practices To Address Community Gang Problems.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

1. “The distrust starts at home”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community members who reside in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods don't only distrust the police, but they have a general distrust of the world.• When a community member is a victim of a homicide that occurs within the community that they reside in, often times the surviving family members believe that people in their own neighbourhood are aware of who committed the murder. However, that information is rarely shared with the surviving family members.• Family members of homicide and/or shooting victims carry a general distrust, fuelled by anxiety and trauma, in almost every level of interaction they have throughout their day - with the exception of other family members, close friends, and religious institutes.• These experiences become adopted experiences within their family and social circles.• Police only account for an approximate 10% of their overall distrust in life.
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing this perspective with police officers may increase their optimism of developing a healthy and trusting relationship with otherwise distrusting community members.• Police officers may be able to utilize this deeper understanding of the real and perceived obstacles that impacted community members feel on a daily basis to foster healthy, trusting, and prosocial relationships.• Police officers who feel confident in their understanding of this perspective may be able to re-share this perspective back to impacted community members who may not be consciously aware of their outlook on life, and work with them to identify their personal risk factors and the appropriate social services that may benefit them.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

2. “Politicians are only around when it’s an election time and police are only around when there’s a crime scene”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods feel disconnected from both the police and local government officials, citing that they only have interactions with local government officials when it’s during an election period and with the police when there’s a crime scene.• This perception, in combination with various personal life events, contributes to general feelings of being devalued, unimportant, and having no voice in the implementation of initiatives and strategies within their own neighbourhood.• Community members advised that they would be welcoming and open to conversations with local political leaders and police officers of all ranks if they came to their neighbourhood regularly, out of a uniform or business attire, and outside of critical election periods and crime scenes.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistency in professional and personal relationships was identified a shared ingredient in the recipe for healthy, positive, and valued relationships with gang and crime impacted communities.• Creating positive relationships in otherwise disengaged communities requires an effort to bring the relationship directly to them, as opposed to having them come to various government offices in the downtown core.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

3. “People are generally afraid to leave their house”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods advised that they have a strong general fear of leaving their residence on a daily basis.• The fear stems from local crime incidents, homicides, shootings, news coverage, social media, adopted experiences from other community members, and a general feeling of distrust.• Contrary to what may appear as popular opinion, most gang and crime impacted community members advised that they wanted more of a uniform police presence in their neighbourhood to increase their general feelings of safety and foster a healthy community, including; going out to the park with their children, being able to get groceries for their family without fearing for their safety, being able to work shift work without feeling as though they will be a victim of a random shooting, and being able to socialize and build relationships with local community members, leaders, and social services.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing trust and positive relationships in gang and crime impacted communities is an obstacle that every major metropolitan police service faces.• Strategically deploying uniformed officers to these communities with the intent of combining a provided sense of safety while proactively engaging residents may help build bridges in otherwise distrusting neighbourhoods.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

4. “We need community events that have consistency”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A youth, who self identified as a gang member, shared that the lack of social activities within their interests led to their recruitment into their gang and was also the reason that they don’t leave the gang. The youth gang member stated that they didn’t care who ran consistent athletic programs or events (police or otherwise), but if there was something happening on a consistent level in a place of safety, they would participate, champion, and encourage other gang involved youth to participate. The youth gang member advised that the most ideal event or sport would be <i>“basketball, as stereotypical as that may sound. I don’t care who is organizing it. It could be police, jails, hospitals - I don’t care. I just need something that I want to do, not forced on me”</i>.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bridging the gap between youth at risk of gang involvement and positive adult role models has been, in evidence-based studies, one of the highest returns of social investment in curbing delinquent behaviour, encouraging pro-social attitudes, and reducing recidivism. Police officers who are naturally inclined to show an interest in pursuing such types of events should be highly encouraged to bridge the gaps in relationships with law enforcement, gang involved youth, youth involved in the criminal justice system, their siblings, and their families. Additionally, community members advised that when police officers are participating in community events and are disengaged or disinterested, it creates a further divide when they feel as though they’ve taken the effort and time out of their day to show up. They also acknowledged that they don’t expect every single officer to see the value and importance of having community focused relationships within their neighbourhood, but were critical of police management identifying disengaged officers as the most ideal officers for community events.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

5. “Engage people in strategies collectively”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods advised that when government strategies or initiatives were developed and implemented in their neighbourhoods, they were often unaware of the initiative until either the projects were being implemented or closed.• They advised that they feel disengaged from government efforts as their needs haven't been solicited or included in the high level problem assessments that would be of high value to them.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government agencies must consult with community members in the planning stages of projects, initiatives, and/or strategies to gain community support, insight, an in depth needs assessment, the identification of values versus priorities, and ensuring that the best method of delivery is identified.• Strategically and efficiently engaging community members in the planning phases also fosters positive community relationships, true empowerment, and localized advocacy work.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

6. “Our kids don’t like the police because we don’t like the police”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several Gang Prevention Town Halls had participants that were parent(s) of children who had died as a result of gun and gang violence. In several of the Gang Prevention Town Halls, these parent(s) shared their unfortunate experiences of finding their deceased child and the associated trauma associated with the loss of a child. In one case, a parent shared that they had taught their children that the “<i>police are the enemy</i>”. The parent continued to grieve and pleaded that they felt as though they had a part to play in the death of their child. The parent shared that after the death of their child, some of the most supportive people in their life were the Homicide investigators. Having a positive experience with police during a traumatic moment dramatically changed this parents perspective on police and the community that they reside in. The parent plead to the participants in the Gang Prevention Town Hall that their children had adopted their negative mindset towards various forms of authority (<i>including the police and teachers</i>) and it impacted their ability to develop positive and pro-social relationships with adult role models.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting influential community leaders with strategic neighbourhood initiatives are a bridge of trust within gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods. Highlighting, encouraging, and empowering community members who have lived experiences that are valuable to the greater good has the ability and impact to greatly influence the perspectives of communities as whole, organically and efficiently - from the inside out.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

7. “There are two types of people - condo people and housing people”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community members who reside in Toronto Community Housing revealed that they felt as though they are serviced differently by various government and non-government organizations.In particular, community members who reside in rejuvenated neighbourhoods with a mix of both private condominium owners and Toronto Community Housing tenants had the perspective of discrimination on a daily basis. They felt as though they get treated different at the grocery store, at local schools, their interactions with police, and when attending various government municipal services (Ontario works, the Ministry of Transportation Ontario, etc.).As a result of this perspective, impacted community members advised that they often felt isolated, disengaged, and devalued. Some community members advised that these feelings lead them to pursue negative habits as a coping mechanism, including drug and alcohol use, negative self talk, and general feelings of isolation and disconnect.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensuring a high quality of professional service in interactions with community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods will strengthen community trust, foster healthier family structures, and encourage pro-social attitudes.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

8. “We are not proud of being in housing”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some community members who reside in Toronto Community Housing indicated that they felt a sense of shame for residing in community housing. The overwhelming members of the community who reside in Toronto Community Housing shared that they wished for a better life, however, had no direction, access to information, feasible education, or guidance communicated to them on a level of understanding that they felt confident with, to successfully implement a strategy to change the course of their future. Surrounded by mixed private and community housing within the same neighbourhood, some community members residing in Toronto Community Housing shared that they felt unaccomplished, insecure, and upset about their own lives when they would see high end vehicles in their shared parking lots and other private tenants wearing high valued clothing and jewellery. These community members were capable, intelligent, and willing to pursue their individual personal and professional goals, however, lacked either the capital, mentorship, or guidance to be able to develop a feasible action plan to pursue their goals. This perspective and experience creates a local community divide that manifests feelings of insecurity and dependence, resulting in anti-social behaviour.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding this perspective may afford police officers with an insightful understanding, empathy, and perspective to successfully engage community members residing in Toronto Community Housing, and gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods at an impactful level. This will strengthen relationships among the Toronto Police Service and gang and crime impacted communities, foster a higher quality of service, and encourage pro-social attitudes. Being able to understand this perspective may allow for members of the Toronto Police Service to resonate with, and mitigate, any of the associated risk factors associated to the community members that they’re dealing with and re-route conversations to practical next steps in the pursuit of community goals, achievements, and fulfillment.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

9. “The elderly are afraid to go outside because of the news”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The elderly population residing in gang impacted communities advised that they felt disengaged from their community and local government services, fearful of the violence in their neighbourhood, and vulnerable.• In many of the testimonials, the elderly population advised that they had the time, experience, and wisdom to be able to influence their local community, however, felt as though they lacked the support and access to be able to facilitate community events, strategies, and initiatives effectively.• The elderly population advised that they’re fearful to leave their residence as they have feelings of extreme vulnerability to personal attacks, random acts of violence, and intimidation from local gang members residing in their community.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging the elderly population in gang impacted neighbourhoods may strengthen pro-social attitudes among pillar community and neighbourhood members, positively support feelings of security within a vulnerable population, and encourage true empowerment within local community champions to feel able and competent in driving sustainable solutions for an extended period of time, absent of police involvement.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

10. “Communities acknowledge that they have a responsibility in creating relationships with police as well”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community members who attended Gang Prevention Town Halls advised that they were aware that their participation in initiatives, strategies, and root cause solutions were essential in the solutions surrounding gang membership, violence, and recruitment.• Community members stated that they'd be willing to participate and lead strategies, however, the strategies and initiatives had to be in alignment that would not compromise their personal safety.• Strategies focused on community mobilization, creating opportunities, improving the economic condition of their neighbourhood, fostering an environment of care, and creating localized educational opportunities were ideas that would be most supported by the community.• Enforcement led initiatives were perceived as problematic strategies for community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhood to participate in, or publicly champion.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By identifying what the immediate concerns are of communities impacted by crime, the Toronto Police Service can effectively engage and encourage community members to participate in strategies that are in alignment with both their personal interests and personal safety.• In most cases, the community members advised that they wanted to feel empowered in the leadership of localized initiatives.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

11. “In some cases, it’s difficult to communicate with an officer in a uniform because the uniform represents different things to different ethnicities, backgrounds, and experiences”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The City of Toronto is extremely diverse and has cultural and religious representation from all over the world.• Several community members advised that they were unaware of the model of policing within Canada. Often times, they shared that they originated from countries riddled with obvious police and government corruption. Those experiences remained with them and, while they attended a police-led Town Hall, they advised that they did so out of desperation and fear from their own neighbourhood.• Once they grew an understanding of how the Toronto Police Service operated, what the mission statement was, and the aim of a community centric approach, the initially hesitant community members became very forthcoming, positive, and eager to participate.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Toronto Police Service can utilize effective outreach, engagement, and messaging to address the cause and concern of the many community members who originate from countries with historical police and political corruption.• By combating their previous experiences, community members who would otherwise not communicate with, support, or report crimes to police would cooperate with police and effectively combat localized crime, while fostering strong community relationships.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

12. “Gang violence has been normalized. I’m more annoyed that I have to walk around a crime scene to get home more than the fact that there was a crime in my neighbourhood”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An insightful youth, who resides in a gang impacted neighbourhood, advised that they were more bothered by having to take a different route home as a result of a crime scene than a crime having taken place in their neighbourhood.• This youth advised that the normalization and conditioning of gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods fosters a cultural norm at the community and neighbourhood level of acceptance and tolerance for delinquent behaviour.• Subsequently, additional community members across all Gang Prevention Town Halls echoed this sentiment and stated that they wished for positive changes within gang and crime impacted communities, but felt as though the compassion for the victims has been lost in the acceptance of residing in a gang controlled neighbourhood.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effectively identifying, engaging, and empowering insightful and motivated youth in community initiatives within gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods may be source of influence to promote prosocial attitudes, adjust the cultural norms that are accepting of gang violence and behaviour, and prevent the increase of gang recruitment and membership.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

13. “Mistrust of the police pushes youth towards gang involvement as gangs foster an ‘Us versus Them’ mentality”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A self identified ex-gang member stated that they were influenced by family members, friends, and music to dislike and distrust the police and other authoritative figures. As a result, they not only avoided attempts of engaging police officers who had attempted to reach out in the past, but also any attempts by authoritative adult role models, including; teachers, guidance counsellors, and local community leaders. At a young age, the self identified ex-gang member was groomed by like-minded adult gang members who further substantiated their individual belief system. As the self identified ex-gang member got older, they began to have positive interactions with members of the police, teachers, and social workers who influenced them to change their perspective and pursue a life outside of gangs and crime. The self identified ex-gang member stated that persons in authority must understand the perspective of obstacles that gang members feel everyday - and the importance of being consistent in outreach efforts. The self identified ex-gang member shared that an individual police officer was consistently around, positive, fair, and professional in the arrest of them and their associates in the past. As a result, the gang as a whole had a level of respect for this individual police officer - which led to this particular gang member befriending the police officer and pursuing new relationships with positive adult role models.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of consistency in bridge building, outreach efforts, and professional conduct have impacts greater than a single layer. Consistency requires patience, understanding, and a belief in a vision. Combined with effective communication, consistency is a long term requirement for cementing the foundation of stable relationships.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

14. “People are living in past experiences, even beyond their level of police involvement, and passing it onto their kids”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several community members who attended the Gang Prevention Town Halls were re-living experiences that they had with the Toronto Police Service - some being 20 years ago. • These experiences, alongside adopted experiences from their social circle, were continually passed on to their children, friends, and family - and cycled through their additional circles respectively. • As a result, community members had negative views of police officers without having a single encounter, experience, or interaction with any police officer at any point in time. • These unaddressed cycles of experience directly lead to poor relationships between the police, gang impacted communities, and victims of crime. • If addressed effectively, this will decrease the levels of anxiety, paranoia, and distrust that impacted communities may have adopted towards the police. • Many community members were unaware of the developments in police protocols, training, education, and outreach to increase service delivery and adjust to the voice of the community. • While some conversations became hostile and aggressive, the emotions eventually subsided and a healthy, constructive, an appreciated integrative conversation prevailed that focused on the future, safety, and individual success of all those impacted.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in effective public education, marketing, advertising, and public relations may break the cycle of negative, outdated, and inaccurate perceptions of the Toronto Police Service Service which may lead to increased public support, increased reporting of crime, and a decrease in anti-social behaviours.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. • This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

15. “We need fathers for our children”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mother shared her experience of finding her child - shot on her driveway, deceased. As she shared her grief and experience, she brought forward the belief that an absentee father was a critical element in her deceased child's life that pushed them towards being gang involved.• A male participant responded and stated that he has been trying to have a relationship with his teenage child for several years, however, court orders and his child's mother have prevented him access from being an involved in his child's life.• This father stated that he had a lengthy criminal past, however, as he has aged and matured in life, he has been steadily employed and wishes for nothing more than to be a part of his child's life. He expressed his frustration and was desperately seeking some resolve.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying with males who are criminally involved, father's, and/or before the courts on orders that limit their involvement with their children are opportunities for members of the Toronto Police Service to develop meaningful, influential, and valued relationships with those who might otherwise continue to view the police as the enemy.• Being able to relate to a person in this situation is invaluable in connecting purpose with positive action and the development of prosocial attitudes to mitigate the risk factors associated with generational cycles of gang involvement and abuse.• Recognizing and being able to attempt to identify appropriate social services to facilitate a re-connection between a parent and a child are immeasurable and may have a priceless value to those that are impacted.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

16. “People feel that if they say something, that their whole family will be targeted”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods indicated that they had direct knowledge, information, and insight into a variety of gang offences, including: homicide, human trafficking, sexual assault, and shooting offences. When they were canvassed as to what actions, if any, they took to relay that information to law enforcement, the overwhelming majority of them indicated that they feared for their, and their family's, personal safety and never relayed any information to police. When participants in the Gang Prevention Town Halls were advised on the potential, and limitations, in providing confidential information to the police about crimes, many of them were unaware of the privilege that they would receive. Many of the participants had based their working knowledge of providing confidential information based on poor and incorrect representations in the media, movies, and word-of-mouth from within their social circle. Many community members advised that they weren't aware of the options available to provide information anonymous through Toronto Crime Stoppers.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educating community members on both the option of providing confidential information to police, but also Toronto Crime Stoppers, is an invaluable asset to gang and crime impacted communities and the Toronto Police Service. Engaging in an intensive outreach and educational strategy to highlight the available of providing confidential information to the police directly, or utilizing Toronto Crime Stoppers, may yield in much needed information to prevent criminal offences and foster valuable sources of information to aid and assist in the administration of justice.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

17. “Youth are not exposed to anything outside of their neighbourhood, some schools don’t even have any field trips to show gang involved youth anything outside of their neighbourhood”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An educator advised that they had organized a field trip to take some of their behavioural students two hours outside of the City of Toronto. The educator advised that during and after the trip, the most at risk youth had stated that they have never been more than five city blocks away from their residence and weren’t aware of the world outside of their neighbourhood.• In one particular case, the educator stated that a student (who was a known and self admitted gang member) confided to them that after experiencing the field trip, they had a new outlook on life and wanted to pursue an alternative, non criminal path. Unfortunately, the motivation from the single event dwindled and the at risk youth continued to become criminally involved while failing to achieve academic success.• Several educators from allover the City of Toronto had attended the Gang Prevention Town Halls. When advised of this particular incident, there was unanimous agreement that the scope of exposure to a life outside of their neighbourhood was extremely limited in the most gang impacted and at risk youth.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In efforts to build trusting and prosocial relationships with at risk youth and their families, the Toronto Police Service can utilize similar types of expeditions with at risk youth - with or without partner stakeholders.• Providing an alternative experience and scope of life creates intimate bonds and fosters pro-social relationships with positive adult role models.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

OPPORTUNITIES PROVISIONS

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

18. “Labelling has real issues”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 15 year old youth was shot and killed in a gang impacted neighbourhood within a two year timeframe of a particular Gang Prevention Town Hall, in which their surviving family and friends attended. • Their family and friends advised that even though they knew the youth was gang involved, they never viewed the youth as a gang member. • After the murder of the youth, a press conference was held in which a member of the Toronto Police Service stated that the homicide was gang involved. • The family and friends of the deceased youth advised that relating the death with gang involvement was perceived as devaluing the death of their loved one. • A lengthy discussion as head with the family and friends of the deceased youth in efforts to identify some level of common ground. They were advised of the importance of acknowledging the involvement of gangs in the youth’s death in driving solutions forward. They stated that they understood the acknowledgement of gang involvement, but wished that there would have been a follow up statement along the lines of, <i>“even though this may be gang related, this is still a loss of a life”</i>.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting our language during press conferences can aid and assist in mending bridges with fragile relationships, both with the community and surviving family members of gang involved youth who become victims of homicides in the City of Toronto.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. • This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

19. “Kids are vulnerable the day they go to kindergarten”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A self identified ex-gang member advised that they would routinely pay attention to elementary schools, during the after-school hours, to identify young children who were loitering, unattended, or left on their own to walk short (or long) distances home.• The self identified ex-gang member stated that they would identify those children as the most easily recruited into gangs, as they lacked positive adult supervision.• The self identified ex-gang member stated that they would often engage these young children with positive words, small gifts, and encouragement. Over the course of years, these young children developed positive and reliant relationships with older gang members who would continue to recruit them into their gang, encouraging criminal acts and victimization.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To prevent gang violence and recruitment, the Toronto Police Service can utilize this same strategy to identify youth that may be at risk of gang involvement, those that may be recruited not the gang lifestyle, and families that may require mitigating and protective services to mitigate their risk factors with protective factors, encourage community-led supervision programs, and connect social service and programming agencies with the communities that may need it.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

20. “I am in depression but I need to stand because if I don’t, who will”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several family members, including parents and siblings, of gang involved youth who attended the Gang Prevention Town Halls had expressed they personal struggles with mental health, trauma, anxiety, and depression due to various personal issues surrounding their own childhood trauma, lived experiences, drug use and abuse, and poverty.• Across several Gang Prevention Town Halls, parents had all expressed emotional exhaustion and fatigue that coincided with a defeated mentality. They advised that they wished to participate as a healthy parent in their child’s life - however, they needed help themselves.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By being sensitive to this insight, the Toronto Police Service may be able to effectively identify root cause solutions with gang impacted youth by strategically engaging not only youth at risk of gang involvement, but their pillars at home - their parents and siblings.• While individual relationships with police officers may be an effective protective factor, a stronger and more sustainable strategy is to strengthen the family structure as a whole by referring them to much needed professional and social services in alignment with their respective risk factors.
POTENTIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

21. “Before kids get into gangs, they’re doing nothing”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A self-identified gang member advised that they, and many other gang members, lack activity, engagement, and perceived opportunities that lead them to the belief that their only option in acquiring income is to become a gang member.• The self-identified gang member stated that when there are no other alternatives of occupying time outside of school hours, they tend to congregate outdoors or utilize social media to find their place within the local youth social structure. Unfortunately, in gang impacted neighbourhoods, the social structure for youth living in low equity is to become gang involved, earn money through illicit methods (drug trafficking, robbery, human trafficking, extortion, etc.), and establish an influential social media presence.• The self identified gang member stated that after school programs, when parents weren’t around or at work, would be an essential step required in gang impacted neighbourhoods to prevent youth at risk of gang involvement from becoming recruited into a gang.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Toronto Police Service can utilize this insight to engage identified stakeholders, youth at risk of gang involvement, and local social services in supporting collaborative program development, supports, and address the localized need of gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

22. “The first question to ask parents is, ‘Do you want help?’”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A parent of a gang involved youth advised that their child had a lengthy criminal history, had been arrested multiple times, and is well known to police. The parent advised that in the large majority of their interactions with police, officers were respectful, professional, and forthcoming with the reason for their interaction with their child.• The parent shared that they felt like a failure and, if provided the opportunity, they would be open to participating in parenting classes, furthering their education, and pursuing mental health assistance in identifying and working through childhood trauma.• The parent stated that they have several other children that are not criminally involved and wished to be a stronger pillar within their family structure.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When dealing with repeat young offenders, police officers can taking an additional prevention and intervention step by speaking to family members to determine if they require assistance to aid and assist in mitigating their risk factors, promoting pro-social behaviours, and developing positive relationships within their household.• Additionally, strengthening the parent pillar in a household will mitigate the risks of the other siblings pursuing a criminal lifestyle and, hopefully, reduce the likelihood of the currently criminally involved person from continual involvement in the criminal justice system.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

23. “The gang mentality is that you can’t come back”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A self identified gang member shared that the culture within a gang is one that doesn’t foster any potential of ever leaving.• The self identified gang member revealed that gang members, in private, have discussed leaving the gang but are fearful of the repercussions of leaving, being viewed as an informant for the police, or being viewed as a liability and facing deadly consequences.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advising identified gang members, gang associates, and persons at risk of gang involvement of the Toronto Police Service’s Gang Exit Program will supply an unseen demand for an alternative life path.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

24. “We are going to be back here in five years and nothing is going to be done about it, like always”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A well known, respected, and influential community leader shared that they have been a part of several conversations surrounding the prevention and intervention of marginalized youth, their families, and communities for decades.• This community leader was appreciative of the Gang Prevention Town Halls, however, did not have high expectations for an action plan to be executed at the conclusion of the events.• This perspective was adopted and echoed by other community residents within the Gang Prevention Town Hall.• The general feeling among the participants of various Gang Prevention Town Halls is that their participation in police and government led initiatives and strategies do not amount to any meaningful action within an understandable timeframe.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping the community members informed, updated, and educated on strategies that they had a voice in developing is a key element of fostering trust, establishing a positive relationship, and establishing credibility among community members living in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

25. “We can’t even access our programs”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the City of Toronto commences rejuvenation efforts in several low-equity neighbourhoods, there are a variety of multimillion dollar community centres being included to provide much needed programs, spaces, and services to gang and crime impacted communities that house a large population of at risk youth. Unfortunately, a wide variety of participants across several Gang Prevention Town Halls stated that they were having extreme difficulty in booking their children in programs within the newly developed community centres. They advised that families from more affluent areas were routinely pre-booking their children into the programs at the community centres and driving or commuting in. A specific issue with booking their children into the available youth programming had to do with the majority of it being done online. They advised that not every community member has access to reliable internet connections and that calling via phone was a tedious process that was often trumped by the ease and speed of online bookings from other Toronto residents. In particular, Toronto Community Housing residents felt discriminated against, isolated, and devalued in access youth specific programming at newly developed community centres. These feelings were amplified by their general perceptions of defeat.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Toronto Police Service can act as advocates for both the community centres and the residents residing in Toronto Community Housing within rejuvenated communities by acting as a bridge for both. The potential for joint partnerships between the City of Toronto and the Toronto Police Service to identify, engage, and encourage both families and youth at risk of gang involvement to pursue alternative methods of booking or delivery may yield the wanted results, promote inclusiveness, and foster a sense of value among Toronto Community Housing residents.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

26. “Why aren’t police in schools?”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why police officers were removed from the schools was a common question asked in almost every Gang Prevention Town Hall, either privately or publicly among the participants. Both gang impacted, and non-gang impacted, families advised that they felt as though having a police officer within the school setting provided a sense of safety and security to them while their children were at school. When they were advised that the program was removed at the request of the Toronto District School Board trustees, many of them were visibly upset and stated that it was not feasible to expect that the most impacted families would have the ability to spend a day in downtown Toronto advocating for the positive impacts the School Resource Officer program had on not only their children, but on the mental health and wellness of the parents and families.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth at risk of gang involvement, youth gang members, and youth at risk of gang victimization, develop their social circles within the school environment. To effectively mitigate and identify unaddressed risk factors in a true collaborative efforts requires a wraparound approach with every impacted stakeholder, including the school in the City of Toronto The Toronto Police Service can foster future consultative discussions with gang and crime impacted communities, the Toronto District School Board, and the Toronto Catholic District School Board to revisit the potential of reimplementing a version of the School Resource Officer program in the future - with a thorough annual evaluation process.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

27. “Broken families got us into gangs and human trafficking, but loving families got us out”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In one particular Gang Prevention Town Hall, a self identified ex-gang leader and a human trafficking survivor were both in attendance.• They both stated that a broken family environment was critical in their involvement in gangs and human trafficking.• They also both stated that being reconnected with a family structure is what got them both out.• The self identified ex-gang leader advised that he had a loving relationship with a significant person in their life who encouraged them to see a life with a positive future.• The human trafficking survivor gave birth to a child and wanted to pursue a life outside of constant victimization.• Both of them instilled family structure, values, and health as the greatest motivator, facilitator, and protective factor to combat gang and human trafficking recruitment.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police officers who have routine dealings with youth at risk of gang involvement and human trafficking should extent their outreach efforts to the family of the youth, including siblings, parents, and grandparents - if possible.• By identifying the familial risk factors, issues, and history, they may be able to refer or connect families to much need social and professional services to strengthen the family structure, environment, and relationships in efforts of preventing, intervening, and suppressing further victimization.• A needs assessment of the family structure is as important as the needs assessment of youth that are criminally involved in the justice system.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

28. “Mentors and opportunities are both very closely linked”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods shared their economic struggles as a primary reason they were absent from much needed involvement with their children. Community members stated that they either had unrecognized educational qualifications from other countries that limited their current income potential, had to work multiple jobs that required an extended period of time away from the family home, were under constant stress to ensure that bills get paid, and were mentally exhausted during times that they were with their children. Community members further stated that it was not feasible for them to enrol in furthering their education through traditional post-secondary streams, certifications, or other forms of continuing education as it required an extensive amount of time, travel, or cost that they could not manage. As a result, they shared that they felt trapped in their income potential. Further, insightful immigrant community members stated that they also lacked access to Canadian mentors in a variety of fields that can provide them with much needed real world information, education, and direction to help them achieve their entrepreneurial goals and plans that would allow a reduction in stress, connect them with projects that they're passionate about, and invigorate them with a Canadian purpose.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting franchised community members with the disenfranchised communities in the form of facilitating mentorship, training sessions, and access is a low-cost method of empowering community members, families, and struggling residents in the City of Toronto with real world skills, tips, and networks that may mitigate many of the familial risk factors associated gang involvement and strengthen the family structure as a whole.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

29. “Grassroots organizations are more effective than some government services because as they operate at later hours”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members advised that some their concerns and limitations in participation in government initiatives, programs, and strategies surrounded the hours of operation. They stated that most government offices are only open to the public during Monday to Friday, with daytime or early evening closures. For community members residing in low equity neighbourhoods, taking a day off of work to attend a government office has very impactful economic consequences. Impacted community members also shared that while most of the working class population has access to vehicles or the GO train lines, they have to utilize low-cost alternatives - primarily the TTC. As a result, what would appear as an eight hour work day becomes a 12 hour work day (due to commute). Additionally, childcare implications can make their 40 hour work week become an 80 hour work week with the inclusion of transportation time. Many community members stated that they work additional jobs on the weekend to support their financial demands. The unseen demands of living in low equity and having extended periods of travel result in a lack of energy and participation in much need social services, government initiatives, and grassroots groups that aren't within walking distance of gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods. Additionally, community members advised that they don't feel accurately represented in various government and civilian committees focused on actioning overall wellness strategies as they don't have the ability to attend meetings at either Toronto Police Service Headquarters or Toronto's City Hall.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Toronto Police Service should consider hosting and facilitating community focused committee work within the communities that need them the most. Consistently hosting committee meetings during the work week, during weekday hours, and in downtown Toronto may not facilitate an accurate and fair representation of the most impacted communities, their voice, their perspectives, and the potential implementation of solutions.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

30. “Youth cannot self-identify what their own problems are”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community members and some social service agencies advised that mistakes some organizations make when dealing with at risk youth is that they allow the youth to direct initiatives without an oversight or controller with both professional and life experience.• The assumption that at risk youth are inherently aware of real world solutions, their individual risk factors, and how to achieve long term and sustainable goals is unrealistic and, in some cases, setting them up for future failure.• While it is important to conduct intensive outreach with at risk youth, it is equally as important to strategically provide them with direction, insight, and oversight to ensure that their lack of experience and education in particular social solutions aren't overstated and underachieved.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategies aimed at empowering at risk youth to identify and provide solutions should be strongly directed by an experienced, educated, and professional adult with a proven background of management, coaching, and delivery.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

31. “If the child is the support system at home, they are most loose when they’re out of the house because it’s the only time that they can actually be a child”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A youth at risk of gang involvement advised that their single parent had a lengthy history of substance abuse issues, mental health illnesses, and was unemployed. As a result, this at risk youth shared that they’re the oldest child among several siblings and is the primary pillar within the household.• The at risk youth stated that when they’re at home, they have taken the responsibility of ensuring that their siblings are fed, make it to school, and make it home while their parent is absent, abusing substances, or is suffering from mental illness episodes.• The at risk youth shared that the only time that they can feel like a “kid” is when they’re at school or they’re not acting in the guardian role for their younger siblings. As a result, they advised that they tended to act out and become involved in the criminal justice system.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing this insight to police officers may be of value in identifying root cause familial issues, align interview and relationship questions with purpose, and aid and assist in developing trusting, meaningful, and impactful relationships with at risk youth to foster pro-social attitudes and perspectives.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SUPPRESSION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

32. “You have to give me a few days”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members shared that when a homicide occurs in their neighbourhood, a crime scene is set up, a strong presence of uniform officers are felt, the media attends with video cameras, and every community member is looking out of their windows. The impact of the heightened attention, in combination with the loss of life, generate a fearful response in community members. When uniform officers commence a systematic door knock in efforts to identify any potential witnesses to the homicide, community members are aware that their walls of their residence are thin, other community members are observing, the media is recording the interactions, and that the potential suspect or suspect’s family is aware of anyone potentially cooperating with police. Out of an initial fear of repercussion, many community members who had indicated that they had some level of knowledge of homicides in their neighbourhood chose to either not answer the door, or advise canvassing officers that they didn’t see anything. Community members advised that they understood the requirement to conduct an immediate canvass, but also shared that if a secondary canvass was conducted by non-uniformed officers who appeared similar to the demographic of their neighbourhood was completed up to two-weeks post-homicide, during the evening hours when other neighbours couldn’t see clearly, they would be open to sharing much needed information that would aid and assist in the ongoing investigations. Community members also stated that in the two weeks post-homicide, information (whether hearsay or credible) was routinely passed along through neighbourhood members. Generally, the information involved the potential motive, who was potentially involved, and/or specific details of the homicide itself.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic extended canvasses by plainclothes officers, who represent the demographics of a particular neighbourhood, in the late evening hours may increase the gathering of information and witnesses to homicides occurring in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SUPPRESSION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

33. “Shootings became a problem when they started happening in places they weren’t supposed to happen”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Community members who reside in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods advised that they felt and perceived as though shooting incidents in the City of Toronto only became problematic when they started to occur in areas that did not have a history of being gang impacted or having shootings incidents occur in them.Community members further stated that they felt disconnected and devalued as a result of the perceived police and public outrage response as these types of crimes have been historically happening in their neighbourhoods for decades.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No shooting, homicide, or violent offence that is potentially linked to gang activity should be condoned in any particular area and any particular time. A public acknowledgement of this in future homicide and shooting investigations will foster public support, trust, and value in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods - encouraging positive relationships in communities that house the most violent gang members.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SUPPRESSION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

34. “Grassroots policing is key”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community members advised that what they needed and required by members of the Toronto Police Service was a constant professional and engaging presence by police officers within their neighbourhood. Several of the most gang and crime impacted communities spoke of retired officers and their impact on knowing everyone in the community, being a professional and respected member of the community, and the focus that they provided on their small, everyday problems that were impactful to the communities needs. Some of those problems included light bulb delivery, assistance in CPTED audits, facilitating graffiti removal, hosting community events, and fostering immediate action on the localized criminal problems through the use of actioning information confidentially. Community members in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods routinely advised that they appreciated the implementation of streamlined technology to aid in reporting some offences to police, but they preferred having an actual police officer in their community to deal with, develop a relationship with, and as a uniform presence.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shooting incidents, homicides, and human trafficking are all major offences - however, the smaller offences within gang and crime impacted communities are the daily nuisances that are of high priority to citizens that slowly destroy the sense of community among gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods. The small incidents need to be thoroughly and immediately addressed to mitigate the larger incidents, foster the belief in the competence of the Toronto Police Service, and encourage trust in communication and action.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

SUPPRESSION

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

35. “Police priority systems need to be adjusted to link with the value system of individuals and families”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community member who resides in a heavily gang and crime impacted neighbourhood shared her experience in reporting a stolen bicycle in which they were referred to online reporting. This community member stated that they wanted to speak to an officer and not report it online, as the bicycle had tremendous value to their family. The officer arrived, conducted an investigation, and completed a report. The community member stated that they were extremely disappointed in the lack of follow-up for their reported stolen bicycle, and while they understood the likelihood of ever having their bicycle recovered was slim, however, they wanted the matter to be treated at the same value that it meant to them. The community member closed off their experience by sharing that, <i>“If you can’t even treat my stolen bicycle with some level of respect, why do you think I’ll ever tell you about a murder?”</i>.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Toronto Police Service justly utilizes a priority response system to ensure that preventing the loss of life is of utmost importance. This is recognized, valued, and appreciated by the majority of community members in the City of Toronto - as it should be. Within gang and crime impacted low equitable neighbourhoods, recognizing the value and impact of the reported incident is extremely important in developing long lasting, trusting, and positive relationships during an opportunity generated by a community member. Treating low priority responses on their value system increases the public’s perception of police response, competency, sensitivity, and professionalism which translates directly into the level of communication and cooperation impacted communities have during high priority responses. Utilizing the opportunity to respond to low priority calls in highly gang and crime impacted neighbourhood is an opportune moment to develop positive relationships in otherwise distrusting environments.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas. This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service’s Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

36. “We are not under serviced, we are poorly serviced”

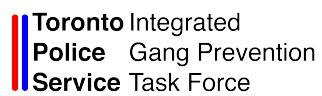
INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An influential community leader in the City of Toronto spoke of the variety of social services in the City and stated that it wasn't the lack of services available, but the quality of the services.• Community members indicated that some social services have major issues in implementation and may not be true to their mission statement, including; a lack of space to meet with youth, only catering to specific age categories, lacking stability in funding, building trust in both the community and with the target youth, they have a limited programming, intake assessments, program waitlists, getting and keeping parents and mentors involved, and being easily accessible to gang and crime impacted.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Toronto Police Service is in a unique position to readily identify reputable social service agencies, facilitate a safe space for social service providers and their target market to meet, establish partnerships to secure strategic funding from government grants, and assist in problem and community assessments.• The Toronto Police Service also has the ability to develop an audit system with the City of Toronto to ensure that social services are delivering on their desired outcomes and servicing the community efficiently, effectively, and within their best interest.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT

INSIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

37. “Communities want to be informed of strategies at their level and in forms that they value - face to face. They want input and follow-up”

INSIGHT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community members residing in gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods expressed a strong interest in wanting to participate in community-led initiatives, strategies, projects, and programs within the scope of their needs and passions.• Community members advised that they would be more inclined to participate if the strategies were run from, and in, the impacted communities.• Community members further stated that follow-up was an essential component of involvement in initiatives - on both ends, from the police to the community, and from the community to the police.
OPPORTUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bringing community strategies, projects, and initiatives into the community as opposed to having the community attend a police facility are necessary steps to establish a positive and productive relationship within the most gang and crime impacted neighbourhoods.
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through strategic deployment and collaboration of police officers, social services, and community members in 12, 23, and 31 Division in 12 gang and crime impacted neighbourhood improvement areas.• This insight is being actioned via the Toronto Police Service's Project #Engage416 through the effective development and use of internal and external lectures, training, and social media content to raise public awareness.



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