



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 21 January 2025
Subject: Building Safer Communities Update Q4 2024
Directorate: Community Safety and Social Services

Issue:

Council is being provided with an update on the Building Safer Communities project.

Policy / Council Direction:

The Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) project aligns with Council's 2023-26 Caring Community Focus Area.

Background:

In May of 2022, Administration was notified by Public Safety Canada (PSC) that the City of Airdrie was selected to receive approximately \$1 million dollars, as part of the Building Safer Communities Fund which has been allocated to municipalities and Indigenous governments to put in place community-led projects to combat youth gun and gang violence.

Once Administration was notified by PSC, strategy development began which included the hiring of an external consultant to survey and evaluate feedback from youth and youth-serving organizations in Airdrie to understand youth violence and bullying in the community. Based on the feedback collected in 2022, the Airdrie Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Strategy was finalized in 2023, which outlined options for next steps in addressing youth safety.

In January 2024, the City of Airdrie, and Public Safety Canada (PSC) made the official announcement to inform the community that the City has been awarded the grant.

Based on the strategy, Administration focused on two initiatives aimed to foster positive relationships with youth and prevent unsafe or violent behaviour, which included:

1. City Administration and community partners work together to implement an evidence-based approach that improves youth outcomes, through an evidence-based framework, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) .

2. Develop a wrap-around support initiative focused on youth between the ages of 13 and 18 who are experiencing vulnerabilities and at risk of entering gun and gang violence.

To introduce the project, Administration held a workshop in March with social-serving organizations, RCMP, Rocky View Schools (RVS), and the Chamber of Commerce. Following the workshop, an open house was organized for residents to learn more about the project.

Progress to Date

Initiative One: PBIS Community Collaborative – Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

The PBIS¹ Community Collaborative seeks to enhance the capacity of youth-serving organizations in Airdrie and municipal departments that engage with youth to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) effectively. The initiative aims to promote consistent positive behavioral expectations for all youth, foster collaboration among service providers, and create a unified approach to supporting youth development. Through training, capacity building, and enhanced coordination, the initiative aspires to establish a citywide culture of positive reinforcement and shared accountability for youth outcomes.

To date, the following accomplishments include:

- April 2024: A PBIS introductory training for City Administration which included Genesis Place, Arenas, and Parks staff.
- June 2024: Airdrie youth-serving organizations participated in PBIS training.
- September 2024: youth-serving groups participated in the remaining PBIS training.
- November/December 2024: Implementation training was completed with internal departments and youth-serving community groups.

During the PBIS training, the identified groups were provided the introductory behaviour principles to better understand how we can better support youth behaviour in the community context. During the fall/winter, the groups were then provided three sessions to prepare them for the implementation phase of PBIS. This included identifying our core values, creating the behavioral expectations that can be utilized in both indoor and outdoor spaces, and breaking down the accountability procedures for handling youth behavior. These key pieces will allow for staff in our public and youth-serving spaces to be consistent in responding to youth behaviors in a positive and effective way.

In early 2025, the identified entities will work with Administration to begin plans for implementation in their respective work spaces. Administration is also exploring the best

¹ Center on PBIS. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports. PBIS is an evidenced-based framework that supports students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health. When implemented, it improves social emotional competence, academic success, and school climate. <https://www.pbis.org/pbis/what-is-pbis>, (accessed 15 October 2024).

option to support our groups in finding a sustainable approach that continues this work following the training.

Initiative Two: Positive Directions

Positive Directions is a youth resilience program designed to prevent and address bullying, violence, and gang involvement among youth aged 13-18 in Airdrie. The program utilizes a holistic, evidence-based approach to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen protective factors to guide youth towards positive choices. Through mentorship, skill-building, and community collaboration, Positive Directions empowers youth to develop resilience, build healthy relationships, and actively engage in their community.

To date, our Positive Directions team has been established which includes a Child and Youth Care worker from BGC Airdrie, a designated RCMP officer and administrator support from Rocky View Schools (RVS). Administration has provided program presentations to RVS Principals and support staff. As this is a pilot project, the program is currently accepting referrals only through RVS principals and support staff.

In summary, both initiatives continue to move forward and would not be possible without the support and commitment from our community partners.

Council Committee Routed Through:

Administration's report was provided to the Community Safety and Social Services standing committee on November 12th on consent agenda. The report was pulled only for questions.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration recommends that Council accept the Building Safer Communities Update for information.

Budget Implications:

Municipal contributions are included in the 2025 approved operating budget.

Communications and Engagement:

Administration will continue to work with the communications department to create a community outreach plan to share information on the projects progress.

Recommendation:

That Council accepts the report entitled “Building Safer Communities Update”, for Information.

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Pauline Clark, Team Leader, Social Planning
Lynn Mackenzie, Manager, ME & RCMP Support Services

Staff Presenter:	Jessica Dudek
External Presenter:	N/A
Department:	Social Planning & Municipal Enforcement
Reviewed by:	Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	#1: PBIS Community Collaborative TOC #2: Positive Directions TOC