# Safe Streets Safe Cities

## Conference Report

Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference
April 4-6, 2006, Calgary, Alberta

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**Canada**West
FOUNDATION

# Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference

**Safe Streets - Safe Cities** was a national conference held in Calgary, Alberta, April 4-6, 2006.  The Canada West Foundation and the Community Life Improvement Council co-hosted the event.

**Safe Streets - Safe Cities** sought to tackle chronic social problems affecting urban society, and to propose workable, compassionate solutions to make cities safe.  The conference aimed to mobilize innovative thought and to allow conference participants to examine the modern challenges to community cohesion, including drug and alcohol addiction, crime, sexual exploitation, poverty, and homelessness.  Experts in their various fields discussed the best practices and precedents being used throughout the world to address these and other related issues.

# Executive Summary

Co-hosted by the Canada West Foundation and the Community Life Improvement Council, the inaugural Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference examined the chronic social problems affecting urban society and proposed workable, compassionate solutions to make cities safe. Held in Calgary on April 4 through 6, 2006, the event aimed to mobilize innovative thought and to allow conference participants to examine the modern challenges to community cohesion, including drug and alcohol addiction, crime, sexual exploitation, poverty, and homelessness. Experts in their various fields discussed the best practices and precedents being used throughout the world to address these and other related issues. A diverse group of 350 people from across Canada and from the United States attended the conference. Keynote speakers included former US Attorney General Janet Reno, former Mayor of Vancouver Philip Owen, and Chief Elijah Harper.

The conference provided an opportunity for learning from the experiences of communities across western Canada and around the world. Although it did not yield a finished blueprint for ensuring safe cities, the conference highlighted the growing importance of the chronic social problems affecting urban society and pointed to proactive solutions.

Key themes of the Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference include:

- communities must take steps to make the general public aware of street level and community social problems;

- communities must lead, and allow government action to follow;

- positive change occurs one block at a time, and one person at a time;

- to address street level social problems, communities need to give individuals a sense of belonging and community; and

- prevention of street level community social problems can be cheaper and more effective than addressing problems once they exist.

A number of methods for increasing public awareness of problems and for taking steps to address problems were identified:

- develop community networks;

- develop local champions;

- encourage data collection and research;

- fund grassroots community revitalization efforts;

- engage in strategic philanthropy;

- engage the media; and

- promote debate.

Planning is underway for a second Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference in Vancouver in 2008.

## *Preface*

Glenn Lyons
Lyons, Venini and Associates

The idea of having a conference in Calgary to showcase best practices grew out of the frustrations that Susan McIntrye of The Hindsight Group Ltd. and I were experiencing as we were doing research work for a crime and social disorder reduction strategy in Calgary's Beltline district.

We had done similar work in downtown Calgary in the early 1990s and we were surprised by both the similarities and differences between the two projects. Our first observation was that Calgary's major downtown problems—illegal drugs, homelessness, and sexual exploitation—hadn't changed. They had only gotten worse. The drugs were harder now, with crack cocaine dominating the scene and crystal meth looming on the horizon. Calgary's homeless population had more than quadrupled in the last 12 years and far too many young men and women were still being sexually exploited on Calgary's streets.

What really surprised us, however, was the weariness and the sense of resignation among police and front line social and community workers. The funding cuts of the early 1990s had indeed taken their toll. The Calgary Police Service was much thinner on the ground and struggling to keep up with the changing scene. The front line social agencies were also struggling, trying to find ways of doing more with less and less money.

In addition, despite the explosion of innovative approaches in crime prevention and community development around the world, there was a dearth of new ideas circulating in Calgary. Great Britain, in particular, has been doing many innovative things. In response, Susan and I talked about bringing someone in from the Home Office to talk about their efforts and the idea of the conference was born—one speaker and maybe 50 people attending. We then spoke with two prominent Calgary business leaders—Jim Gray and Dick Wilson—who encouraged us to proceed with the project. They also offered us some keen advice: first, that all of western Canada's major cities were experiencing these same problems; and, second, that some problems such as illicit drugs were seriously affecting our northern resource towns as well.

Our discussions with Gray and Wilson led to the partnership between the Community Life Improvement Council and the Canada West Foundation to produce the Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference. Marilyn Arber from the Community Life Improvement Council and Roger Gibbins and his staff at the Canada West Foundation became ardent supporters of the project.

The response to the idea of the conference was overwhelming. Our single-speaker event blossomed into a major conference with 8 keynote speakers and dozens of panelists. Fundraising from the Calgary corporate community and grants from the City of Calgary, the Province of Alberta, and the Government of Canada exceeded all expectations. The delegate response was simply amazing, with over 350 registrants. The local media coverage was unprecedented in Calgary. Clearly, the Conference's themes and the quest for new solutions found ready acceptance in western Canada.

Our collective work is really only beginning with the end of the conference. We must now put the information that we have learned to good effect. I hope this report will assist you in your own attempts to build safer communities.

## 1. Introduction

**In** April 2006, the Canada West Foundation and the Community Life Improvement Council (CLIC) jointly hosted the inaugural Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference in Calgary, Alberta.  Anticipated to be the first in a series of conferences, the event was dedicated to addressing the myriad chronic social problems facing big cities in western Canada.

Urban societies are increasingly afflicted with challenges that threaten their social fabric and the cohesion of communities, such as drugs, crime, the sex trade, poverty and homelessness.  These problems affect both the individuals involved and the wider communities in which they live.  Safe Streets - Safe Cities sought to gather leading experts from across Canada and the United States to discuss these issues and attempt to find compassionate and practical solutions to these problems, with an eye to making cities safer.

The conference married the strengths of the two founding organizations: CLIC's knowledge of the urban social problems facing Calgary's downtown and inner city communities, and the Canada West Foundation's expertise in bridging research and ideas with active public policy debates. There was a realization that the social problems facing urban areas are not the exclusive domain of governments, nor are governments adequately dealing with these problems.  There is a need to go beyond this and to engage the business community as a stakeholder.  The hope was to foster serious dialogue about devising effective strategies to help make our streets and communities safer.

This report outlines the overall purpose of Safe Streets - Safe Cities, how the conference came together, and what problems it sought to address. Rather than providing a transcript of the conference presentations, we instead provide a summary of the key themes that emerged from the conference and possible ways the conference may serve as a point of departure for future action.

## 2. Genesis of the Conference

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference stemmed from a 2004 report by the Community Life Improvement Council.  This report, entitled "Safe Streets - Safe City," sought to advance recommendations for reducing crime and enhancing public safety in Calgary's Beltline communities of Victoria Crossing and Connaught.  However, while the report was an important step in identifying the challenges facing these communities, the feeling at the time was that more work needed to be done.  There was also a sense that Calgary could learn from the experiences of other cities and communities both within Canada and around the world.  The Community Life Improvement Council decided to host a forum to bring together these ideas and to enable a wider discussion about ways to address crippling community social issues such as homelessness, drug use, and sexual exploitation.

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference, initially meant to be a small event, blossomed into a symposium of much wider scope. The evolution of the event into a major conference occurred when a number of groups not previously involved were identified as stakeholders in building safe communities.  This began with the engagement of the business community.  Once on board, the business community embraced the event. Other organizations were then drawn in to help engage the wider community and to assist in broadening the scope of the conference.  The Canada West Foundation was a natural ally in the development of the conference as its Western Cities Project focuses on important policy issues facing big cities in western Canada.  Municipal governments were also identified as stakeholders and were engaged in the process.

With the addition of so many partners, and due to the early interest within the Calgary community generated by the event, the conference agenda quickly expanded from a one-day event with a single keynote speaker to a three-day event with the participation of a host of experts and practitioners.  Conference participants brought a diversity of backgrounds to the event (including government, law enforcement, the nonprofit sector, grass roots community organizations, and the research sector) and came from a wide range of geographic locations in Canada and the United States.

## 3. Purpose of the Conference

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference had three objectives:

- ■ to enable stakeholders from western Canada to learn from the community revitalization experiences of experts and practitioners from across North America;

- ■ to create an opportunity for stakeholders to create new networks and partnerships within and across western Canadian cities; and

- ■ to serve as a catalyst and model for subsequent Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conferences across western Canada.

Additional benefits of the conference would be increased community awareness of the challenges facing many urban communities and the importance of addressing these challenges.

A key assumption of the conference organizers was that western Canada's urban centres share many of the same problems. As cities grow, they also experience an increase in the magnitude of their social problems on a scale that sets them apart from smaller communities. Urban inner city communities are increasingly in search of solutions to these problems and of ways to revitalize their downtown cores. And while every city is unique in its own right, this shared challenge suggests that Canadian cities have much that they can learn from each other, and much that they can learn from the experience of cities around the world.

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference brought together a wide range of people—from frontline social workers and law enforcement officers to researchers and policy-makers—to learn about and discuss issues that must be addressed in order to revitalize cities. Panels included:

- ■ building safe and inclusive communities as a deterrent to crime;

- ■ poverty and homelessness;

- ■ Aboriginal Canadians in the urban environment;

- ■ the problem of drugs and alcohol in our communities; and

- ■ sexual exploitation.

These issues are significant and pervasive street level problems with both direct and indirect victims. At the societal level, these realities pose challenges to public safety and make building community within the inner city difficult. The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference addressed the wider societal impact of these street level problems and discussed what community residents can do to take back their streets from crime and to help those afflicted with addictions and illness—those most vulnerable to exploitation—seek the help that they require.

Conference organizers acknowledged that there were themes missing from the conference such as gang activity, the challenges facing immigrant youth, and the presence of illegal firearms in our cities, but these were omitted due to time constraints (see Lee Tunstall, *Conference Evaluation Part 1: Ex Ante Evaluation,* March 31, 2006). It was noted that these might be suitable themes to pursue in subsequent conferences.

## Community Revitalization Success Story: Question and Answer with Jim Diers

Jim Diers, Director of Seattle's South Downtown Foundation, is well-acquainted with community revitalization, as he has been engaged with locally-led community revitalization initiatives since the 1970s, and is the author of *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way.* His opening keynote presentation at the Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference set an optimistic tone for the event. Mr. Diers generously agreed to contribute further to the Safe Streets - Safe Cities initiative by responding to a number of questions for this report.

### What is neighbour power?

Neighbour power is the extraordinary capacity for change that ordinary citizens can exercise when they come together as a community. They can influence the actions of government, developers, and other external forces. They can also mobilize their own assets—their passion, knowledge, skills, and relationships—in support of caring communities, revitalized neighbourhoods, and a better world.

### How did community action begin in Seattle?

Community action in Seattle is as old as its neighbourhoods. In virtually every neighbourhood, citizens came together to form a democratic association known as a community council or club. Each of these associations was indigenous to the neighbourhood, comprised entirely of volunteers, and completely independent of city government and neighbouring associations. Some built their own clubhouses and organized social events but, over time, most focused on lobbying city government. The associations became increasingly insular and reactive, typically rallying around issues related to land use or public safety.

### What changed with the creation of Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods in 1988?

Neighbourhood associations retained their independence, but they began working together on common issues through newly established district councils. They became more proactive as programs of community empowerment were made available including Leadership Development, Neighborhood Planning, and the Neighborhood Matching Fund. These programs also encouraged communities to utilize their own resources, getting many more people active in their neighbourhoods and giving rise to new and more broadly based organizations. These community associations, some of which are ethnically rather than geographically based, became engaged in a wider variety of efforts including the environment, human services, economic development, affordable housing, recreation, education, public art, and local history. With communities and government working as partners rather than as adversaries, it was possible to accomplish more and to do so in a more holistic and neighbourhood-sensitive way.

Eighteen years later, tens of thousands of citizens have been involved in the development of dozens of neighbourhood plans and more than 3,000 community self-help projects. Revitalization continues to be an issue in some neighbourhoods but gentrification is the larger issue these days. There are certainly times when community associations and local government are at odds, but a limited amount of such conflict is probably healthy. Generally, however, both government and citizens are better off, because they have come to treat neighbourhoods not just as places with needs, but as communities of people with valuable, underutilized resources.

### What advice can you give to Canadian cities that wish to experience similar success?

I am impressed with the way in which Canada's local governments and community associations tend to think more holistically than is typically the case in the United States. You certainly have much to teach us in terms of making health care more accessible and guns less so. I am also inspired by the strong commitment to community demonstrated by both government and citizens. You are starting from a great place.

I would encourage local government to think about establishing little city halls similar to Seattle's or finding other ways to make its services more accessible and integrated in order to focus on whole communities rather than discrete functions. I would pilot some kind of a matching fund program that would enable the city to partner with citizens in support of short-term, community self-help projects. Be sure to include volunteer labour as a match provision, because there is no better way to get people more involved in their communities.

I would encourage community associations to reach out, finding ways to be as inclusive as possible while being supportive of immigrants, youth, tenants, local businesses, and others who may, because of language, culture, or other differences, be underrepresented in your association. Think broadly about the mission of your association, realizing that the people in your neighbourhood have a variety of interests and that holistic approaches are the most effective. For example, if public safety has been the focus of your association, consider the ways in which art, education, recreation, decent housing, living wages, and a stronger sense of community can contribute to this goal. Hold your government and police accountable, but share the responsibility for your community. There is so much that communities can do that government cannot, and there is even more that can be accomplished by working together as true partners.



Before

After

**Community Action in Seattle**
The Phinney Ridge P-Patch was one of our first Neighborhood Matching Fund projects. It was awarded $13,500 in funding in late 1989. The project began in the spring of 1990 and was completed within a year. About 100 people were involved in the project, although some people were much more involved than others. The project is located on a street that was undeveloped because it is too steep (60th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues NW in the Phinney Ridge neighbourhood). Jim Dier's book, *Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way,* is available through the University of Washington Press.

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference provided a forum in which experiences could be shared, ideas advanced, and possible solutions discussed. With the growth of social problems facing urban communities, the time was ripe to facilitate a meeting of minds and to encourage innovative thought in the hope this would inspire the visionary leadership necessary to mobilize communities—goals that were important for the Calgary community and beyond.

## 4. Summary of Conference Themes

The range of topics covered at the conference was vast, and it is not possible to summarize the many speeches and panels, much less the discussions that occurred between sessions, in this report. However, there are five key themes that did emerge from the diversity of information and debate of the conference.

"When streets aren't safe, we are all victims."
– Alderman Madeline King, City of Calgary

**1. Communities must take steps to make the general public aware of street level and community social problems.**

A problem frequently mentioned by presenters and participants was that street level community social problems are often invisible to residents who do not live directly in the heart of the affected communities. Simply put, most residents of a city are unaware that problems exist or of their extent and depth. The saying "out of sight, out of mind" is apt in this situation. In addition, many of the residents who live in the affected neighbourhoods often feel unable to make a difference or lack the information and tools to mobilize change. The lack of a broad-based public constituency demanding positive change means that street level community social problems often do not make it onto the political agendas of federal, provincial or municipal politicians. The problems are simply ignored.

"If prostitution and youth exploitation are invisible, how do we deal with them? We need to rip off the veil. Prostitutes and drug addicts are part of our community."
– Jody Patterson, Executive Director, Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society (PEERS)

To address this problem, many presenters argued that communities, nonprofit organizations, and other interested parties need to take steps to make street level community social problems more visible to all residents of a city, and to communicate that these are problems for the urban community as a whole, rather than simply problems of isolated neighbourhoods.

**2. Communities must lead, and allow government action to follow.**

Communities cannot afford to sit and wait for governments or other agencies to step in and take the actions necessary to address urban social problems: government action may take a long time to occur, if it happens at all. Instead, communities must act as the leaders, developing local neighbourhood approaches, and then engage government.

How would this work? The first step, it was suggested, is for one or two concerned neighbourhood residents to put up flyers advertising a meeting. At this meeting, the community members can identify the problems they see, and identify small steps that could be taken—including holding a second (and then third, and then fourth) meeting. The goal of this grassroots action is to engage an ever-growing number of people, and to expand the exchange of ideas. Eventually, this group can begin to take small steps toward improving the neighbourhood—such as painting over graffiti, picking up litter, or establishing a block watch. This

> "Never do for people what they can do for themselves.  To do so takes their power away, and community building needs to empower people.  Bottom-up community solutions are ideal; things don't work as well from the top down."
> –Jim Diers, Director, South Downtown Foundation, Seattle

grassroots group could seek to establish partnerships with other grassroots groups, municipal departments, local community associations, local schools and churches, nonprofits, neighbourhood businesses, and local law enforcement and emergency services.

The need for individuals to be proactive and to take steps to initiate change, rather than waiting for someone else to initiate change, was a common theme in many discussions.  It was also argued that grassroots community action is more effective and positive for the community than is government-led bureaucratic action.

**3. Positive change occurs one block at a time, and one person at a time.**

Individuals and communities need to be realistic and patient in their efforts to revitalize their neighbourhoods.  Change will not occur overnight, and progress will be incremental.  For this reason, it was often suggested that community revitalization be taken one block at a time.  Similarly, it was argued that efforts to address "problem behaviours," such as drug addiction, prostitution, and gang activity, must be addressed one person at a time.

> "We need to work street by street, one block at a time.  You need to start small, and make people feel like the goal is possible."
> –Jim Diers,  Director, South Downtown Foundation, Seattle

**4. To address street level social problems, communities need to give individuals a sense of belonging and community.**

Community revitalization requires that neighbourhood residents develop a sense of attachment, belonging and ownership in their community.  Getting people engaged in their community—be it through a group effort to remove litter, or a neighbourhood farmers' market—gives them a sense of pride, which then feeds their desire to see the neighbourhood continue to improve.  Residents are encouraged to get to know one another, and to get to know the young people in the neighbourhood.  Opportunities for people to "bump into" each other should be encouraged.  Anonymity fosters indifference toward the community, while community engagement fosters a sense of belonging.

> "Gangs understand that people need a support network, and they provide this."
> – Susan Thompson, President and CEO, University of Winnipeg Foundation

The need for a sense of belonging was also mentioned with respect to the homeless, addicts, prostitutes and gang members.  One message that was clearly communicated at the conference is that these individuals frequently have a profound sense of loneliness and isolation in their lives, making it all the more difficult to break free from gang life, addiction, or prostitution.  As part of their rehabilitation, it is important to give these individuals a sense of belonging and a strong support network.

At both the individual and community levels, the role of art and of artists was frequently mentioned. Artists should be encouraged to contribute to the community through murals, music festivals and dramatic performances. Young people should be given opportunities for artistic engagement and training to help foster self-esteem and belonging, and to reduce the temptation of addiction and gang membership.

"A tough and harsh response to a problem is not necessarily equivalent to an effective and satisfactory response."
– Gena Gerrard, Executive Director, Restorative Justice Community Action Inc., Minnesota

"Crime prevention is cheaper than policing. You need to put your money upfront."
– Christiane Sadeler, Executive Director, Community Safety & Crime Prevention Council of Waterloo Region

"Police and the criminal justice system cannot address the drug problem, and they shouldn't be asked to. We can't lock people up and expect them to get better. Prisons are graduate schools for criminals."
– Phillip Owen, former Mayor of Vancouver

"Prevention and early childhood education are the path to safe cities and quality lives."
– Janet Reno, former US Attorney General

**5. Prevention of street level community social problems can be cheaper and more effective than addressing problems once they exist.**

Many of the conference speakers argued that prevention of street level problems is cheaper and easier—and more humane—than is addressing problems once they exist. Drug prevention—by giving children and families the support they need, for example—is cheaper and more effective than treating drug addiction. Drug treatment is cheaper and more effective than repeat hospital and prison stays. Family programs that teach parenting and anger management skills are cheaper and more effective than providing social services for abused and neglected children. Affordable housing is cheaper than homeless shelters. And addressing the physical signs of urban decay, such as graffiti, litter and dilapidated buildings, is cheaper and easier when it is isolated to one block than after it has been left for months or years to snowball and fester. Many presenters argued that there are numerous public costs to street level social problems: costs to the justice and penal systems; costs to the health care system; and costs to social services. It was strongly argued that actions taken at earlier stages would reduce not only the tangible costs to the public purse, but also the intangible costs to neighbourhoods, to families, and to individuals.

That said, it was also noted that we need to be careful when making arguments that prevention programs save money, as the goal is not savings *per se*. It is important that communities not surrender the moral high ground in debate about such social issues, as addressing the problems—rather than saving money—is an important and worthy end in itself.

## 5. Options for Moving Forward

A number of methods for increasing public awareness of problems and for taking steps to address problems were identified:

**Develop community networks.** In response to the suggestion that the conference was "preaching to the choir," Canada West Foundation President and CEO Dr. Roger Gibbins retorted, "There may be a collection of strong voices, but there is not yet a choir." He suggested that much work still needs to be done to increase the number of individuals and groups working to address street level social problems and issues of urban decay in western cities. This should be done through partnerships, workshops and conferences.

**Develop local champions.** Individuals with leadership positions and skills in the community should be encouraged to become vocal proponents for the community. In addition, efforts should be made to recruit local business and community leaders, as well as elected officials, to become advocates for the neighbourhood. These individuals do not need to live in the neighbourhood to be effective in communicating the extent of the problems to the general public.

**Encourage data collection and research.** There is an adage in public policy circles: "what gets measured gets managed." One challenge for street level social problems is that there is a lack of reliable data available. In order to convince the general public and policy-makers that problems exist, communities need to be able to communicate the magnitude and effects of these problems. For this reason, communities should encourage and support research and data collection initiatives. Nonprofit agencies should examine ways in which they can be involved in research and data collection, and corporations, individuals and foundations should provide funding assistance to such research efforts.

**Fund grassroots community revitalization efforts.** Corporations, individuals and foundations should be supportive of neighbourhood revitalization efforts, and should provide funding to groups that show community leadership and vision. It was noted that these groups should accept volunteer labour hours as matching contributions for matching grant programs. Jim Diers, Director of the South Downtown Foundation in Seattle, suggested that cities set up neighbourhood matching funds in which the municipal government provides matching funding for community labour, goods and services. He noted that this has been a successful program in Seattle that now provides approximately $4 million annually to local, community-driven projects such as tree planting, parks, and community centres.

**Engage in strategic philanthropy.** Curtis Meadows Jr. of the Meadows Foundation argued that foundations and corporate donors need to engage in strategic philanthropy, making decisions on an analytical, rather than emotional, basis. Philanthropists must look for intervention possibilities, and recognize the importance of communicating the magnitude of problems to their boards, partners, and the general public.

**Engage the media.** The news media, particularly local newspapers and local television and radio stations, are seen as vital partners for communicating the importance of addressing street level problems. Communities must make efforts to bring these problems to the attention of the media.

**Promote debate.** There are many ways to address urban decay and street level social problems, and not everyone will agree on means or approaches. However, it is important for communities to promote debate on how to address key problems, as this debate will encourage individuals and groups to work together to find solutions.

A noteworthy addition to the impressive line-up of speakers at the Safe Streets-Safe Cities Conference was the Keynote Address delivered by **Janet Reno,** former United States Attorney General (1993-2001).

Ms. Reno noted that successful communities are the products of the will of their people. Strong communities are safe communities and the key building block of safe communities is crime prevention, rather than a strict emphasis on law enforcement. While Ms. Reno noted both are important, she called for increased awareness about the root causes of crime on our streets: inadequate education, affordable housing shortages and problems within the youth justice system. Ms. Reno reminded conference participants about the importance of the first three years of life: infants and toddlers are the place to start as 50% of all human response is developed within the first year of life. Today's youth are our future. Hence, ensuring proper education and housing for young people should be an important goal of communities as the formative years are the most critical in developing crime prevention strategies.

## *6. Next Steps*

There seemed to be a strong feeling among conference participants that the Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference in Calgary was the first step in a series of events throughout western Canada aimed at furthering the discussion about the chronic social problems affecting cities and how to make streets safer. The Calgary event helped to create a network of corporate, nonprofit and community stakeholders who seemed to share the idea that success could only come from maintaining an open dialogue and sharing information and community strategies on an ongoing basis.

It was agreed that a second Safe Streets Safe Cities conference should be held in Vancouver in 2008.  Though the event remains in the preliminary planning stages and the precise themes still to be determined, there is a desire to keep the conference Canadian-focused, interactive and positive.  Thus far, interest in the conference has been expressed in Vancouver  by municipal and provincial politicians, people involved with the Vancouver Agreement, the BC Progress Board, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, and the West End Integrated Neighbourhood Network, to name a few. Phillip Owen, the former Mayor of Vancouver and keynote speaker at the Calgary conference, has also expressed his interest in the 2008 event.

More information will be available in the coming months.  For information on the Vancouver 2008 Conference, contact:

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## *7. Conclusion*

The Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from across Canada to learn from experts and to create new networks and partnerships.  In many ways, the organizers see the conference as a success:  the event was well-attended; participants engaged in meaningful dialogue; the speakers presented a wealth of information and participated in frank discussions with the conference delegates; and the conference presentations generated an ample number of media stories, thus increasing public awareness of street level social problems.

But, as all stakeholders are aware, a single conference alone will not address the challenges facing our communities.  What is needed is continued engagement and ongoing effort.  For this reason, the conference organizers are delighted that Calgary's Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference has served as a catalyst for a second conference in Vancouver.  Indeed, the organizers hope to see many additional conferences to come.  In addition, all conference participants are encouraged to establish and maintain partnerships with other stakeholders.  Calgary's Safe Streets - Safe Cities Conference set the process in motion, but it is up to individual stakeholders to keep the momentum going.  Western Canada's communities can only benefit.  CWF

## Appendix A: List of Panelists/Presenters

MASTER OF CEREMONIES:
**Tim Hamilton,** Founding Partner, Hamilton Hall Soles/Ray and Berndtson

### Tuesday April 4, 2006
Keynote Speakers:
**Jim Diers,** Director, South Downtown Foundation, Seattle and Instructor, Community-Driven Development, University of Washington
**Elijah Harper,** human rights activist, government lobbyist and lifetime Chief, Red Sucker Lake
**Curtis Meadows,** Director Emeritus, Meadows Foundation of Texas and Chair, National Center for Family Philanthropy, Washington, DC
**John Sewell,** consultant, community activist and former Mayor of Toronto

Panel: Community Development as a Deterrent to Crime
**Gena Gerard,** Executive Director, Restorative Justice Community Action, Inc., Minneapolis, MN
**Stoney McCart,** Director, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement
**Christine Sadeler,** Executive Director, Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council of Waterloo Region
**Susan Thompson,** President and CEO, University of Winnipeg Foundation

Panel: Poverty and Homelessness
**Judy Bader,** Assistant General Manager, Community Services Group, City of Vancouver
**Dermot Baldwin,** Executive Director, Calgary Drop-In and Rehab Centre
**Gilles Huizinga,** CEO, Wood Buffalo Housing and Development Corporation

Panel: Aboriginals in the City
**Shaun Hains,** Director, Yotin Foundation
**Tom Jackson,** actor and musician
**Mike Lickers,** Executive Director and Founder, Ghost River Rediscovery Program

### Wednesday, April 5, 2006
Keynote Speakers:
**Richard Estes,** Professor, School of Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania
**Philip W. Owen,** Former Mayor of Vancouver
**Janet Reno,** Former US Attorney General
**Marvin Van Haaften,** Director, Governor's Office of Drug Control Policy, State of Iowa

Panel: Drug and Alcohol Addiction in our Communities
**Garth Gillespie,** Program Director, Fresh Start Recovery Centre
**Donna Heimbecker,** General Manager, Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company
**George McBride,** Senior Manager, AADAC Adult Counseling and Prevention Services Calgary

Panel: Sexual Exploitation
**Susan McIntyre,** Partner, The Hindsight Group, Ltd.
**Jody Paterson,** Executive Director, Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society
**Raymond Payette,** Detective, Vancouver Police Department
**Kim Sutherland,** Executive Director and Front Line Worker, Street Culture Kidz Project

### Thursday, April 6, 2006
Keynote Speaker:
**Norm Stamper,** best-selling author, community policing crusader, former Seattle Police Chief

Workshop: Lessons Learned - The Next Steps
Presented by the International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association (CPTED)
Facilitators:
**Gregory Saville,** AlterNation Inc, University of New Haven
**Anna Brassard,** Brassard and Assoc. Ltd, University of Calgary

Panel: Tackling Community Crime Street by Street
**Marilyn Arber,** President, Community Life Improvement Council
**Doug Borch,** Crime Prevention Investment Plan, City of Calgary
**Bill Bruce,** Bylaw Enforcement, City of Calgary
**Peter Davison,** Inspector, Calgary Police Service
**Dan Jahrig,** Inspector, Calgary Police Service
**Glenn Lyons,** Lyons Venini and Associates, Ltd.
**Jeanette Nichols,** Nicholls Consulting, Ltd.

Workshop: Innovative Thought, Visionary Answers
Facilitators:
**Anna Brassard,** Brassard and Associates Ltd., University of Calgary
**Gregory Saville,** AlterNation Inc., University of New Haven

## *Appendix B: Conference Organizing Committee and Co-Chairs*

### Steering Committee

Marilyn Arber, Community Life Improvement Council

Doug Borch, Crime Prevention Investment Plan, City of Calgary

Anna Brassard, Brassard and Associates

Sandra Clarkson, HRJ Consulting Ltd.

Dr. Roger Gibbins, Canada West Foundation

James Gray, Canada West Foundation

Lisa Kahn, Community Life Improvement Council

Glenn Lyons, Lyons, Venini & Associates

Dr. Susan McIntyre, The Hindsight Group Ltd.

Eileen Stan, Victoria Crossing BRZ

Janice ter Borg, Mission Possible Communication Strategies Ltd.

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## *Appendix D: Conference Funders*

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## *Appendix E: The Canada West Foundation's Core Challenges Initiative*

The Canada West Foundation is conducting a number of projects relevant to the Safe Streets – Safe Cites Conference, including the Western Cities Project, which identifies the policy challenges faced by western Canada's largest cities, and best practices in resolving such policy challenges. In so doing, the research considers the role of Canadian cities in the 21st Century, assesses the appropriate place and powers of municipal governments in Canadian federalism, and places the growing importance of Canadian cities within the context of globalization. Through the Canada West Foundation's emphasis on citizen engagement, the Western Cities Project promotes public awareness of the growing importance of cities to the economic, social and cultural lives of western Canadians.

In pursuit of this goal, the Canada West Foundation has launched the **Core Challenges Initiative**. Street level urban social problems are perceived to be growing in western Canada's large cities, and they need to be understood and addressed as soon as possible. This is necessary both for the wellbeing of those individuals caught up in difficult and tragic circumstances, and for the wellbeing of the cities writ large.

Street level social problems such as crime, drug addiction, homelessness, gang activity, and prostitution are not simply problems of isolated communities or sections of a city; they are problems for the entire city. Left unaddressed, such street level social problems grow and expand. The end result is both individual human tragedy and impeded economic prosperity and compromised public health and safety for the entire community.

The Canada West Foundation's **Core Challenges Initiative** seeks to contribute positively to ongoing efforts to address street level urban social problems by providing reliable, accessible information, by increasing awareness of street level urban social issues, and by pushing western Canadians and their policy-makers out of complacency on these critical issues. The Canada West Foundation's expertise in the areas of urban policy and social policy, as well as its position as an objective and highly respected research institute, make the Canada West Foundation uniquely qualified to conduct this research successfully.

More information on the **Core Challenges Initiative** can be found on the Canada West Foundation's website: **www.cwf.ca**

## *Appendix F:  About the Community Life Improvement Council*

The Community Life Improvement Council (CLIC) is a grass roots, community-based organiztion formed in 1997 to address crime and social disorder issues in Calgary's inner city commmunities.  CLIC was formally incorporated as a society under Alberta legislation in 2003.

CLIC has provided forums for communities, city officials, social service providers and the Calgary Police Service to work together to solve our growing problems of prostitution, homelessness, drugs and alcohol, graffiti, and general social disorder.

In November 2004, CLIC published the Safe Streets-Safe City report consisting of 29 recommendations for reducing crime and improving the social environment of the Beltline area of Calgary.

The Community Support Officer, or CSO, pilot project administered by Calgary Bylaw Services between May and December 2005 resulted from one of the recommendations of the Safe Streets-Safe City report and was deemed very successful by both citizens and Beltline merchants.  Discussions are underway to extend the program for the coming year and possibly beyond.

In 2005, CLIC was asked to prepare a report on the Alternative Measures section of Alberta legislative Bill 206, a private members bill initiated by the Solicitor General, Mr. Harvey Cenaiko, to seize the vehicles of males arrested for soliciting the services of a prostitute.

CLIC is presently engaged in preparing Safe Streets-Safe City reports for the communities of Forest Lawn, Inglewood and Ramsay and is actively working to initiate Community Safety Councils in those communities and the Beltline.

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Community
Life
Improvement
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Community Based Crime Prevention

## Appendix G:  Calgary Herald Articles

### Seeking solutions to make city safer

A school musical in Olympic Plaza stands between a cocaine addict and his stash at the base of a light standard. No longer able to keep control, the addict waves his knife in front of the performers, grabs his fix and rushes for the washroom.

The actors are scared, the audience is numb and the night is just beginning.

Welcome to the inner core as Calgary moves towards a million people, the magic numerical marker that defines big cities.

With size come the big problems as gangs concentrate and criminals expand their reach. Drug use jumps in run-down neighbourhoods and affluent suburbs alike, and homelessness reaches a breaking point.

These are only some of the social problems that must be faced before they fester and become almost impossible to manage.

The Safe Streets Safe Cities Conference, set for April 4 to 6, is bringing to Calgary world experts, including Janet Reno, former Attorney General of the United States.

She and many other speakers and participants have seen what works and what doesn't, and created solutions that produce remarkable results in cities from Toronto to Vancouver (see the website at safestreetssafecities.com).

The public can participate and discuss ideas and solutions to make Calgary a safer, better city.

Calgary needs to determine how to solve these problems quickly, so that the social and criminal impact on people and places begins to drop.

Crystal meth is escalating and crack houses have become virtual revolving doors. Grow-ops seem to proliferate and hard drugs are brazenly sold on downtown streets.

Most small crimes and muggings are drug-related. Crack addicts only steal within a two-block radius of the drug house. Providing treatment on demand and safe injection sites reduces criminal activity and offers the addict a road to recovery.

Another solution is to change criminal sentences. While she was Attorney General, Reno pushed for tougher jail terms for habitual and violent criminals, but offered treatment and a second-chance to addicts and first-time offenders.

There are solutions to homelessness, starting with affordable housing. Studies in Toronto show that low-cost housing proves to be less expensive than shelters, and reaps far greater social rewards.

Ten years ago, Calgary had 400 homeless; today there are 2,600.

The downtown shelter is packed every night while hard drugs are sold within walking distance.

Were treatment available and housing affordable, many of the homeless and those fighting addiction could be permanently working, thus providing part of the solution to our growing labour shortage.

The goal is to reduce the impact of crime and improve the quality of the downtown. Yet there's often a weariness within the system as those on the front line try to maintain equilibrium even as the problems multiply and funding fails to keep pace.

The community needs to re-charge its social and political will and support innovative ideas that show real results.

Becoming a big city requires a paradigm shift. We don't want to be afraid of our city. We want it to be one of the most livable in the world. We need to find ways to continue to be Calgary, but on a bigger scale.

We also need time and money to develop solutions to crime and social disorder.

Calgarians are great volunteers; when we decide something is important, we go ahead and do it. We give to social agencies that make a difference, provide leadership on boards and in community groups.

We need to remind politicians that having a safe, healthy city— social infrastructure—is as important as fiscal infrastructure.

Most of all we need to remember that all big cities, even the best, are challenged. If Manhattan can clean up its downtown, so can we. And we will.

# How best to flag social injustice

Calgary Herald
Friday, March 24, 2006
Byline: John Sewell
Source: For The Calgary Herald

It's as much a surprise to me as to anyone else, but it seems public values have shifted quite considerably in recent years.

Twenty years ago, most Canadians believed in social justice and equality.

We wanted governments to fund programs that would reduce poverty, help young children who were growing up in poor families and make sure that housing families could afford was built.

And, while there might have been some differences about details, that indeed was what most governments, at most levels, did.

But those days seem to have passed. Values have shifted. Now it's just a small percentage of the voting public who think those are important social values.

Political leaders have sensed the change, which is why it's hard to find leaders telling us how they will respond to problems of homelessness, poverty and social injustice.

The federal government has seen overflowing budgets in recent years—as has Alberta—but there has been no suggestion by government leaders those surpluses should be put to programs creating more social equality.

That's why it's hard to find a strong affordable housing program anywhere in the country.

It's why welfare payments have been frozen in the past or increased only marginally, and why eligibility for Employment Insurance has been sliced even thinner.

Homelessness has risen dramatically in every large city. The homeless are a diverse collection of people who aren't doing well in society. Some of the homeless have jobs, but can't find an affordable home. Some are consumed by addictions, some by mental illness. Many are socially isolated and, after a few weeks on the street, are quickly broken. None of them asked to be there.

And while some of us continue to urge action in the name of social justice, or in the name of religious values such as love and charity, those calls seem to fall on deaf ears.

Our political leaders seem to believe social justice and equality are not critical issues for today's agenda.

What to do? First, of course, we must realize shouting the same message louder probably won't help. We need to take a different tack.

Perhaps we can attract the politicians if we tell them they should do something about homelessness in order to save money. Maybe that would get their attention.

Here's an example of what I mean: The cost of keeping someone in a shelter is about $16,000 a year. Yet the cost of putting that same person in an apartment with affordable rent, and then providing the social programs and supports needed to get that person back on his or her feet, is $11,000 a year. That's a saving of nearly one-third. Reducing homelessness is a good way to save money.

These data are from Toronto, where city staff actually worked out the costs and savings of a program called From Hostels to Housing.

I suspect that, in a better-managed city, the savings might even be greater. Better yet, once people are stabilized, the chance they will get a job and begin paying taxes is considerable.

Maybe that's the approach today's values call for; respond to the poor and the homeless, the halt and the lame, because it is a good way to save money.

To those who believe passionately in social equality and social justice, this approach may seem unduly harsh and cruel.

But it might actually make some headway on problems that are not being addressed in our current world.

Those of us who continue to believe in social justice can continue to treasure our values, and be ready to pull them out when the world turns and these values are once again at the forefront.

For the time being, we should advocate action because it saves money.

## Citizens must do their part

Calgary Herald
Wednesday, March 29, 2006
Byline: Norm Stamper
Source: For The Calgary Herald

Safe homes, safe streets and safe communities are goals we strive for daily. Moving without fear in our neighbourhoods gives us the freedom to work, give back to our neighbourhoods and raise our families.

Making our cities safe, however, requires more than goals and ideals. It demands the active participation of everyone. It means community policing.

Community policing begins with neighbourhoods taking the primary responsibility for their own safety. Rather than building bunkers and gates to ward off crime and "undesirables," communities must create authentic partnerships (think relationships in which responsibility is shared 50-50) with groups and agencies of mutual concern—including, of course, the local police department.

Community policing opens avenues for full and honest communication—with joint decision-making and problem-solving—between the police and the citizens they serve.

A major drawback to community policing, however, is the very structure of law enforcement agencies in both Canada and the United States.

Our police departments tend to be paramilitary and bureaucratic, an arrangement at odds with true community policing.

For community policing to be truly effective and efficient, police agencies must make deep structural changes within their organizations.

What we see, certainly in American police departments, is a tortuously long chain of command beginning with the beat cop and working its way up all the way to the chief (or superintendent).

Sensitive internal issues such as morale, safety and personnel moves must be addressed swiftly, and well. In the U.S., internal investigations and discipline can take up to a year to complete. There's usually a bureaucratic explanation, but the delay is still morally reprehensible and inexcusable. Justice delayed is justice denied.

The entire process needs to be overhauled, starting with a much flatter organization.

Community partners, welcomed into virtually all areas of police operations, can make policing more responsive and accountable to neighbourhood needs and concerns.
There are areas, of course, where citizens shouldn't be directly involved, such as intelligence activities, drug raids or any other activity that would jeopardize their own safety or the safety of officers. Nor should citizens have a direct hand in personnel decisions.

Having said that, many U.S. communities have had great success in using citizen representatives in an advisory capacity. Citizens, working side by side with their police, help the partnership more efficiently and effectively identify and resolve obstacles to neighbourhood health and safety.

Increasing citizen participation shouldn't threaten the integrity of a city's police force, but rather strengthen its reputation and standing, both in the community and within the larger institution of policing.

I can't imagine true community policing without civilian review of citizen's complaints. Controversial? You bet. Police officer resistance is based largely on a belief that citizens cannot ever fully grasp what a cop goes through out there on the streets, and therefore should not be allowed to sit in judgment of police actions.

It's time for us to help citizens understand the very tough job of a police officer, and to empower a select group of them, working with trained investigators (ex-police officers come to mind), to investigate allegations of poor service or misconduct.

Perhaps Canada can provide a model of citizen oversight that enjoys effectiveness, efficiency and wide credibility.

In no event should a citizen review board be allowed to deny police officers their due process rights, or to otherwise insult individuals whose conduct is in question.

By working together in a spirit of trust and co-operation, police agencies, their unions, and community stakeholders can create a powerful and satisfying partnership.

After all, the goal is the same: safe streets, safe schools, safe homes. And a police department that enjoys an outstanding reputation among the people it serves.

## Citizens as equals get really involved

Forget about reinventing government as a business. Let's rediscover democracy. We need to take a leap of faith and shift our thinking about community and the role of citizens, bureaucrats and politicians.

The new paradigm calls on local government and citizens to consider their neighbourhoods, not simply as places with unmet needs, but as communities of people with untapped resources.

This changes the relationship from adversarial to collaborative as government and communities develop avenues of mutual respect and ways to work together. Each brings strengths and expertise that combine to further common goals.

Although every government needs a business plan, it can't model itself strictly after business. If businesses could make money on issues that the city government deals with, they'd be out there fighting for profit.

Government is not a business; it's a democracy that needs to respect people as citizens, and not treat them solely as customers. When people begin to think of themselves more as citizens than as taxpayers, government is doing its job.

The problems begin when government tries to do things for the community, not with the community.

The old style of citizen participation involves task forces and public hearings that often blunt the enthusiasm of even the most hardy citizens. The new style empowers communities with the tools and resources they need to address their own priorities through their own organizations.

Government can tap community expertise, relationships, and other resources by empowering communities to develop their own plans.

For example, after 30,000 people participated in Seattle's neighbourhood planning process, citizens voted to tax themselves an additional $470 million for new parks, community centres and libraries.

Government can be a catalyst for community initiatives. Over the past 17 years, Seattle's Neighborhood Matching Fund has helped complete more than 3,000 community self-help projects, leveraged more than $50 million in additional resources and attracted tens of thousands of volunteers.

Government can counter civic alienation by creating a one-stop access to city hall. In Seattle, 13 mini city halls co-ordinate activity at the local level while providing access to a wide range of government programs and services.

When community-centred approaches replace one size fits all and when seamless service delivery substitutes for the bureaucratic runaround, government is no longer perceived as the enemy.

I believe most people yearn for community and want to contribute. More will participate if we give them good options. Unlike meetings, projects produce results and they have a beginning and an end. They also build relationships and more powerful communities.

Power isn't a finite resource. Elected officials are too often afraid that if they give it away, they won't have it anymore. Yet the opposite is true—share power and it grows.

Many officials also fear no one else can be trusted with power. Yet communities have repeatedly shown that they will act responsibly to the extent that they are given responsibility.

Just as government needs to learn to share power, so do the traditional community associations. To remain relevant, they need to make outreach a priority. They should recognize the many other ways that people, including recent immigrants, choose to organize themselves. No one group can speak for the entire community. The community is at its best when the many networks support one another and come together as equals for their common good.

We can't deadbolt democracy. The best way to develop a safe and healthy community is to open the door to neighbours, build strong community organizations and forge alliances that link them.

Government has a key role in making democracy work. It is truly remarkable what communities can accomplish when government takes its democratic foundations as seriously as it does its responsibility for streets, public safety and other services.

Cities work best when local government and the community are partners, not opponents.

# Child sex abuse is big business

Criminals make more money from the sexual abuse of women and children than they do from any other activity, except drugs.

This rips apart the myth that only small amounts of money are involved in child sexual exploitation. In fact, the selling of children is highly lucrative for organized criminals nationally and globally.

This is as much a problem in Calgary as it is around the world. The sexual abuse of children is common in rich as well as poor countries, and it cuts across class lines.

In wealthy countries, such as Canada and the U.S., many believe only those children living in poverty are involved in the sex trade.

In fact, most of the children are from working, middle and upper class homes, and most of those have suffered sexual abuse from grandfathers, fathers, uncles and mothers in their own homes.

In Calgary, a higher number of aboriginals are represented in the sex trade, mainly because of poverty.

Child pornography, prostitution and trafficking are widespread, not rare. Sexual exploitation of youth is more common than child deaths by fire, suicide or homicide, child use of heroin or children involved in violent crime.

There's a misconception that most children involved in sexual exploitation are girls. In fact, the research proves that boys often are as exploited as girls, although there are few services to deal with them.

Another widespread myth is that most perpetrators are pedophiles. In fact, only half of the men who sexually exploit children are pedophiles. The others are opportunistic abusers, such as men on the move who use whatever sexual objects are available.

To them, if it's a child, they think, "Well that's fine, too."

It's far from fine and we can and must try to protect vulnerable children and prevent their sexual exploitation.

Parents need to hear what their children tell them. Then, they need to believe it. Too many deny the dark truth of child sexual abuse by a family member.

Teachers in schools need to recognize the signs and realize the myths surrounding child sexual exploitation.

It's also time to target the offenders, not the children. We must develop penalties that make these crimes against children very heavy for the adults involved: pimps, traffickers, and enablers such as dishonest cab drivers and hotel workers.

Canada is examining sentences that begin with the age gap between the child and adult exploiter. As the age gap widens, so would the jail time.

We should publicly expose the perpetrators after the second offence. Publish their names, put their pictures in the media and in the neighbourhoods where they live.

Some argue this takes away the criminal's freedom, as the person has already served his or her time.

Hardly. These criminals keep coming back to exploit children again and again. It is they who are taking the freedom from their victims.

Society needs to create new and tougher laws as well as co-operative legal arrangements with countries that border each other.

Stopping child sexual abuse and exploitation begins with awareness of the signs and understanding the facts, while destroying the myths. There should be far more co-operation and awareness within each jurisdiction of the private and public sectors, so early detection and apprehension can take place.

We should establish Internet crime units to protect children.

Finally we need to co-ordinate and create special task forces that focus exclusively on child sexual exploitation.

The problem is rampant and the victims are the most vulnerable people in society.

We must act if we want to ensure that they have a future based on dignity and freedom from abuse.

# Don't give up on the meth heads

Crystal meth is highly addictive, readily available and cheap to make.

Methamphetamine users cut across class lines and gender. In 2004, in the state of Iowa, 47 per cent of all new female prisoners had a history of meth use versus 39 per cent of new male prisoners.

Many of those women started using meth to lose weight, since it suppresses hunger. Once a woman takes meth, what stares back at her is a beautiful person. One told me that she felt like a wonderful mother when she was on meth.

This dastardly drug is deceptive. The user can stay awake for three days, then sleep for the next three days. It leads to child neglect and children being put into foster care.

The mother drowns her depression in more meth and descends on a downward spiral.

Men on meth feel 10 feet tall and can take on the world. Their macho mood often leads to crime and violence.

This insidious drug rapidly releases dopamine into the pleasure section of the brain, producing a high that can last for 15 hours.

Once meth devastates that part of the brain, it takes a long time to rebuild. Because meth's effect is so dramatic, treatment also takes longer.

People once believed meth-heads couldn't be treated. That's not true. Successful meth treatment does take longer, but can be profoundly effective.

Addicts need to put in the time, at least 90 days, to rid themselves of meth's horrors.

What is useful to addicts is dual diagnostic treatment where mental illness and depression are handled along with substance abuse.

I've received letters from people in prison who voluntarily quit alcohol, cocaine, or marijuana, but not meth. It's the one drug they overcame only when treated in prison, and some said they would be dead if they hadn't gone to prison and beaten meth.

Meth use touches all parts of society from a city's towers to the country's fields. A few farmers take meth during grain harvest and can't stop; one ended up in prison in Iowa. As in the cities, we're hard pressed to find a rural community not touched by meth.

The ingredients for meth, including pseudophedrine (PSE), are easy to obtain. After a double homicide at a meth lab, we discovered the PSE was obtained from a convenience store where a girlfriend worked.

We learned some high-turnover workplaces are a breeding ground for meth cooks.

In 2004, Iowa ranked No. 2 in meth labs in the United States. Today, Iowa is No. 1 in reducing those labs.

On May 21, 2005, Iowa's pseudophedrine control law took effect. Nearly all medicine made with PSE must be sold in drug stores. Six months later, Iowa saw an 80 per cent meth-lab reduction.

The hard-hitting law puts most PSE in pharmacies where it must be behind shelves or in locked cabinets. Anyone who buys drugs containing PSEs must show photo ID and sign a purchase log with their name, address and PSE quantity. Tiny amounts of liquid-only PSE may be sold in retail stores, with the same types of controls.

The dramatic results show that domestic meth production can be controlled. The secret lies in legislation. First, society needs to recognize the problem. Then, grassroots coalitions of concerned groups and citizens work with policymakers to craft effective laws.

Before and after the legislation, citizens can work together to further prevent drug use.

In your home and community, talk about drugs and the harm they cause. Nearly everyone has stories about friends, family or neighbours and the anguish of addiction.

People feel empowered when they develop solutions to social ills.

People prevention (talking with kids about drugs) and environmental prevention (placing meth-making ingredients behind the pharmacy counter) turn out to be a successful combination in reducing meth labs.

To anyone doing the same, I hope similar positive results will follow.

## Jail not answer in drug battle

The "war on drugs" doesn't work. The facts from the United States show it's a disaster and countries cannot jail their way out of defeat.

In every major city across Canada and around the world, prohibition has proven to be a bust. The consensus globally is that drug policy reform is the only way to go.

We can't ignore drugs but we can and must manage drugs. The users are sick, many are teenagers, and Canada has a national health-care system to help them.

The drug dealers and pushers are evil and must go before the courts for stiff jail sentences. The system isn't working to change the reality that illegal drugs are a public health and public safety issue.

We need to put drugs into a regulated market environment. Governments control gambling, tobacco, alcohol, morphine and codeine. It's time they did the same thing with street drugs and introduced a program to regulate them.

When crack cocaine seriously surfaced in the mid-1990s, associated crime and suffering jumped. As mayor of Vancouver, I realized that the status quo wasn't on.

The people wanted change, but the federal government had no protocol and no programs that worked. We moved toward a reasoned solution, establishing a dialogue with more than 40 different groups and voices throughout the city.

We borrowed from other countries that had seen some success such as Germany and Switzerland, which provided treatment on demand.

As a result, Vancouver developed the Four Pillars Document, which focused on prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm-reduction.

Prevention includes early education in the schools. There are effective programs for students about smoking, drinking and sex education, but minimal ones on drugs. These kids are smart; they can be informed.

Treatment involves options and programs for those on drugs. All drug addicts go through phases when they can't stand it anymore.

Treatment on demand must be available. It works in Switzerland, where it is the law.

Harm reduction applies to both the community and the user. Safe injection sites, needle exchanges as well as many other harm-reduction programs have proven to be supportable and effective in Europe.

In Canada, the federal government authorized safe injection sites for Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal in 2003.

In Vancouver, the changes were huge: deaths due to overdoses dropped from 191 to 47 in less than two years.

It's crucial to separate the user from the dealer and get early contact and early intervention. That's far more successful—and less complex—than trying to rehabilitate a six-year user.

The potential to rehabilitate through innovative drug programs and treatments could ultimately lead to far less jail time with only the habitual criminal and dealer behind bars. The reality is that 80 per cent of crimes are caused by just five per cent of the criminal population.

Rehabilitation in jail should involve drug treatments and education programs. Put those convicted into workshops where they talk about their behaviour and avenues for change.

The goal is abstinence, but that's not completely realistic. We expect the courts to solve the drug problem. Judges, who are simply interpreting the law, get criticized for lenient sentencing.

We can't just hope that drugs will go away and leave the whole activity to organized crime and unregulated dealers.

That's what we have now.

The global drug trade is a multibillion-dollar enterprise, especially benefiting terrorists and insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush said America wasn't going to allow drugs into the country. Yet the following year, $7.1 billion worth of heroin landed in the U.S. from Afghanistan.

Marijuana, which should be decriminalized, is a minor drug compared to the highly addictive hard drugs. Canadians want separate discussions about hard and soft drugs. (See the reports of both the House of Commons and the Senate from the fall of 2002.)

To seriously tackle hard drugs, every city in Canada, and indeed, North America, needs to adopt Vancouver's Four Pillars approach. The results are in; it works.

# About the Canada West Foundation

**Our Vision**

A dynamic and prosperous West in a strong Canada.

**Our Mission**

A leading source of strategic insight, conducting and communicating non-partisan economic and public policy research of importance to the four western provinces, the territories, and all Canadians.

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In 1970, the One Prairie Province Conference was held in Lethbridge, Alberta. Sponsored by the University of Lethbridge and the Lethbridge Herald, the conference received considerable attention from concerned citizens and community leaders. The consensus at the time was that research on the West (including BC and the Canadian North) should be expanded by a new organization. To fill this need, the Canada West Foundation was created under letters patent on December 31, 1970. Since that time, the Canada West Foundation has established itself as one of Canada's premier research institutes. Non-partisan, accessible research and active citizen engagement are hallmarks of the Foundation's past, present and future endeavours. These efforts are rooted in the belief that a strong West makes for a strong Canada.

More information can be found at **www.cwf.ca.**



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