HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

# Violence and Public Safety in the Halifax Regional Municipality

***A Report to the Mayor as a Result of the Roundtable***

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**Halifax Regional Municipality**

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In November 2006, I felt it important to initiate the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence in Halifax Regional Municipality, in response to growing concerns that violent crime in HRM was escalating. Whether these concerns reflected the reality of the situation in our region or if they were simply a perception of the crime that exists was unclear; regardless, the fact that residents of HRM were concerned and, in some cases, felt unsafe in their communities was the impetus for me to strike this Roundtable.

From the outset we knew the Mayor's Roundtable on Violence would be a massive undertaking. To ensure the Roundtable was done thoroughly from the start, I engaged Professor Don Clairmont, Director of the Atlantic Institute of Criminology and a nationally renowned expert in the field, to facilitate. Professor Clairmont poured hundreds of hours of planning, research, interviews, analysis and writing into the entire process; as a result, we have been rewarded with a Final Report that is comprehensive, perceptive and useful. We are very grateful to Professor Clairmont for his considerable wisdom, patience and wit, all of which contributed to a Report that provides a wealth of practical information and insightful recommendations for action.

Great works rarely happen in isolation, and I would like to thank the hundreds of people who made the Mayor's Roundtable possible: the Mayor's Task Force on Violence, Halifax Regional Councillors, HRM staff, Halifax Regional Police and RCMP, businesses, media, academics, statisticians, provincial and federal partners, and other Canadian and American municipalities. Most of all, I would like to acknowledge the thousands of HRM residents who took the time to complete lengthy phone, mail surveys, and student surveys, participate in community roundtable meetings, and provide their invaluable feedback throughout the Roundtable process.

As I have said all along, together we *can* make a difference, and, indeed, together we *have* made a difference.

While a great deal has been done to produce this Roundtable Report, the work is really just beginning. I am committed to working with our stakeholders, in particular, the provincial and federal governments, as well as other relevant partners, to do what it takes to act on the Roundtable's recommendations.

I look forward to working with each of you to ensure we make a positive difference in violent crime and perceptions of violent crime in our respective communities.

Respectfully, I remain

Peter J. Kelly

## Acknowledgements

This assessment of violence and public safety in HRM was initiated by Mayor Peter Kelly who, along with executive assistant Debbie Chambers and coordinator Christen MacDonald, provided practical suggestions and valuable insights – and good company – to the writer on a continuing basis. There were many others who contributed substantially to the project, especially Professor Chris Murphy who contributed to all aspects of the project and was the major advisor to the writer. Kit Waters, Owen Carrigan, Kerry Chambers and Professor Stephen Schneider were also major contributors in multiple segments of the project. The contributions of Professor Stephen Kimber, Laughlin Rutt, John Benoit, Charlene Croft and Ethan Kim were significant and much appreciated. The Municipality's Development Department cooperated fully as did others in the municipal administration when requested. The Nova Scotia Department of Justice contributed much in all segments of the Roundtable project, staff members making reports and data available and participating in the various Roundtable activities. Both police services, HRP (Chief Frank Beazley and others) and the RCMP (Superintendent Gordon Barnett and others) not only responded fully and quickly to the writer's requests for data but participated in the advisory group, the focus groups, the actual Roundtable session itself, and were available for informal discussions. The writer was humbled by the willingness of virtually all persons contacted to participate in the advisory group, the focus groups and in the three-day Roundtable sessions where many gave substantial presentations. Thousands of the adults in HRM participated in the three large public surveys where the response rate was considerably greater than anticipated. Clearly, the level of collaboration and public participation is testimony to the wonderful spirit of civic commitment that characterizes HRM public life.

# THE ROUNDTABLE REPORTS

1. **VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY (MAIN REPORT AND APPENDIX)**

2. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 1: THE TELEPHONE SURVEY**

3. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 2: THE MAIL-BACK SURVEY**

4. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 3: THE STUDENT SURVEY**

5. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 4: THE ACTIVISTS (COUNCILLORS AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS)**

6. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 5: THE ENGAGED (FOCUS GROUPS ISSUES AND REPORTS)**

7. **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT # 6: AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS (ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS)**

# VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY - MAIN REPORT

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# *INTRODUCTION*

## THE TASK

The task of this report was to identify, and discuss in context, the patterns of violence and public safety concerns in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), to provide an in-depth analysis of the correlates of these patterns, and to suggest future directions that could improve the situation. The process, whereby this was to be done, was deemed very important. It was to be as participatory as possible and draw on perspectives, insights and recommendations from all segments of the adult HRM population, including the public at large, community activists, local experts and persons engaged in dealing with the public safety issues, and those with formal responsibilities for change. The objective was to contribute to the reduction of fear and worry about victimization as well as the actual levels of violence and public safety. The six Supplemental Reports to this summary report provide the results of that effort. One out of every 60 available adults in HRM was a direct participant, either completing a long questionnaire or participating in focus groups, Roundtable community meetings, presenting at the three-day televised Roundtable session, or being interviewed at length by this writer. The project was at the initiative of Mayor Peter Kelly and followed the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities launched in Fall 2006 under the leadership of Department of Justice, Nova Scotia. The Minister's Task Force issued its report in May 2007 and shortly thereafter this HRM Roundtable project began its public phase.

Prior to May 2007, the Roundtable project activities were largely limited to background work such as reviewing appropriate literature, preparing research strategies and instruments, and attending the public meetings of the Minister's Task Force. Over the period June to November 2007 three large surveys, ranging in size from 1207 to 1542 to 1982 completed questionnaires, were carried out, one of which was a collaborative effort with the Halifax Student Alliance representing post-secondary students in HRM. Multiple focus group sessions were held in the Summer of 2007 on seven themes considered central to appreciating issues of violence and public safety in HRM; 91 well-informed persons were engaged in that exercise. Individual interviews were conducted by the writer with all 23 council members and Roundtable community meetings involving a total of 300 participants were held in the six major regions of HRM in the Fall of 2007. There were 37 other individual interviews conducted by the writer with diverse authorities and experts. The three-day Roundtable session was held in November where there were 35 presenters. Between January and April 2008 the writer was pulling together and analyzing the data gathered, obtaining additional salient material where necessary, and writing the report and the supplemental reports. Throughout the Roundtable initiative there were regular meetings with The Mayor's 'Operational Committee' (the Mayor, the executive assistant, the Mayor's facilitator for the project, and the writer) and a few meetings with the Mayor's Advisory Committee. The writer is solely responsible for the content of the report.

## THE MAYOR'S ROUNDTABLE: WHY IT WAS NECESSARY

Why a Roundtable initiative on violence and public safety in HRM? There were a number of reasons. Halifax, the core of HRM, has had a long history of boisterous, sometimes violent behaviour associated with its being a major port, military centre and government base. The formal social controls for much of the city's history featured military patrols walking up and down the streets, strong restrictions on alcohol and gambling, strict regulations for taverns, curfews, and liberal use of incarceration. As one historian put it, "They did not have swarmings then; they had riots". In a recent review, Lafolley's Hunting Halifax is cited as follows: "Compared to 1850 or even 1750 Halifax today is a pretty safe city … murder rates were much higher … "sharp class and ethnic divisions .. still fuel some of our modern violence" (Patterson, 2007). Certainly, a number of key informants reiterated that point, that violence and alcohol abuse have been commonplace historically and the current crime levels and public disorder do not approach those of the old days. A veteran HRM journalist commenting on a 2007 pre-Christmas brawl in the Downtown area, wrote, "Violent behaviour … cheap drinks …Both have been very much a part of this old port city for well over 200 years. The Dome brawl pales in comparison to some events this city has seen in the past" (Connolly, 2007). It can also be argued that compared to some other places, especially in the United States, the level of crime and public safety in HRM is modest. A recent newspaper article compared Halifax and the city of New Orleans as attractive tourist sites; talking about the wonders of Halifax ("the greatest walking city in the world", according to one cited reader) the columnist wrote that other Canadians "see Halifax as the New Orleans of the East, a small port city punching way beyond its weight in terms of culture and that illusive quality known as 'the good times'(The Coast, 2008); interestingly, New Orleans with a population of 255,000 had 209 murders in 2007 while the 2007 figure for Halifax with an urban core base of 225,000 was 7.

Of course, as Carrigan notes (Box 1), favorable comparisons to the past or to particularly violent-prone societies such as the United States cannot discount the crime and public safety concerns about what is happening today in HRM, Nova Scotia, Canada. Halifax and the HRM area are much bigger population-wise now and while still a port with a significant military presence, the area's features may be shaped more by its large dominant tertiary sector (i.e., governmental, financial and business and post-secondary educational institutions). The social controls are quite different now too, both the formal ones (e.g., policing, court response) and the informal (e.g., kinship systems, neighbourhoods). Even some veteran observers who contend that the previous eras were at least as violent, have expressed alarm about what one referred to as "an increasingly serious challenge to maintaining law and order". The perceptions of, and expectations and tolerance for, violence and crime are likely different too, given the pervasiveness of mass media and the vulnerability-generating individualism of contemporary society.

Five major public incidents or types of incidents have been key factors in precipitating much fear and worry among local citizens and negatively affecting the image of Halifax as a safe place to live, namely teen swarmings, violence at the Downtown bar scene, concern about the Justice response to youth crime, high levels of self-reported violent victimization, and the fear and collateral damage generated by gang violence and turf wars. Each of the five was etched on the public mind in dramatic fashion.

**Box 1 - Crime in Halifax in Historical Perspective**

Halifax was founded in 1749 and from its earliest days was a major seaport, a garrison town, a port of call for the British Navy, and a transit point for troops. It is not surprising then that the city has always had a significant crime problem. The first settlers were hardly off the boats when criminal activity began. Pickpockets, prostitutes, thieves, and con artists plied their trades as the new settlement struggled for survival. The first murder took place on the very ship, the Beaufort, which was being used to house the governing officials. As the settlement grew so did the number of taverns, houses of prostitution, and a significant population of criminal types. The business of crime prospered with assaults, robberies, gambling, bootlegging, arson, and murder. Clashes between the military and civilians were common. Juvenile crime in an earlier day was also too common. The Mayor of Halifax in his 1861-62 report complained about the number of young trouble makers. He noted the juveniles of both sexes were "constantly brought before the Police Court, charged with thefts and similar offences." He also claimed that the number of young offenders was "far greater than would be imagined."

Even world events influenced the level of crime in Halifax. The war with France that started in 1755, the American Revolution., World War One, and World War Two all brought hordes of troops through Halifax and contributed to rowdiness, drunkenness, and conflicts between the military and civilian population. Certain types of crime also increased. During the two world wars, for example, the docks in Halifax had a major problem with theft. One of the most famous black eyes on the city's reputation was the V.E. day riots. Mobs took over the streets of Halifax and shop windows were smashed, stores looted, cars destroyed, liquor stores and breweries cleaned out. The post war era brought with it prosperity and a more liberal society. It also witnessed an increase in both adult and juvenile crime as the problem escalated through the 70's, 80's, and 90's. Halifax experienced a substantial drug problem along with more criminal gangs. Illegal drugs in turn contributed to more break-ins, thefts, and assaults.

Halifax's historical level of crime should not in any way diminish the concern over our current problems. The reality is that the nature of crime today is more serious than in the past. As a result public safety is seen as being more compromised than at any time in the past.

**D. Owen Carrigan**

First, since 2000, according to a key word search of Halifax dailies, "swarming**"** has been a frequently reported phenomenon in the urban core areas, and indeed as this section of the report was being written in early April 2008, there were three incidents of a mature male adult being swarmed in urban Dartmouth over a two day period; swarming sometimes is robbery and at other times it is just gratuitous violence but, whatever, it sends an important signal to the community that virtually no one is immune from a possibly random assault at any time in the urban core areas. Secondly, the 2004 General Social Survey (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada) results indicated that Halifax led all 30 Canadian census metropolitan areas in the *rate of self-reported violent victimization.* Thirdly, on October 14, 2004 a well-respected school teacher, Teresa McEvoy, was killed in an automobile crash when the young driver sped through a Halifax intersection in a stolen car. The individual, a young offender, had several outstanding warrants and a significant record, facts which created a huge outcry and led to the

provincial government establishing the Nunn Commission to examine the issues around *youth justice policies and practices* and make recommendations to deal with them. The report with 34 recommendations was issued in 2006 and within the year the Department of Justice launched the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. Fourthly, in November 2006, a Black American sailor was stabbed to death outside a Downtown bar as he was trying to be a *Good Samaritan* and intervene in a conflict between two persons he did not know; the event crystallized the concern about violence in the Downtown. Fifthly, *drive-by shootings*, while not frequent, occurred often enough in the years 2004 to 2007 (see the graph on the media mentions in the appendix for details) that they underlined the collateral damage that is associated with illicit drug dealing and possession and the use of weapons, widely perceived as major problems in HRM.

The Minister's Task Force on Crime Prevention, 2006-2007, was a response explicitly to the GSS results and the McEvoy tragedy and to more general fear and worry about public safety. It focused largely on youth and was province-wide. HRM officials and others considered it important to conduct an additional task force in HRM for a variety of reasons. First, there was quite *limited participation of HRM residents* in the Minister's Task Force and little new data which could provide for in-depth analyses.

Secondly, *HRM has different demographics* than the rest of Nova Scotia and the importance of that fact is significant for issues of violence and public safety (see the population graphs in the appendix). The population is growing, albeit slowly but nevertheless in sharp contrast with the rest of the province outside a few areas contiguous to HRM. HRM's population grew by 13,500 or 3.8% between 2001 and 2006 while the total Nova Scotian population grew only by 5,400; this of course means that, outside HRM, the provincial population fell by 8,000 (Statistics Canada, 2006). HRM has much of the modest racial and ethnic diversity that characterizes Nova Scotia. Immigrants to Nova Scotia primarily and increasingly settle in HRM. The great bulk of off-reserve Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia reside in HRM. At least 67% of the Black population in Nova Scotia resides in HRM. Other minorities such as gay persons are overwhelmingly concentrated in HRM according to informants in that community. The violence and public safety concerns of minority group members, on the basis of the general literature (see Statistics Canada – The Daily, February 20, 2008), as well as the detailed local studies carried out by this writer (Clairmont 2005, 2006), indicate that victimization and in some cases offense patterns, differ profoundly in comparison with the majority population. HRM also leads the nation (tied with Regina and Saskatoon) in terms of the percentage of its population (i.e., 9%) between the ages of 19 and 24 (Statistics Canada, CMA and Age, 2006), the age group most associated with violence and crime, whether as offenders or victims (Canada-wide studies confirm this pattern; Hastings, personal communication, 2008).

**HRM is different in its political economy** than the rest of Nova Scotia. As noted, it is the center of Nova Scotia's expanding economy; the tertiary sector is the growth engine and that usually means that quality of life issues are crucial for economic growth as well. Post-secondary university and college students from outside HRM alone bring some $300 million annually in direct input to the HRM economy and a major factor they say in their coming to HRM for study is "safety" (see Supplemental Report # 3, The Students Survey).

The **patterns of offending are different in HRM** compared to the rest of the province. The appendix provides a number of tables from different sources to substantiate this point. The fact sheet on reported crime in HRM in 2005 prepared for the Minister's Task Force in 2006-2007 (Department of Justice Crime Fact Sheet 2006) points out that HRM had a crime rate, per 100,000, well above the Nova Scotian average, namely 9,389 to 8,345, and nearly 20% greater if HRM is excluded from the latter calculation. It had higher levels of both violent and property crime (47% and 55% of the Nova Scotian totals respectively). Fully 84% of the robberies – and virtually all of the swarmings – occurred in HRM, as well as 95% of the prostitution offences and 62% of all motor vehicle thefts. Surprisingly, the overall rate of youth crime in 2005 was less than the provincial average though the rate of violent crimes by youth was higher in HRM, especially robberies (an unknown number but presumably many if not most were swarmings). Other data on crime are congruent with these facts **(**see the appendix**).** A recent release by the CCJS (The Chronicle Herald, April 21, 2008) reported that Halifax had the highest rate of gun-related robberies in Canada in 2006, adding that "the high rate in Nova Scotia is driven by the numbers for Halifax"). Recent analyses of the restorative justice program in Nova Scotia have found that serious repeat users of that criminal justice system option were essentially HRM youths (personal communications, March, 2008). Clearly, the violence and public safety issues in HRM require special attention.

HRM accounts for some 373,000 or 41% of Nova Scotia's population (Statistics Canada, 2006) and demographic projections suggest that it could account for nearly 50% in another decade (see CanMac, 2006). Despite that scale and the fact that the municipal government is the closest to the everyday concerns of the electorate, since amalgamation - and the Services agreement signed - over a decade ago, the Municipality has had a very limited role in matters of social services, social planning, housing, education and the like. With respect to matters of violence and public safety, its legislated mandate has focused on policing and recreation. Given the uniqueness of HRM in Nova Scotia, and the challenges to its quality of life and future development presumably posed by violence and public safety issues as noted above, it clearly is important that HRM examine these issues in an in-depth and participatory fashion and consider what strategic plans might be adopted, within and beyond its legislated mandate, to meet those challenges.

For the above reasons then the Roundtable initiative was considered imperative and an important complement to the Minister's Task Force. Unlike the latter, the emphasis was to be less on youth and more on violence and public safety in general. By focusing attention on the public crime and safety problems that generate victimization and bother people and communities the most, and developing an appropriate research and consultation-based strategic response, hopefully the Roundtable initiative can contribute to the more effective prevention, reduction and management of victimization and enhance public confidence in the security and safety of life in HRM. Two areas of victimization that are certainly worthy of attention were not included in the project, namely domestic violence (especially wife-battering) and problem gambling. The former continues to be a major crime and social problem according to the HRPS, and studies show that it is associated with negative coping strategies (e.g., aggressive behaviour) on the part of the offsprings (London, Ontario, <www.lfcc.on.ca>); it was avoided because the protocols that have been established for proper research in that area were not feasible in this modestly resourced Roundtable initiative. Problem gambling was excluded for similar reasons; moreover, as

Chambers indicates (Box 2), it presumably generates little external violence or direct threat to public safety.

**Box 2 - Problem Gambling and Violent Crime in HRM**

As in other Canadian cities, numerous opportunities to gamble exist in HRM, ranging from lottery tickets to casino games. For the majority of HRM residents, gambling is a harmless pastime. However, a small number experience devastating consequences that arise from frequent financial losses, a significant factor in gambling related crime.*

The *Mayor's Roundtable on Violence* did not examine criminal activities related to problem gambling in the region. Research elsewhere suggests that gamblers *who seek help for their gambling problems* are predisposed to engage in illegal activities to mitigate mounting financial difficulties and gambling related debts. Nevertheless, the prevalence of *violent* crime associated with problem gambling is considerably lower than its association with non-violent crime, which typically includes forgery, shoplifting, fraud, embezzlement and the sale of drugs (*ibid.*). Moreover, these crimes are often perpetrated against family members, friends and employers of the gambler. From the foregoing, it appears that the direct threat of violent crime resulting from problem gambling in HRM is negligible.

*Source: Productivity Commission, 1999, *Australia's Gambling Industries*, Report No. 10, AusInfo, Canberra.

**Kerry Chambers**

## THE ROUNDTABLE'S TWO KEY PREMISES

There are two key premises guiding this Roundtable initiative, namely:

a) There is a real problem of violence and public safety in HRM
b) Municipal and community initiatives can effect positive changes to the problem

### (A) Perception and Reality

There is little doubt that many residents in HRM believe that there is a problem. Media reports and everyday conversations attest to that fact; indeed, in casual conversations over the past year, the writer himself has been told by many citizens from diverse backgrounds (from bank tellers to repeat offenders on probation) that HRM, the urban core in particular, is a dangerous place to be. Table 1 clearly provides telling proof of how widespread that view is. It can be seen that when asked in 2007 for their spontaneous opinion on the single most important issue facing their community, representative samples of Moncton and Saint John residents cited most frequently the environment or health care, unemployment or taxation, and the highest frequency for any specific issue was 12%. In HRM, by contrast, the number one issue was crime and public safety and that was cited spontaneously by a whopping 29% of the sample! While it is true that the Minister's Task Force was operative during the period of the survey, it would be most unlikely that it would have had much of an impact on the views of HRM residents at that time.

**Table 1 -** ***What is the single most important issue facing your community? (2007)***

| HALIFAX | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Crime/Safety** | **Traffic/Public Transportation** | **Environment** |
| 27% | 9% | 9% |
| **MONCTON** | | |
| **Environment** | **Taxation/Too Much Tax** | **Health Care** |
| 11% | 9% | 8% |
| **SAINT JOHN** | | |
| **Environment** | **Health Care** | **Unemployment** |
| 12% | 9% | 9% |

*Source: The Urban Report, 2007, First Quarter. Corporate Research*

Tables 2, 3 and 4 indicate that this view has roots in reality. The General Social Survey (GSS) 2004 results of a nation-wide telephone survey of violent victimization conducted by Statistics Canada indicated that HRM had the highest rate of self-reported violent victimization in Canada. As noted in Table 2, even five years earlier in 1999 the HRM rate was either 3rd or 6th highest in the country (depending on confidence limits). Interestingly, while the number of violent incidents increased by some 4000, the HRM rate actually declined between 1999 and 2004 but apparently other CMAs experienced even sharper reductions in their ratios of increased population to increased incidents.

**Table 2 -** ***Total Violent Victimization (Self-reported)***

| HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year** | 1999 | 2004 |
| **# of incidences** | 67,000 | 71,000 |
| **Rate*** | 234 | 229 |
| **Rank**** | Between 3 to 6 | 1 |

**Rate per 1000 pop (aged 15+); **Ranked among 30 Census Metropolitan Areas*
*Source: Juristat – General Social Survey*

Tables 3 and 4 present CCJS data on violent and property crime as reported by the police services themselves. It can be seen that the HRM metropolitan area since 2000 has been among the top 25% of Canada's CMAs in terms of violent crime (primarily common assault) and close to that in terms of property crime. The rate of violent crime increased over the decade but appears to have crested in 2004; the rate for property crime, highest in the years preceding 2000, has also fallen since 2004.

**Table 3 -** ***Crime Rates for Census Metropolitan Area***

| HALIFAX | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **YEAR** | **Violent Crime** | | **Property Crime** | |
| | **Rate** | **Rank** | **Rate** | **Rank** |
| **1997** | 1164 | 7 | 5794 | 6 |
| **1998** | 1016 | 9 | 6047 | 5 |
| **1999** | 1062 | 7 | 5914 | 5 |
| **2000*** | 1094 | 7 | 5053 | 6 |
| **2001** | 1235 | 5 | 4915 | 7 |
| **2002** | 1297 | 5 | 4626 | 8 |
| **2003** | 1349 | 3 | 4805 | 8 |
| **2004** | 1360 | 3 | 5342 | 8 |
| **2005** | 1306 | 3 | 4883 | 8 |
| **2006** | 1261 | 5 | 4454 | 8 |

**There are some modest discrepancies in the rates provided in Juristat publications and in the raw data provided to the Centre for Justice Statistics but only in one case did these differences affect the rank order, and that was in 2000 where the difference between 1164 and 1094 made for a difference in rank order of 5 rather than 7 for the Halifax CMA. For consistency purposes, the rate of 1094 and the rank of 7 is used here.*
*Source: Juristat – General Social Survey*

Table 4 presents the CCJS data for the area policed by the HRPS in comparison with other Canadian municipal police jurisdictions. Since HRPS' jurisdiction is the urban core area of HRM and its entertainment center, it is not surprising that its recorded rates for both violent and property crimes are substantially greater than for the HRM metropolitan area as a whole. Here it can be seen that Halifax has had the highest or second highest rate of violent crime in Canada since 2001 and has been in the top 25% for property crime as well.

The rate of violence generally rose incrementally since 1996 but, similar to the pattern of the CMA unit, it appears to have crested in 2003-2004. It has fallen appreciably over the last two years cited and recent statistics indicate that it has fallen further in 2007 (about 10% overall and a dramatic 40% in robberies); again this may not affect Halifax's rank order since other municipal police services have reported a similar pattern. Property crime in the HRPS' jurisdiction appears also to have peaked in 2004. These trends might partially reflect the aging of the population (e.g., less property crime as the percentage of youth in the population declines) but it can also be argued that the three-year decline reflects the impact of the increase in police complement over the past five years and the opportunity that provided the HRPS to implement community response strategies such as 24/7 foot patrol in some areas (see "More officers on the street", The Chronicle Herald, April 21, 2008).

**Table 4 -** ***30 Largest Municipal Police Services: Halifax Ranked Using 2002 as Criterion Year ****

| HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE SERVICES | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **YEAR** | **Violent Crime** | | **Property Crime** | |
| | **Rate** | **Rank** | **Rate** | **Rank** |
| **1996** | 1454 | 4 | 7634 | 5 |
| **1997** | 1485 | 5 | 7695 | 4 |
| **1998** | 1285 | 6 | 8072 | 5 |
| **1999** | 1327 | 4 | 7938 | 4 |
| **2000** | 1574 | 3 | 7333 | 6 |
| **2001** | 1701 | 2 | 6776 | 6 |
| **2002** | 1845 | 1 | 6449 | 6 |
| **2003** | 1856 | 2 | 6614 | 8 |
| **2004** | 1848 | 1 | 7438 | 7 |
| **2005** | 1792 | 1 | 6842 | 7 |
| **2006** | 1752 | 2 | 6315 | 7 |

*Source: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics*

** The comparison in rates of the police services takes the year 2002 as criterion and only the police services Juristat cited in that year are compared over time. The main implication is the Victoria PS is excluded, a fact which would change the HRPS by one rank position in the years 1996 to 2002.*

There is, overall, a strong congruence between the views of HRM residents with respect to crime and public safety as revealed in the polls, the media and everyday discourse, and the reality of the problems as evidenced by self-reported and police reported incidents. It might be expected that if and as violent crime continues to be reduced, these views and the public image of HRM will also change. However, that is not certain as the rise of the reassurance policing movement in England and elsewhere has shown. The proponents of that movement (see Murphy Box 3) have noted that public views and associated fears and worries about public safety may be somewhat independent of crime trends and reflect broader features of society such as less community integration and the increasingly high risk character of modern society. Then, too, modest reductions in the rates may hardly dent what the public defines as problematic and unacceptable.

**Box 3 - Reassurance Policing**

In Great Britain, police responding to growing public concern about community safety and also the impact of *signal crimes* such as street assault, vandalism, rowdy behavior, etc., have begun to practice a style of policing they term “reassurance policing”. The objective of reassurance policing is to engage in visible local community policing strategies that will enhance both the reality and perception of public safety in neighborhood and communities where there is a problem.

Police strategies are based on neighborhood crime analysis, the deployment of special community service officers, fixed community police assignment and joint community – police problem solving strategies. The results of neighborhood based policing have been encouraging and have reduced both crime and fear of crime

**Chris Murphy**

The negative implications for public retreat from public places and spaces, not to mention for attracting others for tourism, post-secondary schooling and the like, and for economic growth, may be considerable. It is important therefore to examine the links between fear and worry about crime and public safety and actual victimization, the factors associated with each, the ways in which citizens adapt to perceived public safety challenges, and their suggestions for dealing with crime and public safety issues in HRM.

**(B) The HRM Mandate and Public Safety**

As noted above, municipalities in Nova Scotia, such as HRM, have a limited legislated mandate for responding directly to the social factors associated with crime and public safety or for collaborating with, if not coordinating the efforts of, the many voluntary associations, non-profit agencies and business organizations that are or could be involved in responding to the problems at the local level. HRM's legislated mandate does include policing, recreation, local transportation (e.g., buses) and some community development, and it is important to examine the extent to which the public, the community activists, and those most engaged in dealing with violence and public safety, think that the municipality is carrying out this mandate and their recommendations for future directions. Associated with that mandate is a role as advocate vis-à-vis the senior levels of government and again it was considered important to assess how that has been carried on in the public safety area and solicit suggestions on whether and how it could be improved. It may be noted that the Municipality has always stepped outside the limited mandate to some extent. Since amalgamation, for example, there has been a "grants committee" to which a great variety of non-profit and community groups could apply for modest funds, including now projects in the area of neighbourhood safety; in 2007 the grants committee had a budget of $500,000. In addition to direct grants, HRM regularly provides several million dollars in tax rebates and, occasionally, significant, one-time funds for special community projects (e.g., in 2007, $600,000 for a community project in the "Uptown" of the urban core).

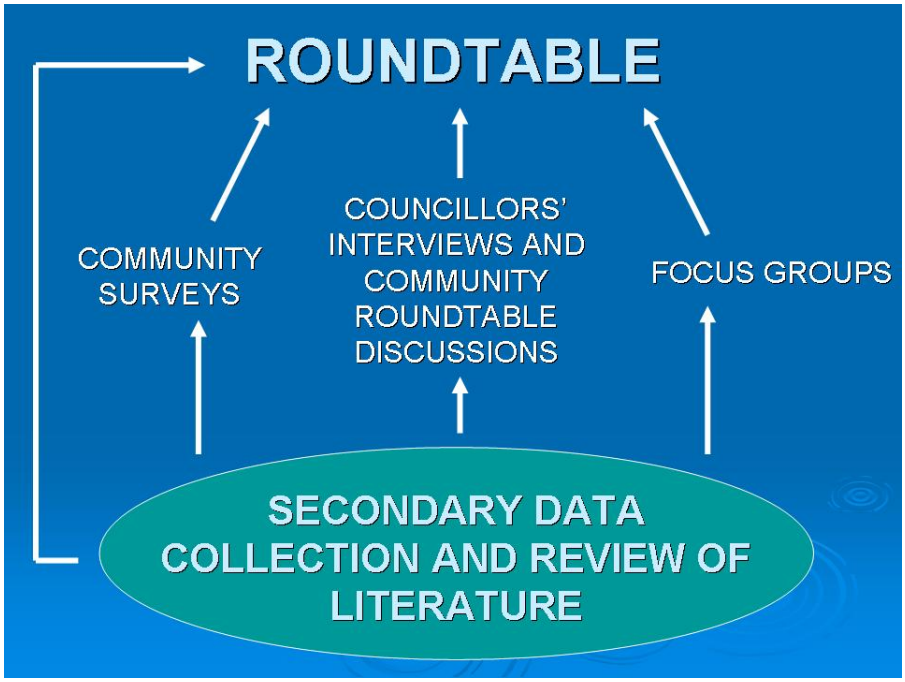
Going beyond the legislated mandate could be seen to be problematic for several reasons, namely constitutional factors (would the provincial government allow it and, even if so, would this be seen as unwisely accepting downloading without compensation on the part of HRM?), resource reasons (can the municipality afford to do more?), and political issues (would the large 23-person council, representing ostensibly quite diverse interests, support it?). At the same time, there are some factors that might be facilitative of the municipal government adopting a broader political mandate in public safety, were that a strongly held public and activists' viewpoint. One would be the scale factor given that HRM is a modest sized unit where an holistic perspective might prevail. Secondly, it may be that to effectively carry out even the current mandate and the associated advocacy function, there would have to be more municipal government presence in the public safety field. Several City staff persons, for example, have communicated the view that the discontinuation of the municipality's extensive social services, which accompanied amalgamation, has created a vacuum and an unworkable system for effective local response to social problems. An important issue might also be what special knowledge and expertise the municipal government could otherwise bring to the table in discussions with the senior levels of government about matters of violence and public safety.

Clearly Canadian provinces differ sharply in terms of the role and mandate of their cities but, according to informants on both the national and local scene, it would appear that other large Canadian cities are much more engaged in social services including housing and community development and that they have taken on a larger role in coordinating and strategically planning local efforts to improve public safety. While most if not all large Canadian cities identify major needs for more funding and inventive fiscal relationships with the senior governments, there is much City initiative taking place in dealing with crime and public safety, not only at the national lobbying level but in cities such Surrey, Victoria, , Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Moncton. There are then many crucial issues concerning the City's role for which the Roundtable initiative sought views and suggestions.

## *THE ROUNDTABLE APPROACHES*

Figure 1 depicts the Roundtable project strategy. The component dimensions leading up to the Roundtable three-day session were (a) secondary data collection and review of literature, (b) the two community surveys and the survey of university and college students; (c) the focus groups, and (d) the interviews of councillors and the community Roundtable discussions. In addition, at the Roundtable session, there were special invited presentations from authorities or change agents with respect to their views, current programs and projected plans on violence and public safety; these views and recommendations will also be discussed.

**Figure 1 - *The Roundtable Approach***



# *SECONDARY DATA AND LITERATURE REVIEW*

Here the writer examined secondary data and the salient literature regarding violence and public safety issues in HRM**.** The GSS survey (2004), several Canada-wide surveys of the public's views on the operation of the Criminal Justice System (e.g., Public Confidence in the Justice System, 2007), and previous surveys of public safety issues in HRM (e.g., Clairmont 1988) were reviewed in order to identify appropriate research questions to utilize for comparison purposes in the Roundtable community surveys and thereby help "place" the HRM results. Such comparisons will be discussed below. Some theoretical and substantive literature will be briefly mentioned here but that literature will be referred to in more detail in the segment on Focus Groups (Supplemental Report # 5, The Engaged). Secondary data on HRM, and Nova Scotia more generally, were examined to complement the findings on crime patterns noted above.

## DIVERSITY

Demographic factors usually impact on crime patterns and trends. As the baby boom has played out, there have been accompanying changes in crime patterns such as the rise and fall of property crimes noted earlier. In Nova Scotia the aging population is very evident. In 1971 almost 36% of the population was 17 years of age or under, whereas now that proportion has dropped to about 18% and is expected to decline further over the next decade to below 15%. The percentage decline has also reflected a decline in the absolute number of youth aged seventeen or less. The decline of population and youth outside of HRM is greatest but the same basic demographic trend exists for HRM; less than 8% of the HRM population is now aged between 12 and 17 inclusive. HRM has increasingly attracted the little immigration that has come to the province as shown by the graphs in the appendix, and it is estimated that roughly 75% of the province's immigrants are in HRM. They have added to the population of youth and to the diversity of the HRM population. The metropolitan area is also home to over 13,200 African-Nova Scotians; at one time, now nearly fifty years ago, Nova Scotia could boast of being home to the largest indigenous Black population in Canada. Overall, there are roughly similar numbers of Blacks and Aboriginals in Nova Scotia (e.g., 19,230 Blacks and 14,500 Aboriginals who are band members plus several thousand claiming native ancestry) but while the former are concentrated in HRM, the latter are not; indeed, of the several thousand Aboriginals identified as living in HRM in the Census, only 1000 or so (Clairmont and McMillan, 2001, 2006) are identified in the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey (i.e., have band membership or consider their primary identity to be Aboriginal). The remaining non-Caucasian population (Chinese, Other Asian, Latin Americans and Filipinos), as of the 2006 Census, totaled 10,580 in Nova Scotia, so the visible minority population in total constituted roughly 5% of Nova Scotia's population and 7% of HRM's population.

Tables in the appendix dealing with youth charged or receiving restorative justice options or on probation or sentenced to custody, establish very strongly that Blacks are very overrepresented in the criminal justice system. The table "Metro Youth" shows that they account for 22% of all young offenders and 26% of all repeat offenders (five or six times their proportion in the population), and while 26% of Caucasians youth accused during a five year period were repeat

offenders, fully 40% of the Black youths were. The custody data for the period 2000 to 2005 in Nova Scotia show that, while the custody numbers have been declining for all groupings, they have fallen less rapidly for Black youth with the result that Black youth in 2005 accounted for 24% of the youths sentenced to custody, close to double the 14% that they did in 2000. There is a similar pattern in the probation data. In an assessment of the level of over-representation, using reasonable demographic assumptions, and drawing on data from probation, custody and restorative justice sources, it has been estimated that in 2005 possibly as many as 10% of all African-Canadian males between the ages of 12 and 17 inclusive had been involved as offenders in the Nova Scotia criminal justice system (Clairmont, 2006). Comparable adult data were less accessible but the writer's previous work, plus correspondence with CSC and Parole officials (see also the presentation by Ben Bishop in Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts), indicate that there is much overrepresentation at the adult level too. While undoubtedly there is an association between custody and repeat offending and the seriousness of the offence, such overrepresentation can well be likened to the situation of Aboriginals throughout Canada, a situation described by the Supreme Court of Canada as completely unacceptable and requiring new criminal justice system and societal responses.

It is always important to underline that offending frequently occurs in an historical and societal context of victimization. For example, Statistics Canada (The Daily, February 20, 2008) recently released the 2004 GSS findings showing that among those aged 15 or more, Canadian- born visible minorities' rates of violent victimization are three times higher than visible minorities born abroad and twice as much as non-visible minorities in Canada; the rates were 211 per 1000 versus 69 and 107 respectively. It was noted that the Canadian-born visible minorities are younger, single, lower income and engaged in more evening activities but, even so, the differences according to Statistics Canada remain very significant. In light of the disproportionate offending and victimization among Blacks in HRM, it is disappointing and unacceptable that HRM's Community and Race Relations Committee has not been more effective (e.g., "Few members attend anti-racism meetings', Chronicle-Herald March 6, 2008).

A focus group (see Supplemental Report # 5, The Engaged) explored diversity and issues of violence and public safety among African-Canadian, Aboriginals, Immigrants and the Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Interviews were also carried out in 2006 with twenty-five local Black activists engaged with public safety issues and updated with others in 2007 for the Roundtable initiative. These local leaders emphasized the context of a more holistic response to social problems in certain parts of the Black community, problems whose roots, at least in part, have been shaped by the historical experiences of Blacks in Nova Scotia. With respect to the issue of overrepresentation noted above, the interviewed Black stakeholders in HRM were not surprised by the high level of CJS entanglement. One respondent commented, "I'm not at all surprised; I work the front-lines". A black defence lawyer reported, "not at all surprised because that is where the poverty and underlying issues such as racism are". There was much consensus among the respondents that such youth offending has become more serious as well as more plentiful. This view was reflected in such comments as "more weapons and violence than before", "I notice it more", and "in my fourteen years on the police force, the youth crime is definitely more serious than it was before, 70% to 80% more serious". A few respondents simply commented that they were not surprised because the justice system is two-tiered and "it's always been that way".

The local leaders' views on alternative justice strategies such as restorative justice (RJ) were sought. While positive, they believed that it was necessary to strengthen it through accountability, effective community engagement, better mentoring, especially youth on youth, and Black mentors, and "tough love" with consequences and limits. But the other side of tough love is love and the respondents also stressed that the context and causes of offending have to be addressed since otherwise RJ was just a band-aid; accordingly, the respondents pointed to the need for RJ to be more proactive, to liaise with the schools in particular, and, through having a more Africentric philosophy, give Black youth a sense of pride and awareness of the possibilities of life. While acknowledging the need for more resources being available to restorative justice programming to accomplish these broad objectives, they also suggested that it could be possible to draw more from the community , especially other youth, professionals, other programs and the like, but ordinary residents too if they can perhaps appreciate more their stake in the RJ option. While most respondents were not asked about sentencing circles, the few, who were, considered that that restorative justice tactic might be valuable in effecting community engagement, something called for in the focus group report below. In the case of both Black and Aboriginal offenders (many Aboriginal ex-inmates re-settle at least on an interim basis in HRM), the need for offender reintegration programs was emphasized (see Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts).

Interviews and correspondence with activists in the Gay community indicated that while public views have changed appreciably, and for the better, there are still concerns. The disappearances and murders of gay men in 2007 sparked anger and fear (Marwah, "Times change but violence a constant for gays" Chronicle-Herald May 16, 2007). It also may have led to a better relationship with the HRPS; one activist commented, "The recent tragic murders of two men marked a new relationship between Halifax Regional Police and the LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender] Community. The police reached out to us with concern for our safety and a desire to work with us. The Chief and his deputies were present in uniform at a rally against homophobia; they mourned with us, standing in solidarity against the physical, psychological and social violence of homophobia. I have the very best hopes that we can continue to build on this renewed trust". The public safety concerns raised included responding to domestic violence in LGBT relationships, drug abuse, the safety of sex trade workers and concern about entrusting public security to groups such as the Guardian Angels ("As taxpayers, we can hold our police to the highest standards of respect for individual and collective human rights, we expect them to be well trained and responsible. The Guardian Angels, or any such group that expresses its intent to use force as it sees fit, are at best unaccountable and at worst, dangerous").

A HRPS officer underlined the need for a better relationship between the LGBT community and the police, and a possible educative role for HRM in reducing violence against LGBT people, in her comment, "Under-reporting of victimization in the gay community is very high. The majority of "cruisers" are not self-identifying as gay and are highly vulnerable to assault and robbery. There is a general lack of trust toward those in authority, including Police. There are no openly gay male members of HRP. Those victims who do report often cite that they are treated differently than other victims with the emphasis being on their sexual orientation as contributing to the cause of the crime whether that is truly the case or not"; she added, "Due to a lack of support and acceptance within the larger community, substance abuse is extremely high in the

gay community. Education regarding the gay community is required in order for acceptance and tolerance within the larger community".

As detailed earlier, immigration to Nova Scotia has increasingly meant immigration to metropolitan Halifax. The relatively small foreign-born population has been diverse as well with Asian groupings (especially Chinese) being the largest. No substantial data are available concerning the foreign-born as either victims or offenders, Neither the court data system (JEIN) nor the restorative justice one (RJIS) refer to race/ ethnicity, apart from Caucasian, African-Canadian, Aboriginal, and two grab-bag categories, namely "Other" and "Unknown". In addition to being limited in categorization, information on race / ethnicity is frequently not entered in these data systems. Information gathered through interviews with HRM prosecutors and police authorities indicated no significant level of immigrant offending or victimization. Indeed, in a 2008 interview, a well-known and long-time immigrant activist commented that immigrants have brought a greater sense of community in one or two large housing projects in HRM, contributing in that way to a reduction of violence and crime.

In light of the diversity of cultures, and reports that some immigrants would not be comfortable or trusting in bringing their victimization to the authorities, immigrant activists were asked about the possible benefit of alternatives such as having the matter dealt with through restorative justice circles involving the community's members. There was much appreciation for the idea that RJ could provide a more nuanced response to offending that would take into account contextual factors as well as avoid some of the fears that some immigrants may have with respect to the formal court process. One respondent commented, "It [RJ] is phenomenal, allows reflection on what has happened and why, opportunity for restitution and personal ownership of the event, compassion and learning. Immigration is a two-way street. They have to know their rights and responsibilities. At the same time, they have to work with Canadian citizens and create an open and inclusive environment". While positive about RJ, at the same time, the respondents stressed very much the diversity of the immigrant communities, suggesting that some immigrants could well feel more comfortable in the formal court process than in "semi-public discussions" of family members' troubles and possible airing of discordant family dynamics. One long-time immigrant service provider emphasized the variation as follows: "In some cultures any crime needs to be punished. For them RJ may be seen as getting away with the offence. Immigrants from some cultures feel the system should be dealing with the criminals and they don't need to be involved".

Despite the diversity of the minority groups involved in the sessions there appeared to be considerable empathy among them. For example, one LGBT leader and focus group participant observed, "I was struck by the common ground that LGBT Haligonians had with refugees and other New Canadians in responding to violence within our respective communities; in both communities, the violence often remains hidden from the larger society. Both groups have identified a (possibly unwarranted) distrust of officialdom, particularly law enforcement. Both groups have a fear of disclosure which might prevent their reporting crimes of violence, i.e. for those LGBT persons who are closeted (whether at work, or to our families and others) fear of being "outed." An attendant fear which may prevent reporting of crime is that of anticipated homophobia on part of the police".

## YOUTHS AND ADULTS

The tables and graphs in the appendix depict the pattern of youth charges and recorded offences over the past 20 years in Nova Scotia. It can be seen that the rate per 10,000 of youths charged has declined since 1993, significantly and on a generally continuous basis. The rate of youth "accused", a new statistic developed by the federal CCJS to take into account alternative measures and restorative justice referrals, however, increased appreciably between 1999 and 2003, indicating an enhanced dependence in the criminal justice system on the restorative justice option which was launched in Nova Scotia in 1999. Other tables in the appendix show that with the promulgation of the YCJA in 2003, that dependence, especially in HRM, increased further with the steady decline since then of police cautions as an alternative to either laying charges or referring the youth to restorative justice. Youth incarceration levels for the period 2000 to 2008 illustrate the very dramatic decline subsequent to the introduction of the YCJA, a decline of 55% in the following year.

Unquestionably in Nova Scotia, despite CJS reports indicating that youth violence has not followed the downward trend that the adult rates have, there has been an emphasis on extra judicial sanctions. The restorative justice program has modestly but steadily received more referrals, averaging annually 40% plus of all provincial referrals and 60% plus of the provincial post-charge (Crown-level) referrals. The latter statistic is telling since it indicates that the local agency is receiving a higher proportion of complex cases, where the youth may be a repeat offender or have committed a serious offence. The evidence is that the local agency has been struggling with this workload (as, by the way, have some the Group Homes who have also been receiving more troubled youth in recent years and have had this problem compounded by the Department of Justice sending youths released from custody at Waterville into the Group Homes) since effective intervention in these cases appears to require more intensive assessment and case management (Clairmont, 2006). Recommendations have been suggested to possibly improve the restorative justice intervention, including a special project for the more difficult referrals (Clairmont, ibid) and some such initiatives are now underway.

More detailed analyses and recommendations are provided in the introduction to the focus group report on Troubled Youth and in the focus group report itself (Supplemental Report # 5, The Engaged). The central recommendation of that focus group deserves attention – "The general recommendation was that the municipal government should be more assertive in coordinating, facilitating and networking and in lobbying the senior levels of government – "HRM with almost its soon-to-be 50% of the Nova Scotian population has a right to be heard in violence and public safety issues. To realize the more expansive role, the City should establish a business unit dedicated to public safety thereby incorporating the issues of troubled youth and other Roundtable foci into HRM business plan and priorities". Evidence from the public surveys is that the public, while very critical of youth justice policies and practices, is also self-reportedly quite unaware of how they operate and their potential value. Clearly, as the focus group on Social Constructions of Public Safety recommends -"HRM should develop a social marketing campaign to influence community attitudes and values drawing on past marketing successes, engaging champions for the initiative, using real-life stories to show positive change is possible and non-traditional partners and means of communication to ensure its message reaches those who need it most".

Analyses of completed court cases recorded in official Nova Scotia court statistics (i.e., JEIN) for a 14 month period January 1, 2005 to February 28, 2006 (see Completed Court Cases**,** Appendix**)** indicate that, in Nova Scotia, youths, 12 to 17 years of age inclusive, accounted for roughly 14% of all the charges while for HRM the percentage was 13%. Given the above demographic trends, one might expect that this proportion will decline in future years. The analysis of completed court cases indicates that there were no significant differences in the number of charges per cases, or the incidence of distinct court cases per individual, between HRM and Nova Scotia youth in the fourteen month period. There was, however, a quite significant difference in violent offenses charged, as HRM youth were more likely to have been charged with such crimes (i.e., 21% to 12% for the province as a whole, so about double the non-HRM percentage if HRM was excluded from the provincial calculation). It is interesting to note that young adults, 18 to 25 years of age, were charged much more often and for more violent offenses. As the appended table shows, these persons accounted for 40% of all adult charges and 35% of all charges in HRM. They exhibited much more recidivism, and 29% of their charges were for violent offenses. Public attention and initiatives by criminal justice system officials however have focused primarily on youth between the ages of 12 and 17 or younger. It is interesting further to observe in the appendix that the two HRM dailies over the period 2005-2008 gave much attention to youth crime as a theme.

Clearly the bulk of crime, and the greatest threat to public safety, now and in the future, come from those who are 18 years of age and older. HRM is home to small gangs centered in the drug trade and accountable for a number of retaliatory murders and public-frightening drive-by shootings; in addition, it has been the home base and recruiting grounds for the notorious "North Preston Finest" gang which has roots in drugs, guns and prostitution extending back over twenty years. As will be seen in the next section, young adults have been and remain responsible for virtually all the high level of offending in the Downtown area. The public and criminal justice system response has been essentially punitive for adult offending. Review of HRPS-provided data for the period 1994 to 2004 inclusive, indicates that prison sentences have not fallen for adults convicted in Nova Scotia; indeed, for those convicted of weapons offences there has been a significant increase in the number (and likely the rate) of prison sentences. Overall, there has been a modest, decade-long, trend for those adults convicted of break and enter, fraud, and vandalism/property damage to be more likely to be given prison sentences; no obvious trend was discernible for assaults, robberies or sexual assaults.

While enforcement remains crucial, innovative approaches, such as carried out with young offenders, should be directed to dealing with certain offending young adults. Two areas would seem especially important, namely, first, as originally planned by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, restorative justice for minor, non-violent offenses, and, secondly, direct assistance and advocacy for offender re-integration in the case of more serious offenders. Concerning the former, restorative justice initiatives on a project basis should be encouraged by the municipality for dealing with minor student offences. The case for one such project is developed in the section Student Survey below; a similar project has proved valuable in reducing the alcohol abuse/minor offenses public safety problem in Antigonish (for detail, see "St.FX / Antigonish Restorative Justice" in the appendix). Some restorative justice literature has indicated that the restorative process as currently implemented may indeed be best suited to minor adult offences. Of course

restorative justice programming comes under the jurisdiction of the province but the benefits of an innovative expansion to adults seem very crucial for public safety in HRM. Concerning the second area, HRM is a central re-settlement place for ex-inmates, not to mention being home to at least seven halfway houses with their total of approximately 75 residents. There are few resources available for reintegrating ex-inmates, as noted in Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts, and the municipal government might well be a stronger advocate of attention to this situation as well explore what it can contribute directly.

## STREET CRIME

Swarming and street robbery, perhaps more than anything else, have been at the heart of public concerns for safety, and indeed HRM, compared to most other jurisdictions in Canada, has had a high level of these "signal crimes'. While both swarmings and conventional street robbery would appear to overlap much with respect to the motives of the offender, robbery would appear to be more utilitarian. The criminological literature on the whole supports that depiction, suggesting that street robbery, committed by a single person or two, is most often utilitarian and linked to drugs (e.g., "I was high", "I wanted to buy crack"), but it too may involve a complex of factors such as notions of street justice, getting status and the "high" of domination. As Barnet argues ("Street Robbery Is Not Just About Money", 2006), "the decision to commit street crime can be explained in part by particular characteristics of the street culture … any explanation must take into account cultural factors associated with life on the street".

There has been little examination of the motivation for swarmings and virtually none on the victims. A Quebec article in 2002 (State and Rising Youth Gang Violence) noted that "Sometimes the motivation for the attack is to obtain some property from the victim. However, many senseless and unprovoked attacks left the victim with their property. Violent swarmings are committed by emotionally deprived kids who are looking for status and acceptance. A study found a strong correlation between youth with absent fathers and/or lack of family support joining violent gangs and committing violent acts. It is argued that by participating in violent acts, one's status in a gang is upgraded and he becomes more strongly integrated into the gang and brotherhood – thereby fulfilling his/her emotional need to belong/accepted". Cultural factors appear to be significant. Sociologists refer to the modern origins of swarming in the inner cities of the USA where the desire to get an expensive item such as top-grade running shoes (i.e., expensive sport paraphernalia) mixed with quasi-gang motives (e.g., the status factors that Barnett refers to above). It has an inner city, Black subculture identity which conventional street robberies do not have. Swarming, as found in HRM, would appear to be more motivated by these non-utilitarian considerations. There is often no material gain whatsoever and when there is, the assault seems "over the top" or gratuitous (a concept frequently used by police, prosecutors and judges in describing these actions). In one HRPS report dealing with gang swarmings, an officer noted, "To be indicted [into the gang] new members must commit an assault in the presence of established members".

Analyses of the data on swarming and street robberies provided by the HRPS, for the period January 2006 to July 2007, indicates that swarming, where assault is more prominent than theft though both may be involved, by youth and young adults in the urban cores of HRM – there is

little outside these zones – is disproportionately carried out by young Black males. On the other hand, 'conventional' street robberies of individuals, where the material gain seems to be the sole objective, has been more likely carried out by individual Caucasian males though Black male robbers are not exceptional. For example, in the Central and East districts (i.e., both sides of the Harbour) of HRPS jurisdiction, the urban core areas where robberies of both kinds largely takes place, one typical period report shows 11 Whites involved in 9 robberies and 23 Black males involved in 5, a clear indication of the style of conventional street robbery versus swarmings; another period report for a district indicates that 23 of the 26 robberies were committed by groups of 3 or more Black young males. Aside from these general patterns, there is some variation by area of attack (but most of these street crimes occur close to home), gender (there have been a few swarmings by females), the number of attackers, and motive. In a recent, well-publicized case in HRM where several young teenagers swarmed a sixty year old woman and the assault could be described as gratuitous, the ostensible motive as expressed by one of the girls was to get back to the Youth Correctional facility where her basic survival needs would be better met. The notion that a subcultural pattern of swarming may have taken hold among socially disadvantaged Black youths, who themselves are usually routinely victimized in their everyday life, seems supported by the large number of such youths who have been identified by HRPS as quasi-gang members engaged in swarmings, and by the fact that older Black males, young adults, appear to be participants and role models. Another officer, a participant in the focus group in 2007, made the following comment, "In our Metro there are 16 youth gangs. We are on the verge of becoming L.A. in terms of gang involvement".

As Professor Murphy aptly notes in his write-up of the focus group on street crime, "Swarmings in the HRM urban core are signal crimes that require special attention from the community and the criminal justice system. The serious and public nature of group violence against innocent victims in public places, by often young repeat offenders needs to be better understood and more effectively responded to by the community and the criminal justice system. This requires a coherent and coordinated criminal justice and community response, based on a better understanding of the social and racial dynamics of the problem and a willingness to invest special resources to ensure prevention and deterrence". Certainly the victimization has been serious on occasion and the public anxiety induced by such signal crime considerable. If swarming has become "a rite de passage", a subculture thing and part of the quasi-gang culture, then, in addition to enforcement, one has to focus on breaking the quasi-gangs and providing alternatives for pro-social behaviour.

## RELATED STREET CRIME ISSUES

The grey-crime / provincial statute area of intimidation, vagrancy and the like has frequently been identified as a significant public safety issue and usually linked with the proliferating problem of the homeless, and panhandling. Little information is available on the threat to public safety. It is unclear what crimes are committed with what frequency by the "street people". Charging people for some such statute violations has sometimes been seen as following the famous "broken windows" policing strategy whereby social disorder is reduced, opportunity for crime diminished and the offenders seized may be subsequently charged for more serious offenses. In the parlance of the American street, such a statute charge is designated, "it's a

humble" (i.e., no serious implications for one's record, bail etc but a 'statement'). At the same time, the line between statute and crime can be a shifting one and there can be little doubt that street people, given their frequency of addiction and health problems, on top of their poverty and need, would likely be repeat minor offenders as well as repeat victims of violence themselves.

A number of studies have been done of the homeless in HRM and are accessible through the HRM website (see also the sources in the appendix). Studies completed in 2004 indicated that the public perception was that the problem was getting worse and that some action by government on providing affordable housing was needed. Other studies in that period indicated that most homeless persons are young adults and older with only some 12% being under 18 years of age, that the homeless numbers were significant though not increasing dramatically, and that the problems of the street people were multifaceted; they, too, emphasized the need for safe, affordable housing. A 2006 report which probed the circumstances and views of a small, and likely unrepresentative, sample of the homeless (Street Youth Speak Out, 2006) pointed to a high level of victimization both before and after the respondents became homeless, a persistent homelessness, extensive use of drugs and serious health problems, and few available social services (i.e., they were too old for Community Services and few other services save Phoenix House and ARK were available for them). Safe, supervised housing was a central recommendation of the 2006 report as well.

Throughout Canada, that has been the central recommendation of virtually all studies of the homeless and the threat to public safety. It has become almost a mantra that the "housing first" approach, by getting people into supportive housing, would yield big savings in public outlays for diverse social services and that there would be a high (80%) housing retention rate (e.g., "Sheltering addicted persons would save millions" British Columbia Report www.cbc.ca April, 2008). Recent legislation has made it possible to enhance the enforcement side of dealing with this general problem. Bill 7 amending the MV Act was passed in January 2008 to reduce or eliminate the squeegee problem. The Nova Scotia Safe Streets Act directed at panhandling and street "intimidation' is set for promulgation. In August 2007 the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear an appeal from eleven homeless men arguing that an Ontario law outlawing squeegee "kids" and panhandlers is unconstitutional. There is though reluctance by governments and the public in general, appropriately so in this writer's view, to use the enforcement tools here save in egregious circumstances (Lezlie Lowe, 2008). Getting at the roots of the problem (undoubtedly, problems since there are complicated issues here) through more positive approaches such as the "navigator project" encouraged by local business associations (see Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts) or the partnerships proposed by the Community Action on Homeless (funded in part by both senior levels of government) to generate permanent, safe housing stock, should be encouraged by and collaborated in by HRM government. Typically, too, much effort is expended by police and courts in dealing with disturbed or addicted street people committing relatively minor but frequent offenses. A variety of specialty courts have come into vogue in an attempt to get more on the roots of the problems experienced by these persons, such as mental health courts, drug treatment courts or community courts, and it appears that the province is now encouraging such initiatives.

Drug addiction and abuse has been considered by many criminal justice people, community groups and the public at large to be a major contributor to street crime and threats to public

safety. It is at the core of much street crime, the street sex trade, deadly local disputes and turf wars, and organized crime in the large. The emphasis in the USA and Canada justice policy and practice has been on enforcement and the supply side but a major rehabilitation thrust has accompanied the growth of drug treatment courts as options to conventional incarceration in both countries over the past decade (i.e., there are now over 2000 such courts in the USA and six formal and three "informal" courts in Canada). Research carried out by the writer in 2003-2004, with respect to HRM getting a drug treatment court , found that drug offenses were increasing and that the number of addicted persons who would be eligible for that option (i.e., addicted persons charged with drug dealing, street crimes etc) would be sufficient to mount the initiative. These data have been updated by accessing federal prosecutions data and interviewing prosecutors and local treatment providers (e.g. Directions 180). The drug problems and the drug numbers appear to be similar to the earlier period and, indeed, the local treatment providers (providing methadone and some counseling) indicate that they are operating at capacity. There is also an underlying concern that powerful addictive drugs such as "crystal meth" might become more widespread. There appears also to be a greater openness to rehabilitative initiatives, such as the drug treatment court in Canada, and, in the USA, a noticeable trend away from mandatory sentences for drug possession (see for more detail the focus group write-up on drugs in Supplemental Report # 5, The Engaged). In Nova Scotia the provincial Department of Justice is considering a form of drug treatment court for the immediate future. Improving treatment and other services – dealing with the demand side of drug abuse –is an important complement to the enforcement thrust. It would also have positive implications for reducing street crime. The municipality is home to seven halfway houses accommodating adult ex-inmates, many of who have addiction problems and without treatment, housing, and the like might – and do – recidivate at a high level. Similarly, it could benefit street sex trade worker and associated public concerns (see below). Presently there are a relatively small number of street sex trade workers but reportedly, a high proportion is drug addicted. According to police authorities, "there are never more than ten prostitutes working then streets at one time" and "where there is [street] prostitution, there is usually drugs and a crack house within a short distance".

## LOCATING VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The Roundtable three-day session opened with a presentation by **Marnie Wallace, researcher with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, (CCJS), Statistics Canada**. Ms. Wallace discussed the CCJS's geo-coding of crime in that portion of HRM policed by the HRPS, using census and crime data from 2001. The central thrust of geo-coding is to correlate where instances of crime occurred with other socio-economic data, where the unit is the census tract. The correlates then of high crime census tracts with other census tract features are identified. There were 51 census tracts in the HRPS jurisdiction and the geo-coding had a usable sample of about 21,000 criminal incidents. For good reasons, three types of offenses were excluded, namely impaired driving, administration of justice offenses and harassment calls. The sample's criminal incidents consisted of 77% property, 20% violent and 3% other crime, quite comparable to Canada as a whole though slightly higher for violent crime (20% to 17%). It was noted that Halifax crime rates followed the Canada-wide pattern of decline over the last decade though the rates were above average since 1990s.

Ms. Wallace's chief findings were (1) both violent and property crimes are concentrated in the Downtown Halifax and Dartmouth areas (what we have been calling the urban core of HRM), unlike in other municipal jurisdictions geo-coded by CCJS where the two types of crime were not as bunched together; (2) the two sides of the Harbour were somewhat different in their incident patterns presumably because of the different land use (e.g., industrial park in Dartmouth, large entertainment zone in Halifax); (3) the correlates of violent and property crime were the usual factors identified in the literature, namely single parent family (female), unaffordable housing (persons spending more than 30% of income on housing), low household income, low educational achievement and so forth There was some variation in the correlates between violent and property crimes. In particular for property crimes the census tract correlates were low household income, single parent family, and unaffordable housing while for violent crime they were more males, high residential mobility, more people living alone, single parent (female), low household income, and high unemployment. For both sides of the Harbour, the key variable correlated with high rates of violence appeared to be high proportion of single parent (female) families, though the researcher noted that this variable is strongly correlated with most of the other variables such as low income, unaffordable housing and low educational attainment**.** Ms. Wallace reported that low income was a key factor in violent and property crime in other municipalities geo-coded by CCJS. Below is a closer examination of violence and crime in the two key areas of the urban core, namely the Downtown and the surrounding areas.

## THE DOWNTOWN BAR SCENE

The Downtown bar scene, or what some English writers have termed "the night-time economy", was an especial emphasis of the Roundtable initiative since much of the violence and concern about public safety in HRM has focused on the Downtown in the evening, and it has also been such a vital part of HRM's attraction and economy. In HRM there are some 231 Liquor Licences in the Downtown core, including 71 Lounges and 4 cabarets and the operating hours are from about 11:00 am - 4:00 am. The challenge for HRM is how to respond effectively to the assaults and other crimes there while retaining the vibrancy of the Downtown areas. There have been many assessments of the violence and public safety issues with respect to the 'night time economy' or Downtown bar scene in Canada, England and the United States. The specific features associated with increased likelihood of violence and crime, as well as the recommendations on how to reduce their impact, are very commonly noted (see the literature cited by Murphy below). The Downtown bar scene in HRM could well be described as the perfect storm for violence and crime, involving as it does young adults (the central contributor to violence in virtually all societies), moderately affluent, of diverse race/ethnic and social status, concentrated in large numbers in a few large drinking establishments, engaged, in significant number, in excessive alcohol consumption, and in a very permissive milieu (open hours past midnight, poor oversight, discounted alcohol prices) where Bar security is questionable and transportation inadequate. In all segments of the Roundtable initiative the Downtown was a central point of emphasis but especially so of course in this focus group and in the Student survey (as one might expect the Downtown scene has a major allure for some, though not all, university and college students). Data from the public and student surveys, and other material generously provided by the HRPS, was passed on to professor Murphy who took on the task of preparing an overview and pulling together the recommendations as he saw appropriate; his

elaborate seventeen page overview follows the focus group report on the Downtown also prepared by himself. The HRPS' recommendations in presentations to the provincial government have emphasized prohibiting deeply discontinued liquor prices, staggering closing times given the high outlet density in the Downtown, reducing the hours of operation, strengthening the regulatory oversight, mandating responsible service and "safe bars" training, and support for the Nova Scotia Alcohol Strategy for long-run change. All of these recommendations have been incorporated in the overview recommendations advanced by Murphy.

Several tables in the appendix depict the concentration of violence and crime in the Downtown area well. One table – "Downtown vs median value of all HRPS-policed districts" – illustrates that the Downtown has long had a pattern of violence; for example, consistently throughout the period 2002 to 2004 inclusive, there were significantly larger number of assaults, robberies, sexual assaults, and even break and enters in the Downtown than in the medians for the other thirteen districts.. The table also shows that the incidence of all these types of crimes in the Downtown was consistently the greatest in the last quarter of the year when post-secondary students were in place and university social activities were perhaps at their height. Several other tables show the impact of the extended hours and the lure of the 'cheap drinks' promotions that have generated so much current controversy. Comparing police-recorded offenses in the four hour periods before and after 1 am in the years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, and also for the period April to November 2007, the differences are very significant; in the latter eight month period, for example, there were 356 police-recoded offenses in the hours 1 am to 5 am and only 44 in the hours 9 pm to 1 am. While the differences usually involve liquor violations, assaults of others and of police officers were also ten times more likely in the hours 1 am to 5 am. The "cheap shots" promotions have usually been on Wednesday and Sunday evening, and, as the tables show, Thursday and Monday (the mornings after the two promotion nights) have come to be associated with higher levels of crimes and arrests than any other day but Sunday (i.e., Saturday night and early Sunday morning).

The table also indicates that the number of offences increased considerably in the year 2006-2007 compared to 2005-2006; the increase was completely accounted for liquor offenses (assaults, as noted, occurred more in the early morning hours but did not increase in total over the two year period) and presumably reflected the increased police presence in the Downtown in 2006-2007. These tables, and many other that could have been selected, underline the findings advanced in the cited geo-coding report concerning the concentration of violent and property crimes in the Downtown. They also underline that alcohol abuse is the central proximate cause of the violence and public safety issues there. As the HRPS wrote in a submission to provincial authorities, "Intoxication is a serious problem for HRP in the downtown core of Halifax. In 2006 there were 3,534 and in 2007 there were 4,316 liquor related offences in all of HRM. 57% of these calls occurred in the downtown core. Forty-six percent of those calls occurred after 2 a.m. In addition, many of the serious assaults in the downtown occur between 3-5 a.m. The experience of police officers is that many perpetrators and/or victims of these violent crimes are highly intoxicated".

**BEYOND THE DOWNTOWN**

In the appendix, the table –"The Top 6 Risk Districts" – is based on HRPS reports for the period 2002 to 2004 inclusive. For assaults, sexual assaults, robberies and break and enter, the Downtown of course was number one in terms of incidents but the other urban core areas on both sides of the Harbour were usually in the list of the top six; break and enter, the only one of these offences not usually coded as violent, frequently occurred in the districts contiguous to the urban core (e.g., the South End). A detailed report on robberies for the eighteen month period, January 2006 to July 2007, indicates the vast majority of all robberies and virtually all swarmings occurred in the urban core, outside the Downtown, on both sides of the Harbour, the scene of most, though not all, gang activity. The urban core areas experience much violence and crime for many reasons as noted in the geo-coding report cited above (e.g., poverty) but surely a central reason is that they are, to some extent, "deviance service centers", places where people, residing elsewhere in HRM and beyond, come for drugs, sex trade services and other vices. Prostitution-related charges – driven by complaints – have declined from 183 charges in 2004 to 70 in each of 2005 and 2006 and vast majority were in relation to street sex trade, but virtually all complaints came from residents in the urban core areas on both sides of the Harbour. Many observers have noted that such activities would effect outrage in other areas of HRM, and, to that extent, then, the area itself is victimized. Also, there is a concentration of social services in these areas which draws into them many people who have a host of personal problems and can generate anxiety about public safety. One well-informed local leader commented that parts of the urban core on the Halifax side of the Harbour are really "close curtain societies" where people come home from work etc, close the curtains and do not get involved. In the Minister's Task Force on Crime Prevention, a public meeting in the Uptown heard several residents complain about the ever-present danger of youth gangs in the area,

What can be done to improve the situation in these high risk urban core areas beyond the Downtown? The focus group, Neighbourhood Engagement and Public Safety, was considered crucial since the municipality has had to date such a minimal role in directly dealing with issues of violence and public safety that the onus has fallen largely to neighbourhood initiatives supported by the United Way. The municipality does provide, since 2007, modest grants for applicants advancing projects on a neighbourhood safety theme but few have been requested to date (personal communication, HRM, February, 2008), There has also been an HRM Community Response Team format in operation for five years but it appears to have had a limited, reactive role (e.g., crime prevention through environmental design). The focus group was set in train in order to explore whether community mobilization has been thus far an effective strategy in responding to violence and public safety issues, what the current assets and capacities are, what might be recommended to enhance effectiveness, and what the municipal government's role might be in that regard.

The focus group brought together persons who worked in the area of community mobilization as well as leaders of several well-known community efforts where significant change was achieved with respect to reducing crime rates as well as increasing community refurbishment and pride. The facilitator, Professor Schneider, who has developed and implemented innovative intervention programs (e.g. mentoring), studied and written on neighbourhood mobilization, also provided a review of the salient literature. He noted there that a central problem of community

mobilization and crime prevention has been that it is least successful where it is usually most called for, namely in the socio-economically disadvantaged urban core areas of modern Western societies. Academics, and the evaluation literature, have become quite pessimistic about the capacity of such communities to mobilize and impact on the pervasiveness of crime and have emphasized the greater value of social development programs targeted at at-risk children and youth, their families, their schools and their after-school activities. There has been some research indicating that collective efficacy, defined as social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, is linked to reduced violence (Neighbourhoods and Violent Crime, 1997). The challenge has been to achieve collective efficacy in areas characterized by poverty, transience, high crime levels and so on. The Lighthouse program in Winnipeg and the Mulgrave Park developments referred to in the focus group report suggest that it is possible.

The recommendations of the focus group reasonably enough emphasized on how the municipal government could advance community / neighbourhood engagement in reducing violence and crime and improving public safety. Here the central call was for leadership from the Mayor's Office in acknowledging the problem of public safety and assuming a mobilizing and coordinating role. The focus group held that a community crime prevention coordinator and associated advisory group, directly reporting to the Mayor's Office, should be established. Specific ways in which this new organizational structure could advance community engagements were deemed to be assisting in the recruitment and retention of volunteers, supplying technical experience and a broad strategic planning umbrella for community initiatives, and directly supporting a social development approach to the problem. It was also recommended that the police services commit more to reassurance policing, deemed to mean police personnel in specific neighbourhoods, full time, and focusing on reassurance policing objectives.

## TRENDS

Analyses of police-reported crime provided by the HRPS indicate that the number of violent crimes increased in the core of HRM in the years following amalgamation in 1996 and that the clearance rate simultaneously fell off. Assaults increased modestly but the clearance rate for assaults fell sharply, while for robberies the numbers increased sharply but the clearance rate only declined modestly; in the case of weapons charges, the increase in numbers and the decline in clearance rate were both quite modest. In the ten years since amalgamation, violent crime increased significantly in the years since 2000 compared to the years prior to it. Assaults, sexual assaults, and robberies were higher (as of course was total violent crime) in each year since 2000 than in any of the five years between 1996 and 2000. As the police service was able to increase its complement to pre-amalgamation levels and have the infrastructure to support new initiatives such as its anti-violence and community response strategy, the trend began to change.

Table 5 indicates that the Community Response Strategies of the police services introduced in 2005 have achieved some of their objectives. In the HRPS jurisdiction, break and enters of all types, and theft of and from vehicles, steadily and significantly declined over the three year period. Robberies declined sharply in 2007. Recall too that Table 4 showed that the rate of violent crime declined in each of the years 2004 to 2007. One specific police strategy that

appears to have contributed much to this impact was the "Breach Project" wherein HRPS (the RCMP also has such a program) checked on convicted persons released on conditions (e.g., house arrests). Fully 40% of the offenders checked – roughly equal numbers of adults and youths - were subsequently charged with breach offences). Clearly, though, despite police efforts, violence and public safety remain serious issues – especially quasi-gangs of young men - in the urban core areas of HRM.

**Table 5** - ***Selected Crime Trends in HRM, HRPS Jurisdiction (2005 – 2007)***

| | **2005** | **2006** | **2007** |
|---|---|---|---|
| B & E - Commercial | 730 | 618 | 590 |
| B & E - Residential | 1356 | 1160 | 848 |
| B & E - Other | 584 | 349 | 263 |
| Robberies | 528 | 571 | 404 |
| Theft from Vehicle | 3219 | 3107 | 2383 |
| Theft of Vehicle | 1322 | 1174 | 789 |

With the exception of Robberies, street level crime in these categories has been on a steady downward trend since 2005. Robberies increased slightly in 2006 however dropped significantly in 2007, by over 25%.

Tables in the appendix depict the patterns of crime recorded in the RCMP jurisdiction of HRM over the years 2001 to 2006 inclusive. It can be seen that, overall, the key criminal offense was assault (usually common assault) but there were about 30 robberies and 130 sexual assaults per year on average. The number of assaults peaked at 1463 in 2004, and, like sexual assaults, has fallen sharply since then. The distribution of offenses has not been even throughout the RCMP area. Assaults have been consistently at a higher rate in Lower Sackville. Cole Harbour had a lower rate but still a significantly higher one than the other districts. All districts peaked in the years, 2003 and 2004, in the number of recorded assaults. Sexual assaults, on the other hand, occurred at a higher rate in Cole Harbour with Lower Sackville having the second highest. Again, in all the larger districts the number and the rate of sexual assaults peaked in the years 2003, 2004. Robberies have increased in Cole Harbour over the six year period and in 2006, that district had the highest rate. Robberies peaked in Lower Sackville in 2004 and were quite uncommon elsewhere in the RCMP-policed area. Weapon offences were more concentrated in Lower Sackville but increased in Cole Harbour in recent years. Clearly, the two major districts posing challenges for violence and public safety have been and remain Cole Harbour and Lower Sackville. In light of the crime statistics, one can appreciate the graph in the appendix (i.e., Media and Crime) which shows that, in the period 2005-2008, the weekly for Cole Harbour devoted far more space to Youth Crime than did the weeklies of Bedford-Sackville and Halifax West-Clayton Park.

The decline in certain street crime patterns and public safety concerns in HRM since 2005 would appear to be linked, partly at least, with the well-known and well-praised (see Toronto Anti-Violence 2006) HRM Policing Community Response Model launched in 2005 as a collaborative effort between the HRPS and the RCMP (see Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts for details). A multi-dimensional strategic plan, it has a zone-based, intelligence-driven policing, foot patrol, quick response units, an outreach communications strategy, and in-depth analyses of the crime patterns in HRM; it has also significantly advanced the community response strategy in the high risk, urban core areas. Clearly, though, even the best police strategies represent only part of the solution as the crime stats and public fears indicate, and as the police leadership acknowledges in its advocacy of social development to get at the roots of the problems. A review of the Town Hall meetings regularly held by the police leadership in the different districts (and going back to 1991 in the case of HRPS) indicates – as the Roundtable results below did – that police visibility and community involvement continue to be a major focus of HRM residents. There are complex reasons for this and precisely what the public wants is uncertain. It would be opportune for both services to consider a further step in meeting the concerns of the public for greater depth in police presence and crime prevention and program information and, to that end, to consider the Community Support Officer innovation that has apparently been successful in achieving those types of objectives in England and which are now in place in New Brunswick and parts of British Columbia.

As Murphy indicated in Box 3 above, the reassurance policing movement has been an international police response to both actual crime (usually street crime) and to the public perceptions and fears of such crime. It has taken off in England where a central feature has been the engagement of full-time civilian 'community support officers' (CSOs) who are hired by the police service, trained, uniformed, usually from the neighbourhood, and work under the supervision of the area police. There are now thousands of CSOs in England, and Metropolitan Police Service alone had 3500 by March 2007 (Blair, 2007). The rationale articulated by a MET police leader, is provided in the accompanying Box 4. There has been significant evaluation

**Box 4 - Community Support Officers**

The simple great advantage of CSOs is that they do not leave the street. They do not need extensive training, they do not make arrests, they do not police public order or football matches, they do not go to court, they just are. They provide the presence which we believe the public are seeking and which will stem incivilities. Police CSOs will have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for minor offences, to demand the name and address of offenders, to detain for 30 minutes if that name and address is refused, and to use reasonable force to do so. These last two powers are uniquely available to police employees. Police CSOs will act under the direction of constables, raising the status of beat officers, being not a replacement but an additional set of eyes and ears. They can be recruited, trained, and deployed in a fraction of the time it takes to train a police officer.

We have taken much of this model from the Amsterdam Stadtwacht and it is from there that we have drawn the last great advantage, which is that, in Amsterdam, this experiment has been found to be a gateway for hard-to-reach communities. In terms of disadvantages or concerns, there have been queries about the relationship of pay and overtime to those of regular officers. We have had to adjust some of our earlier thoughts on uniforms. We have had to make sure that our training is going to be sufficient and we have had some interesting discussions with the Metropolitan and national Police Federations.

**Blair, 2007**

work carried out in England on the CSOs and these studies have been generally quite favorable to the initiative (Innis, 2005, Millie and Herrington, 2005, Home Office Research, 2007, Banff Conference on Crime Prevention, 2007) especially in relation to high risk neighbourhoods. The CSO initiative in Surrey is to be launched in Summer 2008 with 10 CSOs (deployed differently depending on the area needs). There are already about a dozen CPOs (a somewhat similar role) engaged by the RCMP in New Brunswick. The job descriptions for these positions are provided in the appendix.

## MUNICIPALITIES AND PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVES

There is a large literature on the fear of crime and concern for public safety (Fear of Crime, 1999, 2001). It has generally been argued that fear of crime has become quite prevalent in modern society. Research has usually found that the factors associated with having a high level of such fear and worry to be gender (females more), age (older more), past victimization, race/ethnicity, location (urban core) and neighbourhood integration. However, the same research (From Imitation to Intimidation, 2004) has determined that these variables or factors produce, overall, a weak to modest impact, underlining that there remains much that is unknown about the subject. These issues, and all the variables mentioned, were examined in the Roundtable surveys. While most of the literature has found high levels of fear and worry about crime and public safety to be associated with support for "harsh measures", it is not clear what other consequences are related to having such a perspective. There is some evidence suggesting that persons with high levels of fear and worry about crime may be especially influenced by the mass media with its reportedly disproportionate emphasis on violent and presumably random crimes, but what is unclear is whether the media influence is a direct cause or largely a reinforcement effect (i.e., people with such fears are more likely to read, view or listen to such mass media messages).

The public opinion literature in recent years has consistently found that the Canadian public has approved a more punitive approach to violence and most crime, and held that sentencing has not been appropriately severe enough. At the same time, there has been consistent evidence that the public acknowledged its lack of awareness about alternatives to incarceration, and expressed significant support for restorative justice initiatives for youth and non-violent offenses (CURA, 2008). A Canada-wide survey dealing with "Public Confidence in the Justice System" was conducted by EKOS in 2007. Some of its findings for Canada and Nova Scotia will be compared to the results of the HRM surveys below. The Public Safety Canada 2008 overview of several national 2007 surveys (including the 2007 EKOS one) on public opinion on crime and criminal justice in Canada, is interesting. One question asked "whether crime is decreasing, staying the same or is worse than before" and the plurality, if not majority response, Canada-wide and in all regions, was "worse than before"; Prairie and Atlantic Canada respondents were most likely (65% and 59% respectively) to say so, and Atlantic Canada respondents were the most unlikely to say "decreasing". Child pornography, identity theft, gang violence, gun crime, and drug trafficking were especially of concern to minimally 70% of Canadians. Canadians expressed 'high confidence' with the police service (67%), but much less with the Courts (38%) and less still with Corrections (26%) and Parole (19%). The surveys also show that the criminal justice system received the most 'low confidence' approval ratings in comparison to the educational, health and social welfare institutional systems. As will be seen below, the HRM Roundtable

surveys produced rather similar response patterns. The 2007 national surveys indicate that respondents believed that emphasis should be more on crime prevention programs than law enforcement; here Atlantic Canadians' responses were very similar to those of Canadians as a whole, with 50% opting for prevention rather than enforcement. Some Public Safety Canada officials (private conversations, 2008) have interpreted the results as positive for a national emphasis on crime prevention but some caution may be in order. Law enforcement is defined as detecting crime and punishing law breakers. It is clear that most Canadians think the police services are doing well but most also think that punishment / sentencing has been problematic, so perhaps it is not surprising that they may lean to crime prevention almost by default.

In recent years, in Canada, there has been a growing emphasis on crime prevention and on the role of the municipalities in spear-heading the initiative at the local level. The Institute for the Prevention of Crime (2007) has shown that self-reported violent victimization has been increasing while the proportion of such victims reporting the incident to the police has been decreasing, a process which perhaps has been fuelling the disconnect between public fears and declining crime rates. The Institute has emphasized a social development approach to crime prevention based on coordination and collaboration among public, private and voluntary partnerships; here the municipality is seen as exercising "the key role". One of their major substantive recommendations on crime prevention, based on American findings, has been to "improve the quality of life in high-risk neighbourhood through free recreational activities for kids, more jobs for youth and better use of the physical space" (ibid, p14). The views and recommendations of Roundtable participants were quite congruent with the Institute's position.

Other recent works have elaborated on the "key role" of the municipalities in public safety. In The Key to Safer Municipalities, the favorable cost-benefits of a more active municipal government engagement have been detailed, as well as practical steps for municipalities to take and examples of promising initiatives in a number of Canadian municipalities. The authors refer to the need for municipalities to develop a political vision, mobilize local institutions, develop a strategic action plan, and monitor and evaluate the process and outcomes. They point out that full utilization of municipal expertise and mobilizing / coordinating partnerships are demanding tasks and, not surprisingly, "a number of municipalities in Canada and other countries have created positions such as urban safety coordinators for this purpose". In its review, Canadian Strategies and Practices, The Institute for the Prevention of Crime (2007) particularly noted the importance of the municipal government's role with respect to both social development measures and effective situational crime prevention (e.g., crime prevention through environment design, strategies reducing the opportunities for crime). Based on research undertaken with 14 Canadian cities and a review of the European experience, four chief guiding principles were advanced for making cities safer, namely (a) strong commitment and leadership; (b) coordination among governments and appropriate funding; (c) extensive partnerships and public engagement, and (d) effective utilization of data. Similarly to the above report, The Key to Safer.., the Institute's review recommended "implement permanent responsibility centres, where none exist, to coordinate crime prevention and community safety initiatives".

Much action on responding to the challenges of violence and public safety is occurring among the larger cities in Canada. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a subcommittee devoted to that topic. Edmonton (2007) has followed up its earlier "Enough is Enough" phase

with a “Fight Violence” initiative. Regina has established a Crime Prevention Commission. Winnipeg, a leader in several interesting public safety initiatives (e.g., the Lighthouse program for safe, supervision “hang-out” areas) has proposed a “Live Safe” strategy to further get at the social and economic causes of crime (March 2008). In response to a number of well-publicized shootings, Toronto has had a community safety secretariat since 2005 where the focus is on twelve high risk neighbourhoods. Moncton, in response to several murders, gang violence and a raucous Downtown bar scene, established a Safety and Security Task Force in the late 1990s. It has been, by all accounts, a successful initiative which continues to this day. The Task Force’s legacy has been a 19-person Advisory Committee which meets once a month and allocates the modest funding ($40,000 to $50,000) it annually receives from the municipality for community-generated safety projects such as anti-bullying or awareness campaigns about drug abuse (several personal communications, Fall and Winter, 2008).

The Task Force in Surrey British Columbia issued its report in 2007 (City of Surrey, 2007). The crime rate there had gone down in the few years prior to the task force being launched (i.e., its high ranking for violent and property crimes by the CCJS was reduced) but in order to consolidate the gains and enhance them, particularly in the light of continued high levels of public fears and worries about safety, the task force was carried out. Surrey is quite a good comparison for HRM for a variety of reasons, such as population size, crime and public safety patterns, and public concerns. In unveiling its crime prevention program the Mayor referred to it as “a complete paradigm shift from what is currently done in Canadian municipalities to combat crime”. Its basic feature was to be one unified comprehensive strategy incorporating municipal, provincial and federal government action. The Surrey report called specifically for the establishment of community drug-action teams, ‘prolific offender’ management teams, a homeless and housing foundation and collaboration with the private sector to add to affordable housing stock, and a crime-reduction strategy website. Organizationally, the ‘drivers’ have been the creation of a full-time ‘crime reduction strategy manager’ on City staff (as of April 2007), an advisory committee made up of the Mayor, several councillors, security chiefs and community leaders, an innovative reassurance policing approach beginning in June 2008 (the CSO strategy referred to earlier and the job description is included in the appendix) and various implementation committees. The manager’s role is to oversee and flesh out the recommendations and he has defined other central tasks as collaboration with provincial and federal authorities, and networking with community organizations (several personal communications, Winter, 2008). Equivalences to all of the Surrey recommendations were advanced in the Roundtable project and will be recommended for HRM.

The growth in the number of street people in the large cities throughout Canada, including HRM, has been considerable since 2000. Studies show much similarity across the cities in terms of the characteristics of this population. One large city attempting to deal with this problem and the associated public safety concerns has been Victoria, British Columbia. It recently conducted a task force involving several panels of experts dealing with the extensive and seemingly long-lasting problem of homelessness in the city. In the final report (Victoria, Mayor’s Task Force, 2007) the homeless persons focused upon were the vulnerable, chiefly persons with various addictions and / or mental illness, and younger adults graduating age-wise from provincial care in group homes. The key problems were identified as lack of appropriate supported housing, inadequate coordination of available treatment and other services, and absence of a program for

assisting those youth leaving provincial care. The major recommendations called for (a) a supported 'housing first' strategy providing permanent shelter and (b) assertive community and forensic treatment teams to address the needs of the homeless as the housing issues are resolved, and (c) the development of a homeless prevention strategy to address problems such as reducing the risk of homelessness for youth leaving provincial care. An action plan for implementation of these and several other recommendations was produced. As we shall see, similar recommendations were advanced in the focus groups or in the Roundtable session by those informed persons labeled here as "the engaged" or "the authorities" and will be seconded in the report's recommendations.

## *THE ROUNDTABLE SURVEYS*

### SOME CONTEXT

Before the specifics of the three Roundtable surveys are discussed, it is useful to 'place' them in context by looking at what other salient surveys have found about the issues being addressed. In 2007 there was a federal government funded, nation-wide survey focused on 'Confidence in the Justice System". Three tables in the appendix ('Some Comparisons with Other Large Surveys') describe the results for Canada and Nova Scotia with a third column providing comparable data from the 2007 HRM Roundtable surveys. Nova Scotians were much more likely than Canadians in general to report that 'in recent years crime has increased in your neighbourhood" (48% to 32%) and the Roundtable sample yielded a similar percentage to the provincial one (i.e., 49% to 48%). Nova Scotians were more likely than Canadians in general to report being a victim of crime in the past 5 years (44% to 36%), and the HRM Roundtable sample had a slightly higher proportion, namely 47%. The percentage reporting specific victimizations varied, but for each type, such as break and enter or robbery, either Nova Scotia or HRM recorded the largest percentage of victimized respondents. A third table depicts survey responses to questions dealing with respondents' level of confidence that the Justice System's youth policies and practices are realizing stated objectives such as preventing crime, holding young offenders accountable, reducing re-offending, and providing effective alternatives to conventional court processing of youth cases. Here the results show an impressive level of consensus – low confidence on all the mandates – among Canadian, Nova Scotian and the HRM Roundtable respondents.

While the National Justice Survey comparisons underlined the high level of perceived crime and actual victimization in Nova Scotia and HRM, the tables in the appendix, depicting selected Statistics Canada's 2004 GSS results for Nova Scotia and the Halifax CMA in comparison with the 2007 HRM results, show that fear and worry about public safety in HRM has indeed increased in the last several years. It can be seen that, whereas 28% and 29% of the GSS' Nova Scotian and Halifax CMA respondents believed that the crime trend had increased in the recent years, that percentage jumped to 49% in the Roundtable survey. The percentage feeling very safe walking alone at night in their neighbourhood followed the same trajectory, declining from 41% and 31% (among provincial and Halifax CMA respondents respectively) to 27% in the Roundtable survey. The provincial (no CMA data were available) and Roundtable percentages identifying drug use and dealing as a problem in their area were 15% and 40% respectively, and similar wide margins were found in assessments of loitering, vandalism and other self-reported

"big problems" in the neighbourhood. The GSS comparison tables also show that Roundtable telephone respondents in 2007 were much more likely that their provincial counterparts in 2004 to adopt defensive security strategies such as changing their routines / avoiding certain places (48% to 31%) or carrying cell phones and the like for protection (31% to 11%). Overall, the tables show that while 57% the Nova Scotians in the GSS sample were very satisfied with their personal safety, that percentage dropped to 47% among the GSS' Halifax CMA sample and to 45% in the 2007 Roundtable survey. Finally, the GSS comparison tables show that assessments of whether the police and the courts are doing "a good job" on various mandated functions always followed the same patterns, namely the provincial GSS sample gave the most favorable assessments, followed by the Halifax CMA GSS sample, and lastly, by the Roundtable 2007 sample; for example, 21% and 18% of the GSS' Nova Scotians and Halifax CMA respondents respectively, held that courts do a good job in helping victims of crime, but only 9% of the Roundtable survey in 2007 shared that view.

The third comparison was with the Roundtable telephone sample and a 1988 survey on public safety carried out by this writer. The latter focused solely on the area then policed by the Halifax Police Department, so in making the comparison a special sub-sample of the Roundtable sample was drawn to capture only those respondents residing in the same 1988 geographical area. The comparison results (see the appendix) show that respondents in the equivalent Roundtable sample were more likely to hold that crime rates in the area were high (44% to 36%) and that crime in their neighbourhood had increased in recent years (53% to 48%). The respondents in 2007 also expressed consistent though only modestly more fear and worry about possible violent and property victimization. **These comparisons suggest that while fear and worry about public safety has undoubtedly increased in recent years in HRM, it was always a fact of life in the urban core.**

## THE ROUNDTABLE TELEPHONE SURVEY

The telephone survey was a randomized, land-line calling aimed at one adult per household contacted. It yielded 1205 usable questionnaires. Overall, the survey has a margin of error of 2.8% at the 95% confidence level so any estimate of the salient population would be within +2.8% and -2.8%. For example, if 50% stated they had been victimized in the past five years the *true* value would be somewhere between 52.8% and 47.2% and we could expect to find this 95% of the time. The respondents were older (51.5 years median) and there were more female (64%) than in the adult HRM population so when weights were applied, based on age and gender, to facilitate estimation of the population parameters, the frequencies for the different variables changed though rarely dramatically. The overall frequencies for each question, weighted and unweighted, are presented in Supplemental Report # 1 Part A and detailed analyses are provided in Part B.

Using weighted sample figures, it can be noted that the telephone respondents' average length of residence in HRM and in their present local area were 25 years and 10 years respectively. The proportion of 'minority' group members was small, namely 8% disabled respondents, 3% visible minorities, 1% aboriginals, and 2% recent immigrants, a reasonable reflection of HRM reality. Most respondents (or another member of the household) owned their own dwelling (68%), roughly two-thirds (63%) were either married or common-law, and about a fifth (22%) were

retired. 70% had obtained some post-secondary education. Some 33% reported household incomes of less than $60,000 but 40% of the sample refused to give their annual household income over the phone or did not know it; were the percentages calculated leaving out the missing cases, 55% would have household incomes less than $60,000. Overall, the weighted socio-demographic features of the sample appear congruent with the known parameters for the adult HRM household population.

The respondents generally considered that HRM had an "average level" of crime and that their own local area had less crime than the rest of HRM. However a significant minority (41%) held that HRM is best characterized as a high crime milieu, and a smaller minority that their own local area had more crime than HRM as a whole (14%). More significantly, a near majority (49%) believed that crime had increased in their local area in recent years and only 5% considered that it had decreased. As in other studies, most respondents considered walking around HRM alone during the day to be very or reasonably safe (94%) but only 54% reported feeling as safe doing so after dark. The personal and social costs of that worry is partially reflected in the fact that many respondents indicated that, if they had less concern, they would walk alone at night more (46%) and / or use more the public transit during evening hours (27% plus). The respondents indicated that they worried more about property than person or violent victimization; for example, 65% said that they were "not at all' worried about being assaulted but only 37% reported that absence of worry about having their homes burglarized. The level of concern, about crime and their own victimization, expressed by some respondents is clearly evident in the fact that about one quarter of the sample reported worrying more about these matters than they do about other things in life.

The respondents were asked to assess the level of social problems and risks in their local area by indicating whether each of 12 designated possible issues was a big problem, somewhat of a problem or no problem at all. It should be noted that in the telephone sample only 16% of the respondents resided in the urban core areas of HRM compared with 30% in the mail-back survey so one might have expected much less identification of conventional social problems. There was much variation in the telephone responses but in the several types of potential problems where there was a majority position (concerning prostitution, lack of contact with police, teen swarming, use of guns and weapons) the position was that the matter was "not at all a problem". The chief matters identified as being big or fairly big problems were vandalism (42%), traffic (46%), drug use and dealing (39%), and residential break and enter (33%). About a fifth of the sample reported that each of 'people hanging around in the street or buildings', 'teen swarming', and 'fighting among groups in their local area', were fairly big or big problems. All the above percentages were quite similar to those found in the mail-back survey, especially if one adjusted for the many "don't know" responses in the latter sample.

Another dimension of risk is whether one goes out in the evening for any purposes, presumably increasing the opportunity for being victimized. Respondents were asked how many evenings per month they went out for each of seven different types of activities. A large percentage of the respondents did not go out at all in the evening for some activities such as work, sports events or visiting bars and pubs. Among those going out, a median per month was calculated for each of the different activities; the leading activities were work or classes (8 evenings), sports and recreation (8 evenings), and shopping (4.5). The respondents generally reported (83%) that they

feel either very safe or reasonably safe when they do go out in the evening. The results with respect to frequency of evenings out and feeling safe are quite congruent with the mail-back results, especially given that the telephone respondents were on average a few years younger and more likely to be in the workforce. The high percentage reporting that they felt safe when out in the evening is not inconsistent with the above percentages worrying about walking alone at night since neither being alone nor walking is pivotal, as we shall see, to these evenings out.

The survey asked people what if any change strategies they had adopted over the past five years to protect themselves or their property from crime. Nine specific options were raised such as changing their routine or avoiding certain places, changing their phone number, carrying something to defend oneself or alert others, and installing burglar alarms. The respondents were asked too about other strategies they may have utilized and these answers were also incorporated in the analyses. The most frequently reported strategies were 'lock my car doors when I am alone in the car' (68%), 'planned my route with safety in mind'(55%), 'changed my routine and avoided certain places'(39%), and 'carried something to protect myself or alert others' (30%). In elaborating on their protective measures, a large percentage of the respondents emphasized "being aware of what is around me" and "don't travel at night alone". A number of respondents referred to investments they had made in obtaining outdoor lighting (and often leaving them on all night), motion sensor lights, and bars for windows. Carrying something usually meant that they carried a cell phone but a few males referred to clubs and shotguns (more at the ready than carried) and some talked of more esoteric weapons such as "I carry a stick purse under my shoulder". A handful of respondents mentioned they had taken self-defense programs and several women reported they carried their keys between their fingers to ward off possible attackers. When subsequently asked whether they were satisfied with their personal safety, 45% of the respondents reported themselves 'very satisfied' and another 45% 'somewhat satisfied'. While not a specific strategy, a person's sense of control or active mastery with respect to his/her milieu and life situation can be significant in how he or she deals with risk. Accordingly, the respondents were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement with six statements that make up a widely used scale of active mastery. The statements, detailed below in the table on frequencies, include 'there is really no way you can solve some of the problems you have' and 'what happens to you in the future depends mostly on you'. Most respondents checked off answers indicating a positive sense of their control but there was sufficient variation that the variable proved useful in the analyses reported in Part B.

The survey also explored the amount and type of victimization that the respondents have experienced. Roughly 40% reported that they had been victimized within the past five years and less than half that percentage (17%) reported victimization within the past twelve months. As in the G.S.S. statistics, these figures include attempts as well as 'actual' victimization. There were three times as many respondents reporting property victimization (e.g., vandalism, theft) as reporting violent person victimization (15% to 5%) within the past twelve months. Such a finding is to be expected in light of the comparable statistics for Canada and other Western societies. When victimized, respondents were about 50% more likely to report the matter to the police than not. Their top three reasons for not reporting were, in order of frequency, 'the crime was not serious enough', 'the police could not do anything about it', and 'the police would not do anything about it'**.** The ratios for reporting versus non-reporting to the police were 1 to 1 for fraud, assault, stalking, and sexual assault, 2 to 1 for vandalism and theft of non-household

property, 3 to 1 for theft of household goods and robbery, 4 to 1 for theft from/of motor vehicle and 9 to 1 for break and enter.

A number of questions sought respondents' views concerning their local police service. While only a minority of the respondents (26%) reported that they knew by name any of the officers working in their local area, about two-thirds indicated that they knew where to contact them there. Only a very small number of respondents considered that there were too many police officers engaged in policing their local area as the sample was evenly split (48% and 47%) between those reporting the "right number" and those who said "too few". Still, the respondents, those who believed that they could make such a judgment, held that the police service in their local area was about the same as in other areas (64%); 14% considered that their area received better service and 9% deemed their area police service to be poorer. When respondents were asked to rate their police service on the nine standard general police functions, a substantial majority considered the police service to be either good or adequate on all the functions, the highest approval given to enforcement, approachability and fairness, and the lowest (but still around 70%) to investigation, providing crime prevention information and assistance with community development. The police service received the largest percentage of "poor" responses – about 20% - on two functions, namely visibility in the local area and providing information to the public on ways to prevent crime. A small percentage of respondents reported that they had participated in various programs sponsored by their police service, the most frequently cited being Neighbourhood Watch (20%), Operation Identification (14%) and Block Parent (12%).

While quite positive concerning the police service, the respondents, like their mail-back survey counterparts, were quite critical of the justice / court system and of the youth justice system. A plurality (47%) held that local courts were doing a poor job with respect to 'providing justice quickly' and 'helping the victim' (36%) and both these percentages would be greater if 'don't know' responses were excluded from the calculations. A clear majority did hold that the court system did a good or average job assuring a fair trial for the accused' (65%) and "determining if persons charged are guilty or not" (59%). The assessments, in conjunction with written-in comments, indicate clearly that most respondents believed that the courts provided due process but not good outcomes. This was apparent also in the assessments of sentences handed down; fully 72% of the sample held that the sentences were "not severe enough". Consistent with these positions, the respondents, like the mail-back respondents, expressed very little confidence with the treatment of young people 12 to 17 years of age in the criminal justice system. Only 2 to 3% % indicated that they felt 'very confident' that the justice system was accomplishing the various, formally stated objectives of Youth Justice. The majority, sometimes a very significant majority, reported that they had no confidence at all that the justice system is "preventing crime by young people" (67%), 'repairing the harm done to victims and communities' (50%), holding young people responsible and accountable for their actions' (72%) or 'reducing re-offending'(68%). The respondents were less definitive about whether Youth Justice was 'providing alternatives to formal court proceedings; here the plurality position was 'not at all confident' (37%) but there were many more 'don't know' responses. The survey concluded this section by asking people to indicate the level of confidence they had in various institutions in society. The police topped the approval list with 86% indicating that they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the service, followed well below by the health system (70%), school system (57%) and the banks

(57%), and then the justice system (46%); the bottom three were the major corporations (40%), the provincial government (40%) and the federal parliament (31%).

The respondents basically depended upon three major sources for their information about crime and public safety in HRM, with 57%, 48% and 15% indicating that they got a great deal of the information from TV and radio news, newspapers and magazines, and friends and relatives respectively. Personal experience and 'through the internet' each garnered 13%. Other sources such as the police and government materials received 6% or less of "a great deal" citations. Asked specifically which source of information they relied upon the most, the respondents reproduced the above rank order, with TV and radio topping the list at 47%. Exploring their community connections or embeddedness further, the telephone questionnaire asked about friends and relatives and organizational involvement. About a quarter of the respondents reported that they had relatives living in other houses in their neighbourhood, 73% indicated that they had two or more close friends in other households there, and 48% that they knew many if not most people there. The large majority of respondents (80%) reported that theirs was a neighbourhood where neighbours help each other and roughly 70% gave high end scores of four or five on a scale of one to five asking how much they trusted the people in their neighbourhood. It would appear then that HRM adults are reasonably well-integrated in their local areas or neighbourhoods. The last question in this set asked about organizational involvement and participation over the past twelve months. The respondents most frequently cited their membership in a union/professional association (26%), sports/recreational programs (26%), and cultural or hobby groupings. Moreover 57% of the respondents who answered the question about frequency of participation, reported that they attended such activities and meetings at least twice a month.

**Overview of Analyses and Some Policy Implications of the Telephone Survey**

Detailed analyses of the telephone survey response patterns are provided in Supplemental Report # 1 but here there will be only a short overview and a discussion of some policy implications. Most HRM adults perceived the area to have about average levels of crime and their own local neighbourhood to have less than the municipal average but they also considered that crime had been increasing in recent years. There was much variation in their responses. The factors associated with general perception of high levels of crime were being older than 55 years, having lower income, being a renter, living in the urban core areas, having been victimized (especially if recent and the victimization was violence not property victimization), having less sense of personal control over things, and not going out frequently in the evening. Further analyses (i.e., regression analysis) indicated that when all these variables were considered simultaneously the crucial determinants of the variation in perceptions of crime were the older age, urban core residence and lower sense of personal control. There was significant variation too in how much the respondents considered their own local areas to have serious problems and risks such as drug dealing and burglary. Essentially the same factors were the correlates of perception of high levels of local risks, namely having been victimized, living in the urban core areas, being low income, and renting. The only difference was that the age factor changed as respondents less than 55 years old reported high local risks. Low levels of reported community integration were also a factor in assessments of one's neighbourhood as "high risk". Depending most on friends and

relatives for information about crime and public safety was another factor in respondents reporting perceptions of high risk (crime and safety issues).

Most respondents indicated that they felt unsafe when walking alone at night in their local area but their adaptive strategies led to avoidance of that option and so they expressed more fear and worry about property than violent victimization. It is rather striking that about a quarter of the sample indicated that they worried more "about crime and being a victim that other things in life". Generally the same core of variables that were associated with perceptions of high levels of crime and risks were also linked to high levels of fear and worry about either violent or property victimization, namely previous victimization, living in the urban core areas and lower sense of personal control over matters affecting oneself. In the case of fear and worry about person or violent victimization however the fit was even better since low income, renting, and not married were also important correlates. Females and minority group members – arguably the more vulnerable compared with their counterparts - also indicated much fear and worry about violent victimization. Further analyses of all variables simultaneously (i.e., regression analysis) identified a common core of major determinants for violent or property fears, namely living in the urban core areas, having been victimized in the past, being female and have lower sense of "personal control over things".

Victimization was found by various kinds of analyses to be an important determinant of fear and worry not only directly but indirectly as a contextual factor since whether or not respondents had been victimized turned out to be crucial in how important other factors such as gender and minority group status were. Odds risks ratios were developed for both fear of victimization and actual victimization. In the case of violent victimization, the same core of variables were associated with high ratios, namely living in the urban core, being a minority member, renting rather than owning, and having either low household income or low educational attainment. In the case of property victimization, there was more of a difference between worry and actuality as living in the urban core, and being female generated high risk ratios for fear but age, employment and middle to high income were associated with high risk ratios for actual property victimization. In general, violent victimization involved a different set of factors than property victimization. Most of the victimization reported by the sample's respondents was property victimization. In the crosstabs and regressions reported for victimization within the past five years and within the past twelve months, the same correlates were identified namely frequent evening outings, living in the urban core areas, and being under 55 years of age, plus the expected subjective variables such as fear and worry and perception of one's neighbourhood as high risk. Considering all variables simultaneously the crucial factor was found to be living in the urban core areas of HRM. The main conclusion would be that lower socio-economic status is a particularly crucial correlate of fears about and actual violent victimization.

The respondents generally expressed approval of and confidence in the policing in HRM. Indeed they rated the police service higher than the school system, the health service, banks and government with respect to having their confidence. About two-thirds held that their local area received the same level of services as other areas in HRM – there was no major difference in this regard, for example, between those in the urban core areas and those not. Within that context there was significant variation to consider as well. The sample was evenly split between the percentage believing that the number of police in their local area was "about right" and the

percentage stating there were “too few”, and while most respondents considered that most police functions were handled either “average” or “good”, a sizeable minority held that police visibility and crime prevention efforts were ‘poor’. The variation in police approval was related to several variables – older respondents, those reporting higher household incomes, and those with higher community integration scores were more likely than their counterparts to accord high approval to policing; on the other hand, respondents reporting high levels of risks in their local areas gave lower approval than those reporting lower levels of risk. Clearly, the differences point to a challenge for the police services. Enhanced visibility and crime prevention in the local areas where respondents expressed greatest perceived risks, fears about, and actual victimization seem important and the issue may be how to further improve on the initiatives already undertaken by the police service.

In the case of courts and youth justice, the situation is quite reverse from that of the police service. Here the context for examining variation is the high level of consensus that is critical and disapproving. The factors that are significant in accounting for the limited variation in respondents’ assessments are age (less than 55 years), high frequency of evenings out per month, and marital status (non-married); they are associated with higher approval of court and youth justice. The respondents were more approving of process than outcomes with respect to the court system. In the case of youth justice, respondents were uncertain about the value of alternatives to court processing. Given the low approval of courts and youth justice responses to violence and crime it is understandable that the emphasis by respondents would be on early preventative response at the police level. It would seem that improving HRM residents’ assessments of the court and youth justice should be a priority. One way to accomplish that would be to inform the public better if the alternatives to court processing such as restorative justice are working or can be readily improved since many respondents indicated they simply had no idea about whether it has been. Recommendations about strengthening the restorative justice alternative are detailed elsewhere in this report.

It was observed that HRM adults engaged in a large variety of adaptive practices in the face of perceived threats of crime and violence. The main factors associated with utilization of a large number and also with use of an option open to all such as changing one’s routine or avoiding certain places at certain times, were high levels of evenings out, being female, having been victimized in the past, being better educated, living in a neighbourhood perceived as high risk, and having much fear and worry about victimization. Gender (females more than males) was by far the most important determinant of multiple strategies but high levels of fear and worry and actual victimization were also important. There was a clear subjective rationality associated with the respondents’ reports on adaptation as those reporting lower levels of such adaptation expressed satisfaction with their personal security and those with the highest level were the most dissatisfied with their personal security. It would seem that more crime prevention information and system rather than individual initiatives would pay dividends and are necessary.

In sum, then, the chief policy themes that emerge from the analyses of the telephone survey are

a. There are some widely held positions, namely that crime and violence are increasing in HRM and in the local neighbourhood, that the police services are doing a good or average

job in dealing with the issues, that the courts and youth justice are not, and that adaptive strategies are required by the residents.

b. There is significant variation in perceptions, fear and worry, victimization, and assessments of the criminal justice system and the key objective variables correlated with high values on all these matters are usually (property victimization being less so) lower socio-economic status, living in the urban core, and being vulnerable (female, minority status).

c. Respondents have high approval for policing but do identify some areas for improvement such as police visibility and crime prevention assistance. The dependence on enhancement of police services is significantly a consequence of respondents' poor ratings for the courts and youth justice.

d. The adaptive responses of HRM residents indicate the value of more crime prevention information becoming available and also of the need for system-level changes whether in policing or in the delivery and communication about alternatives to standard court processing of crimes and violence.

## THE ROUNDTABLE MAIL-BACK SURVEY

The mail-back survey proved to be much more successful than anticipated and nearly 2000 responses were received from the 4500 envelopes distributed by the Postal Service. There were two mailings and those returning the questionnaires were eligible for draws for gift certificates to a local restaurant. As the contracted company handling data entry reported, "Overall the quality of the survey is quite good". The mail-back respondents were older than the telephone sample (54.5 years compared to 51.5 years) but were less likely to be female (57% to 64%). The fact that a significantly higher proportion of the mail-back female respondents were quite elderly however accounted for a dramatic shift in the gender proportions when weights were applied to the sample for purposes of making estimates to the population of adults in HRM; males became the majority! An effort was made also to distribute more envelopes to areas deemed higher risk on the basis of actual police reports in the several years prior to 2004 but this factor was not taken into consideration when weighting the sample results because it introduced considerable complications in determining weights and the telephone survey was better suited to making population estimates. As will be noted below, the higher rate of fear and worry, perception of their area as high risk, and reported victimization than found in the telephone survey indicates that the strategy was effective. While it may distort somewhat estimation of population parameters, the rationale was to secure more respondents from high risk areas so as to do in-depth analyses and that strategy was successful as seen in Part B. The percentage of urban core respondents in the mail-back sample was almost twice as large as in the telephone grouping (31% to 16%). The overall frequencies, unweighted and weighted, for each question, are presented in Part A and detailed analyses are provided in Part B (see Supplemental Report # 2, The Mail-back Survey).

Using weighted sample figures, it can be noted that the mail-back respondents' average length of residence in HRM and in their present local area were 22 years and 18 years respectively; this compares with 25 years and 10 years for the telephone sample. Both samples had essentially the same proportion of disabled respondents (about 8%), visible minorities (5%), aboriginals (1%) and recent immigrants (2%). More mail-back respondents – technically a member of the household owned - owned their own dwelling (87% to 68%) and about a quarter were retired compared to 22% in the telephone sample. About 75% of the mail-back respondents had obtained some post-secondary education (compared to 70% of the telephone sample). Some 40% reported annual household incomes of less than $60,000 but a fifth reported such incomes in excess of $100,000. The comparison to the telephone sample is problematic for household income since there were three times as many refusals / missing cases among the telephone respondents; if these cases are disregarded in the calculations, the income levels become quite similar for both samples. Overall, the mail-back respondents vis-à-vis the telephone respondents were similar but also older, more settled homeowners with relatively high levels of educational attainment, and, on average, they had modest household incomes.

The respondents generally considered that HRM had an "average level" of crime and that their own local area had less crime than the rest of HRM. However a significant minority (34%) held that HRM is best characterized as a high crime milieu, and (21%) that their own local area had more crime than HRM as a whole. More significantly, a majority (52%) believed that crime had increased in their area in recent years. As in other studies, few respondents considered walking around HRM alone during the day to be a cause for worry but less than half the sample (40%) reported feeling very or reasonably safe doing so after dark. The personal and social costs of that worry is partially reflected in the fact that many respondents indicated that if they had less concern they would walk alone at night more and / or use more the public transit during evening hours. The mail-back respondents indicated that they worried more about property than person victimization; for example, only 14% worried very much or much about being assaulted but 40% reported that level of worry about property vandalism. The level of concern, about crime and their own victimization, expressed by respondents is clearly evident in the fact that 33% reported worrying more about these matters than they do about other things in life. The mail-back survey respondents expressed significantly more fear and worry about either property or person victimization than did the telephone respondents; for example while roughly two thirds of the telephone respondents reported they were "not at all" worried about being mugged or molested in their local area, only roughly a third of the mail-back respondents gave that response and in the case of property vandalism, the difference for the "not at all" response was 35% to 10%. Such a differential suggests that self-selection factors may be more important (e.g., previous victimization) for the mail-back respondents and also underlines the over-representation of respondents from the high risk areas as per the mail-back design.

The respondents were asked to assess the level of social problems and risks in their local area by indicating whether each of 12 designated possible issues was a big problem, somewhat of a problem or no problem at all. There was considerable variation in the responses and many "don't know" answers (in Part B don't know responses were recoded as "somewhat of a problem" for analyses). . The chief matters identified as being big or fairly big problems were vandalism (40%), traffic (38%), drug use and dealing (35%), and residential break and enter (31%). About a fifth of the sample reported that each of people hanging around in the street or buildings, use of

weapons, teen swarmings, fighting among groups in their local area, and lack of contact between residents and the police were fairly big or big problems. There were many fewer "not at all a problem" responses than among the telephone sample, a predictable difference given that the mail-back sample overrepresented high crime areas. Another dimension of risk is whether one goes out in the evening for any purposes, presumably increasing the opportunity for being victimized. Respondents were asked how many evenings per month they went out for each of seven different types of activities. A large percentage of the respondents did not go out at all in the evening for some activities such as work, sports events or visiting bars and pubs. Among those going out, a median was calculated for each of the different activities; the leading activities – each having a median of about 4 evenings out per month – were work or classes, sports and recreation, shopping, and visiting friends and/or relatives. The mail-back respondents generally reported (73%) that they feel either very safe or reasonably safe when they do go out in the evening.

The mail-back survey asked people what if any change strategies they had adopted over the past five years to protect themselves or their property from crime. Nine specific options were raised such as changing their routine or avoiding certain places, changing their phone number, carrying something to defend themselves or alert others, and installing burglar alarms. The respondents were asked too about other strategies they may have utilized and these answers were also incorporated in the analyses. The most frequently reported strategies were ' lock my car doors when I am alone in the car' (73%), 'planned my route with safety in mind'(61%), 'changed my routine and avoided certain places'(49%), and 'purchased new locks, sensor lighting or altered shrubbery'(38%). When subsequently asked whether they were satisfied with their personal safety, 22% of the respondents reported themselves 'very satisfied' and another 58% 'somewhat satisfied'. There were many mail-back respondents who did make comments in an open-ended question about their adaptive strategies and these are discussed at length in the Supplemental Report # 2, The Mail-back Survey. While not a specific strategy, a person's sense of control or active mastery with respect to his/her milieu and life situation can be significant in how he or she deals with risk. Accordingly, mail-back respondents were asked about their level of agreement or disagreement with six statements that make up a widely used scale of active mastery. The statements include 'there is really no way you can solve some of the problems you have' and 'what happens to you in the future depends mostly on you'. Most respondents checked off answers indicating a positive sense of their control but there was sufficient variation that the variable proved useful in the analyses reported in Part B.

The survey also explored the amount and type of victimization that the respondents have experienced. Roughly 60% reported that they had been victimized within the past five years and about half that percentage reported victimization within the past twelve months. These are significantly higher levels of victimization than reported in the telephone survey; for example, in the latter only 40% of the respondents said they had been victimized in the past five years. As noted earlier, the mail-back sample was over-represented by design of the higher crime, urban core areas so more victimization was anticipated and, accordingly, the mail-back sample is less valid than the telephone sample when extrapolating to the adult population of HRM as a whole. Other factors also may partially account for the difference such as the greater anonymity of the mail-back format. Additionally, there were more elaborate write-in comments where it occasionally happened that a respondent would say "no" to the general victimization question

but then write in the open spaces that he/she had been victimized; in such cases, the original "no" was changed to "yes". Also, cases where the victimization page was left blank were defined as missing cases and not used in the percentage calculation; if they were considered as "no" responses, the victimization percentage would drop by a few percentage points. Interestingly, when the two samples were compared with respect to the percentages of respondents reporting specific kinds of criminal victimization they experienced within the past twelve months, there only modest differences in the percentages for property crimes and almost no difference for the violent crimes. It is clear in the mail-back data, as in the telephone data, that property victimization was much more common than crimes against the person or violent crime. A maximum (i.e., not disaggregating for multiple types of victimization) of 6 % of the sample reported some kind of violent victimization while, using a similar crude measure, those enduring property victimization would be roughly five times as many (i.e., in the vicinity of 30%). Such a finding is to be expected in light of the usual criminal statistics for Canada and other Western societies. When victimized, respondents were about 50% more likely to report the matter to the police than not. Their top three reasons for not reporting were, in order of frequency, 'the crime was not serious enough', 'the police could not do anything about it', and 'the police would not do anything about'.

A number of questions sought respondents' views concerning their local police service. While only a few of the respondents (15%) reported that they knew by name any of the officers working in their local area, about half indicated that they knew where to contact them there. Virtually no respondents considered that there were too many police officers engaged in policing their local area but a majority (at least 51%) held that there were too few. Still, the mail-back respondents, those who believed that they could make such a judgment, held that the police service in their local area was about the same as in other areas; a handful considered that their area received better service and a slightly larger handful deemed their area service to be poorer. When respondents were asked to rate their police service on the nine standard general police functions, a majority considered the police service to be either good or adequate on all but two (investigation and community development) and that was with the many 'don't know' responses included in the calculations; if these were not included or given a median response, the assessments would have been good or average on all the police functions. The police service received the largest percentage of "poor" responses on three functions, namely visibility in the local area, providing information to the public on ways to prevent crime, and helping people with local area problems. A small percentage of respondents reported that they had participated in various programs sponsored by their police service, the most frequently cited being Neighbourhood Watch (21%) and Block Parent (13%). The assessments of the police service differed significantly from those in the telephone sample in that on eight of the nine police functions, the telephone respondents were more likely to consider that the police service did "a good job"; the percentage difference in absolute terms ranged from a low of fourteen for "help with local area problems" to a high of twenty-two for "investigating and solving crimes". The telephone respondents were also significantly more likely to hold that the number of police they saw in the local area was "about the right number" (47% to 27%). Such differences between the two samples again seem chiefly explained by the larger number of mail-back respondents living in the high crime areas.

The mail-back respondents, like their telephone counterparts, were quite critical of the court system and of the youth justice system. A slight majority held that local courts were doing a good or average job with respect to 'providing a fair trial for the accused' (52%) and "determining if persons charged are guilty or not" (51%) but many fewer gave such approval to the courts' role in 'helping the victim' (24%) or 'providing justice quickly' (27%). The percentage rating the courts' work in each of these areas as "poor" was substantial (over 40% for three areas and with many 'don't know' for the fourth). The assessments, in conjunction with written-in comments, indicate clearly that most respondents believed that the courts provided due process but not good outcomes. This was apparent also in the assessments of sentences handed down; fully 76% of the sample held that the sentences were "not severe enough". Consistent with these positions, the mail-back respondents expressed very little confidence with the treatment of young people 12 to 17 years of age in the criminal justice system. Only 1% indicated that they felt 'very confident' that the justice system was accomplishing the various, formally stated objectives of Youth Justice. The majority, sometimes a very significant majority, reported that they had no confidence at all that the justice system is "preventing crime by young people" (67%), 'repairing the harm done to victims and communities' (50%), holding young people responsible and accountable for their actions' (73%) or 'reducing re-offending'(67%). The respondents were less definitive about whether Youth Justice was 'providing alternatives to formal court proceedings; here the percentage of 'don't know' responses outnumbered those expressing no confidence at all. The survey concluded this section by asking people to indicate the level of confidence they had in various institutions in society. The police topped the approval list with 78% indicating that they had a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the service, followed well below by a second tier of the health system (58%), school system (50%) and the banks (52%), and the bottom three were the justice system and the courts (27%), the provincial government (27%) and the federal parliament (20%).

The mail-back respondents basically depended upon three major sources for their information about crime and public safety in HRM, with 59%, 49% and 14% indicating that they got a great deal of the information from TV and radio news, newspapers and magazines, and friends and relatives respectively. Other sources such as the internet, police and personal experience garnered less than 8% of "a great deal" citation. Asked specifically which source of information they relied upon the most, the respondents reproduced the above rank order, with TV and radio topping the list at 64%. Exploring their community connections or embeddedness further, the mail-back questionnaire asked about friends and relatives and organizational involvement. About a quarter of the respondents reported that they had relatives living in other houses in their neighbourhood, 71% indicated that they had two or more close friends in other households there, and fully 80% that they knew many if not most people there. The large majority of respondents (80%) reported that theirs was a neighbourhood where neighbours help each other and roughly 70% gave high end scores of four or five on a scale of one to five asking how much they trusted the people in their neighbourhood. It would appear then that HRM adults are well-integrated in their local areas or neighbourhoods. The last question in this set asked about organizational involvement and participation over the past twelve months. The respondents most frequently cited their membership in a union/professional association (40%) and sports/recreational programs (37%) but at least a quarter of the sample also reported participation in religious-affiliated groups, cultural / hobby groups or school / community association bodies. Moreover,

72% of the respondents who answered the question about frequency of participation, reported that they attended such activities and meetings at least twice a month.

**Overview of Analyses and Some Policy Implications of the Mail-Back Survey**

As in the case of the telephone survey, here there will only be a brief discussion of the analyses and policy recommendation; for more detail the reader is referred to Supplemental Report # 2**.** The mail-back survey essentially reproduced the results of the telephone survey with respect to HRM adults' perception of crime levels, of crime trends in their own neighbourhood, and their fears and worries about violent and property victimization. The larger sample of residents from high risk areas sharpened the trends found among the telephone sample (e.g., fully a third of the respondents agreed at least somewhat that they feared being a victim of crime more than other things in their lives), and resulted in some variables becoming statistically significant when they were only marginally so in the first survey (e.g., relying mostly on friends and relatives for information about crime and safety and perceiving high levels of crime or expressing fear and worry about possible victimization). The same variables, however, were associated with perception of HRM as a high crime milieu (being female, lower household income, living in the urban cores, past victimization, less sense of personal control, and lower education attainment) as in the telephone survey. Similar results were obtained when variation in high scores for perceived high local area risks was examined. Experience and socio-economic factors were crucial in accounting for the variation in respondents' responses in both surveys. That was also the case with respect to fear and worry about violent or property victimization. In the telephone survey the main factors associated with fear and worry of either violent or property victimization were past victimization, living in the urban core areas and low active mastery but, in case of fear of violent crime, socio-economic factors and vulnerability were also important (i.e., low income, gender (being female), renters rather than homeowners, and minority group member). In the mail-back the same pattern was found. Fear and worry of violent or property crime were both related to previous victimization and low sense of personal control but, additionally, fear of violent crime was related to social vulnerability (being female, renting, living in the urban core, being a member of a minority group) while high fear of property crime was more common among homeowners and those more frequently out in the evening.

One of the major advantages of the mail-back survey was that it allowed more detailed examination of actual victimization. There was considerable congruence between the telephone and mail-back surveys. Some factors with the high odds risk ratios in the telephone sample for violent victimization were significant in the analyses here too (e.g., renters, minority member, low community integration scores) and most of the variables with odds risk ratios for property victimization were significant for the property victimization reported here in the mail-back survey (e.g., higher income, employment or post-secondary education). The factors accounting best for any victimization within the past five years were almost virtually identical in the two surveys (i.e., less than 55 years old, higher income, post-secondary education, frequent evening outings, and living in the urban core areas). The mail-back results underlined the somewhat different trajectories for violent as opposed to property victimization; while adults under 55 years reported more victimization than those over 55 in both cases, renting and being a minority were

crucial determinants for violence victimization whereas being male, having post-secondary education and frequently going out in the evening were key determinants of property victimization. Even with the larger sample and more 'at risk' respondents it was not possible to account for much of the variation in respondents' reported victimization and one might well speculate that a lot of victimization is random.

Mail-back respondents generally expressed much approval for and confidence in HRM policing, whether it be in assessing policing in their local area compared to that in other parts of the municipality, wanting more police officers, assessing performance on the standard police functions or rating the police vis-à-vis other institutions in society. Still, reflecting perhaps the greater proportion in the high risks areas, they were more critical than those in the telephone survey and gave significantly more "poor job" assessments for three functions, namely visibility, crime prevention information, and help in dealing with local area problems. In the generally positive context, there was variation in responses; older respondents, non-minority respondents, those with high community integration scores, those with a high sense of personal control, and, surprisingly, lower income respondents were more likely to render high approval. The 'explanatory' patterns were similar to those in the telephone surveys save for surprisingly income result (which may be accounted for by noting the larger number of older, retired persons in the mail-back survey).

The views and assessments of mail-back respondents concerning the courts and the youth justice system were just as consensually critical as in the telephone sample. Over 40% indicated that the courts did a "poor job" on its key functions and only 1% of the entire sample reported themselves "very confident" that youth justice was accomplishing its formal objectives (beyond de-incarceration). In both cases – court and youth justice – the same variables yielded some positive assessments namely respondents with post-secondary education, females, and renters compared to owners. These are different from the mix associated with high approval in the telephone survey. Victimization, especially recent victimization, and perception of one's neighbourhood as high risk, were especially likely to generate low approval or confidence scores.

Adaptive responses to actual and possible victimization essentially followed the rank order found in the telephone sample and, as in the latter, the similar variables were associated both with using a high number of strategies and using the single, most general one (i.e., changing one's routine or avoiding certain places), namely being female, adults under 55 years of age, living in the urban core area, all measures of actual victimization, worry about both violence and property crime, lower sense of personal control, lower approval of policing, the courts or the youth justice system, and more frequent evenings out. While there was much overlap with the variables found to be associated with the two adaptive strategies in the telephone survey, the larger sample, and especially the increased representation from the more at-risk areas of HRM, resulted in more variables being statistically significant and living in the urban core areas replaced gender as the dominant objective factor in generating adaptive responses.

Given the similarities with the telephone survey results, the mail-back results essentially confirm and underline the four central themes discussed in relation to that sample. Clearly, the extra-attention given to the at-risk areas in the mail-back sampling has drawn more attention to the

concerns and risks of adults living in the urban core areas and to vulnerable people more generally. The critique of the criminal justice system was even more pronounced in the mail-back survey as was the concern for more visible policing presence, more crime prevention programming and information dissemination, and assistance in dealing with local area problems. While any kind of victimization proved significant in accounting for variations in respondents' answers, violent or person victimization was especially crucial and itself was largely found among the less socially advantaged people and areas as well as the more otherwise vulnerable.

## THE ROUNDTABLE STUDENT SURVEY

The student on-line survey was coordinated by the Halifax Student Alliance of Universities and Colleges and took place in the fall of 2007. The response was considerable as evidenced by the sample size of 1542, encouraged perhaps by a modest prize that could be won via a draw. Procedures set in place required that an on-line participant had to complete the instrument thereby virtually eliminating the likelihood of multiple copies by a respondent. The survey instrument or questionnaire was a slightly modified version of the instrument used in the telephone and mail-back surveys; the modification largely involved adding questions about student experiences in the Downtown. The Student Alliance made a presentation to the Roundtable in mid-November based on initial analyses of the data. The data were then made available to the Roundtable project as agreed upon and an SPSS file was created which is the basis for the description and analyses reported upon in detail in Supplemental Report # 3, The Students Survey.

The overall frequencies for each question are presented in Part A and detailed analyses plus recommendations emerging from the survey and other student reports are provided in Part B and Part C in Supplemental Report # 3. As in the mail-back and telephone samples, females respondents accounted for the majority of the sample (i.e., 63%+). The average age of the student respondents was approximately 24, about half the age of respondents in the other surveys. A plurality of the respondents – 33% - reported themselves as out of province Canadians attending university or college in HRM; the next largest grouping – 29%- were longtime HRM residents. Nova Scotian students whose home base was outside HRM, and International students, accounted for 22% and 7% of the sample respectively. Over 10% of the student sample self-identified as a minority group member. Almost half the respondents lived in university or college residence.

Students' perceptions of the crime in HRM were different in nuance from the telephone and mail-back survey respondents. Slightly fewer, 32% to 41%, considered the Halifax area to have a high amount of crime than did the telephone sample but the same percentage (53% to 54%) reported feeling at least somewhat safe walking alone in their local area after dark. Generally though, the students expressed more fear and worry about possible victimization, especially person violence such as muggings, robberies and being molested. While the percentage of students reporting themselves "not at all worried" about burglary or theft matched up well with the telephone sample respondents (i.e., about one-third in each sample), the students were less than half as likely to report no worry about person violence; only 25% of the students gave that response while 65% of the telephone respondents expressed "not at all worried". Students

typically went out more in the evening than either the telephone or mail-back respondents, whether to work or attend classes (11 times a month to 8 times for the telephone sample), go to restaurants or movies (5 times to 3 times a month for the telephone sample) or to bars, pubs and similar places (3.5 to 2.5 times a month for the telephone sample). From the perspective of routine activities or opportunity theory, they are more at risk. It can be noted in the frequencies highlighted in Part A that walking home after going out in the evening is the most common mode of transportation employed by the students. Since being in HRM, students have clearly made efforts to adapt to the risks they encounter. More than half reported having changed their routines or avoided certain places (57% compared to 39% among the telephone sample), 73% have planned their route with safety in mind (compared to 55% of the telephone sample) and 12% indicated that they have changed residence or moved, nearly twice the 7% among the telephone respondents. 37% of the students reported that they began carrying "something to defend myself or alert others", slightly higher than the 30% in the telephone sample. Still, the students were much less likely than their telephone survey counterparts to report being "very satisfied with your personal safety from crime and violence" (i.e., 20% to 45%).

The students reported going Downtown in the evening, on average, once or twice a week. Roughly 30% indicated that they had witnessed a crime while there but only 7% indicated that they were victims of crime. Gender and age discrimination while there were reported by 12% to 16% of the respondents. 2% (roughly 30 students) indicated that they themselves had been arrested at least once in the Downtown. Overall, the students were rather positive about their Downtown experience and the Downtown itself. Only about a third considered Downtown Halifax in the evening as a dangerous place to go but less than a third were of the view that "it is okay to go Downtown alone in the evening". The sample was evenly split, percentage-wise, between those who agreed or disagreed with the characterization of the Downtown as having a lot of violence in the evening and with the statement, "I feel safe in Downtown Halifax during the evening". The students were also equally divided in their assessments of whether "bouncers" treated students fairly and whether there were enough police in Downtown Halifax. As is true of the section below on adaptive strategies, the students submitted many comments to the open-ended questions about the Downtown experience and these interesting observations are discussed at length in the full report on the survey in Supplemental Report # 3.

About 45% of the students reported in the survey that they had been the victim of a crime. This figure matches up well with that yielded in the telephone survey (40% weighted) though the questions were not strictly comparable. Within the past twelve months (from the fall of 2007) the most frequent reported victimizations involved property crimes such as vandalism (12%) and theft (14%). Compared to the telephone respondents, the students' proportions for all crimes, property and violence, were significantly higher. The percentages for violence victimization were especially greater among students with 7% reporting assaults compared to 4% of the telephone sample, and larger differences being reported for stalking (6% to 1%), robbery (3% to 1%) and sexual assault (5% to 1%). In the majority of cases of victimization the students indicated that they did not report the matter to the police. The main reasons for not doing so were that they did not think the incident was serious enough to report, or that they did not think the police could do anything about it, or that they did not think the police would do anything about it. Interestingly, these were also the chief reasons given by respondents in the telephone and mail-back surveys when asked why they did not report their victimization to the police.

A large percentage of the student respondents (sometimes as many as a third of the sample) reported that they did not know enough about HRM policing to give an informed assessment but, among those who did so, their assessments did differ sharply from those of the telephone survey respondents. Like the latter, they were about evenly divided as to whether the number of police in the area was "about the right number" or "too few". But in their evaluations of whether the HRM police are doing a good job, average job or poor job over the conventional nine police functions, the students were more critical. While the plurality – and sometimes the majority – response for the telephone respondents was usually "a good job", for the students, it was "an average job"; moreover, the students were more likely than their telephone survey counterparts to give a "poor job" rating, especially with respect to the police being approachable (22% to 8%), providing crime prevention information (27% to 9%) and treating people fairly (17% to 7%).

Not surprisingly, the students overall reported less community embeddedness or integration than the telephone or mail-back survey respondents. They had fewer relatives living in the area and knew fewer of their neighbours. Interestingly, only about a third as many as in the telephone sample (10% to 33%) gave the highest score on a "how much do you trust people in your neighbourhood" scale. The students basically depended on the same sources as other HRM adults for their information about violence and public safety. The top two sources depended upon the most were similar, namely, television / radio, then newspapers and magazine. Students depended more on informal sources such as friends and on the internet and university/college sources but here the percentages were small.

The reader is encouraged to look over the detailed analyses of the student survey responses and their many insightful comments in Supplemental Report # 3.

**Recommendations Emerging from the Student Survey Analyses**

It is clear that the post-secondary and university students in HRM are a considerable stimulus for the HRM economy and help to define a quality of life that makes Halifax so attractive to HRM residents and outsiders. The Roundtable report contains data showing the economic contribution associated with the high percentage of university students who come here from outside HRM, other provinces and other countries. A recent ACOA study, cited at the Roundtable, apparently found that a significant factor in such students coming to Halifax has been their perception that it is a safe place to be. It is important to ensure that such a perception will always be well-founded. Recently, or earlier, a number of initiatives have been undertaken which focus on the student-related safety issues. There has been increased collaboration between the Dalhousie University officials / security staff and the HRPS police. Two examples are the HRPS special Dalhousie Patrol project and the HRPS Community Response Team's engagement with the university (Kings included) residences, and dealing (often through a form of mediation) with community – student conflict. According to councillors, community spokespersons, and police sources, there has been a significant improvement in the reduction of social disorder and property damage, although there still are a significant number of community complaints. Dalhousie University has increased its security activity especially in the campus area. In addition to the 25 full-time, trained security staff, there are about 100 students employed part-time during the school year as

attendants in major university buildings or with the Tiger Patrol. The latter involves some forty students engaged (on a scheduled basis) between 6.30 pm and 12.30 am in either walking 'patrols' or providing free transportation (the van service follows a published schedule and extends beyond the campus though not into the Downtown). Dalhousie Security has long provided self-defense information (basically a one evening session), an emergency call number (4109) and in March 2008 announced an additional emergency response notification initiative accessible by registered student (and others) cell-phone. Over the past five years the average annual number of assaults on its campus has been 1.5.

While there have been initiatives and changes it appears also to be true that students and officials, whether HRM or University, have different models of what the central public safety issues may be. All models have both a preservative and explanatory function, rooted in both interests and evidence-based accounting. The students' model in the survey essentially posited a few major themes, one is that too much attention is paid to them as troublemakers and minor offenders and not enough to them as victims of sometimes serious threats and assaults occurring Downtown or in transit to and from it. Another theme is that police and other officials give exaggerated, overkill aggressive response to minor alcoholic-induced disturbance, and a third is that too much attention is focused on their consumption of alcohol and not enough on the security at bars, the training of the bouncers and so on. On the other hand, police and security people are more likely to point to the community complaints (especially in the South End), to note that many public safety measures are in place, and to emphasize the problem of alcohol abuse which may discount public safety measures. To some degree the two models "talk past one another".

When representatives of the Halifax University Student Alliance approached the mayor's Roundtable's project leader in October 2007 with their wish to become more engaged in the Roundtable, they indicated that the reality and the perception of violence and public safety among students are crucial for several reasons, namely (a) personal safety, (b) the value of their degree, (c) the reputation of the universities, and (d) the possibility of inaction contributing to an already declining university enrollment (both Saint Mary's and Dalhousie experienced such declines in the past two years). In their presentation at the Roundtable in mid-November, the student leaders strongly emphasized that "We want more collaboration with the municipality". The students, at the Roundtable and at a subsequent workshop in January 2008, also advanced recommendations for restorative justice initiatives, and improved relationships with HRPS police ("We should try working with the police") and the university's security staff. Indeed, the student calls for the development of a more collaborative and trusting relationship among all parties should be a priority given the crime and violence that happen to students, the crime and disorder / property damage they cause and the significance of the universities for HRM. The above analyses do support the concerns they raised and it is hoped that the recommendations noted below will contribute to positive change.

1. A more effective partnership between the HRPS, campus security and student organizations should be explored for purposes both of student safety and improved communications between the HRPS and the universities and colleges. Currently HRPS does have informational sessions with students in residence at least at the beginning of the school year, and the Dalhousie Patrol, under a cost-sharing agreement between

Dalhousie and HRM, provides extra patrol on certain evenings in certain months (October and November and January through March). These and other programs have had positive effects for responding to the community complaints about vandalism, liquor violations and disturbances. Perhaps other universities and colleges should examine their collaboration with HRPS along similar lines. All campus liaison with the HRPS could likely do more in terms of crime prevention programs to reduce violence against students, assisting student victims, improving the communication and other collaboration between HRPS and campus security, and providing the students or their representatives with a conduit to encourage more reporting of violence to the authorities, and to bring forth their concerns about, what they feel, is inadequate or unfair treatment by the police.

2. It is clear from the gender differences noted throughout the survey analyses that females generally feel more worried about their personal safety in Halifax. Despite the use of more personal strategies to adapt to their feelings of vulnerability, female students have higher levels of anxiety about being attacked. While the overall social factors that generate female anxiety about personal safety are complex, the Universities and their Student Services could implement small and student-led programs which could provide female students with more piece of mind, such as formalized buddy systems for walking around and in the vicinity of campus after dark, or providing female students with a small alarm device that they could use to alert people in the event of trouble, and perhaps offering more awareness and informational sessions, bringing together students, security officials and persons with other expertise, on how to avoid, or, if necessary, respond to violence or threats of violence. Male students' concern about violence should also be responded to along similar lines.

3. Based on students' views about the inefficiency of public transit options in the evenings, the municipality may want to consider re-adjusting night-time schedules for Metro Transit, at least within the peninsula, on weekends. Given the high proportions of student "walkers" living in the South End, which happens to be the area where most complaints of drunk and disorderly behaviour and a good number of the assaults occur, it is possible that such a transportation policy could lower the incidences of such conduct while students make their way home after a night of Downtown recreation or work. Adding more public transit options at night provides safe alternatives, not only for students, but for all residents of Halifax. Perhaps, given the importance of the so-called "night-time economy" to HRM and Nova Scotia, a system of free transportation could be prudently implemented after midnight, along the line of FRED (i.e. free rides everywhere Downtown) which was initiated to facilitate the movement of tourists; it should be noted that HRM already provides subsidized bus passes for students and others.

4. It is clear that there are significant property damage, disturbances and bylaw infractions caused by some students going to and from the Downtown "under the influence" and, also, other offenses and minor assaults. A restorative justice, extra-judicial sanction, program should be established as detailed elsewhere in this report for off-campus minor offending. Such a special project could underline the inappropriateness if not criminality of the acts and, by engaging both the student councils and local community in the restorative justice process, do much to reduce those public safety problems and instill

more trust among students, community members and officials. An additional advantage is that accountability may be achieved without the students getting a criminal record. Protocols can readily be put in place (e.g., eligibility, type of sanctions, operational and organizational issues), drawing upon the considerable experience in these regards of Corrections' Adult Diversion and/or the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. Such a program has proven effective in responding to similar university-community concerns in off-campus behaviour in the Antigonish area.

5. As noted in the introduction to this section, security, police officials and other observers and authorities have emphasized that excessive alcohol consumption and attendant social disorder and property damage are central to student problems in the Downtown, Central Halifax and the South End. Some students in their on-line comments also drew attention to these issues. Both these issues could benefit from the restorative justice initiative being proposed since the extra-judicial sanctions could include, where appropriate, restitution, community service or referrals to alcohol and drug counseling.

6. There are some serious crimes against the person that occur Downtown or to and fro Downtown at late night or early morning, including gangs of predators assaulting the students and sexual and other serious assaults. These require not only police presence and investigation – largely in effect already - but also better collaboration among HRPS, the Downtown bars, and the students. The suggestion of police liaison noted above would help achieve this and other salient recommendations can readily be advanced by the implementation committee that is recommended in the text.

7. Students raised a number of issues concerning campus security and improving services already in existence such as the Tiger Patrol at Dalhousie. From evidence noted elsewhere in this report, it does appear that University – community – police initiatives have been quite successful in diminishing vandalism and public order problems. The view of many students is that violence and their own victimization needs to be given more attention by campus officials and the police, and that is a reasonable position. For example, the problems of perceived dangers walking or biking at or near the Commons are not trivial nor are they easily dealt with by students who not only "party" Downtown but who work there in order to afford their university attendance; the Commons area is a strategic nodal point for walkers and bicyclists going and coming back from the Downtown (including Spring Garden Road) and other areas. A student suggestion advanced in the January 2008 workshop at Dalhousie that there should be some exploration of students' use of the Tiger Patrol (especially why, reportedly, many students do not use it) has merit.

8. Students raised a number of other possible recommendations consistent with the safety thrusts of HRM by Design (e.g., more people living Downtown may yield greater public safety) and the CPTED approach (e.g., better lighting) that are applicable to many areas in HRM including their own campus areas.

9. In the larger perspective about violence and public safety, student recommendations for, on the one hand, more strict sentencing for violent offenses, and on the other, more

strategic planning to get at underlying social factors, generally are congruent with the views of the public at large, with perhaps slightly more focus on the "social development" approach (including how to deal with the culture of substance abuse) on the part of the students.

## *THE ACTIVISTS*

As mentioned earlier, the term, activists, refers the HRM councillors and the participants in the Roundtable's community meetings. Here there is an overview discussion of their views and recommendations concerning violence and public safety in HRM. Supplemental Report # 4, The Activists, is the full report where an in-depth discussion is provided for both groupings. In addition, that report compares the views and recommendations advanced with those of the several meetings held earlier in the year by the Minister's Task Force on Crime Prevention, and also provides a brief note on the views of youth.

The councillors differed of course in their reports of the level of violence and major public safety concerns in their districts, with the urban core grouping indicating the most serious problems while those councillors whose districts were the at the outer reaches of HRM indicated the least serious problems. There was much variation in the reports of the "suburban ring" councillors, though some identified "pockets of problems" and they and others also highlighted public safety concerns on their perimeters. It was widely acknowledged that the discourse for violence and public safety throughout HRM has reflected the issues experienced most in the Downtown and the core urban areas on both sides of the Harbour, and, consequently, even somewhat minor district concerns were often seen through the prism of major issues emanating from this center of HRM. Not surprisingly, councillors in districts, described as having few public safety concerns, were the most likely to consider the media as overplaying the violence and public safety issues in HRM.

The councillors' views on issues such as the adequacy of policing, the importance of police presence and visibility, the serious shortfalls of the YCJA and the criminal justice system in general (especially sentencing practices), and the emphasis on youth issues, reflected closely the views of their constituents as found in the public surveys and community Roundtable sessions. They offered a variety of suggestions on what was working to reduce the public safety concerns and what should be improved upon, the chief emphases here being policing and recreation, areas within the municipal mandate. There was widespread consensus among the councillors concerning the existing role – and sharp limits – of the municipal government with respect to dealing in depth with issues of violence and public safety, but substantial diversity concerning possible future directions. They were wary of taking on provincial responsibilities without changing current revenue agreements. The councillors varied in their views of what the municipality itself should and could do that would require increased municipal funding but all agreed that more municipal coordination of public safety initiatives in HRM was desirable and all were appreciative of the necessity to be fiscally responsible; several noted that the municipality, through initiatives such as contributions of land and community grants, has already

been transcending a strict definition of its requirements, All councillors supported a more effective partnership with the senior levels of government on matters of public safety.

The diversity was perhaps the greatest in the area of whether the municipality should take on a broader mandate than it currently has (vis-à-vis the province) in response to challenges of violence and public safety; here, while almost all agreed with a greater coordinative role for the municipality and closer partnership with senior levels of government, the further out from the urban core, the more the councillors raised concerns 'getting over our head' and costs. Some councillors warmed to the idea of a new vision and strategic action plan in the public safety areas while others were quite concerned about either the need and/or the unachievable expectations that might be set in train by such initiatives. There was much similarity among virtually all councillors in their positive assessments of policing vis-à-vis the rest of the criminal justice system, largely see the latter as ineffective in responding to, if not compounding, the problems. There was much similarity too in their views of the need for accessible, affordable recreational facilities (especially opening up the school facilities, though here there were some wary voices as well). A number of councillors pointed out the racialized nature of much violence whether in swarming or in the Downtown or in the schools, and suggested the need for more commitment and action in improving race relations. Several councillors suggested the need to consider specialty courts such community courts, mental health courts or drug treatment courts.

As was true among the councillors, there was diversity within strong consensus among the approximately 300 activists participating in the Roundtable community discussions**.** The major consensus themes for improving public safety revolved around the role of the police services and the school systems. The policing service was highlighted for dealing with the immediate enforcement and crime prevention issues whereas the school system was highlighted by participants when they focused on getting at the roots of social problems generating violence, roots which they conceived of as shortfalls in values, mentors, and alternative opportunities. Concerning the police services, there was much praise, and when participants cited what was working in their community in reducing violence and increasing public safety, they usually cited various policing initiatives, whether that be DARE, Neighbourhood Watch, COPS, community / school liaison officers, foot-patrol or street crime units. They, like the councillors and like the public survey respondents, were usually quite critical regarding the work of the courts in sentencing and also regarding the youth justice system (particularly of course the YCJA, here decrying especially the 'anonymity' of offenders and what they perceived to be the lack of meaningful sentences and accountability). They usually called for major changes in the criminal justice system for both youth and adults– bail, sentencing and the YCJA – but, pending these, their focus was logically on the pre-arrest, crime prevention activity of the policing service. In their priorities for policing, the participants generally called for more of everything that the police services are already doing, but especially for closer collaboration with the communities with respect to visible police presence and crime prevention programs.

In the case of the school systems, the participants looked to the schools to have a broad mandate, focusing on values and civic culture in addition to the three Rs, and being more accessible in every respect for the community and for youth in particular. The schools were seen as the chief venue for providing mentors and role models where there were inadequacies in parenting, and the schools' physical resources – the gyms and meetings rooms and so forth – were seen as

extant, 'bought for', resources that should be available off-hours and affordable, if not free, to community residents. A number of participants also emphasized the need for the school system to retain youths more effectively, reducing drop-outs, and to re-establish trade school programs for those who for one reason or another do not qualify for or cannot cope with the expectations of community colleges and universities; in this perspective, drop-outs and credential-less young people are seen as more likely to become engaged in anti-social behaviour.

The emphasis on the policing service for short-term response, and the schools for the long-term social development approach, to problems of violence and public safety is a perspective that may have faults itself on a variety of levels; for example, police programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, D.A.R.E. have been sharply criticized by criminologists as ineffective, as implemented, for reducing crime, and the school systems may be already overburdened with responsibilities (though prospects of a declining youth population as noted elsewhere in this Roundtable Report may offer some room for taking on other tasks). The overall perspective, however, is consistent and congruent with participants' views of how the criminal justice system operates, of effecting possible improvements in public safety without radical social change, and especially with their focus on youths when thinking and talking about violence and public safety. Indeed, the emphasis on youth – usually though not always, considering youth in the junior high and under-18 years of age categories – was very pervasive in the Roundtable community discussions. Little mention at all was made of the adult population which accounts for 87% of the reported offenses in HRM and in Canada overall. Several times, participants mentioned this preoccupation to the researcher; one noted on exiting the meeting place, "They sure all focused on youth didn't they" , while twice, nearing the end of a Roundtable community discussion period, a participant asked rhetorically, "Why are we just talking about youth". Certainly, when the community meeting participants discussed what was working to improve public safety in the HRM, apart from the police initiatives, they usually cited youth-oriented agencies and programs as noted above. Beyond both police and school initiatives with youth, and additional ones recommended for them by the discussion participants, the chief recommendations were that youth-at-risk be given special attention and that there be much greater coordination of services (e.g., "wrap-around' programming) for such youth; as will be noted below a number of such projects have recently been funded in HRM.

Another general consensus theme, articulated quite similarly to the positions advanced by many HRM councillors, was that there needed to be much more coordination and facilitation carried out by governments and especially by the municipal HRM government, the government closest to the communities and of course to their public safety concerns. Many activists did not envisage such municipal initiative to require major investment ("big bucks "). They were cautious of affordability and any tax increases but the view often was expressed, as one activist put it, "It's not a question of big money but rather of political will". They saw the municipality's role as coordinating and planning, working with the non-profit agencies, volunteers, and businesses and universities (the latter both seen as able to make valuable contributions and as very under-utilized by HRM planners at present). Modest government funding was seen as required to secure and make affordably accessible, existing recreational facilities, to facilitate volunteering (some training, some registry, some coverage of liability insurance etc), to communicate and publicize crime prevention and public safety successes and strategies throughout HRM, and to

lobby senior levels of government. It was generally held that at present the municipal government lacks the capacity to carry out that role effectively.

Another consensus theme emerging from the Roundtable community discussions was that signal crimes such as the swarmings, however infrequent, and the general high level of violence in the Downtown have created a sense of fear and worry for public safety that transcends the urban core areas. Even modest incidents of disorder and violence are increasingly seen through the prism of such violence and that makes problematic the sense of trust between youth and adults and the feelings of safety even in areas of very low crime, as well as increasing anxiety about going into Central and Downtown HRM. A related consensus theme was the underlying sense of balance in the positions advanced by the community participants. Not only did they discuss the difference between perceptions and realities but also they coupled recommendations on toughening sentencing and the YCJA with recommendations for working more with disadvantaged families and at-risk youths and for ensuring that salient services and facilities are accessible and affordable to all HRM residents. To borrow a contemporary phrase, the participants were not “one trackers”.

Specific additional recommendations emerging from the Roundtable community discussions point to some diversity within the above consensus:

1. Increase police presence and visibility as a deterrent to violence and crime, especially in ‘hot spots’ such as The Commons.
2. Increase public participation with the police in crime prevention initiatives.
3. Get citizens in high crime areas more engaged.
4. Get at the roots causes of drug use and gang formation.
5. Revise the YCJA and have tougher bail and sentencing practices for both adults and youths who commit violent offenses.
6. Consider the reintroduction of curfews.
7. Examine the possibilities and effectiveness of restorative justice.
8. Provide other affordable opportunities for wholesome recreation (especially for youth and the disadvantaged) by “opening up the schools, the facilities we now own”.
9. Ensure the educational system is responding to all youths, not just those likely to pursue a university education.
10. Have schools appreciate a broader mandate with respect to teaching life skills and taking on more responsibility for reducing violence and enhancing public safety.
11. Focus more on at-risk youths and coordinate better the services appropriate for them.
12. Provide more assistance to parents of at-risk youths.
13. Improve public safety by paying more attention to CPTED.
14. Encourage police to adopt an elder watch program as in the First Nations communities.
15. Consider how to get sex workers off the street whether by legalizing (decriminalizing) the sex business or otherwise.
16. Have more government funding and coordination in public safety field. Husband better what is ‘out there’ in human resources and infrastructure.
17. Have better coordination among the different levels of government.

18. With respect to the Downtown violence and offending, have special taxi and/or bus services to facilitate public safety, maintain or increase police presence at the right times, ensure bar owners are held responsible for living up to higher standards for training staff and serving clients, have better monitoring by Alcohol and Gaming authorities, eliminate the cheap drink practices, and reduce the hours open after midnight.
19. Ensure volunteers are nurtured by the municipality and seek more voluntary collaboration from the large pool of university students in HRM, the military, and private business generally.
20. Achieve better balance in media accounts of crime and positive community initiatives, perhaps by having the municipality taking some responsibility for communicating the positives.

# *THE FOCUS GROUPS*

## SEVEN KEY DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN HRM

The focus groups were directed at seven key dimensions of the violence and public safety concern in HRM. They entailed having engaged persons, persons involved in the specific dimension, usually local leaders and knowledgeables from a variety of perspectives, meet on several occasions for group discussions of the seven themes (i.e., twelve persons per theme). The seven key dimensions were

1. Street Crime, Violence and Public Safety
2. Neighbourhood Engagement and Public Safety
3. The Downtown Bar Scene (The Night-Time Economy)
4. Troubled Youth and Issues of Public Safety
5. Public Safety and Security Issues in Minority Communities
6. Social Constructions of Violence and Public Safety
7. Community and Municipal Government Initiatives Regarding Organized Crime and Issues of Addiction, Prostitution and Offender Reintegration

Supplemental Report # 5 includes a detailed account of this particular Roundtable segment with an introduction by this writer which "places" the specific issue (e.g., Street Crime, Troubled Youth etc) in the literature and HRM context, reports from each focus group, and special essays on their focus group topic by Professors Murphy and Schneider. There has already been reference to most of the focus groups' key recommendations and they will be reiterated in the concluding section of this report, so rather than repeat them here, only a few of the common themes / recommendations will be noted. The main suggestions for the municipality's greater involvement in public safety centered around four issues, namely leadership and presence, capacity building at the municipal government level, functions, and mechanisms to achieve these functions.

A basic, common theme and recommendation was that the municipal government has an important role to play in effecting more coordination and collaboration among services and

programs in HRM and between them and the different levels of government. The Street Crime focus group, for example, while sharply divided between those emphasizing rehabilitation and treatment for offenders (often their clients) and those emphasizing an enforcement / accountability approach, nevertheless, agreed that HRM should become more engaged in facilitating that coordination and suggested the mechanism of a crime prevention council be established by the municipality. Despite the major divide between treatment and enforcement perspectives, there was a sense that a coherent strategic action plan could accommodate both approaches. The latter, the value of a strategic action plan against which the municipality could assess the value of different initiatives and husband its resources and advocacy, was another common theme. The Neighbourhood Engagement focus group called for leadership from the Mayor's Office in acknowledging the problem of public safety and assuming a mobilizing and coordinating role. It held that the municipal government's capacity building required a community crime prevention coordinator and associated advisory group, directly reporting to the Mayor's Office, should be established. Specific ways in which this new organizational structure could advance community engagements were deemed to be assisting in the recruitment and retention of volunteers, supplying technical experience and a broad strategic planning umbrella for community initiatives, and directly supporting a social development approach to the problem.

The Downtown focus group advanced many specific recommendations, well integrated by Professor Murphy in his overview statement of consensus recommendations for the Downtown bar scene and the different public safety issues in the Spring Garden area (see Supplemental Report # 5). Some of the suggested changes would be within the municipality's current jurisdictional mandate while others would involve advocacy and collaboration with the Province. A mechanism suggested was a Downtown Public Safety Implementation Committee advisory to the Mayor and Council, operating in conjunction with a full time HRM public safety coordinator (enhanced capacity) and charged with developing a strategic action plan based on the Roundtable report Beyond these there was a call for the municipal government to take leadership in creating private, voluntary and government partnerships to deal with housing and other social development approaches. The focus group, Social Constructions of Violence and Public Safety, appropriately enough, emphasized the way information about violence and crime is conveyed and considered. Its chief recommendation was that the municipal government "should develop a communications strategy that provides proactive comprehensive, comprehensible, contextual and useful information to citizens on crime and violence; the strategy should involve a wide range of key players, entail the municipality coordinating the public awareness of local programs and initiatives to make sure these 'solutions-oriented" messages reach the larger community, establish a "safe community citizens' website, and use paid advertising in conventional media to communicate to get quality information on violence and public safety to the citizenry".

The focus group on Troubled Youth was quite aware of the fact that social services are currently an almost exclusive provincial mandate but its participants believed that the municipality had an important role to play directly in some areas and by coordination of information and advocacy in others. Specifically, there was agreement that HRM should be playing a more significant role in (a) facilitating community engagement and community conversations about issues (e.g., the much maligned group homes); (b) re-establishing a Volunteer Bureau in HRM; (c) facilitating if not providing more safe, supervised youth "hang-out" areas; (c) innovatively getting information out to troubled youth and their families concerning the help available and how to access it. To

accomplish such objectives and realize the more expansive role, capacity building was deemed to be required, so it was recommended that "the City should establish a business unit dedicated to public safety thereby incorporating the issues of troubled youth and other Roundtable foci into HRM business plan and priorities".

The focus group dealing with Community and Municipal Government Initiatives concerning Addiction, Prostitution and Offender Reintegration had limited consensus on these issues for a variety of reasons (the way the focus group theme was articulated by the writer, the scope of the discussions and the limited time for discussion). While consensus on the broad issues was limited, there was agreement on some initiatives that HRM could undertake. These were (a) thoroughly examine other jurisdictions' successes to determine what might be appropriate for HRM; (b) develop a more coordinated approach among governmental jurisdictions and community agencies; (c) encourage the establishment of a drug treatment court to reduce demand for drugs; (d) develop safe supervised housing for ex-inmates and others; (e) have a communications strategy to counter public stereotypes about half-way houses and group homes. The section on Minority Perspectives of Violence and Public Safety incorporated the focus group overview, as well as the results of numerous personal interviews carried out by the writer with members of some of the groups represented (Black local leaders, Immigrant activists, and Aboriginal program managers) and submissions by activists in the LBGT communities (see the write-up in Supplemental Report # 5). There were a number of specific recommendations advanced specific to the different minorities. The general recommendation of the focus group was that HRM should be more "hands-on" in this area since "diversity is a top-down initiative". The greater HRM role could be both direct in coordinating information and supporting programs, and indirect, being an advocate vis-à-vis the senior levels of government.

## *AUTHORITIES AND EXPERTS*

At the three-day Roundtable session, special invitations were sent to authorities and other experts to present their views on the Roundtable theme of violence and public safety and / or inform the Roundtable on related developments from their role's perspectives**.** These presentations are summarized and discussed in Supplemental Report # 6, Authorities and Experts which also includes the actual presentations of some of the presenters. The Roundtable presentations were grouped into five categories (a) the Criminal Justice System (here the presenters were the two HRM police leaders, the Coordinator of Restorative Justice in Nova Scotia, the Chief Prosecutor HRM, the Coordinator of Victim Services, the Executive Director of Nova Scotia Corrections, the Chief Justice of the Nova Scotia Supreme Court, and a consultant with the National Parole Board, Atlantic); (b) Prevention and Treatment (here the presenters were a pediatrician and professor, representatives from Public Health and Capital Health, the Director of Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services, Capital Health, a community liaison member of the IWK Youth Forensic Services, and a Criminology professor); (c) the Nova Scotia Department of Justice (the presenters were the Minister of Justice, the Executive Director, Children and Youth Justice Strategy, and the Lead, Crime Prevention Strategy); (d) Community Engagement Initiatives (the presentations here were by President and CEO, United Way, the Executive Director, Mulgrave Park Tenants Association, the Executive Director, Spring Garden Road Business Association, the CEO, Black Business Initiative, and the Halifax Student Alliance); (e)

Macro Perspectives (the presenters were professors of Municipal Affairs, History and Urban Planning, respectively).

As in other urban Roundtables, role players in the Criminal Justice System (CJS), other than the police, were not involved in other Roundtable activities. Several special interviews were, however, conducted by the writer with judges, prosecutors and Corrections officials. It was found that the judges and prosecutors were skeptical that crime had been decreasing and commented that, if so, it was not reflected in their workload. They were, like other CJS role players, disturbed by the level of violence they saw, especially the gratuitous violence, and especially among youth. There was some ambivalence concerning the number of offenders involved in the violence but a fair amount of consensus that the media sensationalized violent crime. There was certainly an appreciation of the public's concern about public safety though at the same time a sense that the public did not understand the context of much sentencing or sentencing recommendations nor appreciate the constraints on judges and prosecutors imposed by law and official policy.

The leaders of HRM's HRPS and the RCMP both indicated that the violent crime problem in HRM has been significant but that certain policing policies and the increased police complement obtained in recent years have been making a significant difference, causing a reduction overall and especially in adult crimes. Both services pointed to strategies such as foot patrol in certain high risk areas, street crime or quick response units, an integrated policing format for certain crimes, and enhanced community response strategies as having made a difference. At the same time, the presenters for both services appreciated the distinction between crime levels and trends and public perceptions and fears, the need for partnerships to get at root causes, and were open to alternative complementary strategies. The CJS presentations apart from the police services did not highlight a particular role for the municipal government in Public Safety. Basically these presenters described their role and / or programs. The RJ coordinator also noted that various special projects were underway here (e.g., especially in the Black communities) and that projects were being considered to improve restorative justice interventions with the small minority of serious, repeat young offenders but that there are no current plans to extend the program to adult offenders. The Chief Prosecutor, HRM, discussed current initiatives to have a mental health or community court in HRM, something which might impact well on street crime and social disorder since its target would be repeat offenders with problems who commit minor offenses. The Executive Director Corrections emphasized the need for modest changes in the YCJA (especially bail provisions) and the importance of early intervention on reducing serious youth offending. The Chief Justice stressed the importance of good parenting and also pointed with approval to current discussions on new justice approaches such as the specialty or problem-solving court. The Victim Services Coordinator described the mandate and resources of that program, noting that its focus is on the individual victim, not the public fear and worry of victimization which he allowed may be overly influenced by media emphases and not reflect actual rates and trends in violence and crime. The consultant to the Parole Board pointed to the serious limitations in services and opportunities for the ex-inmates and the need for re-integration strategies including adult mentoring, as well as re-structuring programs offered in prison (making some compulsory). He discussed some promising Africentric-centered approach with Black ex-inmates who are over-represented in the federal institutions.

The presentations by the Minister and two Justice staff members, heading the newly created Child and Youth Strategy and Crime Prevention Strategy respectively, emphasized the new directions being chartered by the province. The focus was clearly on youth, changing the YCJA, coordinating programs and services for children and youth, and launching a number of crime prevention initiatives that for the most part were directed at youth served by the Restorative Justice program (12 to 17 or younger). In outlining the new initiatives being undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia in response to the Nunn Commission and the Minister's task Force on Crime Prevention, the Minister acknowledged that HRM has specific issues unique to its jurisdiction and said that he anticipates new forms of partnerships with the municipality on issues of violence and crime. He suggested that municipalities could be allowed to re-allocate and leverage money for crime prevention and that ways could be found to directly link the federal government to the communities. The Director of the newly launched Child and Youth Strategy emphasized that while new resources are associated with that strategy, its main role is to identify gaps and develop new strategies for relating to problem youths and families and would not itself deliver services or programs. It was suggested that partnerships with municipalities would be a key feature of the strategy. The Lead of the provincial Crime Prevention Strategy indicated that the focus would be on youth (as was the Task Force) and that the implementation strategies would feature partnerships among the provincial government departments and with municipal governments and other organizations

In the Prevention and Treatment grouping there were four presentations that focused on prevention and early intervention and one that dealt with rehabilitation and treatment of more serious young offenders, including those sentenced to custody. The written presentation by Public Health / Capital Health staff members underlined the violence problem in HRM by noting that Nova Scotia and HRM have hospital treatment rates for violence (e.g., assault, suicide) that are the highest east of Manitoba. They discussed public health issues, especially early child care, the value of increased affordable recreational facilities, and indicated a keenness to partner anti-violence strategizing with the municipal government. The pediatrician and Dalhousie professor emphasized early intervention of a family-centered type to reduce violent behaviour, and providing as much help as possible to single parents of low income in particular, a quite apt recommendation given the geo-coding finding noted above that that factor was most closely associated with violence. His other recommendations included focusing on affordability and accessibility in accessing facilities and resources, using evidence-based approaches, and the municipality committing to hiring a full-time violence prevention coordinator in order to have the capacity to assume some leadership in public safety. The Director of Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services, Capital Health, dealt with alcohol abuse and the culture of alcohol use which constitutes a major social problem and is associated with much of the violence in HRM in his view. He urged the municipality to support the provincial alcohol strategy and the initiatives being discussed regarding specialty courts for addicted offenders. The criminologist at Saint Mary's University and director of PALS, a well-developed mentoring-based project aimed at assisting at-risk youths aged 5 to 12 living in three housing projects, called on the local government to exercise leadership in coordinating networks for volunteers and supporting programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters in a variety of ways. The IWK community liaison specialist discussed the social circumstances of troubled youth. He noted that some youth prefer incarceration because it provides better for their survival needs (i.e., food and accommodations)

than they have “on the outside”. Like several other presenters at the Roundtable, he recommended more supervised housing for persons exiting from custody.

The presenters in the Community or Neighbourhood Engagement grouping included innovative organizations with successful track-records operating at different levels in the high risk areas of HRM. The Director of a tenants association described the efforts that have accounted for its success in causing a radical reduction in vandalism, police charges and restorative justice referrals in the housing project. She highlighted the funding received, the partnerships established with businesses and other agencies, and the considerable fund raising of the tenants via bingos and the like which underlined the community’s ownership of the changes. Her chief recommendation was for more municipality presence and coordination in assisting community groups. The CEO of the Black Business Initiative discussed the work of his organization funding and counseling start-up enterprises and providing actual employment to the Black community. This initiative offers positive alternatives and good role models for many Blacks who may otherwise find themselves marginalized.

The President of the United Way noted that by a combination of design and default (on the part of the municipal government) the United Way has been a major quarterback for public engagement in social development. It has a strategic plan and it substantially funds much of the voluntary sector in HRM. Overall, her main theme was the need for and value of working together and partnership (“We bring expertise, relationships, reputation and private and public donations to this table”). She urged the municipal government to become a more active player at the neighbourhood or community level, noting “With limited resources you must respect your mandate but we urge you not to be constrained by it”. A similar challenge was made by the Executive Director of the Spring Garden Road Business Association. His association has been pioneering a number of initiatives to respond positively to the problems of the homeless, the mentally ill and addicted, the problems of poverty, housing needs and societal reintegration and so on, for the young adults and others in the central areas of Halifax. He too suggested a more activist vision for the municipal government and argued that, based on his association’s experience, there are partnerships among the municipality, the business and the voluntary sectors that can assist in implementing such a vision. Were the municipality to take on a more expansive role in directly and indirectly (through social development) dealing with violence, crime, and public safety, there would be much to be learned from and partnering with the United Way and private business such as the SGRBA.

Three professors, well-known for their expertise in urban planning, social history and municipal administration respectively, provided a macro perspective to the municipality’s role in responding to violence and public safety. The urban planner emphasized the importance of quality of life as the goal of HRM planning and the need to plan for community and civility by greater peopling of areas such as the Downtown and indeed by having several Downtowns in the urban core. He held that the crime prevention through environmental design approach could and should be implemented or enhanced throughout HRM. Like several other presenters, he emphasized too the importance of affordable housing. The social historian discussed the evolution of justice policy and practice, contending that recent changes have not been effective and that it is time for a re-emphasis on law and order and stiffer sentencing practices. He also emphasized the need for affordable, accessible facilities in the community for youths and adults,

especially opening up the schools' facilities after hours. With respect to the role of the municipality he suggested it stay within its legislated mandate. The municipal affairs expert discussed the role and mandate of municipalities in Nova Scotia, noting that HRM should not be hemmed in by its legal mandate since it also has a broader mandate from the public to direct and coordinate vis-à-vis violence and crime. He acknowledged the difficulties of doing so given the disparate agendas that reflect the structure of the HRM Council but suggested that effective leadership coupled with a more sophisticated public management model could produce results.

## *BUILDING ON STRENGTHS, DEALING WITH SHORTFALLS*

Actual violence and crime in HRM do raise appropriate, real and serious concerns about public safety as the above analyses have evidenced. Public perceptions are also important since, to cite the social psychologist W.I. Thomas, "things that are perceived to be real are real in their consequences"; the evidence also shows that HRM residents, on the whole, do hold that violence and crime are serious and increasing problems, and that the official responses to them, aside from police actions, have been woefully inadequate. It can readily be argued that the reality and perceptions of violence and crime have negatively affected the quality of life in HRM. Violence and crime increased in the latter part of the last century and first few years of this one but, while still unacceptable, have generally gone down in recent years. The public's sense of fear and anxiety has, if anything, increased and this may not simply be a lag effect. For both types of reasons therefore it is important for the municipal government to deal with the shortfalls and build on the strengths that have developed over the past few years.

Fortunately, there are many strengths and positives to build on. With the increase in complement of the policing services, their development of the Community Response Model (an HRP and RCMP partnership) and strategic planning (e.g., 24/7 foot patrol in some high risk areas), HRM policing has impacted on violence and crime and has advanced a progressive, balanced model of policing – one that understands that fear and worry are important to take into account as well as actual crime, and appreciates the necessity of long term social development to get at underlying causes. Another major strength has been the governmental response to youth crime. The public and official attention has been on (a) early intervention to encourage attachment to school, direct youth to wholesome recreational activities, and develop pro-social perspectives thereby reducing the prospects for gang formation, and (b) more effective intervention with the more serious young offenders. Within the past year the province has established a Youth Attendance Centre for more serious young offenders, and launched its Child and Youth Strategy and Crime Prevention Strategy. The former focuses on early intervention, coordination of services among departments and with other organizations and services, and trouble-shooting for shortfalls in programs and service delivery for at-risk youngsters. The Crime Prevention Strategy seems primarily aimed at the age category of youth served by The Nova Scotia Restorative Justice program and the nine (plus the Mi'kmaq Customary Law Program) contracted local agencies delivering that service. Some of the new RJ programs focus especially upon troubled youth and repeat offenders. In addition, the province has been lobbying with some success for changes in the YCJA to get at its shortcomings (e.g., bail provisions) and highlight the important objective of public safety. Overall, the new initiatives seem very congruent with the recommendations

advanced by the Nunn Commission, The Minister's Task Force and the experts. It can be hoped that they will be implemented well and achieve their objectives. Following along these same line, within the past year, at least $5 million in grants have been announced for youth projects by the federal government's NCPC (the major funder though the municipality contributes in-kind on a significant level in one project). These projects (e.g., mentoring, wrap-around services etc) generally are aimed at pre-teen or early teenage youth, especially at-risk and living in housing projects. As one NCPC official noted, Halifax has done very well in getting federal funds for youth projects.

The municipal government itself has become much more engaged in public safety initiatives in the past year. In 2007 the Grants Committee began encouraging application from non-profit groups for modest projects promoting neighbourhood safety. In 2007 the Strong Neighbourhood Program was announced whose objective is to integrate salient HRM programs under a single umbrella "to support council's focus areas which include reducing graffiti, pollution and litter and increase voluntarism and youth engagement". Potentially the most important HRM initiative of this type has been the Youth Advocacy Project. This well-funded, multi-year project deals directly with at-risk youths under 12 years of age in a multi-dimensional, "wrap-around" service program. It will also involve the municipality's staff in an in-depth networking relationship with other local service providers (e.g., Phoenix House, Big Brothers / Big Sisters) and perhaps reclaim some social service delivery capacity – certainly some expertise – lost with the transition to amalgamation in the mid-1990s. Of course, there are a number of local agencies and organizations working innovatively with other problems highlighted in this report such as the United Way, the CAH and several area Business Associations, and the greater activity in the youth area could extend to City partnerships with them in projects pertinent for reducing violence and enhancing public safety as indeed will be recommended below. The Roundtable initiative is of course a major statement by the municipal government that the municipal government should have a more important role to play in responding to the challenge of violence and public safety challenges to its quality of life and future economic and social development.

In recent years, as noted in the body of this report, there have been significant developments in conceptualizing and advancing the place of Canada's larger municipalities in public safety activity. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a subcommittee engaged in that area and networks have been established among the cities through Canadian think-tanks such as the Ottawa-based Institute for the Prevention of Crime. There is increasing information on strategic issues and best practices for cities and HRM has had some participation in these activities.

While there are many valuable initiatives that have taken place recently which have impacted on violence and public safety and many other promising initiatives particularly for young offenders, there are three areas where shortfalls are quite evident, namely the role of the municipal government, the neglect of adult offending, and race relations. Despite the recent promising developments just noted, the view was widespread in the Roundtable segments, and shared by this writer, that the municipality lacks vision and capacity at present with respect to dealing directly with outstanding public safety issues or effectively lobbying senior levels of government for needed change in HRM. Presumably the awareness of that situation was the rationale for the Roundtable initiative itself. Under the current situation with respect to vision / mandate and capacity, the municipal government can accomplish more than it has in dealing with violence

and crime. Recommendations have been made below with respect to transportation, recreation, and policing where there is both capacity and mandate. To stake out a greater public role, to provide leadership on matters of public safety, and to be the expertise centre for local problem identification and response (something the senior government leaders in Public Safety say would be the key contribution of their municipal level counterparts), there will have to be more organizational specialization at City Hall, backed by strong leadership from the Mayor. Many Canadian municipalities have recently put that capacity into place, minimally creating an office labeled Public Safety Coordinator or Crime Prevention Manager. In recent years throughout Canada and certainly in Nova Scotia, there has been much talk about closer coordination between the federal and provincial governments and the municipality (see Supplemental Report # 6 where all provincial presenters including the Minister made that point). Given jurisdictional and resource issues, it is not surprising that the Public Safety Coordinators report spending a considerable part of their time in discussions and strategizing sessions with their provincial and federal counterparts. Without a significant increase in capacity how much of a player would the HRM municipality be?

Two observations should have struck the reader of this Roundtable report, namely (a) that youth as a proportion of the HRM population has fallen sharply from the high of 36% in the 1970s and is barely holding it own at 17% / 18% overall and 8% in the 12-17 age range; also youth account for roughly 13% of all charges registered in official court statistics (more of reported offenses if one includes police cautions and pre-charge referrals to restorative justice); (b) virtually all the public clamor and the government programs and strategies focus on youth, indeed often on youth under 12 , the legal age for criminal responsibility. While adults, particularly young adults, account for the plurality of charges in Nova Scotia, the most violence, the leadership of virtually all gangs, and also account for the vast majority of the homeless, the panhandlers, squeegee "kids", and Downtown bar scene arrests, they receive little attention and few programs and services are available for their reintegration, treatment and rehabilitation. The paucity of reference to these issues in the provincial Crime Prevention Strategy was noted too by defence counsel and others working with adult offenders (personal communications, 2007). There may be many reasons for this disparity, such as the neophilic feature of modern culture (the emphasis on youthfulness), the fact that most projects aimed at young offenders seem to entail limited resources and little societal-level change, the sensitivity of the public and officials to the immaturity of youth, and the common sense position that it is best to focus on early intervention and the inoculation of youth against future deviant options. Unfortunately, the inoculation theory works better in common sense than it does in practice. In the first place, there is the question of how successful such an intervention that primarily focuses on junior high individuals may be for reducing aggregate levels of violence and crime in society at large; secondly, many young adult offenders have only minor, if any, criminal records, while many other adult offenders do change their behaviour with appropriate programs and services. Also, many young adults seem similar in personal development to those coming under the radar of the YCJA.

There is little doubt that Black youths and adults are well-overrepresented in terms of violent crimes and coming into conflict with the criminal justice system. This is a complex, longstanding problem involving a volatile mix of racism and socio-economic disadvantage (including parenting issues) that needs attention and requires social action in HRM. It has been argued above that the problem is basically one of pockets of the Black community, pockets where

negative perspectives, if not gang subculture, seems to have significant foothold and where alternative legitimate or normative opportunities for social support, school attachment and economic well-being are unavailable or unappealing. There are a number of programs in play at present that are aimed at Black youths, as noted above, but virtually none for young Black adults or for Black ex-inmates' reintegration into society.

The municipality must work with the majority African-Canadian population and with Black community leaders and other activists working with the pockets of problem to change that situation. There is much to be worked with since there are roughly 75 Black professionals employed in the Justice system (police, lawyers, probation officers) at present, at least 80 African-Nova Scotians have graduated with a law degree from Dalhousie's IBM program, and numerous others in the educational and social services professions;. Many residents of the Black communities along the Eastern Shore walked and bused to Halifax in 2007 to render their concern about violence in their communities and other Black activists in the past year have championed Africentric socialization and Martin Luther King's approach of non-violence as necessary antidotes to violence and crime. There needs to be a committee established, linked to the Mayor's Office and proposed Public Safety Coordinator, to advise on what strategies could be effective and how the extant Community and Race Relations Committee might be revitalized and tasked. There are many specific recommendations that can be made including special in-depth restorative justice intervention with youth and exploring the possibilities of occasional sentencing circles in some Black communities, as well as working with the other levels of government to improve housing and employment opportunities for ex-inmates. Effective court sentencing, usually considered as more severe sentencing, may be part of the solution to violent repeat offenders but as shown in the above analyses of secondary data, both young and adult Blacks are already overrepresented in custodial venues and at levels akin to those of Aboriginals which the Supreme Court of Canada a few years ago deemed totally unacceptable and representing a condemnation of the criminal justice system.

## *A STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN*

The central question from a policy point of view is what vision and practical mandate will guide the municipality's response to problems of violence and public safety. If there is acceptance of a larger presence, as the writer believes is necessary and required by the significance of the problems and related policy developments at the federal and provincial levels, then the priority should be to increase capacity by engaging a full-time Public Safety Coordinator and establishing an advisory committee, both linked to the Mayor's Office to enhance visibility and quick response and implementation. A second priority would be to establish a race relations advisory group to consider the findings of the report and advise the Mayor and Council on strategic steps to take. A third priority would be to constitute an implementation committee to consider the Community Safety Officer increment to the policing services in the areas designated. Action on the widely advanced Downtown recommendations (including some of the recommendations advanced in the segment on university and college students) would also be a first stage priority. Taking steps in encouraging a Tripartite Forum on public safety as suggested below would also be a first phase priority. Most of the other recommendations noted below

require prerequisite action on the priority recommendations. Were the HRM authorities to decide to remain within existing mandate and capacity, the recommendations on policing, race relations, transportation, the Downtown, and others (e.g., working with the local activists such as the CAH, SGRBA, federal and provincial partners on safe, supervised housing) could still be acted upon and prove beneficial in the reducing violence and improving public safety. In advancing these and other recommendations below, the writer urges HRM officials and interested readers to look closely at the six supplemental reports where there is discussion and presentation of the views of activists, persons engaged in the key areas of public safety policy, and authorities and experts. There are many insights and useful suggestions advanced by these participants in the Roundtable initiative that should be reflected upon and pursued.

## PRIORITY FIRST PHASE RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE MUNICIPALITY'S ROLE IN PUBLIC SAFETY.

1. There is widespread consensus that the municipality as a government must play a greater role in dealing with violence and public safety. That role involves three dimensions, namely vision and leadership, capacity building in the municipal administration, and resources. The public and other local leaders in business, minority group leaders, and activists in the voluntary sector, look to City Hall for leadership even while acknowledging that many issues salient to violence, crime and public safety fall in the federal and provincial jurisdictions. Even if one deemed the central Municipal role to be that of advocacy, being an effective advocate requires action on all three of these dimensions. Currently many very well informed Roundtable participants did not think that the municipal government had the capacity (i.e., the role, organizational structures) to lobby effectively in the public safety field.

2. It is recommended that a priority response to the Roundtable initiative should be the municipality's engagement of a full-time Public Safety Coordinator linked to the Mayor's Office and with a standing Public Safety Advisory Committee appointed by the Mayor and possibly made up of several councillors, representatives from the HRPS and RCMP, business activists in the public safety field, and representatives from the United Way, minority groups and other pertinent HRM voluntary organizations. It is important that the municipal government indicates its commitment to fighting violence and crime by developing a 'business unit for public safety' as suggested by many Roundtable participants. It appears unlikely that federal funds through bodies such as NCPC would be available for such infrastructure costs but the province should be asked to contribute for this unit which in some ways parallels the newly created provincial crime prevention office (such provincial funding has been provided to municipalities elsewhere in Canada for municipal public safety capacity).

3. The activities / responsibilities for the Public Safety Coordinator and the accompanying advisory committee have been suggested throughout these recommendations but central ones should be the development of a strategic action plan and to encourage the establishment of a Tripartite Forum on Justice which would bring together municipal, provincial and federal representatives for a three year

period to consider violence and public safety issues and strategies to deal with them. As virtually all Roundtable participants argued, there is a need for more collaboration among the governments and for strategic planning. Both these objectives could be facilitated by the Tripartite Forum, an idea that was well-received by councillors and others in Roundtable interviews. Among the issues would be housing, especially for the homeless, (currently the senior levels of government do provide some funding for the CAH, a community organization working on the issue), offender reintegration projects, specialty courts, and, more generally, resources. In outlining the new initiatives being undertaken by the Government of Nova Scotia, the Minister of Justice acknowledged that HRM has specific issues unique to its jurisdiction and said that he anticipates new forms of partnerships with the municipal government on issues of violence and crime. He suggested that municipalities could be allowed to re-allocate and leverage money for crime prevention and that ways could be found to directly link the federal government to the communities. Funding an expanding municipal role in the public safety field is a priority issue and imaginative ways of achieving this should be considered such as directly providing the municipality with funding based on successful NCPC grants to HRM, similar to a formula used in both Canada and the USA in regards to University research and administration. It may well be too that the offices of the key three governments' public safety officials could be housed in the same building as is currently the case for Emergency Measures.

4. In order for the municipal government to be an effective collaborator with senior levels of government it must bring 'something' to the table and that would presumably be expertise on local public safety issues, some strategic planning and some commitment. That is why it is recommended that vision and leadership, planning and capacity building be the central priorities. In that regard the recent HRM initiative to 'regain' a charter (apparently with the approval of the provincial government) should be welcomed. As noted too the development of a strategic action plan would bring discipline to the municipal government's efforts in the public safety field.

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5. In recent years, as noted in the body of this report, there have been significant developments in conceptualizing and advancing the place of Canada's larger municipalities in public safety activity. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a subcommittee engaged in that area and networks have been established among the cities through Canadian think-tanks such as the Ottawa-based Institute for the Prevention of Crime. There is increasing information on strategic issues and best practices for cities and HRM should become, especially through the proposed office of the Public Safety Coordinator, a more active participant in these activities.

6. In the course of the Roundtable presentations and on other occasions, Public Health officials concerned with the high levels of violence in HRM, business associations wanting to do some innovative social projects to diminish the street people problem, and provincial addiction experts developing an alcohol strategy, have indicated that they were very desirous of forming partnerships with the municipal government. The

municipality needs a strategic plan so that it can meaningfully respond to some of these opportunities.

## RACE RELATIONS

There is a major need for the municipality in dealing with violence and public safety to respond more effectively to minority groups and especially issues of race relations. The analyses of violence and crime patterns have clearly indicated that there is significant racialized conflict. The proportions of Black youths and adults coming into conflict with the law as a result of serious violence and being referred to restorative justice (in the case of youth aged 12 to 17), charged, or sent to custody is simply striking and unacceptable. The proportion of Black victims is also striking and unacceptable. These patterns and other issues pertinent to other minority groupings have been discussed in detail in the several segments of this Roundtable report. The following recommendations are advanced

1. As many Roundtable participants have emphasized, the municipal government must show greater leadership in the public safety issues of minorities. This has to come from the Mayor and Council and several priority actions can be suggested. One would be a revitalization and re-conceptualization of the standing HRM committee, Community and Race Relations (CRR). There may be many good reasons for it, but the committee appears to have been ineffective and scarcely able to function according to informed reports. A special subcommittee should be struck to advise the Mayor, and the proposed Public Safety Coordinator, and also with respect to the possible reorganization and re-tasking of the CRR committee, drawing on some of the impressive leadership in the minority communities in HRM. A second municipal action, and signal of its commitment, could be an undertaking to ensure that it is reaching out to the Black and other minority communities in its own staffing strategies. It is unclear what proportion of staff is, for example, visible minority but informed municipal employees have contended that they are few. There are a number of actions then that a municipality determined to be racism-free can do on its own and must do.

2. As many local Black leaders have suggested a policy of “tough love” is required to deal with fairly large number of quasi-gang members carrying on random swarmings and other serious crime. Enforcement and accountability is necessary but so are social development strategies that provide alternative opportunities, Africentric pro-social orientation, and greater attachment to school in the urban core and a few other areas. There is much strength in the Black community and much concern to deal with the pockets of problems that the legacy of racism combined with current socio-economic disadvantage continues to generate. The municipality should seek ways to be part of the solution, to build on the strengths, to facilitate the involvement of the majority Black population – and others – in responding to these “pockets of crime, despair, offending and victimization”, and provide alternatives. Under current jurisdictional mandate, the municipal government’s main activity would be in marshalling local

knowledge and activism, developing strategic plans and measurable objectives, and examining positive alternatives with respect to recreational facilities.

3. The municipality should encourage the recommended actions noted elsewhere for a more in-depth delivery of the restorative justice program for repeat Black young offenders, the use of occasional sentencing circles in some Black communities, and collaborate with federal and provincial authorities in developing effective offender reintegration programs (e.g., municipal engagement in section 84 release plans and funding for a greater municipality role from Corrections Services Canada).

**THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER**

It was noted throughout virtually all segments of the Roundtable that, for many reasons, there is a strong demand among the public for more policing but, not necessarily more police officers. The demand is for visibility and presence, crime prevention information and programs, and help in local problem solving especially in the urban core areas where the reality and the fear of violence and risk is greatest, and, through the prism of which, much HRM public safety concern is reflected. In the last 3 years, increases in policing complement, innovative thinking, and a balanced approach by the policing services have made a difference, one that is much appreciated by the community. There are excellent strengths to build upon in achieving further reductions in violence and public safety fears and worries and they should be built upon. It appears useful in this regard then to explore the value and precise implementation strategies for HRM of the community support (safety) officer initiative that has emerged from the reassurance policing movement discussed elsewhere in this Roundtable report. The underlying premise for this recommendation is not only that the CSO initiative could provide a greater depth to achieving excellence in the three police functions mentioned above, as sought by HRM residents, but it would mean that police-hired, trained and supervised support officers with clear, if limited, authority to intervene under some circumstances (see the sample job descriptions in the appendix), would be doing so, working in conjunction with the beat officers and community response teams.

1. It is recommended then that the municipality and the police service implement a CSO project for a trial period of three years. There should be a complement of at least 10 full-time persons, hired initially on a project basis with 8 dedicated to the urban core areas and one each to Cole Harbour and Lower Sackville; the specifics of the role to be determined by the police services with input from the Mayor's advisory committee.

2. Some Roundtable community recommendations (see Supplemental Report # 4, The Activists) would be partially met by the CSO initiative, namely (a) get citizens in high crime areas more engaged and (b) increase the community participation in crime prevention programs.

3. It is recommended too that the municipal government and the police services continue to encourage volunteers in various police-assistance programs such as COPS.

# RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE SEVEN KEY DIMENSIONS OF PUBLIC SAFETY IN HRM

## DOWNTOWN BAR SCENE

On behalf of the Roundtable, Professor Murphy has examined the references to Downtown references and the suggestions / recommendations advanced by the HRPS, the public samples and vetted all through the experiences of other cities. The recommendations are essentially consensus recommendations but their justifications and evidence-base are well-marshalled (see Supplemental Report # 5, The Engaged). Some of the recommendations involve provincial jurisdiction (e.g. better and stricter regulation of liquor establishments) where the municipality might assume a larger mobilizing and advocacy role while others fall more directly into the current municipal mandate (e.g., transportation policy). Some are immediately feasible, while others (e.g., changing the culture of alcohol abuse) are more long-term and their successful implementation would appear to require a more holistic strategic planning. The recommendations advanced here are taken largely from the Murphy set but some are modified significantly.

1. A working group should be set up drawing upon diverse interests but including Business, University officials, APTS officials responsible for the Provincial Alcohol Strategy, and Students to consider student alcohol consumption and abuse issues and collaborate on a new targeted prevention effort aimed at developing more responsible drinking among young people. Officials with the Provincial Alcohol Strategy could be approached to take action on this recommendation. There could be a productive linkage here with the proposed special restorative justice project (see Student recommendations below).

2. A recommendation that the city government, the Halifax Regional Police, the five Metro University Administrations and Student Governments and the two downtown business representatives create a Metro Student Public Safety Working Group to address student-related security and disorder issues is warranted and consistent with the recommendations advanced in the section on Students below. Action could be the responsibility of the Public Safety Coordinator.

3. There should be a standing sub-committee of the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Public Safety in HRM which oversees all public safety and security issues in the Downtown Bar scene and which is chaired by the Public Safety Coordinator.

4. The Roundtable has had access to the recommendations recently advanced by the HRPS to the provincial government committee on the regulation of liquor licenses and establishments (e.g., hours of business, promotion of cheap drinks, training of the staff, greater regulatory oversight by more liquor license inspectors) and endorses those recommendations.

5. In order to enhance public safety and public confidence in the criminal justice system, the Criminal Justice System should place special priority on the prevention, apprehension, and prosecution of violent, repeat offenders who prey on the Downtown crowds.

6. Transportation issues have been cited as contributing to the violence and crime associated with the Downtown Bar scene by the HRPS, the Roundtable focus group and the community meetings. It is recommended that more taxis be available through changes to the current municipal taxi licensing policies, that the municipality provide a dedicated and safe pick-up location that would ensure both taxis and their customers a safe exit (through lighting, CCTV and police or security presence), that the possibility of a late night bus service, perhaps with onboard security, be explored, and that there be collaboration with the university bus services to ferry students back to campus, late at night and create a "safe walk home" corridor for students back to campus. These recommendations are consistent with the recommendation made below under the Student category.

7. The Halifax Downtown area is presumably on the verge of dramatic new development. It would be important then to take advantage of the opportunity to make public safety consideration an important consideration in the design changes. The HRM by Design approach to the Downtown re-development appears to do that and that component should not get lost in the shuffle. Greater population density, smaller liquor establishment, walkways etc influenced by CPTED principles, could ensure the vibrancy of the Downtown with less risk of violence and crime. Accordingly, it is recommended that the current design and planning of future downtown development draw on the considerable body of research and experience on urban safety in order to ensure that public safety considerations are a key part of the HRM general urban design and planning process.

**STREET CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

1. A central recommendation concerned housing, namely direct support and advocacy for the 'housing first approach", getting the homeless, ex-inmates and others into supportive housing. Partnership with organizations such as CAH and SGRBA is crucial to generate permanent, safe housing stock, Such initiatives should be encouraged by and collaborated in by the municipal government as such housing is usually considered the building block for the rehabilitation process. It can also be advanced through the proposed Tripartite Forum on Public Safety.

2. Specialty Courts are recommended: These may reduce street crime and disorder and assist in dealing with chronic minor offenders. A Mental Health Court is apparently now being planned for in Nova Scotia and that should be encouraged by the HRM municipality, the area of the province most affected.

3. A Drug Treatment Court, increasing common in Canada's larger cities, could help reduce the demand for drugs and, in that way, strike at organized crime and its turf wars; as well it could assist in offender reintegration and facilitate reduction in the street sex trade. The federally-funded program (usually with the provinces' contributions being of an in-kind nature covering court costs, officials' time etc) contributes substantial funding on a multi-year basis for the rehabilitative and coordinative dimensions of the drug treatment court. The municipal government should encourage this development in HRM.

4. The municipal government should support and advocate for programs that link street people, ex-inmates, 'graduates' from Group Homes, and others to existing social services along the lines of the "navigator project" launched by area business associations in the urban core.

5. As in the case of the other key areas, there is a great need to overcome the lack of consultation and coordination among diverse community service providers and with and among the governmental services, and HRM should become more engaged in facilitating that coordination. Despite the major divide between treatment and enforcement perspectives in HRM, a coherent strategic action plan could accommodate both approaches.

6. Harassment and intimidation on the street by panhandlers and other, if egregious, should be dealt with under the recent amendments to the MV Act and under the yet to be promulgated Safe Street Act but the general thrust of dealing with such issues should be a social development approach which appears congruent with public opinion and general support for civil liberties. The proposed HRM Public Safety Coordinator should be exploring housing and 'navigator' type of alternatives in HRM as pioneered by business associations and others.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD ENGAGEMENT**

1. Collective efficacy, defined as social cohesion among neighbours combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, is linked to reduced violence. The municipal government should be encouraging that development in every way in the urban core, working with the United Way and other agencies and organizations that have been active in the field and urging more municipal government engagement. Achieving collective efficacy in areas characterized by poverty, transience, high crime levels and so on is a challenge; it cannot be imposed but has to be a real partnership (even at the level of some shared funding) with the neighbourhood or community since the latter has to take 'ownership".

2. The municipality's leadership role should emanate from the Mayor's Office in acknowledging the problem of public safety and assuming a mobilizing and coordinating role. The Public Safety Coordinator and the standing implementation /

advisory committee recommended above should develop a strategic plan to work with and strengthen neighbourhood engagement perhaps assisting in the recruitment and retention of volunteers (re-establishing a Volunteer Bureau), supplying technical experience and a broad strategic planning umbrella for community initiatives, and directly supporting a social development approach to the problem.

3. It was also recommended by the Neighbourhood Engagement focus group that the police services commit more to reassurance policing, deemed to mean police personnel in specific neighbourhood, full time, and focusing on reassurance policing objectives. That recommendation should be acted upon (see above recommendation).

**SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

1. HRM should develop a communications strategy that provides proactive comprehensive, comprehensible, contextual and useful information to citizens on crime and violence; the strategy should involve a wide range of key players, entail the municipality coordinating the public awareness of local programs and initiatives to make sure these 'solutions-oriented" messages reach the larger community, establish a "safe community citizens' website, and use paid advertising in conventional media to communicate to get quality information on violence and public safety to the citizenry. That recommendation was advanced by the focus group and is seconded by this writer. This would be part of the responsibility of the proposed Public Safety Coordinator in collaboration with the municipality's existing informational services.

2. HRM should develop a social marketing campaign to influence community attitudes and values, drawing on past marketing successes, engaging champions for the initiative, using real-life stories to show positive change is possible, and non-traditional partners and means of communication to ensure its message reaches those who need it most. Public Safety communications strategies by the municipality might well focus on informing the public about the 'absence of crime', a nuanced version of the "number of days without an accident that shut down the plant" industrial campaigns.

3. Achieve better balance in media accounts of crime and positive community initiatives, perhaps by having the municipality taking some responsibility for communicating the positives. This recommendation from the community meetings' discussion is congruent with the above.

4. HRM residents indicated an awareness and wide use of crime prevention information. It would appear that quality crime prevention information, well-distributed, could indeed be helpful in reducing victimization and increasing public safety. There should be more of it and it is recommended that this be one of the responsibilities of inter-governmental collaboration such as the proposed Tripartite Forum.

## TROUBLED YOUTH

1. While Troubled Youth are generally seen to be the responsibility of the provincial government, its Justice system and its social services, they are concentrated in HRM and Roundtable participants considered that the municipality has a role to play, partly in advocacy and partly in direct action. Their basic recommendation targeted the capacity of the municipal government's to do so. The central Troubled Youth focus group's recommendation, which is supported here, is that the "City should establish a business unit dedicated to public safety thereby incorporating the issues of troubled youth and other Roundtable foci into HRM's business plan and priorities".

2. Given the increasing CJS use of the restorative justice option for troubled youth and given that the difficult cases for the restorative justice program almost always involve youths in HRM, it is recommended that a special project be developed by the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice program in collaboration with the local RJ agency to provide in-depth restorative justice intervention (including assessment by the IWK forensic unit and intensive case management) in order to determine whether the RJ option is feasible in these difficult cases involving serious and / or multiple repeat offenders. Such a proposal was advanced in 2006 and preliminary steps taken by the local agency looked promising. The municipality's role here would be an advocacy one vis-à-vis the provincial government.

3. It is recommended that HRM should be playing a more significant role specifically in facilitating community engagement and community conversations about issues involving troubled youth (e.g., the much maligned group homes) and innovatively getting information out to troubled youth and their families concerning the help available and how to access it.

4. In light of reports on the significant number of troubled youth who are homeless in HRM and frequently become seriously involved with drugs and other offenses, subsequent to leaving the responsibility of the provincial Community Services and the Group Homes programs, the municipal government should advocate for greater attention to exit planning by Community Services and explore what might be accomplished through municipal action (e.g., see the recommendation on housing and the homeless).

5. Roundtable participants had few ideas about how the municipality might respond directly to the quasi-gangs that are engaged in swarmings and other serious criminal activity. Generally, the recommendations called for an early intervention approach, volunteer mentors to work with and engage at-risk youth, re-establishing a Volunteer Bureau, and providing at least alternative opportunities for recreation and like, including facilitating, if not providing, more safe, supervised youth "hang-out" areas in collaboration with neighbourhood or business interests (e.g., the highly praised 'hang-out" area, partly operated by the participating youth, established by the Halifax Shopping Center). These are the types of actions that the municipal government could directly act on if it had a public safety capacity and a strategic action plan.

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6. The discussions of incarceration trends and other criminal justice data above has clearly established that the implementation of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* has resulted in the incarceration of fewer youth. Sufficient resources must be committed by the provincial government to enable organizations such as the restorative justice agencies to address the needs of the more troubled young offenders admitted to their programs. The Province must also establish treatment facilities for 'out of control' youth whose serious behavioural problems cannot be addressed within group homes. Here the municipality's role is one of effective advocacy.

7. A frequent recommendation that was made with respect to both youths and adults exiting custodial institutions was the need for safe supervised housing. This is important if reintegration efforts are going to succeed and such housing strategy is an area where the municipal government could accomplish much in collaboration with local organizations, and also with the senior levels of government.

## MINORITY PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

1. A number of recommendations have been made above with respect to the municipality's public safety engagement with the Black community. Some useful suggestions that would improve the quality of life for the disabled and some specific concerns for different minority groupings are noted in the focus group report in Supplemental Report # 5 and should be considered by the proposed Public Safety Coordinator and the Advisory Committee.

2. The key recommendation advanced here with respect to the LBGT communities is premised on the understanding obtained through interviews and the focus group reports that positive relationships and increasing trust appears to characterize the relationship with the municipal government and the police service. It is recommended, then, that the municipality nurture that relationship in symbolic ways in order to reduce homophobia and kindred prejudices, and that it acknowledges a role for itself in facilitating acceptance and tolerance in the larger society for the LBGT communities.

3. No especial consensus problem or recommendation emerged from the focus group, or personal interviews carried out by the writer, with respect to immigrants' violence and public safety issues. Clearly, the cultural and other variation among the different immigrant communities is considerable. There does seem to be value for some elaboration of RJ in the form of community circles for some offending in some immigrant groupings so it is recommended that the municipality encourage the creative development of the RJ program for both youths and adults in HRM. Aside from this specific recommendation, it should be underlined how significant the Mayor's Office is seen to be by immigrants in facilitating their sense of inclusion in HRM.

### DRUG ADDICTION, PROSTITUTION AND OFFENDER REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION

1. The focus group on this broad theme did not get too far into specific recommendations but there was a strong recommendation, endorsed by the writer, that the proposed municipality's public safety office examine the experiences of other municipalities in Canada and the United States with respect to best practices in dealing with the street sex trade, responses to addicted offenders and related issues.

2. It is also recommended that consideration be given to policies and strategies for reducing the street sex trade. The evidence suggests that there is a high level of serious addiction among street sex trade workers which is a main reason they work the streets. There are also issues of fear and worry on the part of many urban core residents in whose area the street sex trade is concentrated. It may be possible to reduce addiction through a criminal justice system response including specialty courts such as the drug treatment courts (in many cities where these courts exist, an objective has been to accomplish that goal among the sex trade workers) and it is recommended that the municipal government advocate with the province for such specialty courts (the federal government is already a strong supporter and funder of the drug treatment court in large Canadian cities). There is much controversy concerning the advisability of a "safe stroll area" for the street sex trade or for government facilitating sex trade on an in-door basis but it would be valuable for the municipality to explore the recent highly praised New York City experience in the latter regard.

3. The writer also recommends, that from the perspective of reducing street robberies and facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of addicted offenders, that the drug treatment court be advocated by the municipality.

4. Offender rehabilitation and reintegration in general is woefully inadequate whether for youth or adults. Nova Scotia Corrections should be encouraged to do more in the way of exit planning especially given the usual contention that mounting programs for provincial inmates is too challenging given their short stay in provincial custody. Exit from youth custody in Waterville also needs more effective planning, especially responding to the need for safe, supervised transitional housing. These are provincial responsibilities but recidivism occurs in HRM and adds considerably to the violence and fear for public safety; therefore the municipality has a strong interest in advocating for improvements in this area.

## OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

### UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, DOWNTOWN AND OTHER AREAS

1. A more effective partnership between the HRPS, campus security and student organizations should be explored for purposes both of student safety and improved

communications between the HRPS and the universities and colleges. Currently HRPS does have informational sessions with students in residence at least at the beginning of the school year, and the Dalhousie Patrol, under a cost-sharing agreement between Dalhousie and the municipality, provides extra patrol on certain evenings in certain months (October and November and January through March). These and other programs have had positive effects for responding to the community complaints about vandalism, liquor violations and disturbances. Perhaps other universities and colleges should examine their collaboration with HRPS along similar lines. All campus liaison with the HRPS could likely do more in terms of crime prevention programs to reduce violence against students, assisting student victims, improving the communication and other collaboration between HRPS and campus security, and providing the students or their representatives with a conduit to encourage more reporting of violence to the authorities, and to bring forth their concerns about, what they feel, is inadequate or unfair treatment by the police.

2. It is clear from the gender differences noted throughout the survey analyses that females generally feel more worried about their personal safety in Halifax. Despite the use of more personal strategies to adapt to their feelings of vulnerability, female students have higher levels of anxiety about being attacked. While the overall social factors that generate female anxiety about personal safety are complex, the Universities and their Student Services could implement small and student-led programs which could provide female students with more piece of mind, such as formalized buddy systems for walking around and in the vicinity of campus after dark, or providing female students with a small alarm device that they could use to alert people in the event of trouble, and perhaps offering more awareness and informational sessions, bringing together students, security officials and persons with other expertise, on how to avoid, or, if necessary, respond to violence or threats of violence. Male students' concern about violence should also be responded to along similar lines.

3. Based on students' views about the inefficiency of public transit options in the evenings, the municipality may want to consider re-adjusting night-time schedules for Metro Transit, at least within the peninsula, on weekends. Given the high proportions of student "walkers" living in the South End, which happens to be the area where most complaints of drunk and disorderly behaviour and a good number of the assaults occur, it is possible that such a transportation policy could lower the incidences of such conduct while students make their way home after a night of Downtown recreation or work. Adding more public transit options at night provides safe alternatives, not only for students, but for all residents of Halifax. Perhaps, given the importance of the so-called "night-time economy" to HRM and Nova Scotia, a system of free transportation could be prudently implemented after midnight, along the line of FRED (i.e. free rides everywhere Downtown) which was initiated to facilitate the movement of tourists; it should be noted that HRM already provides subsidized bus passes for students and others.

4. It is clear that there are significant property damage, disturbances and bylaw infractions caused by some students going to and from the Downtown "under the influence" and, also, other offenses and minor assaults. A restorative justice, extra-judicial sanction, program should be established as detailed elsewhere in this report for off-campus minor offending. Such a special project could underline the inappropriateness if not criminality of the acts and, by engaging both the student councils and local community in the restorative justice process, do much to reduce those public safety problems and instill more trust among students, community members and officials. An additional advantage is that accountability may be achieved without the students getting a criminal record. Protocols can readily be put in place (e.g., eligibility, type of sanctions, operational and organizational issues), drawing upon the considerable experience in these regards of Corrections' Adult Diversion and/or the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program. Such a program has proven effective in responding to similar university-community concerns in off-campus behaviour in the Antigonish area.

5. As noted in the introduction to this section, security, police officials and other observers and authorities have emphasized that excessive alcohol consumption and attendant social disorder and property damage are central to student problems in the Downtown, Central Halifax and the South End. Some students in their on-line comments also drew attention to these issues. Both these issues could benefit from the restorative justice initiative being proposed since the extra-judicial sanctions could include, where appropriate, restitution, community service or referrals to alcohol and drug counseling.

6. There are some serious crimes against the person that occur Downtown or to and fro Downtown at late night or early morning, including gangs of predators assaulting the students and sexual and other serious assaults. These require not only police presence and investigation – largely in effect already - but also better collaboration among HRPS, the Downtown bars, and the students. The suggestion of police liaison noted above would help achieve this and other salient recommendations can readily be advanced by the implementation committee that is recommended in the text.

7. Students raised a number of issues concerning campus security and improving services already in existence such as the Tiger Patrol at Dalhousie. From evidence noted elsewhere in this report, it does appear that University – community – police initiatives have been quite successful in diminishing vandalism and public order problems. The view of many students is that violence and their own victimization needs to be given more attention by campus officials and the police, and that is a reasonable position. For example, the problems of perceived dangers walking or biking at or near the Commons are not trivial nor are they easily dealt with by students who not only "party" Downtown but who work there in order to afford their university attendance; the Commons area is a strategic nodal point for walkers and bicyclists going and coming back from the Downtown (including Spring Garden Road) and other areas. A student suggestion advanced in the January 2008 workshop

at Dalhousie that there should be some exploration of students' use of the Tiger Patrol (especially why, reportedly, many students do not use it) has merit.

8. Students raised a number of other possible recommendations consistent with the safety thrusts of Halifax by Design (e.g., more people living Downtown may yield greater public safety) and the CPTED approach (e.g., better lighting) that are applicable to many areas in HRM including their own campus areas.

9. In the larger perspective about violence and public safety, student recommendations for, on the one hand, more strict sentencing for violent offenses, and on the other, more strategic planning to get at underlying social factors, generally are congruent with the views of the public at large, with perhaps slightly more focus on the "social development" approach (including how to deal with the culture of substance abuse) on the part of the students.

**CRIME PREVENTION AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

1. Respondents have high approval for policing but do identify some areas for improvement such as police visibility and crime prevention information, and assistance with local area problems. The dependence on enhancement of police services is also significantly a consequence of HRM residents' low assessments of the efficacy of the courts and youth justice.

2. The adaptive responses of HRM residents indicate the value of more crime prevention information becoming available and also of the need for system-level changes whether in policing or in the delivery and communication about alternatives to standard court processing of crimes and violence.

3. Clearly the extra-attention given to the at-risk areas in the mail-back sampling has drawn more attention to the concerns and risks of adults living in the urban core areas and to vulnerable people more generally. The critique of the criminal justice system was even more pronounced in the mail-back survey as was the concern for more visible policing presence, more crime prevention programming and information dissemination, and assistance in dealing with local area problems.

4. These are common responses and viewpoints in all dimensions of the Roundtable Initiative and lead to three recommendations; (a) exploration of the recommended CSO option to take policing to another level especially in the four urban core districts (two on each side of the Harbour) and Lower Sackville and Cole Harbour, (b) better communication to the public about the role of judges and prosecutors and sentencing process and alternative justice, and (c) better distribution of effective crime prevention strategies and information generally by both provincial and municipal bodies.

5. In light of crime patterns and the one-track (i.e., punishment) approach to adult offenders, it is recommended that, while enforcement remains crucial, innovative approaches, such as carried out with young offenders, should be directed to dealing with certain offending young adults. Two areas would seem especially important, namely, first, as originally planned by the Nova Scotia Department of Justice in 1999, restorative justice for minor, non-violent offenses, and, secondly, direct assistance and advocacy for offender re-integration in the case of more serious offenders. These are clearly provincial responsibilities but the municipal government cannot be indifferent in policy and advocacy since HRM is where the violence and public safety threats occur.

**OTHER**

1. The United Way 211 initiative should be supported by the municipality. It can provide citizens with 24/7 linkage to social services and other assistance, both governmental and other, and impact on the quality of residents' lives, their fears and worries, and possibly reduce their victimization (some persons would not call 911 or contact the police).

2. Making more available and affordable recreational facilities in HRM, especially the school facilities, was strongly recommended in all segments of the Roundtable initiative as it was the Minister's Task Force's public meetings. The recommendation also usually entailed mobilizing volunteers as aides and supervisory people and the government covering the liability insurance costs in these and related voluntary endeavors. While this writer generally supports this recommendation, there are two reservations. First, it is not at all clear under what circumstances youths would use these recreational facilities (see Supplemental Report # 4, The Activists) in sufficient number to justify the initiative so some implementation research should be done. Secondly, the Lighthouse program in Winnipeg and the Mulgrave Park program in Halifax have been successful in part because there is a sense of neighbourhood ownership not simply accessing "impersonal" school property.

3. In all the Roundtable segments a major observation was that HRM has large pools of potentially excellent volunteers and mentors in the 50,000 or so University and College students and in the Military personnel in the city. It was recommended, and it is seconded here, that the municipal government take an active role in seeing such voluntarism organized and carried out. The Halifax Student Alliance advanced such a recommendation in its Roundtable presentation and suggested that there may be ways to increase the number of student volunteers by University officials agreeing to provide certain credits for such community work. Discussions with HRM representatives, University officials and Student Councils seem warranted. There is an identified gap in the engagement of adult volunteers, a "disconnect" between agencies / organizations and lack of central repository of information about volunteer opportunities weakening the positive possibilities for adult volunteers. It is

recommended that a central repository be established within municipal structure for stability and sustainability.

4. Many Roundtable discussions emphasized that attachment to school was important part of reducing youth crime among older youths. It was recommended that the educational system ensure the curriculum is responding to all youths, not just those likely to pursue a university education. Other participants recommended that schools adopt a broader mandate with respect to teaching life skills citizenship, in that way taking on more responsibility for reducing violence and enhancing public safety in HRM. Both recommendations have merit and should be encouraged by the municipal government, advocating vis-à-vis the province which has jurisdiction with respect to the school system.

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