

Doing What Works:

An Exploratory Analysis on Toronto's Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020's Impact on Crime in Kingsview Village-The Westway

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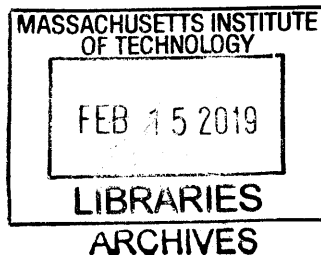
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## Abstract

The Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020 (TSNS 2020) is an initiative started by the City of Toronto in 2014. The strategy's intention was to engage neighbourhood residents, city services, and local non-profits in community and economic development to generate tailored solutions that would result in heightened prosperity, vibrancy, and safety in 31 of the city's most vulnerable neighbourhoods. My exploratory analysis focused on how the strategy attempted to address violent crime prevention and mitigation in one of these neighbourhoods (Kingsview Village-The Westway). Employing a combination of comparative violent crime data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and literature reviews from academic sources as well as my background in law enforcement, I could not find any evidence that TSNS 2020 had led to reductions in violent crime in Kingsview Village-The Westway. Furthermore, I elaborated on a series of fundamental strategic and implementational flaws in TSNS 2020 that have halted its ability to achieve positive results and suggested methods TSNS 2020 could use to enhance their success rate as they look to learn from their past mistakes and build for the strategy's future. It is important to note that my exploratory analysis was conducted with a very small sample size and dataset and therefore should be taken as a launching point for more robust future evaluations of TSNS 2020 successes and shortcomings in the field of crime prevention and mitigation.

Thesis Supervisor: Karl Seidman

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## Acknowledgement

My thesis is a love story between myself and the City of Toronto. Immigrating over 25 years ago from India, Toronto its surrounding region has given my family the opportunity to succeed beyond our wildest dreams. However, I realized that there are those for whom Toronto has not presented the same opportunities. I hope that this thesis will be a stepping stone towards a fruitful career aimed at extending these same benefits throughout the city.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Karl Seidman and reader Justin Steil for the support and guidance they have provided me through the thesis research and formulation process. Their input was essential in producing a final product that I could be proud of.

Next, I want to thank my parents who showed me by example what I could achieve in Canada. It is on their foundation that I pursue my own Canadian Dream. To my sister, I thank for being able to put a smile on my face through the writing process.

Lastly and most importantly, I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to the love of my life, Gina, who believed in me and my abilities when I did not believe in myself. Without you yelling at me on the commuter train, I would have never got my application in on time for MIT. You made me a better police officer and now a better public safety professional. My sincerest wish is I can build a Toronto where our future family can thrive and succeed as we did.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Purpose

When people think of the operation of a city, they frequently think about transportation, recreation, employment etc. What is too often neglected from the conversation in city planning circles is a sound and sane discussion on public safety. When looking at the budget of most large cities across Canada and the United States, one will find that policing and its associated justice programs are usually in the top 3 budget items in terms of expenditure. Drawing on my previous experience as a police officer in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I personally witnessed how poor planning policies at all levels of governments resulted in the emergence of criminogenic factors that would ultimately manifest in the crime that plagued communities. In my view, a city that is first and foremost safe both in operation and perception sets the foundation for its inhabitants to pursue their legitimate interests to the fullest extent.

Women will take public transit, customers walk the main street well into the night, and children will play outside. Time and time again, it has been showed that in large and complex cities, it is virtually impossible to simply arrest your way out of a crime problem. The drug war has escalated drug use, three strikes laws have led to prison overcrowding, and unadulterated stop and frisk has created a rift in trust between the public and police. I must stress here that I am not opposed to strong and appropriate law enforcement action when necessary but am advocating for us not to forget that it should be coupled with the applicable community, social, and economic services from outside law enforcement to prevent the next generation from following the same path. In short, a Marshall Plan for the neighbourhood. This central question in the public safety debate is emerging in Toronto as this past summer has been the deadliest in recent history with a record number of homicides perpetrated.

My thesis aims to assess how the Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020 (TSNS 2020) has worked to address criminogenic factors in Toronto's Kingsview neighborhood. TSNS 2020 is a community and economic development strategy overseen by the City of Toronto. Using a series of indicators it selected 31 vulnerable neighbourhoods to try to strengthen by 2020. TSNS 2020 works with local residents and pre-existing community resources to create and operationalize plans that will address inequities in these neighbourhoods. The term criminogenic factor is often used in criminological literature to describe those inequities that can lead individuals in a neighbourhood to have a strong propensity to commit crime. Since I lived in Kingsview in the early to late 1990's, the neighbourhood has been a rich breeding ground for criminogenic factors that are now manifesting themselves in the gang violence that we see in the city today.

Specifically, the Somali community in Kingsview that largely arrived in the city as refugees from the Somali Civil War has fallen prey to these factors and bears the brunt of the violent crime as both perpetrators and victims. This community will be the focus of my thesis because I believe that much of the solution in addressing crime lies in effectively tailoring the strategy to empower them.

The strategy is a first of its kind in Toronto and despite certain early missteps, it certainly has the potential to fulfill the often-ignored gap of community triaging and service coordination in the public safety debate. As a police officer and a private consultant for the public sector, I learned that cultivating innovation is a struggle in government because of the strong risk adversity from political leaders. However for innovation to thrive, mistakes must first be made. With this principle in mind, the final section of my assessment provides recommendations that TSNS 2020 can employ to address its early shortcomings in order to deliver good results as it approaches its final evaluation date.

## Research Question

The central questions that guided my research are:

- Has the presence of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 led to a reduction in violent crime in Kingsview?
- How has the strategy worked towards addressing criminogenic factors in the community?
- Based on my findings, what can the strategy do to address its shortcomings while continuing to produce its strengths?

These questions provide me with the flexibility to understand the strategy from its conception to its implementation on the ground and make cogent recommendations on the future direction it should take.

## Urban Context

### The City of Toronto

Home to over 2.9 million people and with a Census Metropolitan Area of over 6 million, Toronto is Canada's largest city and the capital of the province of Ontario.<sup>i</sup> Toronto is the focal point of the Canadian economy and supports a diversified base of financial, scientific, manufacturing, and educational sectors. A report issued by Statistics Canada indicated that nearly 20 percent of Canada's gross domestic product is generated by the Toronto metropolitan area.<sup>ii</sup> One of the most celebrated aspects of the city is its demographic diversity. Over 50 percent of the population can be categorized as part of an ethnic minority group and Toronto and its surrounding Census Metropolitan Area routinely absorbs around 56 percent of all new immigrants to Canada.<sup>iii</sup> The gross domestic product is \$168 million and GDP growth has

consistently held at over 2 percent for the last 5 years. The unemployment rate in Toronto is 5.9 percent<sup>iv</sup> and the total household income is \$98,174. <sup>v</sup>

### Municipal Decision Making in Toronto

At the writing of this thesis the mayor is John Tory who was democratically elected through a city wide popular vote. The city is divided into 44 wards each represented by a city councillor. Despite each councillor and the mayor possessing their own political leanings, there are no official political parties in Toronto municipal politics and many municipal committees are composed of members from both sides of the political spectrum. The mayor's cabinet is known as the Executive Committee and is comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and the chairs of the seven standing committees who are appointed by the Mayor and four "at-large" members appointed by City Council. The Executive Committee is responsible for establishing the City of Toronto's priorities, financial planning and budgeting, labour relations, human resources, and the operation of City Council.

### Poverty in Toronto

The economic story of Toronto is the tale of 2 cities and presents one of the greatest challenges in modern Toronto governance. Thirteen city wards have areas of child poverty where rates are 50% or more.<sup>vi</sup> According to Statistics Canada, 20.2 percent of people in Toronto qualify for low income status and 1 in 4 children in the city are living below the poverty line, the highest rate amongst Canadian urban centres.<sup>vii</sup> The municipal government has recognized the need to intervene in order to reverse these alarming trends and has instituted a series of strategic initiatives like the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Young Equity Strategy aimed at defining and targeting the social and economic root causes of Toronto poverty. As sections of the



city rapidly gentrify, Toronto wants to ensure that its current residents do not suffer the typical fate of being pushed to the fringes of the city and eventually out altogether.

The story of poverty in Toronto is indicative of a city in economic and social transition. In the 1970s, one in 10 adults were living in poverty and middle-income neighbourhoods comprised 67 percent of Toronto.<sup>viii</sup> True to its nickname, “The Big Smoke,” Toronto’s strong manufacturing base provided reliable union waged employment to many residents and the majority of people looking for work qualified for employment insurance.<sup>ix</sup> A mix of middle-class flight to surrounding suburban feeder cities like Mississauga, Pickering, and Vaughn, the rise of the city’s knowledge economy, and bias towards investing resources in the Downtown core has resulted in the neglect and decline of many Toronto neighbourhoods beyond the periphery of the downtown.

#### Violent Crime in Toronto

Like most urban centres, Toronto has a crime profile ranging from property crimes with liabilities under \$5000 to homicides. However, when contrasted with other North America cities of similar demographic compositions like Houston and Chicago, Toronto’s level of violent crime is considerably lower. For example in 2012, Toronto report homicide and robbery rates of 2.0 per 100,000<sup>xxi</sup> respectively whereas Chicago reported homicide rates of 18.5 per 100, 000<sup>xii</sup>.

In 2005, Toronto had a spike in homicides labelled by the media as the summer of the gun. Mounting public pressure resulted in the city and province revisiting how public safety policy was implemented in the city. With financial help from the province, the Toronto Police Service established the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS). TAVIS units entered into Toronto neighbourhoods that were struggling with high rates of violent crime particularly shootings and homicides and sought to build trusting relationships with the local community that

could later be leveraged when witnesses were needed during an investigation or the police was gathering preventive intelligence.<sup>xiii</sup> TAVIS led to more than 19,000 arrests and 1,200 guns seized off the street. During the life of the program, violent crime in Toronto decreased but accusations of the program disproportionately targeting African-Canadian communities led to it being disbanded in 2016.<sup>xiv</sup> As of July 1, 2018, Toronto has seen a spike in violent crime. Toronto shootings are up 16 percent from last year and homicides have increased 121 percent.<sup>xv</sup> The rise in violence is mostly concentrated between street gang conflicts but the public is once again calling for TAVIS or a similar program to be reinstated.

## Chapter 2: The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020

### Overall Program Goals

TSNS 2020 is the City of Toronto's action plan to empower local residents so that each of the city's 140 neighbourhoods can benefit from the economic boom that Toronto is experiencing in an equitable and sustainable way.<sup>xvi</sup> In Toronto, there is a correlation between where a Toronto resident resides and the social, health and economic outcomes residents achieve.<sup>xvii</sup> TSNS 2020's objective is to leverage collective actions to address these inequities so fewer Toronto neighbourhoods will be below the strategy's benchmark by the end date in 2020.<sup>xviii</sup> As the most vulnerable neighbourhoods strengthen, it is believed that Toronto will experience marked improvements in all 140 neighbourhoods.<sup>xix</sup> TSNS 2020 seeks to build healthy communities across Toronto by partnering with residents, businesses and agencies to uncover the investment gaps in human capital, services, programs, and facilities in 31 specific neighbourhoods, known as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs).<sup>xx</sup> TSNS 2020's overarching philosophy proposes that the right balance of investments and community input will ultimately strengthen the social, economic and physical conditions within these 31 neighbourhoods and deliver positive local impacts that will translate into a city-wide change.<sup>xxi</sup>



## Strategy for Crime Reduction

TSNS 2020's takes a future oriented outlook on crime and attempts to address it from a preventative standpoint. Rather than focus solely on enforcement actions like many crime reduction strategies do, TSNS 2020 views crime as an outcome of social conditions in a neighbourhood.<sup>xxii</sup> Consequently, it purposefully targets the root causes or social determinants of crime as a way to prevent criminal behaviour before it starts.<sup>xxiii</sup> For example, many children from Kingsview's Somali community live a situation of multigenerational poverty and according to my community contact this breeds a sense of futility.<sup>xxiv</sup> One of the methods used to combat this sentiment was taking the children to a university that has created lectures for children.<sup>xxv</sup> By showing and allowing them to interact with a world outside their neighbourhood, TSNS 2020 opens a world of possibilities that they typically would not be exposed to.<sup>xxvi</sup> A more detailed discussion of TSNS 2020's programming can be found later in the thesis but the main take away should be that TSNS 2020 wants to equip neighbourhoods and residents with the competencies that will create and unlock enough legitimate opportunities that criminal behaviour becomes a more costly personal choice.

### How were the NIAs chosen?

The NIAs were selected based on the Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool (Urban HEART), an evidence-based standard for gauging the wellbeing of neighbourhoods.<sup>xxvii</sup> Urban HEART was inspired by a tool developed by the World Health Organization to reveal "hidden cities", a local geography within the larger urban area that suffered from greater inequities.<sup>xxviii</sup> The City partnered with United Way Toronto, the Centre for Research on Inner City Health, the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network, and other partners to form

the Urban HEART@Toronto project and engaged 80 researchers representing the community, public, private and academic sectors to generate the best available measures of neighbourhood equity from five diverse perspectives: Economic Opportunities, Social Development, Participation in Decision Making, Healthy Lives and Physical Surroundings.<sup>xxix</sup>

The goal of TSNS 2020 is to achieve equitable outcomes for all neighbourhoods and create more resilient neighbourhoods that are prosperous, vibrant, and safe. Understanding that some neighbourhoods experience more inequity than others, TSNS 2020 takes a neighbourhood level approach to remedy them.

The following table displays the indicators in more detail:

<b>TSNS 2020 Equity Indicators<sup>xxx</sup></b>	
<b>Economic Opportunities</b>	Low Income Social Assistance Unemployment
<b>Healthy Lives</b>	Diabetes Mental Health Premature Mortality Preventable Hospitalizations
<b>Social Development</b>	High School Graduation Marginalization Post-Secondary Completion
<b>Physical Surroundings</b>	Community Places for Meeting Green Space Healthy Food Stores

	Walkability
<b>Participation in Decision-Making</b>	Municipal Voting Rate

Using Urban HEART, all of Toronto’s 140 social planning neighbourhoods were analyzed and assigned a Neighbourhood Equity Score.<sup>xxxii</sup> Neighbourhoods that scored below the Neighbourhood Equity Benchmark (a composite score that signals that the overall inequity burden faced by a neighbourhood) were recommended to Council as NIAs.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The score was used to compare how neighbourhoods in Toronto are faring relative to one another in terms of overall equity of outcomes.<sup>xxxiii</sup> A lower score means that the neighbourhood faces more inequities and poorer outcomes, and a higher score means that a neighbourhood has fewer inequities and has better outcomes.<sup>xxxiv</sup> There are 31 such neighbourhoods across the city. One of the challenges that the TSNS 2020 faced in its implementation is within the geographic confines of a neighbourhood, it is not uncommon to have a great variation in the inequities experienced by residents in different pockets.<sup>xxxv</sup>

### Strategy Implementation in NIAs

During implementation planning, the city engaged their community partners to determine where collective energy and investment would have the most impact on resident outcomes. Depending on the needs of the community, some investments were specifically targeted whereas others had wider applications. The TSNS 2020 implementation plan was developed in partnership with residents, community agencies, funders, and Toronto Public Library, Toronto Public Health, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and City divisions has three key objectives<sup>xxxvi</sup>:

- Activating People

- Mobilizing and empowering local residents to lead the discussion around the challenges and potential solutions for their neighbourhoods. This can include but is not limited to attending meetings, writing grant applications, and starting new organizations to lobby for what they want.

- Activating Resources

- Before funneling new money into the community, taking account of what programs and organizations are already working there and forming partnerships that will alleviate resource demands and prevent duplication.

- Activating Neighbourhood-Friendly Policies

- Based on the outcomes of stakeholder engagements with residents, municipal departments, and local organizations, the new policies enacted should be reflective of the community needs.

### How does TSNS 2020 engage the community?

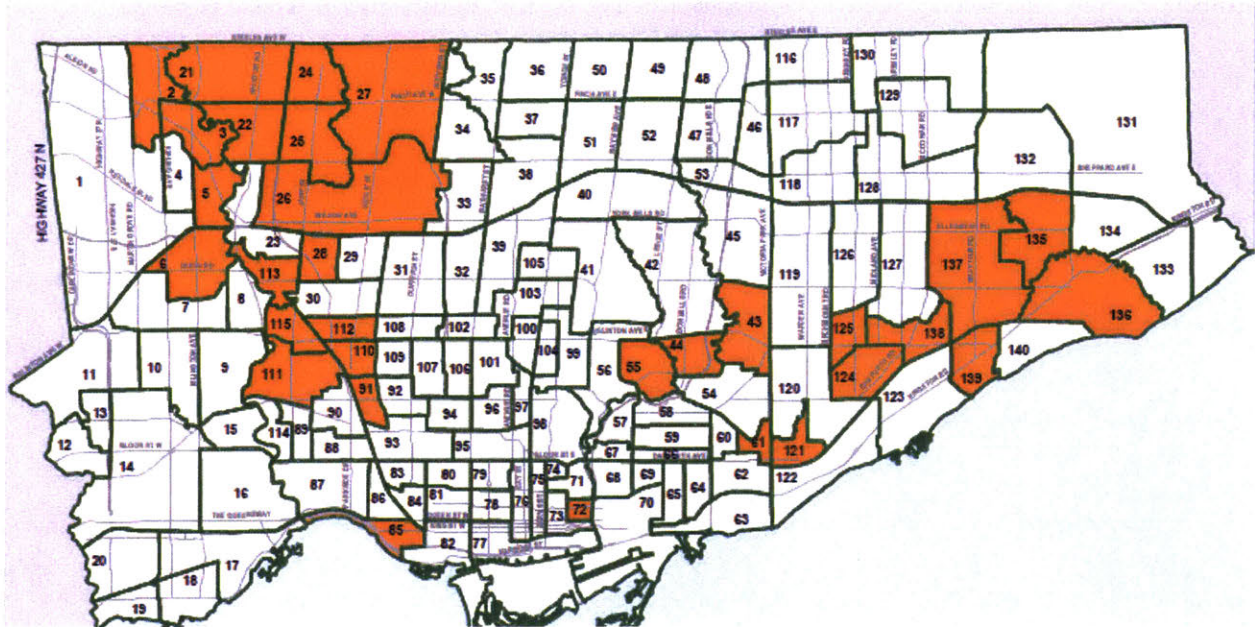
Citywide public consultations took place in 2013. A total of 380 residents were engaged directly through City-led and agency-led meetings.<sup>xxxvii</sup> An additional 1,400 residents also shared their thoughts through an online survey that was also made available in print format.<sup>xxxviii</sup>

After the initial consultation, a series of meetings were also held between January and February 2014 with both past and potential implementation partners to review and comment on two options developed for creating a Neighbourhood Equity Score and provide early advice on implementation issues.<sup>xxxix</sup>



Residents also shared their thoughts through a survey available online and in print format across several language groups.<sup>xli</sup>

The following map represents the geographic distribution of the NIAs in Toronto<sup>xlii</sup>:



## Funding Structure

TSNS 2020 compels city divisions, agencies, and city partners to align and synchronise investments and actions at the local level to improve equitable outcomes for residents. To initiate this process<sup>xliii</sup>:

- 9 Community Development Officers (CDO) were hired to manage TSNS 2020 operation at the neighbourhood level;
- \$12M in capital funding was allocated by City Council to advance community infrastructure in NIAs. The first round of funding was \$3M in 2015. TSNS 2020 sought to identify various approved City and partner strategies that can be combined to form

investment portfolios with a mix of investments that can be made in each NIA to streamline operational efficiency.

The program was commenced in 2014 and the program's end date is 2020.<sup>xliii</sup> There will be a formal evaluation conducted and presentation of the results to council.<sup>xliv</sup> To date, this document represents the one of the first examinations of any form for TSNS 2020.

Unlike many community/economic development programs attempted in the past, TSNS 2020 has made an effort to descend from its high level policy perch and embedded a forum for strong community input into the operational process.

#### TSNS 2020 Progress at a High Level

Since the program's inception, over 24,000 residents, 1,700 stakeholders and 21 City Divisions and Agencies have been engaged in coordinated service planning and delivery in 31 NIAs.<sup>xlv</sup>

15 neighbourhood planning tables were formed across the 31 NIAs consisting of residents, businesses, community agencies, Councillors and city staff to identify priorities and actions that supported neighbourhood well-being.<sup>xlvi</sup> Each of the tables is supported by a CDO whose role is to connect residents with decision makers so that neighbourhood goals and priorities are addressed through responsive policies and programs, and resident-led initiatives.<sup>xlvii</sup>

To ensure that TSNS 2020 upholds its promise of incorporating residents input into the decision-making process it has employed a few different strategies.

#### **TSNS Resident Advisory Committee (RAC)**

The implementation of TSNS 2020 is led by RAC in partnership with City staff and community agencies. Established in 2015, the RACs are composed of residents who live in the NIA and give

a resident voice to TSNS activities as well as engagement opportunities for other residents in local planning processes and initiatives.<sup>xlviii</sup> To be selected for RAC membership, one must state a public expression of interest that follows the City of Toronto's Public Appointment protocol.

A "Call for Participation" was posted on the City of Toronto's Social Development, Finance and Administration website as well as distributed through other networks and agencies, like the City Councillors' offices, in an attempt to include community members who did not have online access. The selection criteria included<sup>xlix</sup>:

- Lived experience and/or experience working in neighbourhoods and active participation in neighbourhood based planning.
- Membership in Neighbourhood Planning Tables \ connected to TSNS 2020.
- Demographic diversity, including age, gender and cultural origin with racialized community representation and gender balance.

The RAC met on a quarterly basis to advise staff on local planning issues, coordinate city-wide events, and ensure accountability throughout the implementation of TSNS 2020.

RAC members have provided input on the development of the TSNS 2020 programs including the POL.<sup>i</sup> RAC members provide resident expertise and perspective at numerous meetings and events and often lead initiatives such as the TSNS District Summits.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Neighbourhood Planning Tables and Action Plans**

The Neighbourhood Planning Tables and Action Plans are co-producing initiatives that benefit individuals and the larger community. As neighbourhood residents collaborate with City Councillors, local businesses, community agencies and City staff tailored solutions are beginning to come to fruition. Some of the most notable successes include addressing issues of food

insecurity through holding a canning, pickling and preserving workshop and introducing youth that are interested in STEM professions to programs that will provide them with mentorship and access to people in the field.<sup>lii</sup>

All planning tables have developed Action Plans that reflect their priorities and activities for strengthening neighbourhood wellbeing. To date 210 actions have been identified across the 31 NIAs. The following common themes have emerged from the Action Plans<sup>liii</sup>:

- **Healthy Lives:** access to healthy food, nutrition information and wellness activities
- **Economic Opportunities:** advocacy for community benefits agreements including job opportunities from transit development; access to employability skills including food handling and other food sector skills development and financial literacy programs
- **Physical Surroundings:** community service hub expansion; green space and arts and cultural space allocation; and access to more recreational spaces
- **Social Development:** resident leadership and local network development; youth engagement; and access to education and literacy programs
- **Participation in Decision-Making:** civic engagement; resident group development; and youth leadership and advocacy.

### **Local Champions Pilot**

In June 2016, Council directed \$200,000 toward a post-secondary certificate/credit training pilot program for residents from NIAs to build local leadership capacity.<sup>liv</sup> The pilot provides an opportunity for residents to assume leadership roles such as facilitators, animators and project developers and build resident skills and confidence, so they can aptly participate in decision



making related to the delivery of local TSNS 2020 actions.<sup>lv</sup> It also acts as a resume builder because participants improve their educational and employment potential when they become involved.<sup>lvi</sup>

### **Activating Resources**

TSNS 2020 recognizes the need to develop collective assets at the local level to ensure every Toronto neighbourhood has the public, private and community infrastructure required for equitable resident opportunities.<sup>lvii</sup> TSNS 2020 works with various funding partners to enhance community amenities.<sup>lviii</sup>

### **Partnership Opportunities Legacy Fund (POL)**

As part of its 2014 Capital Budget process, City Council approved a total of \$12M for infrastructure investments in NIAs.<sup>lix</sup> \$3.1 million has been allocated to 11 projects.<sup>lx</sup> Funded projects included playground upgrades, recreation and community hub space development, community gardens, outdoor splash pads and water play areas.<sup>lxi</sup>

As part of the 2017 Capital Budget process staff recommended an allocation of \$5.048 million to fund 12 projects, bringing the total POL capital investment in NIAs to \$8.148 million.<sup>lxii</sup>

The following are a sample of capital projects have been identified for 2017<sup>lxiii</sup>:

- Children's playground and pollinator garden at Roding Park
- Improved viewing area, floor and snack bar at Angela James Arena
- Create community space at 1652 Keele St. Hub
- Recreation space and computer lab at Kingston Galloway

## Chapter 3: Methodology:

My thesis methodology largely consists of qualitative interviews with members of the city administration responsible for TSNS 2020 at a citywide and local level. To provide a grounding for my interviews, I also engaged in a minor time-series analysis that tracked incidences of violent crime in Kingsview and a comparison neighbourhood, Willowridge, before and during the operationalization of TSNS 2020. The structure of the thesis takes the form of a consultant's report is inspired by what I learned while performing public policy consulting at KPMG. The content flows accordingly: an explanation of TSNS 2020's moving parts, an introduction to the concept of criminogenic factors and their affect in Kingsview, an assessment of the TSNS 2020's work plan on Kingsview based on what I discovered during my interviews, and lastly, providing a compendium of recommendations that the TSNS 2020 could explore to help fortify their efforts towards reaching their mandate. The reason I only chose a single neighbourhood is two-fold. Firstly, each NIA operates independently under the overarching framework of TSNS 2020 and produces action plans tailored to the specifics of their locale. After filtering through the NIAs, I found that they each had unique challenges within them so it would be a more useful endeavour to perform a deeper analysis of what was occurring within one specific NIA. The second difficulty I had was data gathering. In the short period I had to complete my research, it was most realistic to pursue my analysis with the neighbourhood I had the most familiarity with and could obtain the greatest amount of data.

### Selecting Neighbourhoods

The Social Research Unit at the City of Toronto had assembled Demographic Neighbourhood Profiles for each of the 144 neighbourhoods based on the statistics collected from the 2016

National Census. After filtering out the 31 neighbourhoods involved in TSNS 2020, I decided to select the Kingsview-Westway neighbourhood as my treatment neighbourhood (the neighbourhood that received the attention of TSNS 2020) and Willowridge as my comparison neighbourhood (a neighbourhood that shares similarities with the treatment neighbourhood but did not receive the attention of TSNS 2020). Using the treatment and control neighbourhoods, I sought to contextualize how criminogenic factors can alter the level of crime committed between 2 demographically similar neighbourhoods. My intention was to highlight the power of criminogenic factors in a neighbourhood and showcase why it is important for TSNS 2020 to mitigate these factors as much as possible to achieve successful crime mitigation/prevention outcomes.

During the pre-interview research stages, the Social Research Branch at the City of Toronto was kind enough to provide me a package of orientation materials used to introduce TSNS 2020 to leaders in the political, community, and bureaucratic spheres. Included in these materials was a map of major crime rates for each neighbourhood in Toronto in 2014. The neighbourhoods in TSNS 2020 was bolded in black and I used the map as the starting point from which I could launch my investigation. I compared the bolded TSNS 2020 neighbourhoods to neighbourhoods that were demographically and geographically similar but not included in the strategy. First, I looked at which neighbourhoods were in close proximity to each other and shared similar overall geographic features like being close to Lake Ontario, sharing a neighbourhood boundary, distance from downtown etc. Kingsview and Willowridge share a border and are the same distance from the downtown, yet residents in these neighbourhoods are living 2 very different realities due to what is available to them socially and economically. The next important step was using the demographic profile provided by the City of Toronto to compare my treatment and

control neighbourhoods. Here I could ensure that the pairings were appropriate based on similarities in population density, number of residents classified as low income, and the demographic compositions based on age. I chose these three characteristics because I have found a correlation during my law enforcement career between areas with larger numbers of young, low income backgrounds living in denser urban environment, and higher crime. The subsequent graphics obtained from the City of Toronto display these similarities in Population Density, number of people classified as low income, and demographic breakdown by age. Within the graphics, rates for the citywide demographic are stated for reference where available.

**Figure 1: Population Density in Kingsview and Willowridge<sup>lxiv</sup>**

**Willowridge**

**Kingsview**

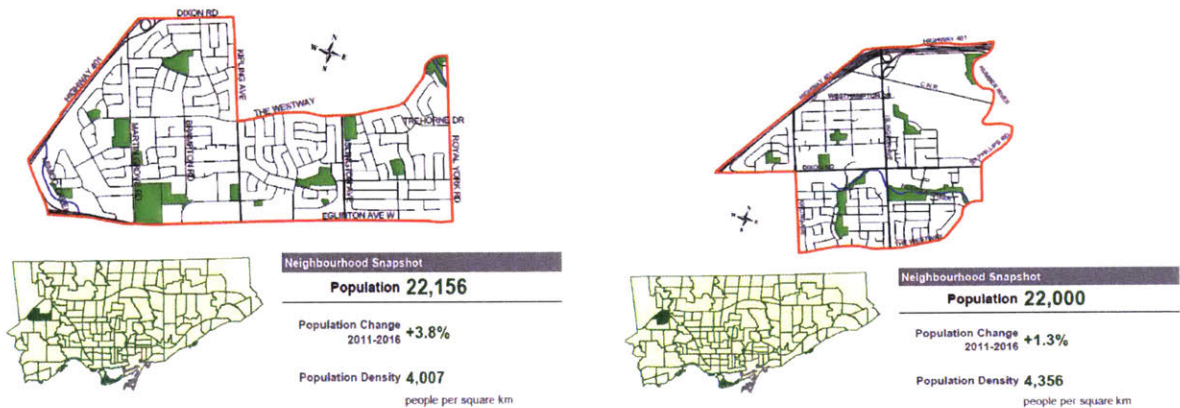


Figure 2: Number of residents classified as low income in Kingsview vs Willowridge<sup>lxv</sup>

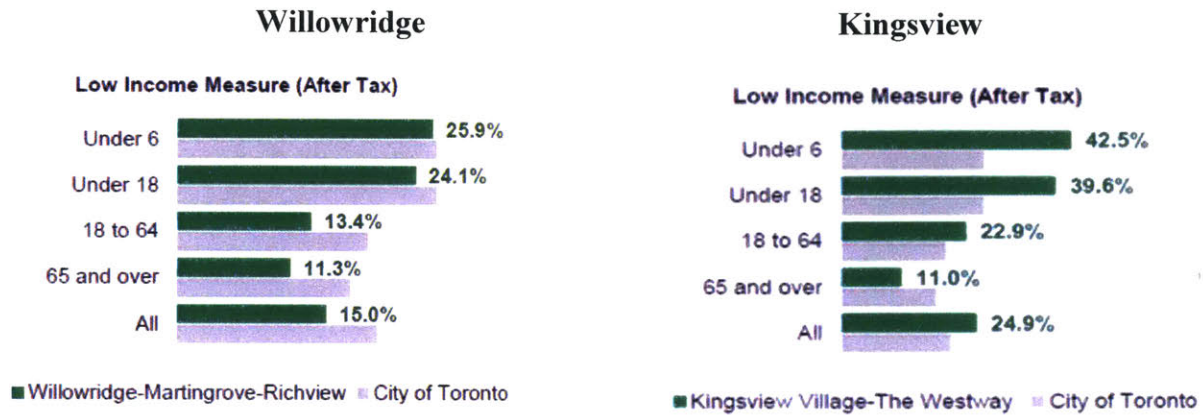
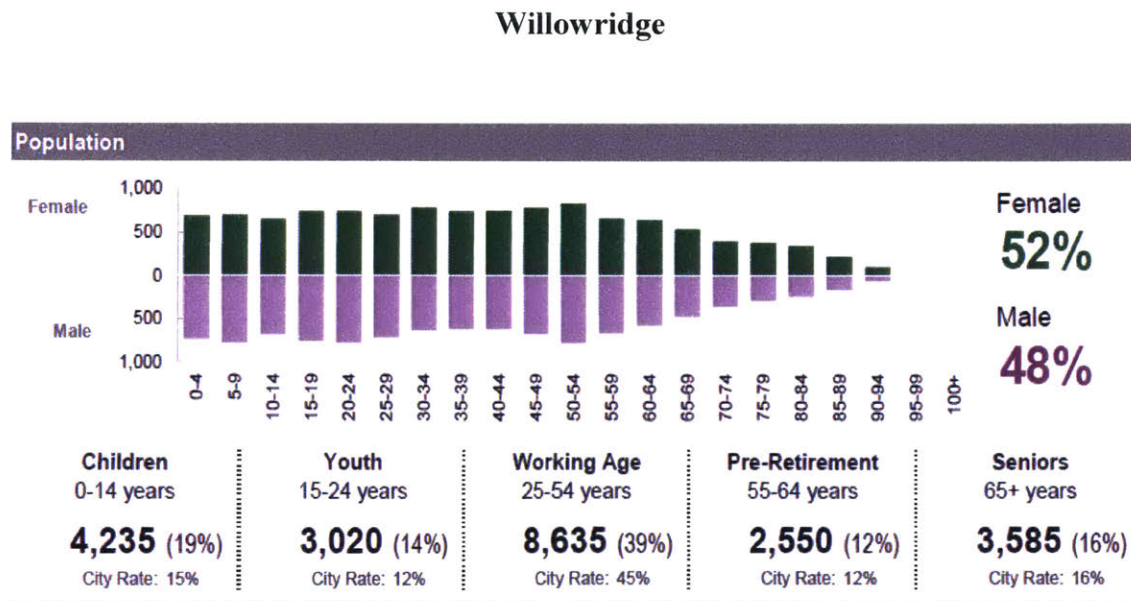
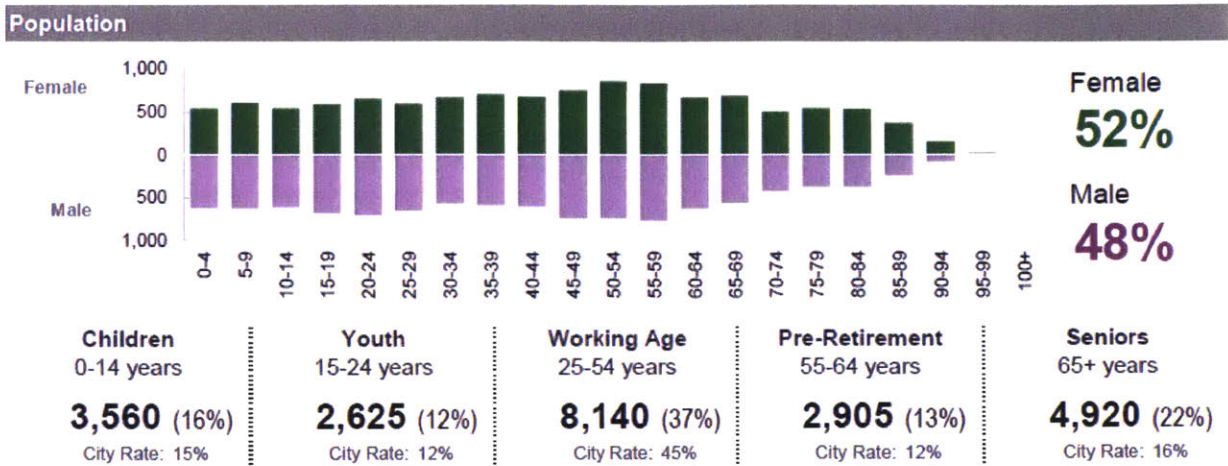


Figure 3: Demographic Breakdown by Age in Kingsview vs Willowridge<sup>lxvi</sup>





## Kingsview



Although it is very difficult to obtain direct matches between treatment and comparison neighbourhoods in a city as diverse as Toronto, Willowridge is fairly good comparison neighbourhood as it shares many similarities with Kingsview without producing the same level of violent crime.

### Data Analysis

The data analysis I undertook was a very simple comparative crime data analysis. The Social Research Branch at the City of Toronto provided me with 2011 data of crime (Robbery, Assault, and Homicide) that had been collected from each Toronto neighbourhood. The Robbery, Assault, and Homicide data for 2014-2017 was downloaded directly from the Toronto Police Service's Open Data Portal. For an undisclosed reason, I was unable to obtain authorization from the Toronto Police Service to have the data released to me for the years 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013. As a result, I do not have a true sense of what the crime situation was in the two neighbourhoods immediately before the initiation of TSNS 2020. This limitation meant that I could only look after 2014 to determine if there was any noticeable change in the instances of violent crime post

strategy initiation. All my data was downloaded in .CSV excel format and I used Microsoft Excel to clean the data until only the Robbery, Assault, and Homicide data for Kingsview and Willowridge remained. From this data, I generated line graphs that compared the treatment and control group pairing of Kingsview/ Willowridge in the hopes of displaying the variance in crime in the two neighbourhoods. To ensure that my comparison of crime figures were accurate, all figures were normalized by 100,000.

## Interviews

Interviews comprised the bulk of my exploratory analysis and were separated into 2 phases. 6 individuals were interviewed from across various levels of TSNS 2020 administration. These included public officials involved in strategy design and implementation, as well as community leaders who actively worked or engaged with TSNS 2020 from the Kingsview Somali community.

The first phase involved speaking with executive management that were responsible for the initial TSNS 2020 conceptualization, program design, and high-level execution. I started with an official from the Social Policy Research Branch for the City of Toronto as they were the individual responsible for determining TSNS 2020's strategic model.<sup>lxvii</sup> They were able to explain how TSNS 2020 was formulated and how the NIAs were selected.<sup>lxviii</sup> They also explained the evolution of the program from its first rendition in 2005 that focused on service delivery in underserved communities to a program that looks to unlock local resources and make strategic investments that will address neighbourhood inequities.<sup>lxix</sup> The second individual that I interviewed was from the Community Development Branch at the City of Toronto. From their position, they oversaw how TSNS 2020 was operationalized in its NIAs through supervising and

providing overall strategic guidance to the CDOs in each NIA.<sup>lxx</sup> They introduced me to the guiding philosophy of TSNS 2020 and the motivations that drove its execution. Through this interview, I also gained a sense of the program's progress to date at a strategic level and learned about how the strategy was intended to evolve past 2020.

The second phase of interviews involved me moving closer to the ground to speak with individuals specifically working in the Kingsview neighbourhood. I began the second phase by interviewing the CDO for Kingsview. The CDO's role is to operationalize the strategy within the NIA.<sup>lxxi</sup> They lead the neighbourhood planning tables and work to bring various stakeholders together to achieve the buy in necessary to formulate action plans that would result in community improvement.<sup>lxxii</sup> The CDO was able to provide insight into the process of bringing stakeholders to the tables, retaining participation, managing personalities, etc. They introduced me to some of the individuals that participated in implementing the strategy from roles at other city departments and local residents' organizations. Despite the endorsement of Kingsview's CDO, I still struggled to connect with other Kingsview neighbourhood planning table participants from the city including Toronto Public Health and Toronto Employment and Social Services officials. I was later informed that these public officials were apprehensive about misrepresenting their agency. I was particularly disappointed that I was unable to speak with a Toronto police officer from 23 Division. Given that law enforcement is exposed to neighbourhood problems in their rawest form, their perspective on community development strategies, root causes of crime, and work with other agencies would prove invaluable to my analysis. However, due to severe budget cuts and staff shortages, I was unsuccessful in obtaining their cooperation. I filled this gap by performing my own analysis of crime trends based on input from local residents, the available data, and my own personal knowledge about the



neighbourhood and law enforcement. I was able to conduct a very interesting interview with an official from the Richview Public Library. They provided insight into how the Toronto Public Library interacts with the strategy as well as how various City of Toronto organizations align their goals with overarching governance strategies dictated through city council.

My two most potent interviews were derived from 2 Somali leaders from the Kingsview neighbourhood. Due to some controversial opinions, I chose to keep their identities and positions confidential so they could continue to pursue their good work without fear of political backlash or being defunded. They provided a perspective that greatly differed from the city staff and oriented me to a many of the shortcomings at the strategic and operational level.

### Identifying Criminogenic Factors in Kingsview

After the second phase of interviews, I compiled the qualitative data I gathered to look for the main themes that were mentioned repeatedly as the causes of crime. I ended up with education, poverty, capital flight/geographic isolation, and mistrust of government and law enforcement. From here I began to conduct background research for each factor to supplement the qualitative data I obtained. I was able to pull statistics and studies on the severity of all these factors in Kingsview weave them into exactly how they were contributing to the elevated violent crime rates.

### Site Visit

Growing up in Kingsview and my background in law enforcement afforded me the comfort to visit the neighbourhood to get a first-hand perspective on what people who lived there were seeing daily. I documented my experience photographically and tried to capture the essence of what it is to be a low income Kingsview resident. I specifically looked for the conditions that

were highlighted to me during my interviews and tried to observe how residents moved around public space. I made it a point to visit both the low-income high rise and upper income single family sections of Kingsview to obtain a sense of the divide that existed socioeconomically. Additionally, I was on the lookout for anyone performing illegal activities publicly and was successful at documenting a case of drug dealing. It was through my site visit that I truly began to understand why Kingsview was selected as an NIA and the dynamics of the neighbourhood that both helped and hindered it.

### Measures of Success

I measured TSNS 2020's success across two main factors. First and most immediately, the decrease in violent between 2014–2017. An assessment of the immediate rates of crime permitted me to determine whether TSNS 2020, with its bias to solving long term criminogenic factors, can still have a positive impact on immediate crime. The next measure of success, that I also believe to be a better indicator of the strategy's progress, is a gap analysis between the plans, practices and implemented actions of the TSNS 2020 in Kingsview and how they actually address criminogenic factors in Kingsview. This success indicator is what inspired the majority of my recommendations.

### Limitations

During my initial conversations with Social Research at the City of Toronto, we both perceived that obtaining data would be easy because the city had a multitude of data available from various agencies. I ran into my first roadblock when seeking expanded crime data. The robbery, assault, and homicide data from 2008, 2011 and 2014-2017 was publicly available but for some undisclosed reason, the critical years of 2012 and 2013 were not included. With help from Social

Research, we attempted to obtain that data from the Toronto Police Service's research head but were ultimately unsuccessful. The absence of these 2 years curtailed my ability to paint a picture of the state of criminal behaviour in Toronto just prior to TSNS 2020's commencement.

Additionally, the resistance I received from certain partners involved in implementing TSNS 2020 to speak with me meant I was consigned to form a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of TSNS 2020 without the input of key stakeholders. Although I made assurances to treat their opinions as completely confidential if they wish, I believe that they harboured significant distrust of an outside researcher that they never met in person. Despite my best efforts in explaining that high ranking strategy officials had provided their input, I could not secured their participation. Lastly, I would have liked to speak with more community members. Although my 2 community interviewees provided me with invaluable insight into their interaction with the TSNS 2020, it is a limited sample and I cannot dispel the possibility that the information I obtained overrepresents the 2 opinions in a sea of over 22,000 residents.

Consequently, this thesis by no means meant to be a comprehensive account of how the TSNS 2020 addressed criminogenic factors in Toronto at large. In fact, with my struggles in obtaining the necessary qualitative and quantitative data, I think my thesis is taking on more of an exploratory analysis of TSNS 2020 in the Kingsview neighbourhood. In a city as large and diverse as Toronto, it is simply not possible to generalize my findings onto the larger municipal scale with the requisite data and rigor. If I had more time and resources, I would have conducted significantly more interviews both within the municipal administration and different groups within the Kingsview neighbourhood. I would have also pushed for more quantitative data to be released to me, so I could have the best chance at avoiding selection bias. Nonetheless, this thesis still has value in providing the City of Toronto and those involved in administering TSNS

2020 to reflect on how they can formulate their own evaluative criteria and methods based on the challenges I had in conducting my analysis. It is my suggestion that future evaluations take both a macro and micro level approach to observe TSNS 2020's progress and independently gather data where it does not currently exist.

## Chapter 4: Literature Review

### **Criminogenic Factors**

The bulk of my thesis explores how TSNS 2020 addresses criminogenic factors that contribute to crime. Criminogenic factors are those characteristics within a space that contribute to a propensity for its residents to pursue criminal behaviour. The criminological literature will often refer to criminogenic by other monikers such as ‘root causes of crime’ or the ‘social determinants of crime.’ In Kingsview, I have determined through my interviews that the criminogenic factors that have the greatest impact on the community are education, poverty, geographic isolation, and mistrust of law enforcement. These factors are well reflected as root causes of crime in many global communities globally.

The quality of education in Kingsview was cited as the single greatest factor in criminal outcomes for residents. Hjalmarsson and Lochner compared global research on the effect that quality education has on crime. Linking the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports for the US in 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990 to 1960-90 decennial US Census data on educational attainment and race, the researchers uncovered that a one-year increase in average education levels in a state reduces state-level arrest rates by 11 percent or more.<sup>lxxiii</sup> These results correlated very closely with the increase in wages associated with each additional year of school by the estimated effects of higher wage rates on crime.<sup>lxxiv</sup> The authors also insinuated from the data that the effect of schooling on crime may come through increased wage rates (making criminal behaviour more personally expensive) and opportunity costs (putting future opportunities at risk by engaging in criminal activity).<sup>lxxv</sup> Hjalmarsson and Lochner did not go into detail about how different jurisdictions pursued increasing educational attainment but their findings certainly provide support for how addressing education attainment can produce positive impacts towards crime. As

I analyze TSNS 2020, the authors' research helps me bridge the divided between how education and poverty alleviation are integral to crime reduction. I will be keeping these results in mind when assessing TSNS 2020's work plan to determine whether they give education enough importance while generating their action plans.

Heller et al. conducted a review of existing theory and evidence related to the correlation between poverty and crime. They found a correlation between neighbourhood poverty, family income, and crime and that increases in incomes generally have positive impacts on crime.<sup>lxxvi</sup> However, not all neighbourhood wealth creation strategies are created equally. For example, transfer programs providing a 50 percent average increase in family income (averaging around \$14,000) reduce violent and total arrests by 20 percent for males.<sup>lxxvii</sup> The authors inferred that it is not sufficient to simply reduce poverty by raising income. Rather, one must look at the improvements in human capital that results from the increased wealth (people with more can will invest more in themselves and children) as a complimentary reason for the improved criminological outcomes.<sup>lxxviii</sup> In addition to informing how I assess the poverty reduction elements of TSNS, Heller et al.'s work compel me construct recommendations on how to expand the poverty reduction efforts from an exercise in increased income generation to having a strong focus on human capital building to ensure long term, multi-generational success for residents.

The last criminogenic factor I want to highlight is the distrust of law enforcement. Tyler and Fagan used a panel study design of 830 New York City residents who were either white, Hispanic or African-American to examine whether perceived legitimacy of police, measured by trust, obligation, and confidence in police, generated increased cooperation with police during investigations. The results indicated that communities reporting a higher trust in law enforcement were more likely to cooperate with police efforts.<sup>lxxix</sup> Police legitimacy and involvement is an



important aspect for TSNS 2020 to consider expanding into. The strategy in its current conception does not have an immediate crime control element which makes operationalizing the remainder of its programming more difficult.

### **Urban Crime Prevention**

Crime prevention strategies have evolved significantly over the last 50 years with the advent of more data driven evaluative techniques. In the 1980's and 1990's, crime mitigation took on a very reactive approach with law enforcement spearheading the response. Approaches like Stop and Frisk (officers randomly stopping and searching individuals that they suspected of having weapons or drugs on them) and Disorder Policing (officers focusing on arresting individuals engaging in public disorder offences like drunkenness or vagrancy) emerged from this philosophy. Stop and Frisk, in particular, was extremely controversial in how it focused on communities of colour without providing any strong metrics on its effectiveness. In 2018 German Lopez, a journalist at Vox, analyzed historic New York City crime data and found that only 1 percent of the Black people stopped and searched were found to be in possession of weapons or contraband.<sup>lxxx</sup> The low success rate indicated a weak correlation to randomized and instinctual policing and crime control but it did show great increases in public distrust of police.<sup>lxxxii</sup> Alternatively, Braga et al conducted a meta-analysis of 269 studies analyzing various Disorder Policing strategies.<sup>lxxxii</sup> They found that policing disorder led to statistically significant reductions in crime only when taking a community centred orientation.<sup>lxxxiii</sup> When law enforcement worked with citizens and city agencies they were better suited to coproduce crime prevention actions.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Braga et al.'s meta-analysis supports the notion that it is not possible to arrest your way out of crime problem and that creating a united front between the law enforcement, the community, and government agencies is our best chance at success. Since

TSNS 2020 does not include a strong policing element, I also looked at literature on programs that targeted criminogenic factors in their communities without a strong police presence. Delgado et al. used a quasi-experimental design to compare the effects of the Cure Violence program between demographically similar neighborhoods in the Bronx, East New York, and Brooklyn. Cure Violence is a public health inspired crime prevention program that partners with local organizations in their target neighborhoods to prevent crime.<sup>lxxxv</sup> The local organizations understood that one of the main criminogenic factors contributing to gang violence was an inability to deal with interpersonal issues amicably.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> Workers would canvass the neighborhood and seek out local intelligence on emerging conflicts between young males and attempted to help solve the problem prior to bloodshed.<sup>lxxxvii</sup> They analyzed 4 communities of similar demographic composition. Two received the treatment (South Bronx and East New York) and two did not (Flatbush and East Harlem) from 2005-2016.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> Over the analysis period, East New York experienced a 50 percent decrease in gun violence and South Bronx decreased by 37 percent.<sup>lxxxix</sup> Programs like these suggest that there is a potential for programs to compliment the crime prevention outcomes of the police. It also suggests that a longer evaluation period should be undertaken when looking at crime prevention strategies.

Geographic isolation remains a tricky criminogenic factor to address for a city as those cities that have been successful at strengthening vulnerable neighborhoods often see their residents relocate to more desirable areas. This is noteworthy for TSNS 2020 as part of its theory of change involves resident engagement in the hopes that those who feel they have a stake in their communities may not immediately want to leave when their economic situation improves.



## **Similar Strategies/ Programs**

I found it difficult to find a precedent program for TSNS 2020 in the literature. Typically, strategies have focused in on one criminogenic factor like education, poverty, etc., so I am inclined to believe that TSNS 2020 is part of a new wave of social programming that takes a more all-encompassing view on strengthening neighbourhoods. The lack of an academic presence for these types of programs presents an opportunity for my exploratory analysis to contribute some preliminary literature to the field. Alternatively, it makes benchmarking the progress of TSNS 2020 challenging because I cannot draw from the experience of similar programs to understand what realistic performance expectations are.

## Chapter 5: Social Causes of Crime in Kingsview

### What are Criminogenic Factors?

The term criminogenic factors will be used extensively throughout this thesis paper. The term is relatively new in criminological circles and is often referred to as inequities in sociological and social planning literature. Essentially, criminogenic factors are those characteristics in the built and social environment, be it a neighbourhood or otherwise, that may put the local residents at higher risk of engaging in criminal behaviour as compared as to their fellow citizens.<sup>xc</sup> Some of the most prevalent criminogenic factors include poverty, spatial isolation from good and services, and poor public service delivery. Consequently, TSNS 2020's focus on inequities in their neighbourhoods can be taken as a way to combat criminogenic factors. It is important to note that these factors are dynamic and shift with changes in demographics, income, and social interventions, among a host of other things. Below I will highlight the some of the main criminogenic factors that Kingsview and in particular its Somali community are struggling with.

### Criminogenic Factors in Kingsview

To comprehend the criminogenic factors in Kingsview, it is important to first understand the history of the Somali community. The Kingsview Somali Community largely arrived as refugees during the civil war in the early 1990's.<sup>xcii</sup> The population included everyone from highly educated professionals with a strong command of the English language to families from the villages.<sup>xciii</sup> Many of the refugees were settled in the Kingsview neighbour without supports for familiarizing themselves with their new surroundings.<sup>xciii</sup> The Kingsview neighbourhood at the time had ample access to housing but little else in the way of amenities and with no pre-existing Somali community to join so they were left to their own devices.<sup>xciv</sup> Being a car dependent

neighbourhood with poor bus connections to the subway line which provided access to most of the services and jobs, the community was left largely to their own devices to navigate their new home.<sup>xcv</sup>

Growing up as a member of a low-income family in Kingsview during the same time period, my family experienced much of the same conditions. However, we had certain distinct advantages in that my parents were both English speakers and were able to integrate into their new society much quicker. As a result, they could take advantage of the generous social services available to them and soon gained the resources to move to a different neighbourhood where I received countless opportunities.

Similar to African-Americans in American inner cities, some Somali families were able to attain social mobility followed a similar path as my family and their children reaped the benefits.<sup>xcvi</sup> However, in doing so, they often left behind other struggling Somali families who one of my interviewees referred to as the “poorest of the poor.”<sup>xcvii</sup> It is the children of these families that are responsible for the majority of Kingsview’s crime.<sup>xcviii</sup>

The Dixon City Bloods are the predominant criminal presence in Kingsview. Composed of largely young Somali males, the gang specializes in weapons, people, and drug trafficking from the United States to Canada and begins recruiting lookouts and soldiers as young as 12 years old.<sup>xcix</sup> This is also the gang that came into the spotlight for supplying crack cocaine to former Toronto mayor, Rob Ford. In 2013, the Toronto Police Service conducted Project Traveller which resulted in the arrest and successful prosecution of 60 gang members.<sup>c</sup>

## Education

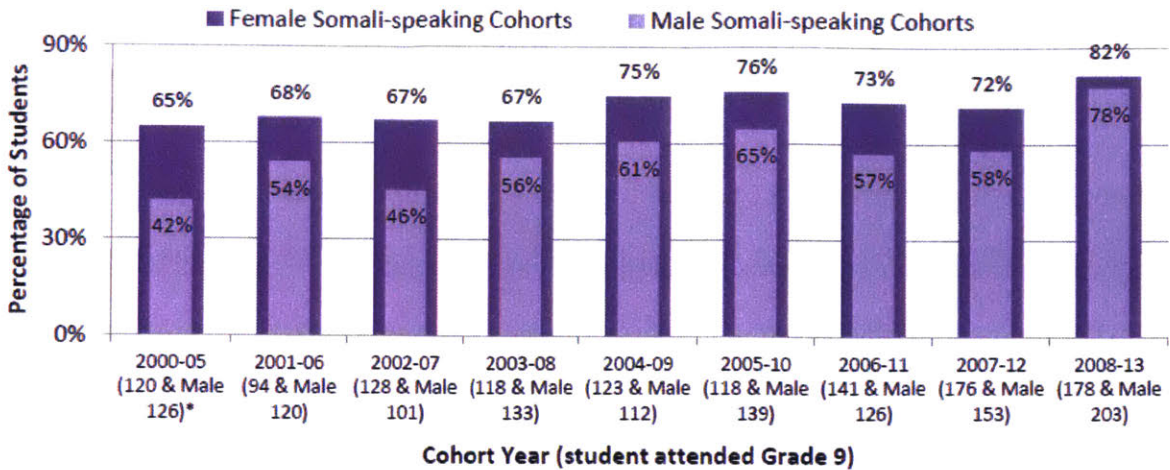
My interviews revealed that the most prominent criminogenic factor in Kingsview for the Somali community is the underperforming and disparate education outcomes within the Toronto District School Board.<sup>ci</sup> In 2015, TDSB released a study that detailed the achievement of newcomer communities compared to the rest of the school board. Somali students are underperforming by almost all metrics. The following is a snapshot of how Somali students fare against their TDSB counterparts:

**Table 1: Percentage of Grade 7 and 8 Students Meeting the Provincial Standards<sup>cii</sup>**

	Somali Students	Other TDSB counterparts
Mathematics	54	72
Reading	52	70
Writing	51	70

In 2012, only 63 percent of Somali students successfully completed the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test versus 73 percent for other TDSB students.<sup>ciii</sup> The last fact that I believe requires special attention is the underperformance of Somali males in attaining high school graduation:

**Figure 5: High School Graduations Rates of Male and Female Somali student in the Toronto District Public School Board:<sup>civ</sup>**



As you can see, until recently there were significant discrepancies between the rates at which Somali male and female students attained high school graduation.

These grades reflect ages 11-15 and I used these statistics specifically because this is the age range that the local street gangs begin their recruitment. A city official in Community Development revealed that this is also the age group at which young males drop out of school, run away from home, or fall out of the system altogether.<sup>cv</sup>

More broadly, in 2017 TDSB released a Learning Opportunities Index which accounted for the amount of external pressures students in the public school system face to learning. Ranking schools on a scale that places 1 as having the greatest external pressures, Kingsview Village Junior School placed 24<sup>th</sup> of 471 elementary schools.<sup>cvi</sup> By contrast, Parkfield Junior Elementary School which serve the residents of Willowridge placed 64<sup>th</sup>.<sup>cvi</sup>

Another cultural phenomenon that was highlighted during my interviews was that, because of their poor command of the English language, many Somali parents do not understand the nature of assessment at Canadian schools and rely on their children to honestly translate their progress.<sup>cvi</sup> The lack of oversight allows underperforming or misbehaving students to conceal



their struggles and continue forward without correcting their issues.<sup>cxix</sup> As a result, the underperformance persists and grows where it would otherwise be dealt with quickly.<sup>cx</sup>

Traditionally, poverty is usually the first criminogenic factor to consider. The reason I chose to rank education first is that in Canada social mobility is still relatively high and the access to affordable and high quality education is often credited as one of the main reasons why. However, those I interviewed on the ground in Kingsview repeatedly cited that public school education in Kingsview was not meeting the standards set by the remainder of the school board.<sup>cxii</sup> Due to a real lack of quality in the Kingsview schools, students were not presented with a viable option for life outside the neighbourhood's confines and were at an increased risk of regressing into criminal behaviour.<sup>cxiii</sup>

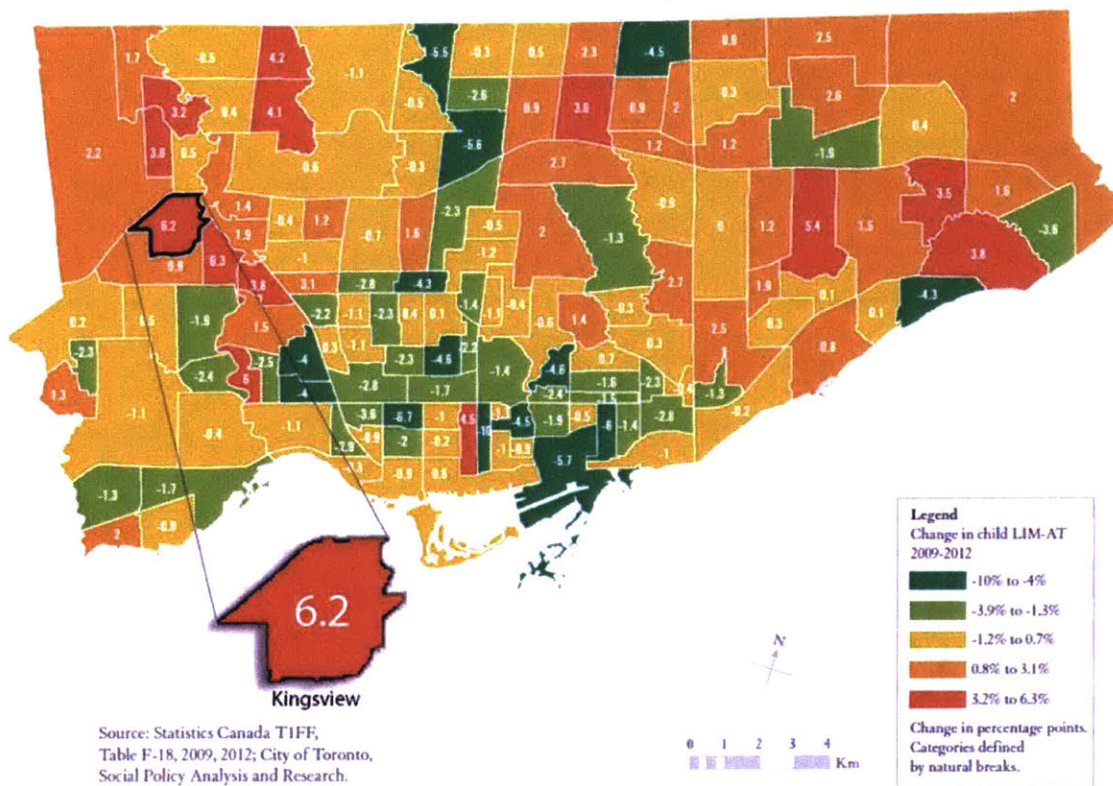
## Poverty

Like many immigrant-centric neighbourhoods, poverty has been a challenge for Kingsview. The unique thing about the neighbourhood is that there are members of the Somali community that have been unable to ride the wave of social mobility that many immigrant communities have experienced. In 1996, the Canadian Census revealed that Somali men were earning a median income of \$25,000 annually while females earned a median income of \$21,300.<sup>cxiiii</sup> At the same time, the rest of Toronto was collectively earning a median income of \$35,000 for males and \$30,000 for females.<sup>cxv</sup> Overall the unemployment rate for Somali Canadians at this time was a collective 24 percent.<sup>cxvi</sup> Ransford Danso undertook a survey of Somali refugee/immigrant experiences in 2001, almost 10 years after the first waves of immigration from Somalia arrived.<sup>cxvii</sup> He found that despite there being a sizable amount of high skilled Somali refugees, many were unable to immediately work in their professional capacity because their qualifications



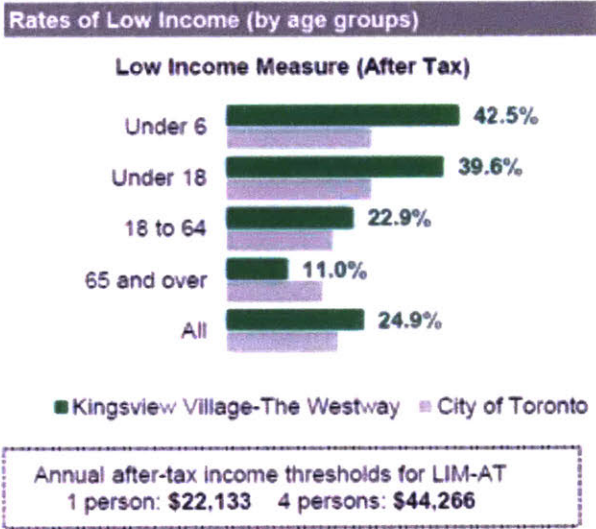
were undervalued in Canada.<sup>cxvii</sup> When I pressed my interviewees on their experiences as children of Somali refugees, they both concurred with this assessment and added that for many people requalification was difficult because as refugees, their cashflow was restricted and there was an absence of public supports to assist them in the process.<sup>cxviii</sup> Apart from their low-income status, Somali immigrant was extremely youth centred meaning that many within the Somali community that are partaking in criminal activity experienced all or a significant part of their childhood as low-income individuals.<sup>cxix</sup> To exacerbate the issue further, many of the households were headed by females who as indicated had even lower earnings.<sup>cxx</sup>

**Figure 6: Change in Percent of Child Poverty (Low Income Measure- After Tax) in Toronto Neighbourhoods between 2009 - 2012<sup>cxxi</sup>**



Fast forwarding to the modern day, poverty is still a persistent issue that plagues the neighbourhood. Referring to the figure above, in 2010 Kingsview had among the highest growth in child poverty in Toronto at 6 percent. In the same year, the Canadian Arab Institute released a study that showed Somali’s average annual pre-tax salaries were still hovering around \$24,182.<sup>cxiii</sup> The figure below graphically represents how Kingsview compares with the rest of Toronto after tax. The Low Income Measure- After Tax (LIM-AT) for the city is \$22,133 for individuals and \$44,266 for 4 person households. The figure displays that approximately 40 percent of youth and children respectively are living in economic vulnerable situations that may give them a higher propensity for crime.

**Figure 7: Percentage of Low Income People in Kingsview vs the rest of Toronto<sup>cxiii</sup>**



Beyond the lack of purchasing power, it was made clear to me that network poverty had a larger part to play in Kingsview’s Somali community. Gwen Van Eijk describes network poverty as “having a personal network including merely or mostly resource-poor people and, thus, lacking ties to resources such as knowledge, wealth, skills, power and information.”<sup>cxiv</sup> The trend that community leaders in Kingsview have noticed is that those students that play by the rules do not

always receive the rewards (girls, money, status) that society promises them.<sup>cxxv</sup> It is not uncommon for young Somali men and women to go to university only to return to Kingsview with a degree and not much else to show for it.<sup>cxxvi</sup> Alternatively, those who choose the gang life are seen driving fancy cars, balancing different sexual relationships, and looked up to for financial support.<sup>cxxvii</sup> For many young Somali males in particular, the divergence in fortunes makes their choices much easier.<sup>cxxviii</sup>

Speaking from a mix of personal experience and from the data gained from my interviews, the importance of networking is lost on many young people of low-income backgrounds. It is a common belief that obtaining formal education is enough to secure social mobilizing employment. However, the statistics on recruitment indicate otherwise. A survey conducted for professional services site, LinkedIn, revealed that between 85 percent of jobs are filled through one's professional network.<sup>cxxix</sup> For many people, that starts with those that they grew up around who are employed or know someone employed in a certain industry. The network poverty in Kingsview can present a severe hindrance to employment and for those community members already vulnerable to falling into a life of crime, this negative perception of playing by the rules will often seal the direction they choose.

### Geographic Isolation/Capital Flight

The Somali refugee community arrival in Kingsview coincided with the Transport Canada, Canada's federal transportation authority, decision to allow planes taking off from Pearson International Airport to fly over Kingsview.<sup>cxxx</sup> The increase in noise pollution prompted many of the middle and upper income residents to relocate to other parts or outside the city altogether.<sup>cxxxi</sup> In 1995, Somali refugees comprised 50 percent of the population.<sup>cxxxii</sup> The city of

Toronto ceased to collect statistics on ethnicity, so it is unknown what the numbers are today but according to my interviews from local Somali workers, that number has increased to represent an overwhelming majority.<sup>cxxxiii</sup> Interviews with Somali workers revealed that the issue with the deep concentration of the Somali community within Kingview is the lack of economic diversity within the community and a more insular co-ethnic network.<sup>cxxxiv</sup> According to the interviewee, the Somalis that were able to be socially mobile and depart the neighbourhood also cut ties with those surroundings creating a networking bottleneck for subsequent generations of Somali Canadians to capitalize on those individuals' success.<sup>cxxxv</sup> Unfortunately, outside of the family unit, one of the only well developed 'professional' networks are the street gangs which provide employment, a sense of being, and a quick release, albeit temporary and dangerous, from the cycles of poverty that they grew up with.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

The geographic isolation reproduced the Somali clan identity conflict locally. The neighbourhood has multiple Somali associations each managed by a clan.<sup>cxxxvii</sup> In the 1990's, many of the clans were at war with each other in Somalia and this conflict has been imported to Kingsview in the form of segregation along clans lines in Kingsview.<sup>cxxxviii</sup> As a result, it is difficult to create a unified Somali front to lobby for the neighbourhood needs because the clan suspicion has been passed onto the next generation.<sup>cxxxix</sup> In another unfortunate coincidence, the Somali gangs operate without a clan-based mentality facilitating their ability to recruit new members into their ranks.<sup>cxli</sup>

It was also revealed to me that there is an underlying conflict between the low and high income residents of the neighbourhood.<sup>cxlii</sup> As described in the sections about Kingsview, the neighbourhood has an informal segregation based on the housing stock. As with many communities globally, the wealthier sections of a community tend to be more engaged and better



organized. As a result, community members from the poorer sections have traditionally had a more difficult time gathering support for policy actions that may benefit the impoverished sections of the community because they do not view their issues as relevant to their own lives.<sup>cxlii</sup> This is most apparent is during election periods when the upper income residents tend to support tough on crime policies that often do more harm than good in the community.<sup>cxliii</sup>

### Mistrust of Government and Law Enforcement

Given the nature of how the Somali community arrived in Toronto, many came with a deep seeded distrust of government institutions.<sup>cxliv</sup> When discussing the relationship between the Toronto Police Service and the local Somali Community with my 2 local contacts, both admitted to personally having a good relationship with the officers.<sup>cxlv</sup> However, they qualified their endorsement by explaining that they both grew up in the Kitchener-Waterloo area (a city located in Southwestern Ontario about 1.5 hours away for Toronto with little ethnic diversity).<sup>cxlvi</sup> Separated from their own people, they were forced to integrate into their new world quicker and expel notions that their parents carried with them from Somalia.<sup>cxlvii</sup> My 2 contacts advised that the isolation of the Kingsview Somali community reproduced some of the suspicions of law enforcement that they previously held.<sup>cxlviii</sup> Consequently, it is very difficult for the Toronto Police Service to build sustainable relationships with the average members of the community so a great deal of illegal activity goes unreported and is only discovered when a problem becomes public like a shooting.<sup>cxlix</sup> Furthermore, many Somalis are apprehensive to work with police because they do not want to risk losing the only social network they know.<sup>cl</sup>

A report published by Ryerson University's Diversity Institute chronicled the stories of many Somali males that were stopped and searched due to being mistakenly identified as a suspect in a

crime.<sup>cli</sup> The recurring theme in the participants' statements was that they had experienced this multiple times and it had soured the reputation of the Toronto Police Service in their eyes and bred a suspicion of law enforcement in general.<sup>clii</sup> Although I understand that cases of mistaken identity are generally not racially motivated, this information is not reported to the public in an effective manner. As a result, it has heightened the sense within the Somali community that they are simply being targeted for some arbitrary reason. I know from firsthand experience that solving crimes is virtually impossible without the cooperation of the local citizenry. However, in the current environment, the Toronto Police Service is struggling to form strong community bonds which weakens their ability to investigate.

### **Crime Trends**



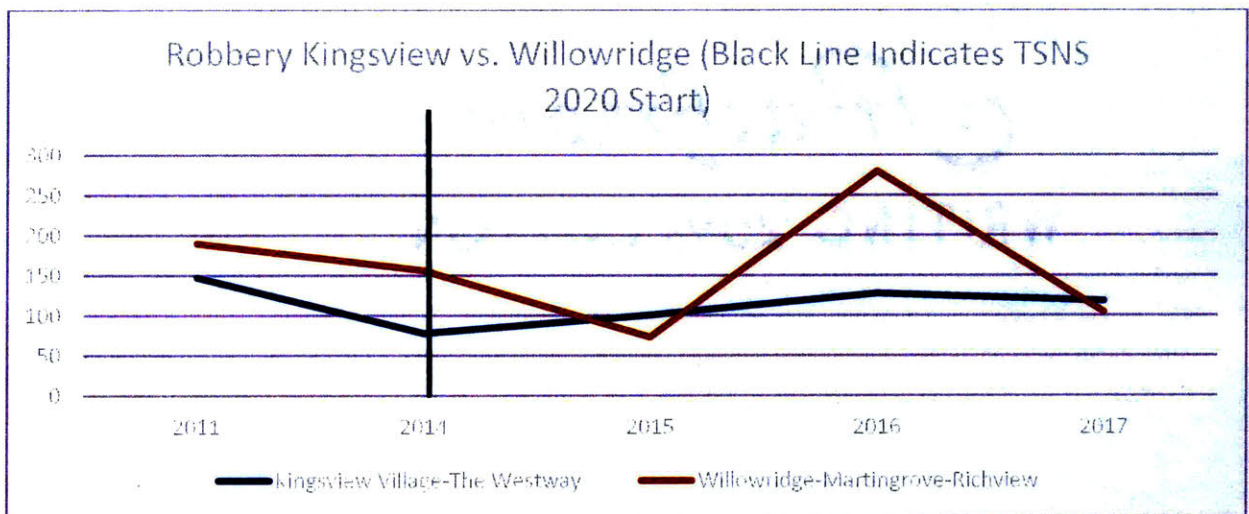
Youth dealing drugs

As an overview for crime in Kingsview, I have outlined the criminal trends across major crime indicators using basic line graphs. These statistics was obtained from the Toronto Police Service's Open Data website and the numbers in the graphs represent the number of crimes



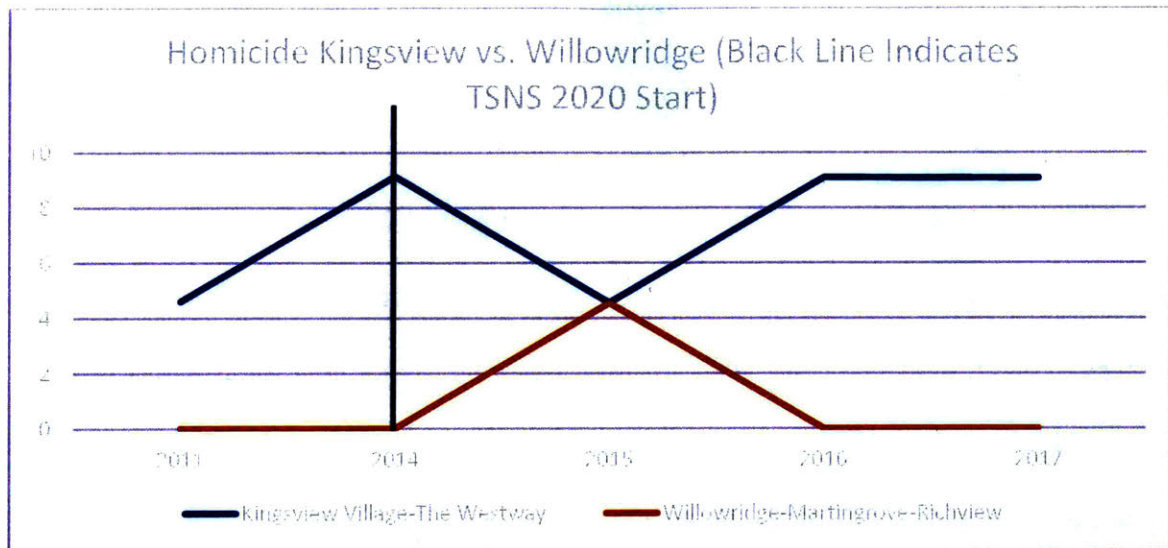
reported in the neighbourhoods so the real number could be higher. The audience can see that the neighbourhood suffers from a litany of violent crime and has been stable or increasing over the past three years. Another form of crime that is emerging, but we only have anecdotal evidence for is sexual exploitation and trafficking of young Somali females.<sup>cliii</sup> My goal here is to visually display how the criminogenic factors that exist in Kingsview are leading to very different criminological outcomes between Kingsview and neighbouring Willowridge. All the data presented has been normalized per 100,000 residents. As a disclaimer, the data displays where the crime has occurred. Many of the criminal organizations in Kingsview are now operating across Toronto, other parts of Canada, and even into regions of the United States so this data does not account for crime that originates in the Kingsview neighbourhood but occurs elsewhere.

**Chart 1**<sup>cliv</sup>



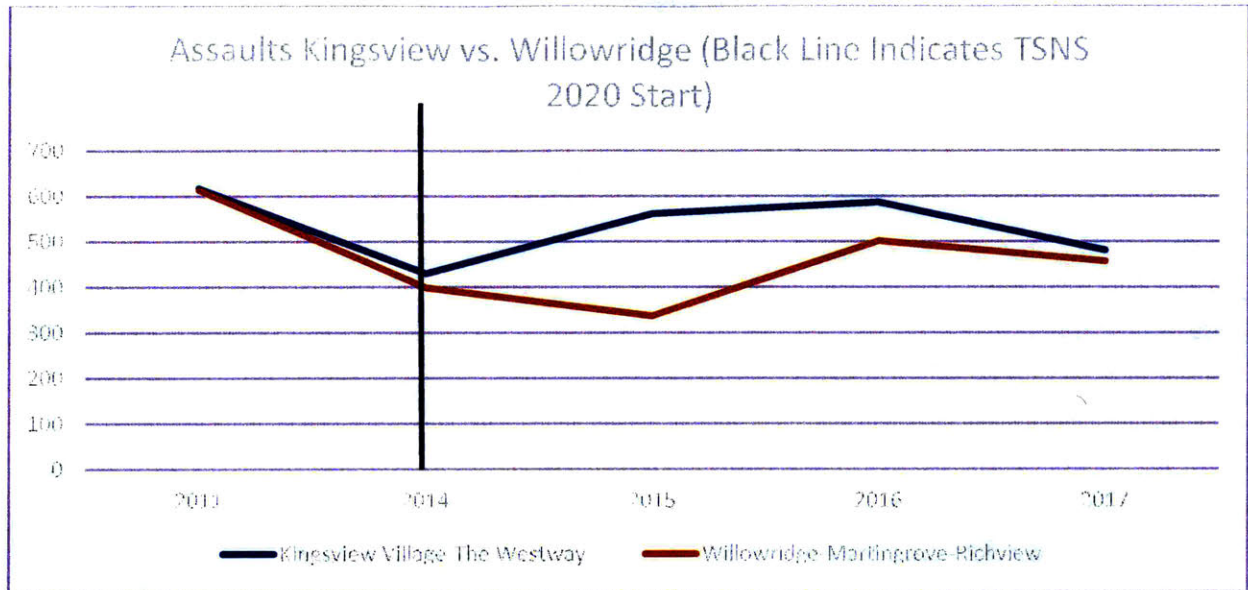
For the purposes of clarity, I am using the legal definition of robbery which entails the application of physical force or the threat to do so to steal another's property. My working hypothesis is that the rate of robberies is higher in Willowridge because it is a slightly wealthier community where perpetrators expect individuals to have possessions of high value.

Chart 2<sup>clv</sup>



The homicide rate in Kingsview is one of best visualization of the struggles the community has with gang activity. In 2014, I suspect that the Toronto Police Service's execution of Project Traveller disrupted the activity of the Dixon City Bloods and may have at least in part led to a decline in homicides the next year. However as so often is the case, there was not enough foresight employed to deal with the ensuing power vacuum which allowed the remaining gang members to toil for the reigns of leadership.

Chart 3<sup>clvi</sup>



Assaults in Kingsview range from domestic violence to gang related beatings to the rare occasion of random attacks.<sup>clvii</sup> This was a difficult metric to represent visually because I was informed that many of the perpetrators of assaults in Willowridge live in Kingsview.<sup>clviii</sup>

From the initiation of TSNS 2020 in 2014, there has been no discernable impacts in crime in Kingsview. In fact, incidences of violent crime have actually risen in some cases. One possibility is that the first 3 years is too soon make an accurate judgement of crime reduction as many of the programs are targeting the next generation and 2014-2016 were largely spent planning the efforts rather than implementing them. As a result, in the next section I will examine how TSNS 2020 is operationalizing its efforts to combat crime and whether those on the ground believe it is effective.



## Chapter 6: TSNS 2020 Efforts to Combat Criminogenic Factors in Kingsview?

The current CDOs had only been in their position for 8 months at the time that I interviewed them, so they were unable to provide concrete insight into the early planning phases in Kingsview. In 2015 after the four domains and 31 NIAs were selected, TSNS 2020 in Kingsview engaged local residents to create a work plan that aspires to use their local knowledge to generate solutions to address neighbourhood inequalities.<sup>clix</sup> Residents and stakeholders from the Kingsview NIA gathered to coproduce the workplan.<sup>clx</sup> Ideas were generated through brainstorming exercises, discussion groups, video diaries, and art projects.<sup>clxi</sup> Periodically the neighbourhood planning table would solicit feedback from residents and recommend ways to improve the process.<sup>clxii</sup> In conversation with the CDO, I learned that the overarching methodology for developing the plans involved starting with the domains within the URBANHeart framework and then having those at the table prioritize where the needs were and how they should be targeted.<sup>clxiii</sup> Below is the resultant work plan that emerged out of the planning process. The horizontal column represents the TSNS 2020 domain, the vertical rows represent the mission statement of each domain, why the action was undertaken, and the progression of that action item into 2016<sup>clxiv</sup>:

Participation in Decision Making	
Build capacity for civic engagement and community leadership	➤ Create a fund for neighbourhood residents to attend conferences on public issues and to get involved in advocacy beyond the local level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide employment opportunities for residents to work on the municipal election</li> <li>➤ Offer grant-writing workshops in the neighbourhood</li> </ul>
Purpose of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide workshops or trainings to members for Grant Writing, Public Speaking, and Leadership</li> </ul>
1 Year Milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Approximately 20 to 25 residents that represent the diversity of the community received training or are continually being engaging in the planning of Kingsview's TSNS 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Healthy Lives</b>	
Engender healthy habits among community members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote Toronto Public Health services to residents and local agencies.</li> <li>➤ Provide more CPR/First Aid Training for community groups.</li> <li>➤ Implement and expand Toronto's "Diabetes Prevention Strategy" to promote awareness of risk factors and prevention strategies, including healthy eating, physical activity, smoking cessation and stress management for people who are at a higher risk due to age or ethnicity or addiction</li> <li>➤ Adopt an anti-oppression framework that focuses on social inclusion, community engagement and anti-discrimination to improve mental health</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Promote physical activity, including exercise classes, for seniors living in the community.</li> </ul>
Purpose of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To Support residents to good health including mental health and reduce stigma.</li> <li>➤ This is based on Residents request and focus to be on organizations to provide programs for the residents that they need.</li> </ul>
1 Year Milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Approximately 100 to 150 individuals trained in the above initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Opportunities</b>	
Connect & Train Residents to Quality Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support active residents to apply for City of Toronto jobs, particularly with divisions that work directly in the neighbourhood (e.g. Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services and Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Public Health, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Long-Term Care Homes etc.)</li> <li>➤ Support local employers and businesses to hire residents for local jobs.</li> <li>➤ Provide work experience, mentorship, and apprenticeship training opportunities in City of Toronto services and divisions</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strengthen employment programs in NIAs (e.g. job fairs, training programs)</li> <li>➤ High Five Training (mandatory training needed to work with children)</li> <li>➤ Resume Writing &amp; Interview Skills</li> </ul>
Purpose of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To incentivize participation and reward community leadership through providing socially mobile employment opportunities</li> </ul>
1 Year Milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 2-12 residents employed with City division or partnered agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Social Development</b>	
Strengthen community grass root organizations and residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distribute community grants equitably across NIAs</li> <li>➤ Create and maintain an accessible database of resident-led organizations</li> <li>➤ Sustain community grants and create long term core funding for successful community organizations that deliver meaningful results</li> <li>➤ Train/Empower parents on how to support their youth and Important of volunteering</li> </ul>
Purpose of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distribute community grants equitably across NIAs</li> <li>➤ Create and maintain an accessible database of resident-led organizations</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Sustain community grants and create long term core funding for successful community organizations that deliver meaningful results</li> <li>➤ Train/Empower parents on how to support their youth and Important of volunteering</li> </ul>
1 Year Milestone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Approximately 10 to 20 residents trained</li> <li>➤ Youth to volunteer for events, programs and/or initiatives in Kingsview community</li> </ul>

### Assessment of the Strategy's work on the Ground

Taking a step into the community to assess the claims of the municipal administration was an enriching experience and truly provided the most valuable insight about whether the strategy was actually reaching the neighbourhoods most vulnerable people. There was a clear disconnect between the perceptions of city officials and those of the community members. Despite the good intentions of the programs at its outset, there are certain operational elements of the TSNS 2020 that are preventing it from achieving its ultimate aims. The assessment of the current TSNS 2020 progress in Kingsview is based on the interviews I undertook from both city officials as well as the members of the Kingsview community that are directly involved in the strategy.

### Activating Local Participation

The ethos of TSNS 2020 revolves around mobilizing the local population to build leadership and capacity for them to guide the trajectory of economic and community development.<sup>clxv</sup> Initially the community was onboard as previous attempts to rectify criminogenic factors in the

community were performed at an arm length with civil servants and consultants from downtown developing the programing without any real input from those it was meant to help.<sup>clxvi</sup> The results were pigeonholed accordingly.<sup>clxvii</sup>

TSNS 2020 started off with strong interest from the community and robust showings at the Neighbourhood Advisory Committee meetings.<sup>clxviii</sup> Unfortunately, a substantial drop in attendance has been observed since TSNS 2020's initiation.<sup>clxix</sup> In my conversations with city officials, there were many theories as to why this decline was occurring but the greatest insight came from those community members operating on the ground. In one of my interviews, it was stated that there is a fundamental misunderstanding about the lives of poor people from the city's perspective.<sup>clxx</sup> For the local residents to participate, they often are making a great personal sacrifice in terms of time and money.<sup>clxxi</sup> Since many people want to participate but their circumstances make it difficult, an incentive structure would aid in the retention efforts.<sup>clxxii</sup> The mechanism that TSNS 2020 proposed to accomplish this was providing support to participants in obtaining jobs with the municipal administration such as Police, Fire, or the City of Toronto.<sup>clxxiii</sup> However, as the years passed, it was noticed that the participants were not receiving the support they were promised and began to drop out from the program.<sup>clxxiv</sup> The Local Champions program was also supposed to pluck individuals from the community and provide them with educational resources that would prepare them to assume leadership roles such as facilitators, animators and project developers.<sup>clxxv</sup> To date, only one person from Kingsview has undergone the training and TSNS 2020 has struggled to attract more residents.<sup>clxxvi</sup> I was fortunate enough to speak with the local champion for Kingsview during my interviews and she echoed the sentiment that community members do not see participating in the program as worthwhile. According to her, city efforts would be better spent creating those incentive structures that could attract and retain

talent and passionate young people from the community into the fold.<sup>clxxvii</sup> Furthermore, she expressed that for the strategy to be truly effective it needs to dig below the surface and be willing to work with individuals that would be deemed politically risky, namely rehabilitated members of the gangs.<sup>clxxviii</sup> In her words, these are the people that understand the lives of those that drop out of the system and have the networks to pull people back in.<sup>clxxix</sup>

Another interviewee who is active at the Neighbourhood Roundtables advised that both the city and TSNS 2020 are devoting their efforts towards the wrong demographic.<sup>clxxx</sup> The current focus on youth (14-18) is much too late.<sup>clxxxi</sup> In their words, “As far as I am concerned you can take all the people with guns, put them in cages, and let them kill each other. We should be focusing on the kids.”<sup>clxxxii</sup> According to this individual, the gangs are starting to recruit as young as 12 years old and by the time they reach their teenage years these at risk individuals are already fully socialized into patterns of criminal behaviour.<sup>clxxxiii</sup> This sentiment was also corroborated by a manager from the City of Toronto’s Community Development branch who advised that during their time as a CDO, they witnessed that many of the young adolescents that they were working with were leaving school and completely falling off the map.<sup>clxxxiv</sup> Years later, they would see many of these individuals’ names reappear on the Toronto Police Service’s wanted board or as victims of a crime themselves.<sup>clxxxv</sup>

The last point that I think bears mentioning originates from one of my interviews in the community. My interviewee spoke at length about the fundamental disconnect between wanting to create a strategy that aimed to be representative of the neighbourhood but not have a single Somali employed in a leadership role.<sup>clxxxvi</sup> In their words, the administrators in charge of TSNS 2020 placed an Afro-Caribbean female as CDO in an attempt to create a blanket solution in the name of representation.<sup>clxxxvii</sup> Although the interviewee did not display any personal disdain for

the current CDO, they stated that the being a Somali in Kingsview is such a unique experience that even minority men and women from outside the community would miss out on the nuances needed to understand what the community is going through as well as not be able to propose solutions to rectify these problems.<sup>clxxxviii</sup>

### Healthy Lives

Healthy Lives represents one of the areas that TSNS 2020 has some notable successes. The principal success has been in the expansion of Toronto's "Diabetes Prevention Strategy." Partnering with Toronto Public Health and the Rexdale Community Health Centre, interested community members were given training to become diabetes coaches.<sup>clxxxix</sup> A number of Somali community members used their training to provide coaching to elderly citizens in their community on prevention techniques, navigating the medical system, and directing them towards resources in their locality that would help manage their condition.<sup>cx</sup> Unfortunately due to resistance from Toronto Public Health to provide information for this thesis and a lack of auditing built into the strategies programming, I am unable to provide definitive numbers on how many individuals were impacted.

### Economic Opportunities

As stated earlier in the thesis, poverty is one of the most significant criminogenic factors in Kingsview. In particular, the young Somali's inability to participate in Toronto's economic boom appears to be one of the greatest elements contributing their overrepresentation in the local crime networks. In fact, a study conducted by Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab on New York City's Summer Youth Employment Program found that there was a 10 percent drop in incarceration and an 18 percent drop in youth related homicide with summer employment which

translated into 112 fewer jail sentences and 83 fewer deaths among their treatment group of 14- to 21-year-old participants.<sup>cxci</sup> Consequently, the Economic Opportunities domain holds a special importance to tackling the crime issue. There have been some preliminary successes with providing community members with job training.<sup>cxcii</sup> Those in attendance at the neighbourhood roundtables expressed a desire to obtain their SMARTSERVE and Food Handlers qualifications so they could access a larger pool of employment in the food service industry.<sup>cxciiii</sup> To operationalize this interest, TSNS 2020 partnered with Rexdale Community Health Centre, which had some money remaining in their budget to spend.<sup>cxciiv</sup> The partnership had enough funding to train 50 community members.<sup>cxci v</sup> The SMARTSERVE/Food Handlers scenario did an effective job at highlighting how TSNS 2020 is supposed to function in practice.<sup>cxci vi</sup> Rather than employing the traditional method of identifying a need and imploring funds from the city, TSNS 2020 sought to mobilize unused funds from organizations that were already active in the community.<sup>cxci vii</sup> As a result, the strategy benefits are delivered to those that need it quickly and municipal temporal and monetary resources are not wasted in administrative duplication.<sup>cxci viii</sup>

The support of local residents into jobs at the city still remains an elusive goal.<sup>cxci ix</sup> Employment with the city is highly sought after as it generally provides a living wage, job security, and opportunities for advancement. As a result, there is rigorous competition for these jobs. From the onset, there was not any network setup to support and mentor the residents through the recruitment process.<sup>cc</sup> There seemed to be an assumption that the residents were more familiar with how to navigate the recruitment process so the in place supports were very piecemeal.<sup>cci</sup> Without the proper support, many Kingsview residents that entered into the process were placed at a disadvantage when competing against job candidates with more familiarity regarding the process.<sup>ccii</sup> Additionally in a highly technocratic world, many municipal jobs requires



intermediate to advanced skills in areas like computation, various forms of analysis, communication etc. It is not a realistic expectation that poorer Kingsview residents who are already having a difficult time in school to possess these skills without a training program to assist them.

Being the economic heartland of Canada, Toronto is home to a robust private sector. When probed about partnerships that TSNS 2020 had created with the private sector employers, I found the answers severely wanting. My impression is that there is an ideological silo in how TSNS 2020 performs economic development that keeps it within the hands of government and non-profits. I was particularly shocked at this revelation because both governments and non-profits constantly complain about their lack of funds or how rigid rules prevent them from attempting innovative policy implementation strategies yet had not reached out to build partnerships with organizations that offered that. My community interviewees both expressed that post-secondary education is a real barrier to social mobility amongst Kingsview's Somali community and that given how much large corporations like the ScotiaBank sponsored events in Toronto's Downtown, they would be open for an independent /organization that had fresh ideas regarding corporate social responsibility to help ease the financial burdens of aspiring post-secondary students.<sup>cciii</sup>

As part of TSNS 2020 team, The Toronto Public Library has also inserted itself into the economic development sphere with great enthusiasm. Out of all the organizations I observed and spoke with, it appears that the Toronto Public Library has been the most successful at rolling out programing that will address the criminogenic factors in Kingsview. Their philosophy in participating was to understand how they could use their resources to support Kingsview in a sustainable way.<sup>cciv</sup> The Richview branch which serves the Kingsview neighbourhood created a

‘Digital Innovation Hub’ in an attempt to reduce the digital divide between upper- and lower-income individuals.<sup>ccv</sup> The library recognizes that as the local economy continues on a rapid reorientation towards the service sector and high skill manufacturing, those that lack basic digital literacy are vulnerable to being unable to socially, culturally, and economically participate.<sup>ccvi</sup> With a library card, patrons can access to Audio/Visual Recording equipment, 3D printing capabilities, a fabrication studio, etc.<sup>ccvii</sup> The library also hosts an ‘Innovator in Residence,’ an industry professional who is tasked at providing mentorship and advice to patrons on entering their industry, structuring their business, introducing them to an existing network, among other things.<sup>ccviii</sup> Recently, The Toronto public library’s Innovator in Residence was a successful music producer who offered patrons the chance to learn the industry and develop the skills needed to have a competitive advantage in the industry.<sup>ccix</sup> Another way the library is attempting to bridge the digital divide is by literally loaning out internet access to cardholders through their hot spot loan program.<sup>ccx</sup> Library patrons can borrow hotspot devices for a maximum period of 6 months.<sup>ccxi</sup> In past surveys conducted by the library, it was found that 80 percent of the participants in the program had an annual income of \$20,000 and reported that they could not afford internet service at home.<sup>ccxii</sup> It was also stated that for two-thirds of the users, the library was their primary source of internet access.<sup>ccxiii</sup>

The ‘Digital Innovation Hub’ is a relatively new program so it does not have the requisite data necessary to analyse who is using their services. However, when speaking to a library official, it was refreshing to hear her recognize that offering these services was no longer sufficient and the library needed to take a more activist role in introducing these services to community members who do not typically see the library as place for them.<sup>ccxiv</sup>

## Social Development

The Social Development domain is the most contentious and one of the trickiest to assess because TSNS 2020 has not clearly defined their interpretation of social development. Both of my interviewees from the community expressed that there is gross misappropriation of funds occurring in this domain due to a lack of accountability.<sup>ccxv</sup> As parents send their children to the local schools, they stated that not including the Toronto Public School Board in the Neighbourhood Advisory Committee is a substantial design flaw.<sup>ccxvi</sup> Considering that Canadian children of Somali immigrants, particularly young males, are struggling to meet the provincial education standards, not having the main educational stakeholders at the planning table really curtails how effective the Neighbourhood Advisory Committee can be at generating a solution. Both community interviewees stated that the local gangs have begun recruiting as young as 12 years old and sometimes directly on school grounds.<sup>ccxvii</sup> According to these informants, the Toronto Public School Board was particularly at fault for mismanaging their resources at the expense of the students.<sup>ccxviii</sup> These discrepancies are born at the School Trustee level (elected officials that are responsible for establishing the policy direction of the school).<sup>ccxix</sup> According to my interviewees, the trustees only allow people they know to partake in school funded programs.<sup>ccxx</sup> For example, I was relayed a story that years ago there was a meal program at Kingsview Village Junior School that sought to provide free hot meals to low income students.<sup>ccxxi</sup> However, increasing regulations compelled program cooks to only procure from Board approved sources which increased costs to the point of making the program unaffordable.<sup>ccxxii</sup>

Another minor point is that Somali teachers were not well represented in the Kingsview schools.<sup>ccxxiii</sup> This was stressed as an important step because the children attending the Kingview

Public schools often did not have enough positive role models in the social development sphere.<sup>ccxxiv</sup> The majority of the teachers were living outside Toronto and commuting into the city daily.<sup>ccxxv</sup> Furthermore, the teaching profession in Ontario is considered upper middle class and tends to attract that demographic. Consequently, when teaching at a school in a low-income community, some of the teachers have a difficult time overcoming that social barrier and many eventually leave to teach in other boards or wealthier areas of the city.

As part of the Social Development domain, community members apply for Community Grants (valued at \$1,000 with potential to have funds matched by external organizations) to help fund programming that could benefit the community.<sup>ccxxvi</sup> The scope of activities can range from social events to job training and just require a simple application to be considered for funding.<sup>ccxxvii</sup> The issue that arose was that there has not been any auditing built into the funding process, so the city provides funds without a system that safeguards against misappropriation.<sup>ccxxviii</sup> One of my interviewees believed that it has created a situation in which many non-profits are being run as for-profit businesses without delivering on their promises.<sup>ccxxix</sup> There is a perception of a cartelization around the politically connected non-profits at the expense of smaller locally based non-profits.<sup>ccxxx</sup> The politically connected non-profits have their applications approved without any contingencies made for accountability.<sup>ccxxxi</sup> Since these non-profits possess an endorsement from the city, larger foundations will often match funds, providing these non-profits with ample funds for little to no deliverables.<sup>ccxxxii</sup> Alternatively, new non-profit organizations started from within the community are having difficulty sustaining themselves.<sup>ccxxxiii</sup>

Another essential missing element in the Social Development domain is the presence of law enforcement at the Neighbourhood Advisory Roundtables as the Toronto Police Service does not

have a representative that sits at each meeting. The current community interactions with law enforcement range from adversarial to collegial and there is still a large amount of distrust that the Somali community harbours towards law enforcement. Both my interviewees advised that just prior to the start of TSNS 2020, the Toronto Police's 23 Division had an independent program that sought to improve the relationship between themselves and the Somali community.<sup>ccxxxiv</sup> The program was generally well received among community leadership but was suspended due to funding cuts.<sup>ccxxxv</sup> My interviewees stated that bringing stakeholders in law enforcement and the Somali community together under TSNS 2020 has the potential to make bonds that can be leveraged in times of community crisis.<sup>ccxxxvi</sup>

On the positive end of the social development spectrum, the CDO explained that TSNS 2020 was able to secure funding to take children from the local middle school to the McMaster Children's and Youth University in Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>ccxxxvii</sup> Over the course of a few weeks, students were able to attend lectures on a variety of subjects tailored to their age group and speak with professors and students regarding the subject matter and how they could enter university in the future.<sup>ccxxxviii</sup> The CDO advised that the purpose of these trips was to remove the children from the confines of their surroundings, which for many could be toxic, expose them to an environment that they may not have experienced, and provide them with a realistic roadmap of how to get there of they wished.<sup>ccxxxix</sup> Overall the trips were well received by the students and TSNS 2020 is looking to make them a permanent feature.<sup>ccxli</sup>

The Toronto Public Library had some interesting progress in Social Development Domain. The Toronto Public Library is heading an initiative to break the library and the role of the librarian out of the traditional confines of the brick and mortar branch and into a more activist organization.<sup>ccxli</sup> They have hired a youth outreach librarian to go into the local schools and

community centres and promote library resources to populations that were not aware of them.<sup>ccxlii</sup>

They are also stationed at the Toronto South Detention Centre, to introduce offenders to library resources that could help them reduce their chance of recidivism once they complete their sentence and re-enter the civilian world.<sup>ccxliii</sup> A library official stated that the library is trying to implement a strategy that makes residents feel welcome on their premises.<sup>ccxliv</sup>

The landmark policy for the Social Development Domain is still in the planning phase. After 3 years of deliberations, the city and residents all agree that Kingview needs more quality community spaces that will increase recreational services for youth and seniors, create accessible drop in spaces for youth, and centralized community-based health care services for seniors and other marginalized populations.<sup>ccxlv</sup> Today those who are able, travel to neighbouring communities to access amenities like the Richview Library branch.<sup>ccxlvi</sup> They identified the Don Bosco Secondary School, which recently closed due to low enrollment, as a site within the community that can host a new community hub.<sup>ccxlvii</sup> The operating model would also be unique as it proposes a City/Community Partnership governance model.<sup>ccxlviii</sup> This project is currently stalled at the feasibility study phase due to funding concerns.<sup>ccxlix</sup> If TSNS 2020 can create and leverage these partnerships, it would certainly be a significant achievement that could have longer term positive implications for Kingsview.



## Chapter 7: Summary and Recommendations

Before I enter into my summary and recommendations, I want to reiterate that these are based on a limited amount of interviews and data. I fully acknowledge that with a larger stakeholder pool and more data at my disposal, my results could be altered significantly. The main use of my exploratory analysis is as a starting point for the formal, more rigorous analysis that the City of Toronto will undertake as the strategy approaches its end date. Furthermore, these recommendations have been tailored for Kingsview and may not be applicable to aptly serve the challenges that exist in the other 30 NIAs.

At the beginning of this thesis, I sought to uncover two main questions:

- **Has the presence of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 led to a reduction in violent crime in Kingsview?**

After reviewing the crime statistics for robberies, homicides, and assaults in Kingsview, it is clear that TSNS 2020 has not led to an immediate reduction in violent crime in the neighbourhood. From the commencement of the strategy in 2014, I did not observe any discernable change in crime behaviour across homicides, robberies, and assaults.

**Table 2: Violent Crime Rates per 100,000 people Kingsview vs Willowridge (2011, 2014-2017)<sup>ce1</sup>**

Assaults	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kingsview	617	429.4438	560.5095	586.3636	480.5987
Willowridge	614	398.5862	336.5019	500.9929	456.9426

Robbery	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kingsview	147.3093	77.6653	100.253	127.272	117.882
Willowridge	189.5649	155.769	72.7571	279.8339	103.8093

Homicides	2011	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kingsview	4.603416	9.137102	4.556988	9.090909	9.0679
Willowridge	0	0	4.547323	0	0

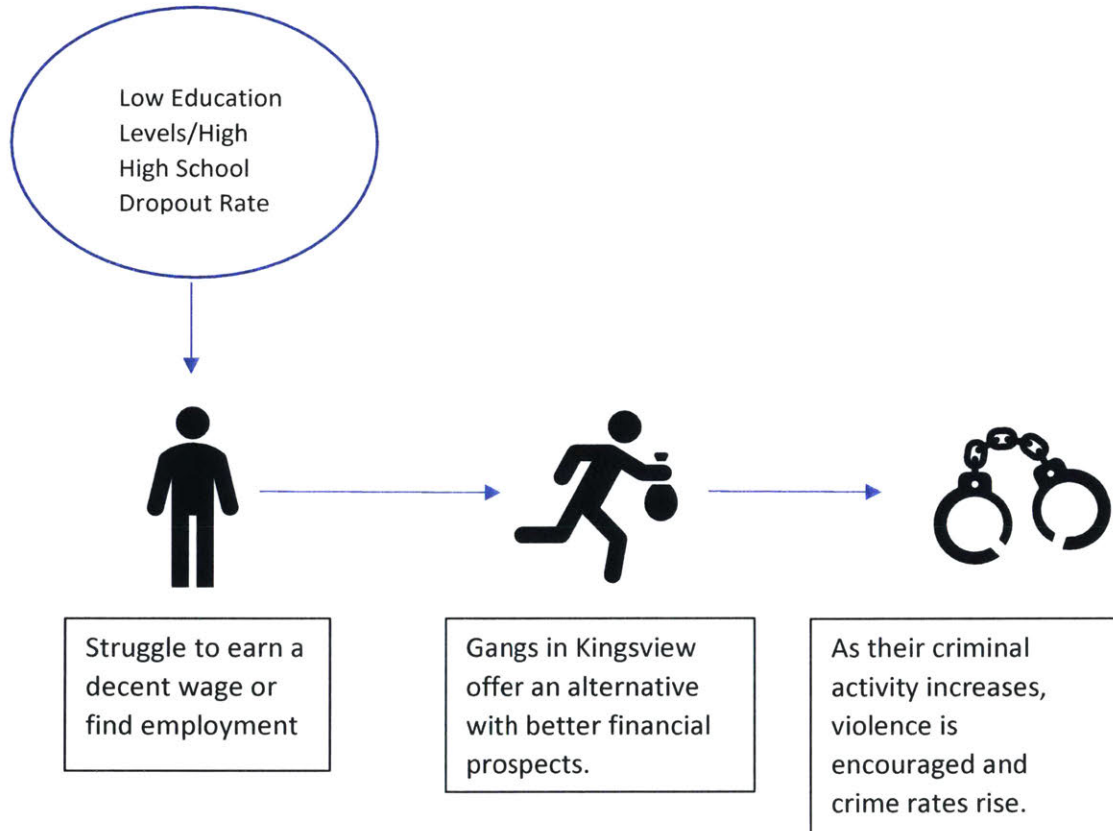
The above table reveals that after the initiation of TSNS 2020, violent crime rose and fell in the two neighbourhoods at relatively the same rate. Therefore, it would be a stretch to credit the declines in robberies and assaults in Kingsview to the actions of TSNS 2020. After analyzing, the available data, the only thing I can prudently conclude is that TSNS 2020 seems to have little to no effect on violent crime outcomes in Kingsview. I will add that one would have to observe what violent crime is like from 2017-2020 before making a final comment on the program's effectiveness but as the data stands, we must take a critical look inside the mechanisms of TSNS 2020 in Kingsview to uncover potential issues early on.

- **How has the strategy worked towards addressing criminogenic factors in the community?**

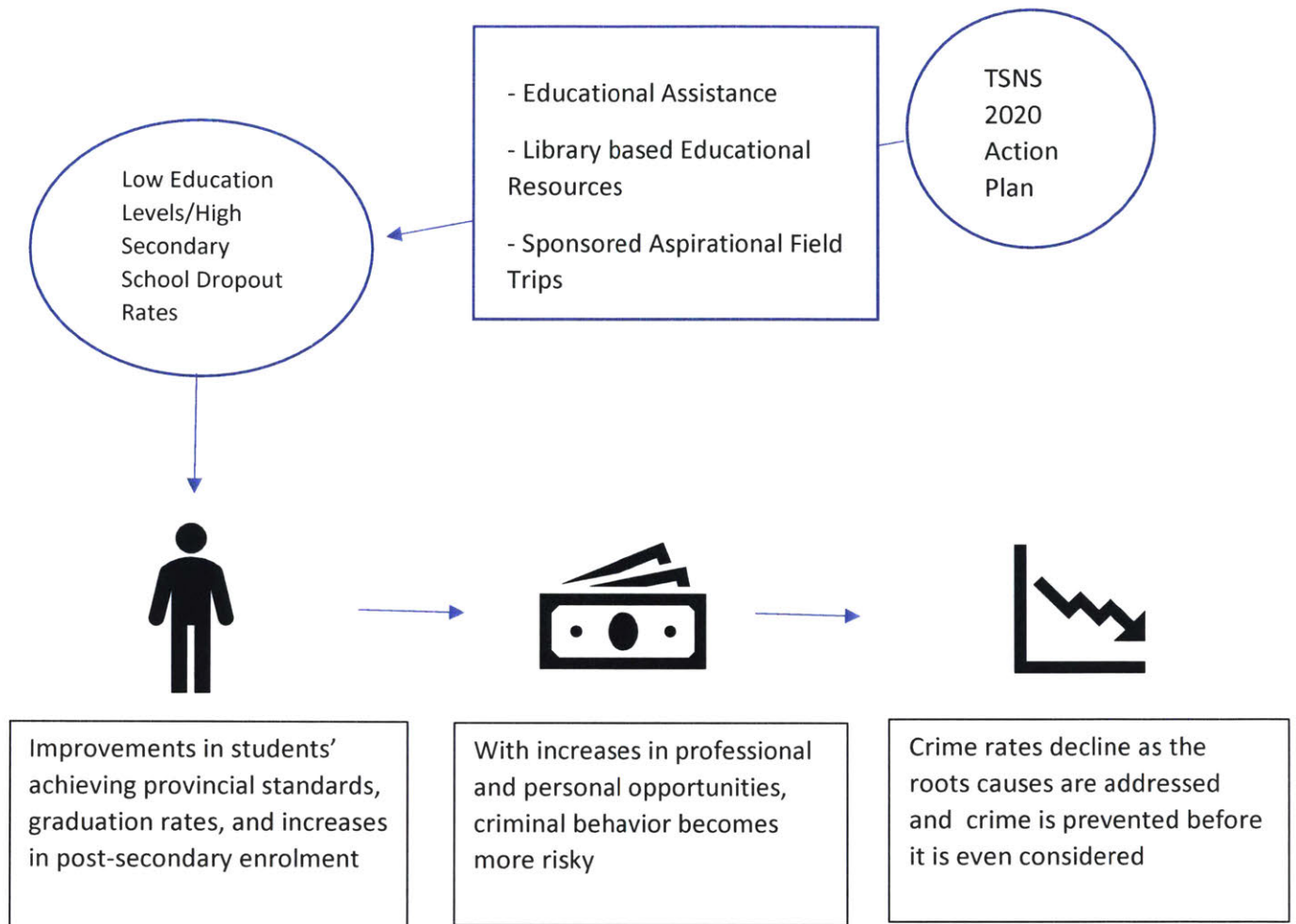
As a means of clarification, I constructed the following diagrams to explain how TSNS 2020 views the relationship between its action plans and the criminogenic factors it seeks to combat. Using the criminogenic factor of education, the diagram informs the reader how low educational levels manifest in criminal behaviour and how the insertion of TSNS 2020 actions solves one of the conditions that underpins crime, thus preventing the behaviour before it even begins.

**Figure 8: TSNS 2020's Logic Model on Alleviating Criminogenic Factors in Kingsview**

**Violent Crime without TSNS 2020 Intervention**



## Violent Crime with TSNS 2020 Intervention



A deeper explanation regarding the strategic issues and disconnects in this model is discussed in the next section in more detail. Very briefly, TSNS 2020 believes that when we address the criminogenic factors in a community, the rate of crime will decrease over time. The model is very future oriented and does not include provisions for how to deal with the current levels of crime leaving it unbalanced in its approach.

The first 2 years of TSNS 2020 has been heavily centered around advertising the existence of the strategy and developing the Neighbourhood Action Plans with the residents. In theory, the neighbourhood action plan for Kingsview certainly seems to be

heading in the right direction when it comes to addressing the education and poverty criminogenic factors but without allowing for at least 2 years of implementation work, it would be irresponsible to make a concrete judgement call on whether their methods actually achieving future crime reduction. The plan does fall short of addressing the issue of geographic isolation because it appears that when individuals and families are socially mobile in Kingsview they relocate which denies the neighbourhood of their increased capital capacity. It is unclear whether TSNS 2020's has thought of how they might address this phenomenon or whether that is beyond its scope. Lastly, the absence of law enforcement at the table makes it difficult to begin any relationship repair. TSNS 2020's lack of law enforcement involvement might be another cause for why a noticeable reduction in crime has not been achieved between 2014-2017. Presently, TSNS 2020 does not seem to have a plan regarding how they will engage the Toronto Police as a crime prevention partner. What I can say with increased confidence is that based on my interviews with community members, there appears to be great discontent surrounding how the strategy operationalizes its action plan for Kingsview and with its ability to attract and retain members. I was advised numerous times that TSNS 2020 struggles with reaching the most vulnerable sections of the community due to the absence of an incentive structure for community participation as well as resistance to hiring former gang members/ vulnerable persons.<sup>ccli</sup> The ability to reach Kingsview's fringe would help TSNS 2020 to test whether their initiatives are truly effective and allow it pivot accordingly. Further to this point, the subsection of the community that I spoke with wanted increased oversight on how TSNS 2020 grantees used the funds they were granted.<sup>cclii</sup> The perceived misappropriation of funds has led to a perception of distrust of



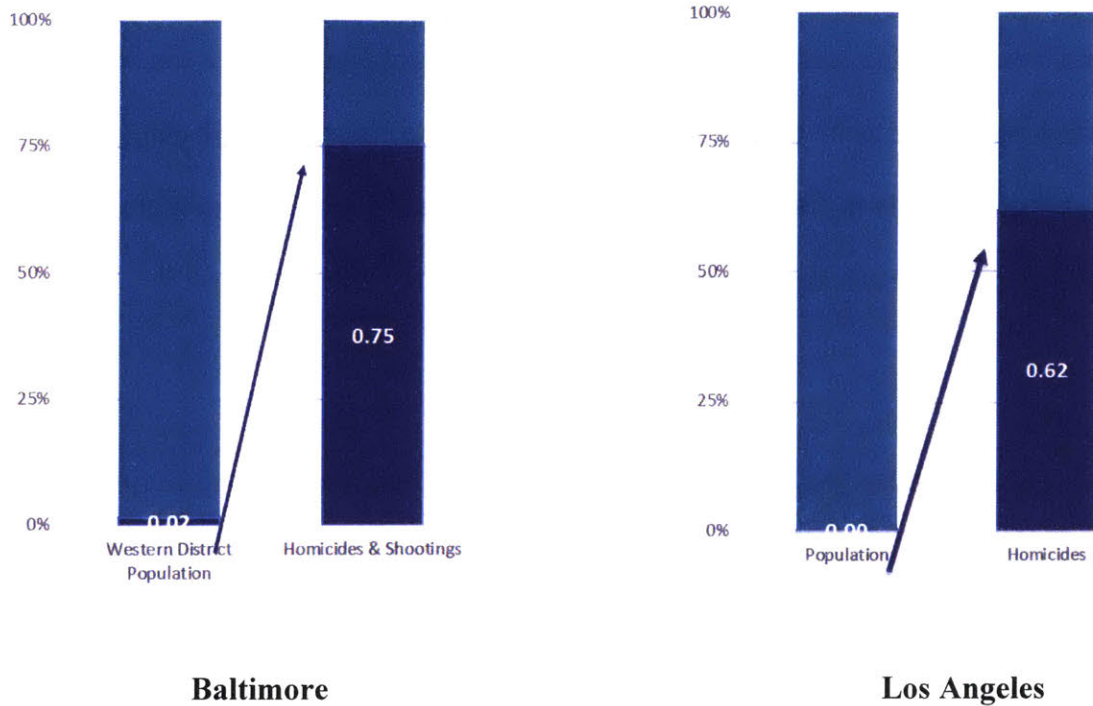
the strategy amongst certain community members making it harder to for TSNS 2020's to address criminogenic factors for Kingsview's most vulnerable. Additionally, the community is open to bringing in outside private sector organizations that have access to more funds to help TSNS 2020 operationalize their work plan.<sup>ccliii</sup> My conversation with the CDO revealed that TSNS 2020 is considering bringing in more private sector partnership so it will be interesting to see how this unfolds and whether the relationship can be cultivated to address some of criminogenic factors in the community.<sup>ccliv</sup>

I talk at great length about how TSNS 2020 can improve its implementation to achieve more positive crime prevention and mitigation results. However, for a change to occur it is important to understand some of the erroneous assumptions it makes at a strategic level.

To begin with, I must commend the TSNS 2020's recognition that each NIA needs a personalised plan of action to attempt to combat the criminogenic factors in each neighbourhood. That being said, the resounding question when TSNS 2020 gets to the neighbourhood planning level is whether to focus on the neighbourhood as a whole or divide it into subsections. Borrowing from work done at the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College, researchers found that even within a vulnerable population in Los Angeles and the Western District in Baltimore (See figure below), violent crime is overwhelmingly committed by less than 1 percent of the residents and the key to mitigation and prevention is rooted in addressing this subsection's needs.<sup>cclv</sup>



**Figure 8: Graphs displaying who is responsible for the violence among vulnerable populations in Baltimore and Los Angeles<sup>cclvi</sup>**



Unfortunately the same research has not been conducted in Toronto but my community contacts both expressed that it is a minute subsection of the Kingsview population that is perpetrating the violent crime.<sup>cclvii</sup> The current action plans seek to address criminogenic factors en mass in Kingsview. Using the above figure as reference, that might be effective at preventing the small subsection of violent offenders in the community from enlarging but does little to tackle the inner workings of the subsection committing the crime and therefore, it is my community contacts' opinion that this is why we observe continued violent offending.<sup>cclviii</sup>

There seems to be an underlying tension in the logic that one can pursue crime prevention without engaging the police at some level. The Toronto Police Service is at the forefront of dealing with the criminal behaviour in Kingsview and as a result, is a crucial partner in

the crime prevention space. The lack of police presence negates TSNS 2020 from gaining a vital perspective on the state of criminal activity in Kingsview which impedes its ability to tailor its action plans beyond general economic and community development initiatives. Operating under the premise that crime prevention/mitigation can be achieved in the long term without actually dealing with immediate crime issues plaguing the neighbourhood is in my belief is one of the fundamental disconnects that is preventing TSNS 2020 from realizing a more immediate impact.

## Recommendations

As indicated TSNS 2020 has had its share of successes and shortcomings during its first 3 years in Kingsview. Moving forward, I am proposing the following adjustments be made to TSNS 2020 in Kingsview to maintain its relevance to community needs and strengthen its ability to achieve its mandate.

### Ensure that TSNS 2020 is Reaching All Demographics

From speaking with my 2 community contacts, I can confidently say that there does not appear to be a shortage of good and reliable residents that want to be involved in TSNS 2020 and help their community improve. However, the process which TSNS 2020 attempts to engage residents is extremely flawed. The expectation that you can expect low income people to volunteer their time without any formal concession is indicative of a program that does not understand the pressures that many of the residents are facing each day. There is a flaw in the logic that overstretched and under resourced people would somehow be able to find the time need to devote to TSNS 2020.

Therefore, this recommendation involves 2 parts: incentivization and outreach.

To incentivize participation in TSNS 2020, those responsible for the strategy's administration must first assess the needs of the low income Kingsview community and create mechanisms for filling those gaps. Speaking with the 2 individuals at the forefront of trying to reform TSNS 2020, the primary impediment to participation is monetary.<sup>cclix</sup> The reality from many potential participants is that the time they would be spending volunteering with TSNS 2020 is time that they could be working.<sup>cclx</sup> With many of the residents surviving off welfare payments or living pay cheque to pay cheque, the opportunity cost of working with TSNS 2020 for no set personal rewards is far too risky.<sup>ccli</sup> As a result, I am suggesting TSNS 2020 consider developing a payment stream for volunteers. The amount and structure of payments (hourly wages or honorariums for example), can be determined by those closest to the ground based on community needs. I believe the most important question to keep in mind when determining an amount or structure is what form of compensation will retain reliable and passionate volunteers. TSNS 2020 should consider hiring community residents to do outreach and engagement work beyond attending the formal meetings as it would open opportunities for income generation, network building, and give participants more of a stake in TSNS 2020's local success. Another form of compensation that I am quite frankly surprised has not been instituted already is a scholarship. Drawing from my own experience serving in the Canadian military, there were many soldiers that originally joined to receive the academic benefits but stayed on when they found the work fulfilling. Any concerns that people would just be attending for the money can be mitigated by strong performance management standards by those on the ground to ensure that participant are adequately conducting their tasks. Forms of non-monetary benefits can also be considered. For

example, free child care at the Neighbourhood Roundtables could help attract more families to provide their input or free transportation/ reimbursement for travel to and from meetings for those that cannot afford it.

The outreach portion of this recommendation is even more important and would require an altering of TSNS 2020's strategic approach to crime prevention discussed earlier. Currently, TSNS 2020 is attracting the residents that would typically engage with any publicly offered program. These people are typically community leaders or special interests that claim to represent community interest but realistically cannot possibly capture all 22,156 opinions, especially those vulnerable voices at the fringes. Therefore, TSNS 2020 needs to renew its commitment to sustained outreach. One suggestion that came up in my interviews was to reengage former gang members to perform a focussed portion of the outreach work.<sup>cclxii</sup> In addition to aiding in their re-entry and potentially lower recidivism, it allows TSNS 2020 access to some of the most vulnerable subsections within the Somali community that are directly connected to the violence. I was advised that there is an understanding between the gangs and certain local non-profits in which they can work with the younger members of the gangs as well as other young vulnerable girls and boys without worrying about any harm coming to themselves.<sup>cclxiii</sup> Given the unique nature of violent offending as uncovered by the National Network for Safer Communities, I strongly urge TSNS 2020 leadership to consider developing secondary action plans aimed at the needs of the subsection of Kingsview that is involved in violence. The more TSNS 2020 can help these young people navigate their personal and systemic issues, the greater chance society has at seeing them become productive members of society. The last piece of outreach involves reorienting some of TSNS

2020's focus from youth centred action to child centred. Considering that in Kingview, gang recruitment is occurring as young as 12 years old, TSNS 2020 must devote significant resources to damming the flow of young vulnerable children into the gangs. A reorientation of resources now, when the children are more malleable to change, can be painful in the short term but is much easier than trying to alter their past once there are juveniles, especially after they have already had negative contact with the law. TSNS 2020 should look at incorporating the educational system, families, religious organizations, and cultural associations to ensure that they can continue to identify and work with vulnerable individuals throughout the various stages of their life.

Moving away slightly from outreach and more into engagement, TSNS 2020 cannot forget to make every effort to include the wealthier residents of Kingsview. Building understanding between wealthy and poor residents is an ongoing challenge in Toronto but even more apparent in Kingsview where the community is adjacent to each other. These residents are active at the voting booth.<sup>cclxiv</sup> Therefore, they have much of the power over what will happen next in the neighbourhood. In the words of one of my interviewees, we must convince these residents that, "Someone else's poverty is your problem."<sup>cclxv</sup> In one of my interviews, it was stated that they are showing the wealthier residents that every time there is a shooting or deferred maintenance on the buildings occurs, their property values are adversely affected.<sup>cclxvi</sup> Furthermore, many of the wealthier residents are older and will begin to rely on the healthcare system more. As a result, I think it would be useful to incorporate statistics regarding how poverty in Toronto is costing the public health system \$730 million, \$23.7 million in hospital days, and \$322 million to \$345 million is forgone tax revenue, meaning that there is less in the public coffers for their



use.<sup>cclxvii</sup> Building communal understanding across the city is how the TSNS 2020 can have the longevity it needs to make mistakes, innovate, and ultimately be successful.

#### Build Accountability Mechanisms and Performance Metrics into the Implementation

It is important to remember that social programming costs a significant amount of public time and resources. As trustees of the public purse, city administrators have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that public dollars are being maximized for the benefit of the taxpayers. From my interviews with city staff involved in TSNS 2020 and the 2 community members, it did not appear that TSNS 2020 had any set evaluation methodology or periods at which it would evaluate the strategy's progression.<sup>cclxviii</sup>

Without a structured evaluation process, TSNS 2020 cannot possibly test their original theory of change and respond to its shortcomings in a swift manner. McKinsey Consulting Group documented how the Nature Conservancy implemented their evaluation criteria. For years, the Nature Conservancy was highly successful at acquiring lands in which vulnerable flora and fauna lived.<sup>cclxix</sup> However they observed that despite their efforts, the rate of extinction persisted.<sup>cclxx</sup> After evaluating their methodology, they realized that factors beyond their protected areas like soil erosion, pollution, etc., were still negatively impacting habitats, the Nature Conservancy expanded their focus to tackle these elements as well to garner greater success.<sup>cclxxi</sup>

In the same way, TSNS 2020 should link its metrics to its mission. Rather expressing how many people have been trained, look at what parts of Kingsview these residents hail from, conduct surveys to determine whether people within the neighbourhood know about the strategy, and how resident that are involved feel about its performance. From this data, TSNS 2020 can address gaps quickly and incorporate new ideas into their

planning. I understand that social programming is always politically contentious and expected to deliver longitudinal results in unrealistic timelines but TSNS 2020's lack of robust accountability metrics only hurts the initiative further by neglecting to fix problems. Furthermore, it was brought to my attention that there is seldom an audit conducted of how the Neighbourhood Grant money is being spent. My 2 interviewees in the community advised that to their knowledge there have been times when they suspected that certain events funded by Neighbourhood Grant money had their results exaggerated.<sup>ccclxxii</sup> Since there was no eye witness to misappropriation, I do not want to begin making unfounded accusations. However, I think this situation displays a clear flaw in the process. The city should be attending a cross section of these Neighbourhood Grant events so they provide informal control over how the money is being spent and can dispel any rumours of mishandling.

The process of building the correct metrics for evaluation can be challenging and will involve some trial and error. A good starting point for the purpose of evaluating crime reduction is to look at the identified criminogenic factors and any improvements in those outcomes. For example, can the action plans be adapted to identify and improve the graduation and proficiency rates of struggling Somali students in Kingsview, are those that are using the TSNS 2020 services attaining more personal wealth or having more success at finding employment over the course of their involvement, is TSNS 2020 delivering initiatives that result in improved relationships between Somali residents and the Toronto Police Service etc. I think the most important overall strategic metric to use would be to evaluate TSNS 2020's penetration into the lives of the most vulnerable subsection of the community. This metric would require an involved process that would

look at how many people using TSNS 2020 programming are affiliated with criminal elements (the individual or someone close to them like a family member is in a gang), how many people possess a criminal record, how many have they reoffended since using the TSNS 2020 resources, are these individuals simply users of the programming or are taking on leadership roles, etc. As stated earlier, determining the correct metrics for success is not a science and necessitates an element of trial and error. However, the suggestions outlined would be a good starting point for measuring success and can always be adapted along the way.

To address the cost of program evaluation, TSNS 2020 can easily partner with a local university to assist as part of a course. This method has routinely been used at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Master's of City Planning Program to help public and non-profit clients with everything from addressing financing gaps in redevelopment projects to designing new neighbourhood layouts and I believe TSNS 2020 could greatly benefit from external expertise that could objectively measure changes in the discussed metrics and then make recommendations that would ensure that TSNS 2020's operations is still on the trajectory to achieving its goals.

#### Create Partnerships between TSNS 2020 and New Private Sector Partners

TSNS 2020 was developed to be locally administered and executed. However, the role of larger non-profits appears to be hindering the growth of grassroots organizations that possess local expertise. Without engaging new organizations, TSNS 2020 risks isolating itself from significant amounts of capital and expertise that can be leveraged to improve outcomes. The biggest funding partner is the United Way which matches funds for TSNS 2020 programming without independently scrutinizes their merits.<sup>cclxxiii</sup>

I suggest working with a number of different funding partners for TSNS 2020 to fulfill their mandate. Canada is in the midst of a major skill shortage and is struggling to fill the gap.<sup>cclxxiv</sup> In Kingsview, the 2 most potent criminogenic factors are education and poverty meaning there are a host of unqualified and under/unemployed individuals. Therefore, it only makes sense for TSNS 2020 to create new partnerships with organizations that can bridge the educational and professional divide. Labour unions are constantly claiming that they cannot find enough candidates to fill vacancies which is a shame considering how the dormant access to labour that exists in places like Kingsview.<sup>cclxxv</sup> Other organizations like Toronto-based Code of Canada, can be used to help residents of Kingsview bridge the digital divide. Lastly, during one of my community interviews it was suggested that TSNS 2020 start involving large private organizations corporate social responsibility departments.<sup>cclxxvi</sup> In particular, the large Canadian banks routinely fund initiatives in Toronto's downtown but that money rarely makes it to the periphery of the city.<sup>cclxxvii</sup> Engaging with these large corporations gives Kingsview access to a funding partner that is not hamstrung by financial constraints but also possesses a deep professional network that can be leveraged.<sup>cclxxviii</sup> It was proposed that the city could attract and retain corporate sponsorship by providing tax incentives structured in such a way that large corporations that showed they had trained, employed, or donated to an initiative, etc. in an NIA like Kingsview, the city would give them a tax break or allow them to defer municipal taxes for a defined period.<sup>cclxxix</sup> I think there is merit in extending this same privilege to local business that employ individuals from low income backgrounds as it rewards local hiring practices, provides more working capital for the businesses, and provides economic benefit to the neighbourhood.

Whether one intellectually agrees with the premise or not, the reality of Kingsview is that the residents will have a lot of interaction with law enforcement officers. As a result, the rift that exists between law enforcement and the community is wholly harmful to generating salient and effective solutions to crime problems. Ironically enough, Toronto has a great reference of how to build a consensus between law enforcement and the public right here in Boston through the ‘Boston Miracle’ of the early 1990’s. Through my affiliation with the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, I had the privilege of listening to and engaging with Reverend Jeffery Brown of the Ten Point Coalition. The Ten Point Coalition is an organization of local Black Christian Ministers from the Boston area that was formed in part as a response to the high homicide rates amongst African American youth in Boston.<sup>cclxxx</sup> Forming a robust relationship with the Boston Police Department, this partnership has been credited as an integral part of the effort that resulted in an 80 percent decrease in violent crime committed by young African Americans over the proceeding decade.<sup>cclxxxii</sup>

In a similar situation to Toronto Police Service, the Boston Police Department was entering the 1990’s with a frayed relationship with the African American community.<sup>cclxxxiii</sup> Public trust was near all time lows and there was tremendous opposition to police intervention in community problems from community leadership including many of the pastors that would eventually become founding members of the Ten Point Coalition.<sup>cclxxxiiii</sup> The work of the coalition and the police helped mend these rifts and allowed them to put aside their differences in the name of good public safety.<sup>cclxxxv</sup>



Some of the most notable aspects of how the partnership operated include hosting gang forums in which local gang members were invited to sit down with the pastors, the police, and other city and social service agencies and city officials.<sup>cclxxxv</sup> At these meetings, the young men were sternly advised to stop gang banging and that should they persist in their current behaviour they would be subject to the full extent of the law.<sup>cclxxxvi</sup> Another notable aspect was the Boston Police Department's use of local knowledge provided by the pastors. To explain this, I will recount a useful anecdote from Rev. Brown. He advised that in every youth gang there was 5 members: 2 killers and 3 just hanging around for a sense of belonging.<sup>cclxxxvii</sup> The gang and drug units would often not be privy to this distinction without devoting significant resources to intelligence work. The Ten Point Coalition members, having lived with and watched many of these young men grow up, had direct knowledge of the dynamics and could supply the police with recommendations as to who were the real menaces to their communities.<sup>cclxxxviii</sup> Paraphrasing Rev. Brown, those 2 scare us and need to go, they other 3 we can work with.<sup>cclxxxix</sup> Having all public safety actors at the table allowed for a uniform goal setting and execution as well as internal conflict resolution to occur behind the scene. As a result, they could go into the communities knowing exactly what their roles were and how they could best support each other.<sup>ccxc</sup> TSNS 2020 was created to lessen competition between programs and streamline processes. Although the Ten Point Coalition was established to primarily deal with crime, there are lessons that the TSNS 2020 can learn from it. Bringing it into the local Kingsview context, TSNS 2020 should be bringing local imams and other community leadership into the frame with the Toronto Police Service to discuss

and operationalize issues of public safety. Rather than the ad hoc coalitions that form today after a major crime incident, a sustained partnership can help bridge the community and law enforcement divide so that each organization can perform effective, long term work in the community. The TSNS 2020's role in this regard can take the form of an initiator of an incorporated and community-directed immediate action response to crime in Kingsview or a facilitator in the formulation of a crime response taskforce independent from TSNS 2020. Regardless of the form it takes, I believe this element is essential in dealing with the immediate crime in Kingsview.

#### Do as the Toronto Public Library Does

Of all the city agencies that operating within TSNS 2020, I was the most impressed by the work of the Toronto Public Library, specifically the Richview Branch. When speaking with neighbourhood contacts about their interaction with TSNS 2020 and its component agencies, it became apparent that there was resistance from certain agencies to tailor their approach to fit the needs of the community they are trying to help improve.<sup>ccxcxi</sup> Operational rigidity has resulted in a misalignment between the strategy and individual agencies' goals, ultimately creating inaction.<sup>ccxcii</sup>

The Toronto Public Library seemed to understand from the onset that in order to participate in an innovative social program, the organization needs to have innovation built into its DNA. When speaking to a library official it was clear to me that the library had completely bought into the strategy's theory of change and was willing to redesign how it functions to fit the strategy's goals. After starting out as a more traditional participant confined to its branch, the library realized that old approach was ineffective and took stock of what the community needed. The new programming, such as the

Digital Innovation Hubs and outreach in the local welfare offices and jails, displays a real commitment to deliver its services to those that typically fall between the cracks of society.

The library, like the rest of agencies involved in TSNS 2020, suffers from a lack strong accountability and assessment metrics and a strong argument can be made that if they had these in place earlier then maybe they could have identified and rectified flaws in their original programming quicker. However, I think they still deserve credit for being flexible to amending their approach once they identified their issues.

## Conclusion

TSNS 2020 represents a new frontier in Toronto's social program delivery. However, like many new strategies, it is going through a series of growing pains before it flourishes. Despite the stated hiccups in Kingsview, I believe that the strategy still has the ability to be an effective mobilizer of community assets and mitigate the criminogenic factors that plague the neighbourhood. Understanding that deep seeded crime problems can only be solved with a longitudinal outlook and sustained investment in meaningful community/economic development and public safety practices is important for success. Therefore, I think it is unfair to judge the current crime trends in Kingsview too harshly. That being said, scrutiny should be applied to the current path of TSNS 2020's strategic and operational plan. If TSNS 2020 wants to create lasting change, it must change some of its current practices to ensure that it keeps evolving to meet the needs of Kingsview residents. Employing the suggested changes to TSNS 2020 can help improve service delivery and enhance the strategy's chances of achieving its mandate of creating stronger neighbourhoods that are vibrant, prosperous, and most of all safe for all.



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