

Ministry of the Attorney General

Justice Centres

Toronto Human Services and Justice
Coordinating Committee

September 12, 2019

Overview

Context

- Ontario's Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy

Discussion

- What is a Justice Centre?
- Justice Centres: Success in Other Jurisdictions
- Vision for Ontario's Justice Centres
 - Unique Justice Centre Model for Each Community
 - Toronto Downtown East
 - Implementation Plan and Timelines

Appendices

- A: Additional Resources
- B: Justice Centres: Vehicle for Reduction of Guns and Gangs

Background: Ontario's Guns, Gangs, and Violence Reduction Strategy and Justice Centres

- On March 26, 2019, the Government announced Phase 2 of Ontario's Guns, Gangs, and Violence Reduction Strategy. The Strategy takes a comprehensive approach to community safety by delivering (1) strong enforcement and prosecution, (2) proactive gang disruption and intervention, and (3) tailored youth and adult violence prevention.
- One of the signature initiatives under the Strategy is to establish Justice Centres in 4 communities across the province (1. Toronto-Northwest, 2. Toronto-Downtown East, 3. Kenora, and 4. London).
- On August 28, 2019, the Government announced Phase 3 of the Strategy, which commits additional funding to extend Phase 2 initiatives, as well as investments in new initiatives to combat guns and gangs on all fronts.
- \$16.4M was committed to Phase 2 initiatives over two years (2018/19-2019/20) and \$58M was committed to Phase 3 over three years (2020/21-2023/24). Phase 2 and Phase 3 are funded, in part, through the Federal Government's Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund.

*Long-term and sustainable **reduction** of guns, gangs and violence requires a **cross-sectoral approach** that works collectively on enforcement, intervention and prevention, to achieve **shared goals**.*

What is a Justice Centre?

- Introduced in over 70 communities around the world, Justice Centres **move justice out of the traditional courtroom and into a community setting**. These centres bring together justice, health, employment, education and social services to address the root causes of crime, break the cycle of offending, and improve public safety and community well-being.
- **Tailored to the unique needs of local communities**, these centres co-locate justice facilities (e.g. courtrooms) with front-end supports (e.g. primary healthcare, mental health supports), prevention services (e.g. employment and skills training) and community re-integration supports (e.g. peer counselling).
- By bringing different sectors together under one roof, Justice Centres help partners develop and deliver effective local gun and gang initiatives. Justice Centres are well-suited to house **intervention initiatives** that provide exit strategies for youth and young adults already involved in gang activity and **prevention programming** to support at-risk youth with alternatives to entering gangs.
- The Justice Centre model **improves outcomes for offenders, victims and communities** by holding individuals accountable for their offences while connecting them to services that reduce the risk of re-offending. Central to the approach is a commitment to better support victims and communities harmed by crime.

Justice Centres: Success in Other Jurisdictions

- The Justice Centre model is a **proven best practice** in over 70 communities, with demonstrated results:
 - Reduced recidivism rates
 - Improved public safety and community well-being
 - Reduced over-reliance on incarceration
 - Increased confidence and trust in the justice system

Canada's only Justice Centre, **Vancouver's Downtown Community Court** (since 2008), has been successful in increasing diversion, reducing recidivism, increasing access to services, improving integrated service delivery, and improving local community well-being.



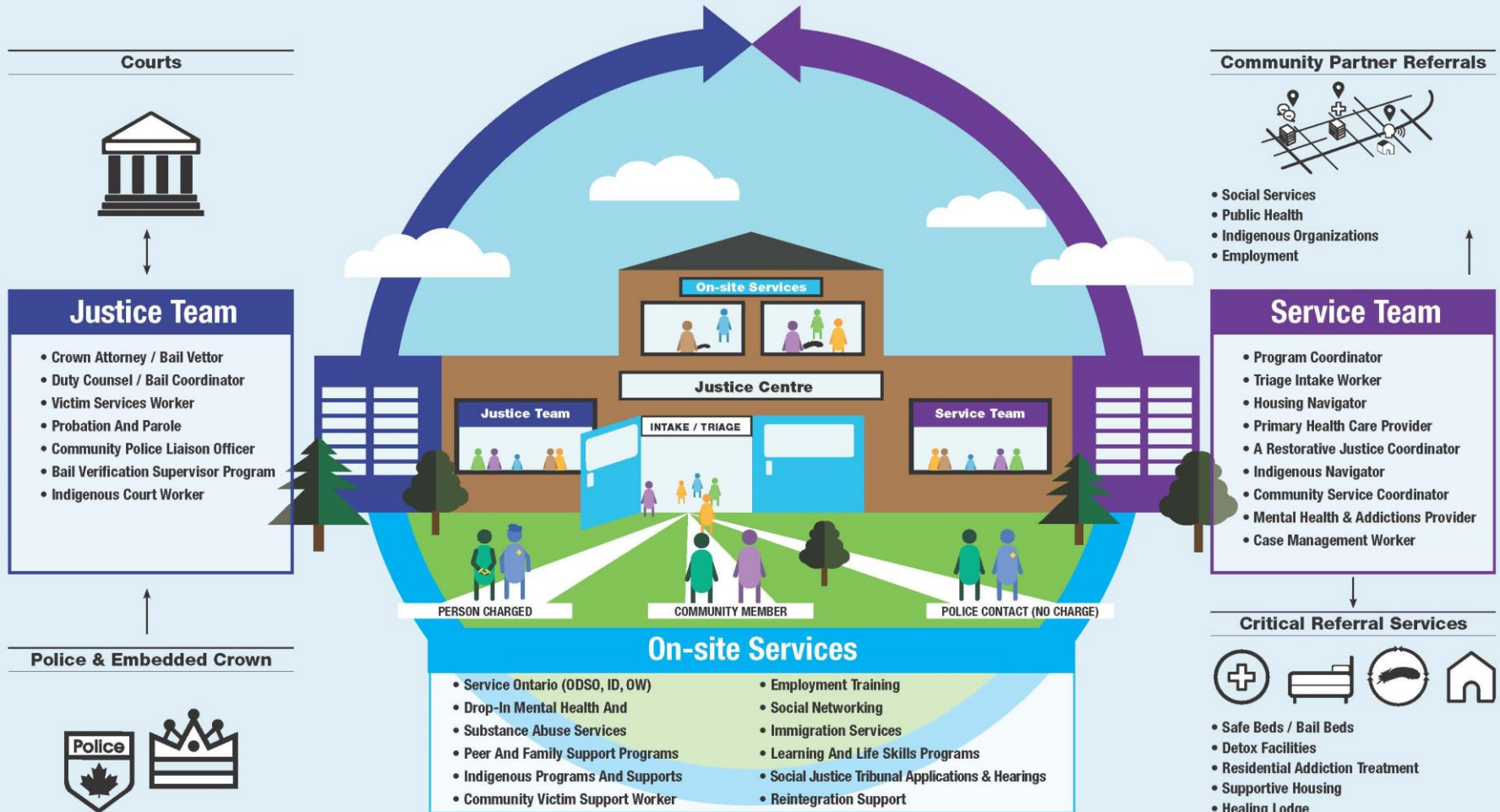
The **Red Hook Community Justice Centre** (Brooklyn, New York) has achieved:

- **35% reduction** in number of offenders receiving jail sentences.
- Adult offenders were 10% less likely to commit new crimes than similar offenders in a traditional court.
- Young offenders were 20% less likely to re-offend.
- **\$4,756 in savings per defendant**, and total of **\$15 million** in avoided victimization costs.



- Independent evaluations of Justice Centre models have concluded that local, coordinated and multi-agency responses are required to achieve long-term and sustainable reduction of crime. A new made-in-Ontario model will be informed by lessons learned and best practices from around the world.

Long-Term Vision for Ontario's Justice Centres



Unique Justice Centre Model for Each Community

- Each Justice Centre will be designed by and for the community it serves. Through a participatory design process, MAG is collaborating with local communities, service providers, law enforcement and justice system participants, municipalities, First Nations leadership and Indigenous organizations, Ontario Court of Justice and partner ministries.
- Informed by the community needs assessments in Toronto-Downtown East, Kenora and London (completed in 2018), and informed by the community needs review process in Toronto-Northwest (ongoing), MAG is working with local communities to design and implement Justice Centres to address each community's needs.

Toronto-Downtown East – Community Health Focus

Toronto's downtown East neighbourhood is hard at work in breaking the cycles of offending and victimization for Ontarians affected by homelessness, poverty, and mental health and addiction issues.

To help local justice, health and social service partners, the government will work with the local community on a Justice Centre approach that seeks to improve both urban community health and criminal justice. The focus will be on breaking the cycle of offending by addressing both criminogenic factors and social determinants of health.

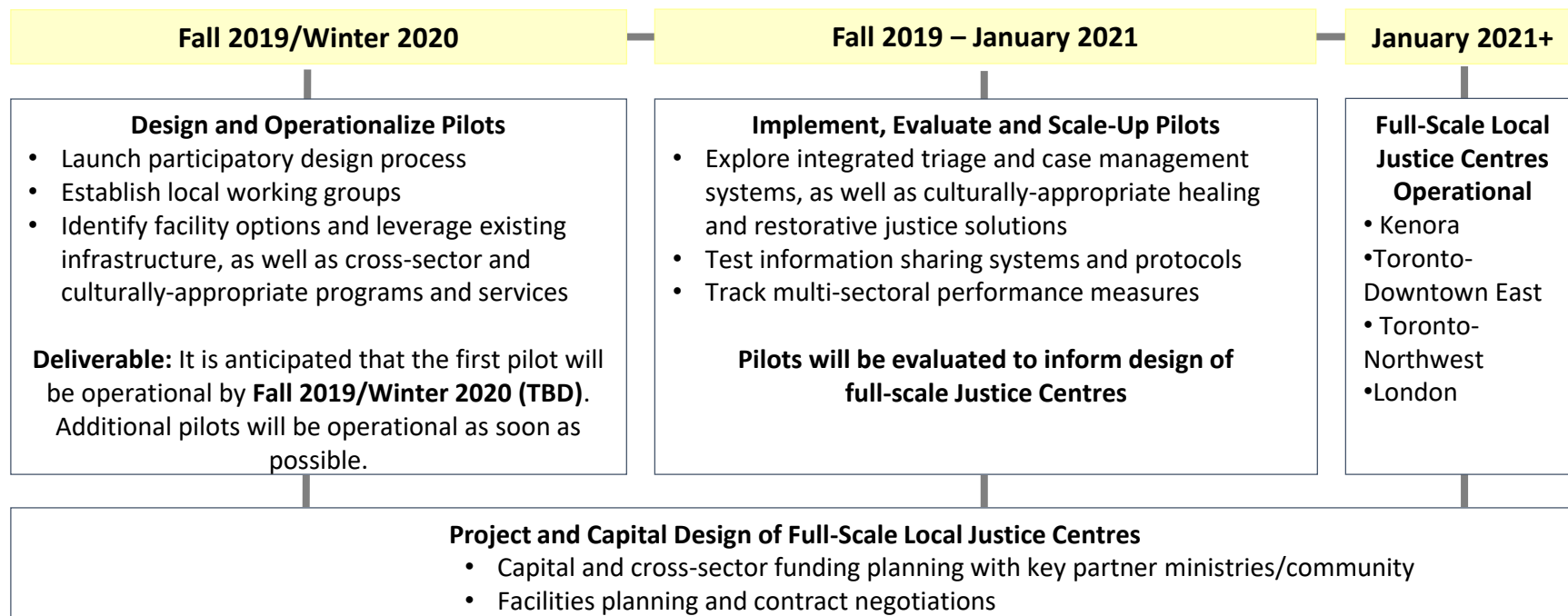
Toronto-Northwest – Gun Crime and Violence Reduction Focus

Neighbourhoods in Toronto's Northwest are experiencing escalating gun crime and violence that often involve youth and young adults. As a first step towards establishing a Justice Centre in the Northwest, the government has undertaken a crime response scan and community assessment.

The government will work with the local community to explore gun violence intervention and prevention strategies, as well as programs that provide employment, education and skills training, so that at-risk youth have new alternatives to criminal activity and better opportunities to improve their social and economic futures.

Implementation Plan and Timelines

- MAG is taking a phased approach to designing, evaluating, and expanding Justice Centres:
 - **Pilot Phase:** All locations will begin with pilots – smaller-scale initiative that incorporates some elements of a Justice Centre model – at select points of the justice process. Pilots will be a first step in the community engagement and participatory design processes. This will include engagement across justice and social service sectors, as well as with Indigenous and First Nations leaders/organizations and the Ontario Court of Justice.
 - **Operation and Evaluation Phase:** Pilots will then be evaluated and expanded.
 - **Full-Scale Justice Centre Phase:** Pilots will inform the design and establishment of full-scale justice centres - a dedicated facility with comprehensive co-located services.



Progress Update and Next Steps

Recent Engagement

- A publicly available Needs Assessment was completed for Toronto-Downtown East in 2017.
- The Justice Centres team has had preliminary discussions with partners from across sectors (e.g. justice, health, social services) regarding the participatory design and implementation of the two Toronto Justice Centre pilots and full-scale models
- MAG is reviewing community-based research, data and evidence to understand local needs to inform elements of the Justice Centres model in the Downtown East

Participatory Design Process

- To develop a Justice Centre pilot, the Justice Centres team is committed to culturally-relevant **participatory design** solutions that address local needs with a view toward implementing two full scale Justice Centres in Toronto.
- To support this work, MAG has retained **MASS LBP, an expert facilitation firm**, to support a participatory design process community and systems-level partners.
- The Justice Centres team will be establishing a **Toronto Justice Centre Advisory Committee** for each Toronto location to guide the participatory design process.

Evaluation

- MAG has engaged Blueprint ADE, an evaluation firm, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation framework of the Justice Centre pilot initiatives in Toronto including a logic model, an impact and efficiency program evaluation and value-for money and performance measurement assessment.

Toronto-Downtown East: Vision and Emerging Priorities

Vision

The Toronto-Downtown East Justice Centre will focus on breaking the cycle of offending for chronic offenders affected by homelessness, poverty, and mental health and addiction issues. Our goal is to bring together local community-based health and social service providers and justice partners to improve both urban community health and criminal justice outcomes.

Community Needs Assessment

Toronto's downtown East neighbourhood is home to some of the most challenging populations and public safety issues in Toronto. Many chronic offenders - struggling with poverty, mental health, addictions, lack of secure housing and unemployment - repeatedly cycle through a 'revolving door' justice system without access to meaningful off-ramps.

- Highest rate of major crime and priority calls to Toronto police (2017).
- Highest number of shelter beds of any Division in Toronto, accounting for 25% of the total.
- Hospital visits for mental health and addictions issues are 4x higher than City average. 38% of these visits were made by 36 patients who presented between 5 to 138 times each. 75% of the hospital visits were discharged with no supports.
- A high number of service providers operate in Toronto-DTE, but lack systemic structures to facilitate efficient coordination and integration of service delivery.

Focus Population

Emerging focus population for the Toronto-DTE pilot is **adults aged 18+** with a recent history of recidivism.

With a focus on holding individuals accountable, while supporting them to reduce their risk factors, eligible candidates could include offenders with:

- Mental health or addiction issues, or concurrent disorder;
- Lengthy criminal history;
- Do not qualify for Direct Accountability Program or mental health diversion;
- If found guilty of charges, would be facing custodial sentences



Toronto-Downtown East: Emerging Priorities

Intensive Community-Based Intervention for Chronic Offenders

Problem: While Ontario’s justice system has taken steps to establish specialized courts (e.g., Mental Health Courts, Drug Treatment Courts) to respond to the intersection between crime and mental health and addictions, there is still a system gap for chronic offenders whose offences and cycle of offending render them otherwise inappropriate for inclusion in existing programs.

Potential Pilot Option: Intensive interventions for chronic offenders through **comprehensive psycho social needs assessment, appropriate wrap-around services, and social interventions (community service, group programming) as appropriate.** Pilot would aim to hold individuals accountable, reduce risk of offending, and make meaningful connections to community-based mental health and addictions services that go beyond completion of the criminal matter.

Pilot could also facilitate improved coordination and integration between justice, health and social services to **reduce “transmission loss”** and ensure that connections to services actually occur (e.g., psychiatrist on-site, treatment programs nearby). Pilot could also ensure that community-based care and case management is sustainable. **Tailored community partnerships** could offer opportunities for social integration and improved well-being outcomes, as well as hold offenders accountable to provide community reparation for harms caused and bolster community confidence in the administration of justice.

Pilot Snapshot

Eligible Population:

- Adults (18+)
- Chronic offenders with history of mental health or addiction issues, or concurrent disorders with a recent history of recidivism.

Pilot Components:

- Psycho-social needs assessment
- Wrap-around services/supports
- Community service; group programming
- Multi-sectoral case management
- Continuity of treatment and care post-criminal justice system process

Desired Outcomes:

- *Offender:* Reduce risk of re-offending.
- *Community:* Improve public safety, reduce crime rates and concomitant victimization costs.
- *Justice System:* Tailored bail/probation conditions that set hard-to-reach clients up for success. Build court capacity to focus on serious offences and offenders.
- *Cross-Sector:* Enhanced systems integration of multi-disciplinary supports for complex clients. Cost savings for courts, corrections, and health sector.

Discussion Questions

Strategic Alignment

Are there currently any initiatives in Toronto that align with the Justice Centre model and focus in Toronto's downtown east?

Outside of HSJCC, are there other coordinating/local planning tables that should be made aware of the Justice Centre model and next steps?

Toronto-Downtown East

What services and supports do you think are critical to have in the Downtown East location to help chronic offenders avoid and exit the criminal justice system?

How ought to these services be delivered to individuals with complex, intersecting needs?

Appendix A: Additional Resources

- Ontario's News Release on Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy – Phase 3 (August 26, 2019), available at: <https://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2019/8/ontario-supporting-more-communities-in-their-fight-against-guns-and-gangs.html>
- Ontario's News Release on Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy – Phase 2 (March 26, 2019), available at: <https://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2019/03/ontario-supporting-the-local-fight-against-gun-and-gang-violence.html>
- Ontario's Backgrounder on Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy – Phase 2 (March 26, 2019), available at: <https://news.ontario.ca/mag/en/2019/03/ontarios-guns-and-gangs-strategy-phase-two-initiatives.html>
- Ministry of the Attorney General's website on Justice Centres, available at: <https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/justice-centres/>
- Toronto-Downtown East Community Needs Assessment, available at: <https://toronto.cjc-ccj.ca/>
- Kenora Community Needs Assessment, available at and upon request: <https://kenora-cjc-ccj.ca/english>
- London Community Needs Assessment, available at: <https://london.cjc-ccj.ca/>