A Synopsis of a Proposal to Facilitate the Secure Commerce Collaborative

Enhancing Safety and Security for Inner-City and Indigenous-Owned Stores and Businesses

Submitted by Gerry Kaplan and Renee Greyeyes

1) Introduction:

In light of the increasing challenges faced by inner-city stores and businesses, and those owned or managed by Indigenous persons, regarding crime, vandalism, and safety concerns, this proposal outlines a research and strategic planning process to enhance security and support for these establishments. It is designed to identify key issues and to provide actionable solutions to improve safety and to create a more secure business environment in Winnipeg's inner-city. It would be undertaken in collaboration with an **Advisory Committee.** A **project sponsor would be identified** to administer this project. The Advisory Committee would be involved in establishing the scope and content of the proposed activities; identifying potential survey respondents and focus group participants; and participating in the strategic planning process. Advisory Committee members would be asked to review draft reports and presentations prior to publication. The research component of this initiative would be undertaken by **Kaplan Research Associates Inc**.

We would seek to work in partnership with organizations and associations representing stores and businesses in the target neighbourhoods. They could provide their perspectives on the related challenges facing their members, while also facilitating contact with prospective survey respondents. They could include, in part, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce; the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce; Downtown Winnipeg Biz; and local business associations with members located in the inner-city. We would also seek the participation of representatives of Winnipeg Police Services to serve as key resources to our processes. Representatives from these groups or associations could be members of the Advisory Committee or, at the very least, participate in focus groups or the strategic planning process.

This document provides a proposal, in principle, which includes the goals, objectives, and the related activities and deliverables for this project.

2) Project Goals:

The primary goals of this initiative are:

- **Enhancing Safety:** To safeguard inner-city and Indigenous-owned stores and businesses from theft, vandalism, violence, and other forms of criminal activity.

- **Empowering Staff:** To provide managers and staff with essential skills and knowledge to:
  - Prepare their premises to prevent and respond to criminal incidents.
  - Identify and contact the appropriate resources when issues arise.
  - Implement preventative measures to avoid criminal activities.
  - Effectively de-escalate potentially dangerous situations.
  - Foster supportive networks with community businesses.

- **Additional Goals:** We welcome any additional goals that may be relevant and should be included in this project.

3) Project Objectives:

- To undertake a **Literature Review and Internet Search** to identify and report on other jurisdictions that have developed crime prevention processes, including related documents, processes, protocol, any related evaluation outcomes, and possibly the causes of their inner-city crime.

- To undertake a **Survey-Research Process** to explore the experiences of inner-city and/or Indigenous-owned stores and businesses regarding criminal or otherwise unsafe situations and occurrences they have experienced; how they addressed them; and how this has impacted their employees, their customers, and their ability to provide their goods or services.

- To conduct **Focus Groups**, in preparation for a strategic planning process to review the findings of the literature review and Internet search, and the survey findings. The outcomes of the focus groups would provide content to be shared through the strategic planning process. Focus group questions would be developed in conjunction with the Advisory Committee, which would also assist in selecting focus group participants. Focus group participants would receive an honorarium in recognition of their time.

- To facilitate a **Strategic Planning Process** to develop a ***made-in-Manitoba approach*** to enhance the safety of inner-city and Indigenous-owned stores and businesses, and empowering their staff. This would be based on the results of the literature review and Internet searches; the survey research; and the results of the focus groups. The ultimate purpose of this project would be to develop the initial components of ***Winnipeg Inner-City Crime Prevention Guidelines***.

- To **Write and Disseminate the Final Report**, including all components of this project for dissemination to stakeholders and beyond. The scope and methods of disseminating the report would be determined by the Advisory Committee. The full report along with a highlights report would be produced in both paper and pdf formats. Links to the pdf versions of these reports would be shared with the participating stores and businesses; partnering organizations; other stakeholders; and the general public.

- To **Develop a Resource Booklet** to provide inner-city and Indigenous-owned stores and businesses with the information and tools to make positive personal connections with other local stores and businesses; to better understand the community culture; and to develop supportive partnerships.

4) Expanding On Our Proposed Activities:

4.1) Undertaking a Literature Review and Internet Search:

The proposed literature review and Internet search would identify other jurisdictions in Canada, the United States and beyond, which have developed inner-city crime prevention strategies. We would review how they went about developing their strategies; what their strategies include; the methods they use to reduce crime; their lessons learned; and their outcomes. We would use this information to identify their respective best practices and determine their applicability for Winnipeg's inner-city neighbourhoods. A comparative analysis of the varying strategies would be part of this project.

4.2) Developing and Administering a Survey of Store or Business Owners or Managers:

A survey would be administered to managers or owners of inner-city or Indigenous-owned or managed stores and businesses. One survey would be developed using two survey formats. The first format would be an online survey using ***Qualtrics*** software. The second format would be a scannable (paper) version of the same survey, using ***TELEform*** software, to be completed by store or business owners or managers who may not have Internet access. The scannable surveys would be distributed and picked up by research assistants. Another option for the paper surveys would be to provide the forms in stamped self-addressed envelopes. Prize draws may be instituted to increase our response rate.

Survey questions would be developed in consultation with the Advisory Committee, Winnipeg Police Services, and other stakeholders. All data from both formats would be merged into a single database using the ***Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*** (SPSS) for quantitative analysis. Open-ended responses would be subjected to content analysis.

Preliminary findings would be shared with the Advisory Committee and other stakeholders for feedback, through a ***PowerPoint*** presentation.

4.3) Conducting Focus Groups - Sharing and Discussing Our Findings:

We would conduct focus groups to review and discuss our findings. Each focus group would include from five to eight participants who would be identified by the Advisory Committee or other stakeholders. The focus groups would develop preliminary plans and strategies to address the issues identified through our survey-based research, and the applicability of some the crime prevention initiatives identified through the literature review and Internet search. The results of the focus groups would form the basis, in part, for our strategic planning process.

4.4) Facilitating a Strategic Planning Process:

This strategic planning process would be planned and facilitated by the sponsoring organization along with members of the Advisory Committee and other key stakeholders. The role of the researchers would be to present the main findings from the survey, the literature review, and the focus groups. Based on this information the focus of the plenary component would be to address specific concerns and develop tailored solutions for Winnipeg's inner-city stores and businesses. The results of this process would be included in the final report.

4.5) Writing Our Report:

The final component of this proposed project would be consolidating the results of the literature review; the survey-based research; the focus groups; and the strategic planning process into a ***Fully-Annotated Technical Report*** along with a ***Highlights Report***. Each component of our project would comprise a chapter of the report, each of which could be produced individually, as stand-alone documents. The survey data would be presented in graphic or tabular formats along with a written interpretation of the findings. PDFs of the reports would be made broadly available. The Highlights Report would be adapted into the ***Resource Booklet***.

5) Conclusion:

This synopsis outlines a structured approach to improving the safety and security of inner-city and Indigenous-owned stores and businesses. We believe that by implementing these steps we can make a significant impact in reducing crime and enhancing the overall safety and security of these establishments, and the neighbourhoods in which they are located. We look forward to discussing this proposal further and exploring how we can work together to achieve our goals. Some of the questions we'd like to explore at the September 11th meeting of the Winnipeg Police Board could include:

1) This proposed project includes: a literature review/Internet search; survey-based research of inner city and Indigenous-owned businesses; focus groups; and a strategic planning process. Have similar local studies been undertaken? If so, when were the most recent studies completed?
2) Do you believe there is a need for this proposed project at this time? If you do, would WPS be a partner to this project, possibly having representation on its Advisory Committee?
3) What do you see as the current major criminal or safety issue for inner-city stores and businesses?
4) We've identified some potential partners to this project, such as the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. What are a couple of other potential organizations or groups to include on the Advisory Committee?
5) Given the origin of this proposal, when the focus was solely on Indigenous-owned businesses, the plan was for ICC to sponsor this project. With the expansion to include all inner-city businesses this is no longer an option. We're currently looking for a registered charity to sponsor this project. What are some potential sponsors that come to mind for you?
6) Are you aware of any foundations or other funding sources that may be open to supporting this project? Can you think of any possible corporate funding sources?