

September 7, 2023.  
Women's Advisory Committee Meeting

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# **Women's Safety Assessments**

A tool for making public spaces safer for women, girls  
and non-binary people

# What is a WSA?

The Women's Safety Assessment (WSA) is a participatory tool used to build safer neighbourhoods, schools, parks, campuses, workplaces, transit systems and other public spaces.

It brings together community members and other important partners to assess the space and make safety recommendations. It is grounded in women's, girls' and non-binary people's expertise from daily lived experiences of using, or choosing not to use, a space.



# History of the WSA

Safety assessments were first developed in 1989 by the Metro Toronto Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC).

The tool builds on the best practices of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and incorporates culturally competent, asset-based community development and gender-based approaches.



# The 7 Principles of Design

Know where you are and where you are going



- Signage
- Signals
- Orientation

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## See and be Seen



- Visibility
- Lighting
- Hiding places

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## Hear and be Heard



- Rush hour
- Peak circulation
- Social use of space
- Proximity of others

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## Being able to escape and get help

<EXIT>

- Informal and formal surveillance
- Access to emergency services
- Multiple route options

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## A clean and welcoming environment



- Design
- Maintenance
- Management
- Organized space

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## Working together



- Community Participation
- Grassroots involvement
- Partnerships

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# The 7 Principles of Design

## Accessibility and Inclusion



- Universal Accessibility
- Flexible space
- Barriers to Access

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# WSAs in HRM

In 2020, the Public Safety Office hosted a workshop with WSA expert and consultant Kathryn Travers. Diverse members of the community were trained as WSA facilitators.

These community members continue to support and facilitate WSAs across the municipality.



# WSAs in HRM

- Findlay Park
- Harbourview Elementary School
- Jason McCullough Park
- Simmonds Road, North Preston
- Morash Park
- Quinpool Road
- Chebucto Road Park



# The WSA Tool

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# Opportunities for Future Development

- The WSA as a tool to monitor & evaluate
- Strengthening processes for understanding the impact of WSAs, changes that occur as a result
- Capturing and communicating results
- Knowledge sharing– broadening the use of the tool
- Assessing more public spaces

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