



Item No. 2
Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality
June 17, 2024

TO: Chair Kent and Members of the Board of Police Commissioners for the Halifax Regional Municipality

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 12, 2024

SUBJECT: **Alignment of Public Safety Reports**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

August 2, 2023, Board of Police Commissioners motion (Item 7.1)

MOVED by Commissioner Critchley, seconded by Commissioner Blackburn

The Board of Police Commissioners requests that the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) direct the Policy Advisor for the Board of Police Commissioners to work with the Community Safety Office, the Halifax Regional Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to:

1. Identify areas of overlap between recommendations and actions contained in the Wortley Report, Defund Report, Public Safety Strategy and Mass Casualty Commission Final Report; and
2. Prepare a staff report outlining these areas of overlap and associated recommendations for consideration as a part of the Board's 2023-2024 workplan.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Legislative Authority is outlined in the attached staff report dated May 15, 2024

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The attached report dated May 15, 2024 is prepared in response to requests from both the Board of Police Commissioners and Regional Council to identify areas of alignment within recommendations contained in various public safety reports received by both bodies.

On June 4, 2024, Regional Council received the attached report and unanimously approved the following recommendations:

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Endorse Recommendation V. 14, Mobilizing a Society Wide Response, in the Mass Casualty Commission Final Report, and declare gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence to be an epidemic that warrants a meaningful and sustained society-wide response;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report with respect to the municipality's role in providing a meaningful and sustained society-wide response to gender-based, intimate partner and family violence, including reviewing the municipality's internal policies and identifying any gaps;
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review and update bylaw P-100, incorporating references to Dr. Ian Loader, "In Search of Civic Policing: Recasting the 'Peelian' Principles", as appropriate; and
4. Direct the Mayor to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the *Police Act* and the *Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act*, in light of recent studies and recommendations.

A video recording of Regional Council's deliberations on this item can be found here: [Archived Video - Halifax Regional Municipality \(HRM\) \(isiglobal.ca\)](#)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications are outlined in the attached staff report, dated May 15, 2024.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is outlined in the attached staff report, dated May 15, 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Staff recommendation report dated May 15, 2024.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Joshua Bates, Policing Policy Strategist, Legal & Legislative Services, 902-478-2032



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 15.1.3
Halifax Regional Council
June 4, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 15, 2024

SUBJECT: **Alignment of Public Safety Reports**

ORIGIN

November 14, 2023, Halifax Regional Council motion (Item 15.1.1)

MOVED by Councillor Kent, seconded by Councillor Blackburn

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review areas of alignment and associated recommendations and actions between the Wortley Report, Defund Report, Public Safety Strategy and Mass Casualty Commission Final Report;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer or delegate(s) to meet with provincial representatives, including from the Department of Justice and the Department of Community Services, and community stakeholders to receive input on implementation options for recommendations;
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to report back to Halifax Regional Council and the Board of Police Commissioners within 6 months

MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter – Section 2 – Purpose of Act:

The purpose of this Act is to:

- (a) give broad authority to the Council, including broad authority to pass by-laws, and respect its right to govern the Municipality in whatever ways the Council considers appropriate within the jurisdiction given to it;
- (b) enhance the ability of the Council to respond to present and future issues in the Municipality; and

- (c) recognize the purposes of the Municipality set out in Section 7A.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Halifax Regional Council:

1. Endorse Recommendation V. 14, Mobilizing a Society Wide Response, in the Mass Casualty Commission Final Report, and declare gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence to be an epidemic that warrants a meaningful and sustained society-wide response;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report with respect to the municipality's role in providing a meaningful and sustained society-wide response to gender-based, intimate partner and family violence, including reviewing the municipality's internal policies and identifying any gaps;
3. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review and update bylaw P-100, incorporating references to Dr. Ian Loader, "In Search of Civic Policing: Recasting the 'Peelian' Principles", as appropriate; and
4. Direct the Mayor to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the *Police Act*, in light of recent studies and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

This report is prepared in response to requests from both the Board of Police Commissioners and Regional Council to identify areas of alignment within recommendations contained in various public safety reports received by both bodies.

In response to a report on race and police "street checks", the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission conducted an inquiry into the relationship between race and police street checks in the Halifax region. The result, Halifax, Nova Scotia: Street Checks Report ("the Wortley Report") was written by Dr. Scot Wortley and received by the Board of Police Commissioners (BoPC) in April 2019. The BoPC receives regular Wortley Report Progress Updates. The last update was received in May 2024.

In September 2020, the BoPC appointed Dr. El Jones to develop a proposal and recruit a subcommittee to recommend a definition of defunding the police for the Board's consideration. The Subcommittee's final report, Defunding the Police: Defining the Way Forward for HRM ("the Defund Report"), was received by the BoPC in January 2022.

In March 2023, the Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026 ("The Public Safety Strategy") was adopted by Regional Council. Shortly thereafter, a Community Safety Business Unit was formed. One of the mandates of the new Business Unit is to lead implementation of the Public Safety Strategy.

In late March 2023, The Mass Casualty Commission's (MCC) final report and recommendations entitled Turning the Tide Together ("the MCC Report") was released publicly. The MCC was an independent public inquiry created to examine the April 18-19, 2020 mass casualty in Nova Scotia and to provide meaningful recommendations to help keep communities safe.

In April 2023, the Policing Model Transformation Study: Future Policing Model Recommendations ("the Police Transformation Study"), written by PricewaterhouseCoopers, was received by Halifax Regional Council. Regional Council referred the report to the BoPC for their review and directed the CAO to report back to Council in 18 months regarding the viability of achieving an integrated policing model with recommendations for next steps. Regional Council also directed the CAO to request that HRM be a

participant in the multisectoral council being developed by the Province. A Nova Scotia Policing Review Engagement Advisory Committee has been formed in response to MCC recommendation P.67, the Future Structure of Policing in Nova Scotia.

In July 2023, upon receiving the Police Transformation Study, the BoPC requested the police services to work with the Community Safety Office to prepare a staff report outlining the necessary steps to achieve an integrated operating model and for the Chiefs of the two police services to provide verbal updates during each regularly scheduled meeting of the BoPC. An Information Report providing an update to the Police Transformation Study was received by the BoPC in May 2024.

The Wortley Report, Defund Report, MCC Report, Public Safety Strategy and Police Transformation Study each emphasize the need for a shared approach toward public safety, collaboration with community, and governance structures to support that collaboration. Both the Police Transformation Study and the Public Safety Strategy are informed by the Defund Report. The Public Safety Strategy was also informed by a community advisory committee that included two representatives from the Defund Report Subcommittee and incorporates actions from the Defund Report recommendations. Several other actions are influenced by recommendations in the Defund Report.

In August 2023, the BoPC received a report that outlines preliminary areas of alignment with recommendations and actions contained in the Mass Casualty Commission, Wortley Report, Defund Report, Public Safety Strategy and the Police Transformation Study. These areas of alignment include Intimate Partner Violence, Gender Based Violence and Third-Party Reporting, Mental Health Care, Use of Force and Police Culture.

In May 2024, the Progress Monitoring Committee, established under Recommendation I.1 of the MCC Report, released its Initial Six-Month Update.

This report addresses 18 of the 36 recommendations in the Defund Report, including most recommendations that fall within the direct purview of the Board of Police Commissioners. The status of all Defund Report recommendations is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

Since the release of the above referenced reports, staff from various Business Units have collaborated to identify areas of alignment across recommendations within these reports and have met with Government of Nova Scotia (GNS) staff who are working to implement MCC Report recommendations. This work included identifying areas where alignment exists already with Actions under the Public Safety Strategy, where possible future alignment could take place as work under the Public Safety Strategy unfolds, and areas that may warrant future exploration by the BoPC. As a result of this collaboration, staff have identified four themes that reflect areas of alignment within the recommendations and Actions outlined in each of the reports:

- 1) Gender Based/Intimate Partner Violence
- 2) Alternative Response
- 3) Police Transformation
- 4) Accountability & Transparency

The specific recommendations and actions that align with each of the above themes are provided in Attachment 2.

Gender Based/Intimate Partner Violence

The recommendations that fall under the Gender Based/Intimate Partner Violence and Alternative Response themes align with Actions under the Public Safety Strategy. As a part of Regional Council's approval of the Public Safety Strategy, the CAO was directed to provide an annual progress report to

Regional Council. In March 2024, Regional Council received the Public Safety Strategy Annual Report as an Information Report (Attachment 3).

The municipality's Public Safety Advisor contributed to a roundtable discussion that informed MCC Report recommendations related to community-led safety, and the implementation of the Strategy is aligned with several relevant MCC recommendations, in particular with Action 1.2, Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program.

Alignment between the Safe City Program's action areas and the MCC recommendations include V.7 Countering victim blaming and hyper-responsibilization of women survivors; V.9 Creating Safe Spaces to report violence; V.14 Mobilizing a society-wide response; V.15 Women-centered strategies and actions; V.16 Putting women's safety first; C.17 Promoting bystander intervention as a daily practice.

In addition to the work outlined in the Public Safety Strategy Annual Report, Regional Council's 2024-2025 budget approved the following additional expenditures that align with recommendations under the Gender Based Violence/Intimate Partner Violence Theme:

Enhance Safe City Program (\$250,000 for 2024/25; \$250,000 annualized, ongoing).

This investment addresses the Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026 Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City Program: Alternative, women-centered reporting service for survivors of gender-based violence and sexual violence.

With respect to MCC Report Recommendation V.14, staff are recommending that Regional Council declare gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence to be an epidemic that warrants a meaningful and sustained society-wide response. This recommendation is backed by numerous organizations, including Women's Shelters Canada, Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, and the Be the Peace Institute. While the cost of gender-based violence is in many ways unquantifiable, the urgency of this recommendation is also backed by data:

- At least one woman or girl is killed by violence every 48 hours in Canada,¹ and the killing of women and girls involving male accused in Canada increased by 27 percent in 2022 compared to the pre-COVID year, 2019²;
- In 2021, 86% (750) of domestic violence files designated as high risk for fatality in Nova Scotia involved female victims; and
- Nova Scotia rates of police-reported domestic violence remains higher than the national rate³

In addition to the work outlined in the Public Safety Strategy, staff are recommending that as a part of the meaningful and sustained society-wide response called for in Recommendation V.14, that Regional Council direct the CAO to review the municipality's internal policies and identify any gaps. Domestic violence can carry over into the workplace, threatening women's ability to maintain economic independence. According to research conducted by the Canada Employment and Immigration Union, more than half (53%) of study respondents who experienced domestic violence said that at least one type of abusive act happened at or near their workplace. Almost 40% of those who had experienced domestic abuse said it made it difficult for them to get to work, and 8.5% said that they lost their job because of it.⁴

Alternative Response

The MCC Report's recommendation for a comprehensive mental health service (P. 60) aligns with Defund

¹ Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, #CallItFemicide: Understanding sex/gender-related killings of women and girls in Canada, 2018-2022, p. 8 [callitfemicide2018-2022.pdf](#)

² Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, #CallItFemicide: Understanding sex/gender-related killings of women and girls in Canada, 2018-2022, p. 5 [callitfemicide2018-2022.pdf](#)

³ Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia, December 2022 [domestic-violence-factsheet.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](#)

⁴ #CEIU16Days of Activism, November 24, 2023 [#CEIU16Days of Activism - CEIU Ontario](#)

Report Recommendations 14 & 15, Action 2.1 in the Public Safety Strategy, and the Police Transformation Study's call for the creation of a community safety function separate from police.

In addition to the work outlined in the Public Safety Strategy Annual Report, Regional Council allocated additional resources to advance this work, augmenting the Community Safety budget with the addition of 2 FTEs and operating budgets for actioning new services and policies necessary to build up alternative responses. This includes the development of a community crisis diversion and outreach and transportation services.

Police Transformation

The recommendations included under the Police Transformation theme align with the principles outlined in the Police Transformation Study, namely to ensure that there is streamlined and integrated communications, operations and leadership within and between police services. An Update on the Policing Transformation Study was received by the BoPC in May 2024. The specific recommendations from the Police Transformation Study will be addressed in an upcoming report to Regional Council. Below is a brief update on the remaining recommendations under the Police Transformation theme.

In September 2023, the GNS announced a comprehensive review of the policing structure in Nova Scotia (MCC Recommendation P.67). The review may result in recommended changes for how policing services are delivered in the province.

In March 2024, the GNS announced that Deloitte will be conducting the comprehensive technical review of policing, and the members of the Nova Scotia Policing Review Engagement Advisory Committee, which is co-chaired by Councillor Lindell Smith (also a Police Commissioner), who was appointed as a community member, and includes CAO Cathie O'Toole as the municipality's official representative. In discussions with provincial staff, the comprehensive review could result in recommended changes to the *Police Act*. In lieu of advocating for a legislative committee, staff are recommending that Regional Council direct the Mayor to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the *Police Act*, in light of recent studies and recommendations (Defund Report Recommendation 13).

In response to MCC Report Recommendation P. 68, Information Sharing, the GNS led the formation of a *Community Safety and Wellbeing Information Sharing Working Group* (WG). The WG includes representation from the HRP and RCMP and is co-chaired by the Executive Council Office in the GNS and Community. The mandate of the WG is to connect various information sharing initiatives with a focus on achieving earlier detection and response to gender-based, intimate partner, domestic, and family violence.

Other recommendations under this theme (MCC Recommendations P.1, P.36 & P.75) speak to the principles of collaboration among emergency responders and the advocacy and support sectors, which apply to the HRP, RCMP and the Community Safety Business Unit. While trauma-informed HRP Victims Services workers work directly with victims of intimate-partner violence, and there is a program within HRP that works directly with offenders, several of the initiatives referenced earlier in this report, including a civilianized mental health response, formalizing third-party reporting for victims of sexual offences, and establishing a stabilization centre, will require the type of collaboration described in these recommendations. To formally acknowledge the collaboration required to achieve the cultural change described in each of the reports, staff are recommending that Regional Council direct the CAO to review and update bylaw P-100, incorporating references to Dr. Ian Loader, "In Search of Civic Policing: Recasting the 'Peelian' Principles", as appropriate (MCC Recommendation P.36). These principles are included in this report as Attachment 4.

Accountability & Transparency

The HRP, RCMP and BoPC have begun to make progress on many of the recommendations under this theme. In August 2020, the BoPC passed a motion directing the HRP and RCMP to "make available to the public, via the website, their policies". Beginning in Spring 2023, the HRP has begun the process of [posting](#)

[their policies online](#). In early 2024, HRP hired a Senior Policy Advisory to oversee this process, and additional policies are expected to continue to be posted. In March 2024, the RCMP updated [its website](#) created in response to the MCC report, stating that it will “Examine publicly publishing all RCMP Policies” (Defund Report Recommendation 6; MCC Report Recommendation P.62).

One policy that has been posted publicly is [HRP’s Use of Force policy](#), which is currently under review. In addition, in March 2024, the BoPC directed staff to work with the HRP to develop a Use of Force policy for inclusion in the BoPC’s Policy Manual. This high-level policy would outline the principles to be reflected in HRP’s revised Use of Force policy (Defund Report Recommendations 4 & 5; MCC Report Recommendation P.57). Background research will include reviewing literature and speaking with subject matter experts to identify emerging best practices with respect to use of force (Defund Report Recommendations 2 & 3). When announced, the GNS’ new police standards are also expected to impact the Use of Force policies of police services across the province. In 2022, the RCMP published a [Police Intervention Options Report](#).

The BoPC has been actively engaged in both exercising its authority to create policies for the board’s policy manual and in the HRP’s policy review (Defund Report Recommendation 8 & 9). For example, as a part of the HRP’s policy review process, the BoPC has passed motions to review the HRP’s policies related to Off Duty and Extra Duty employment and Use of Force. In addition, the BoPC has passed motions to create policies for inclusion its policy manual relating to policing and homelessness and Use of Force. Amendments have been made to the BoPC’s Policy Manual on an ongoing basis and the BoPC has passed motions for specific policies to be reviewed and refreshed.

The BoPC has initiated several activities to improve its function and that align with recommendations received in public safety reports (MCC Recommendation P.61; Police Transformation Study Recommendation 1). These activities include:

- Ongoing funding to seek independent legal advice and for a staff position to conduct research and provide policy support.
- Instituting a stipend for non-Councillor Commissioners.
- Instituting a process to track member terms and to address expired terms in a timely manner.
- Creating a process for members of the public to communicate with BoPC members.
- Ensuring that meetings take place in a public location and are live streamed. Advance notice of the time, location, agenda and expected speakers is posted online. An archived video of meetings is also available online.
- Ensuring that BoPC meetings are scheduled in accordance with the *Police Act*.
- Adopting a policy regarding expectations for attendance at BoPC meetings.
- Adopting a revised board self-evaluation policy that may be used to identify required skills and expertise when recruiting new members and for overall succession planning.

The HRP and RCMP are engaged in several initiatives to counter systemic racism (Wortley Report Recommendations 4.1 & 4.2; MCC Report Recommendation P.74). For example, the HRP introduced new testing for recruits in both cultural competency and racial bias and all officers have received Fair and Impartial Policing training, while the rollout of Journey to Change (anti-black racism training) is on-going. The Legitimate and Bias Free training module is being offered to the entire frontline membership. Beyond training, the creation of the Hate Crimes Unit in 2022 has enabled HRP to better track and respond to incidents that are hate-related.

The RCMP have implemented applicant screening tools nationally to promote diversity and ensure candidates have the characteristics and attributes needed for policing into the future, including screening for bias, racism and discriminatory attitudes and beliefs. They have also introduced mandatory Cultural Awareness and Humility training for all employees, in addition to the African Canadian Experience Course, which was developed in 2018 by visible minority employees.

Regarding the police complaints process, as an initial step, amendments were made to the Police Regulations under the *Police Act*, extending the timeframe to file a complaint against municipal police

officers from six months to one year, which aligns with the timelines for filing complaints against RCMP officers. Authority was given to the Police Complaints Commissioner to extend the time limit for making a complaint if it is in the public interest. Further alignment with recommendations related to the police complaints process (Wortley Report Recommendation 4.11; Defund Report Recommendations 10 & 11) will likely require amendments to the *Police Act* as a first step. Staff are therefore recommending that Regional Council direct the Mayor to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the *Police Act*, in light of recent studies and recommendations (Defund Report Recommendation 13).

The *Police Act* sets policing standards for the province. Similar to the comprehensive review of the policing structure currently taking place, all Nova Scotia policing standards are currently under review, including standards related to training. Therefore, this review may impact the training delivered by HRP (Defund Report Recommendation 1) and any performance metrics established by Regional Council and the BoPC (Defund Report Recommendation 33).

While the Defund Report recommends against funding for body worn cameras (Defund Report Recommendation 12), as part of its Vision150 modernization plan, the RCMP will be rolling out body worn cameras and a Digital Evidence Management System to RCMP officers across the country. Similarly, in 2021, the BoPC passed a motion to support body worn cameras in principle. The HRP will soon be providing an update on a body worn camera pilot program.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications to this report. Any future financial implications arising from implementation of the recommendations will be addressed in staff reports and HRM departmental budgets as required.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This report identifies areas of alignment within recommendations contained in various public safety reports, each of which was informed by community engagement. For example, The BoPC subcommittee that informed the Defund Report had a diverse membership (including those with lived experience) from groups impacted by policing, with an emphasis on organizations that provide community-based services. They deployed multiple engagement strategies, including focus groups, written submissions, a live-streamed public engagement session and an online survey that garnered 2,351 unique responses.

The Police Transformation Study was informed by a series of virtual workshops, which included 22 participating organizations, interviews and written engagement.

In addition to using recent consultations as a basis for action, the Public Safety Strategy was informed by eight community partner and public consultation sessions, with feedback gathered via written responses and an online survey. Consultations resulted in approximately 20 partner organization groups and 107 individuals engaged.

Finally, areas of focus in this report were informed by public consultations held by the BoPC during their budget deliberations. Over the last two budget cycles, the BoPC has heard from a total of 98 registered speakers and received 132 written submissions.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Status of Defund Report Recommendations
 - Attachment 2 – Public Safety Report Recommendations By Theme
 - Attachment 3 – Public Safety Strategy Annual Report
 - Attachment 4 – MCC Report Recommendation P.36 Principles of Policing
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A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Joshua Bates, Policing Policy Strategist, Legal & Legislative Services, 902-478-2032

Status of Defund Report Recommendations

Recommendation	Status
(1) Review police training*	Any review of police training is pending the provincial review of police standards.
(2) Conduct research on disarming*	Alignment with direction given by the BoPC on March 4, 2024 to “[w]ork with the Halifax Regional Police to develop a revised Use of Force Policy”.
(3) Provide oversight on use of militarized equipment*	See above
(4) Review use of force policies*	See above
(5) Improve process on use of force data*	See above
(6) Put policies online*	Alignment with direction given by the BoPC on August 17, 2020 for the HRP and RCMP to “make available to the public, via the website, their policies”. The HRP began this process in Spring 2023.
(7) Provide explanation for confidential policies*	See above
(8) Exercise policy-making authority to implement policies*	Alignment with direction given by the BoPC on August 2, 2023 to draft policy in the area of policing and homelessness and on March 4, 2024 to work with the HRP on a revised Use of Force policy.
(9) Play more active role in policy review*	Alignment with direction given by the BoPC on August 2, 2023 and March 4, 2024 to review policies in the areas of Extra Duty and Off Duty Employment and Use of Force.
(10) Study integrity of police complaints process*	Alignment with recommendation in accompanying staff report to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the <i>Police Act</i> .
(11) Advocate for RCMP to be subject to Police Act complaints procedure*	See above
(12) Reject funding for body worn cameras*	On January 18 2021, the BoPC passed a motion to “support Body-Worn Video in principal.” Body worn cameras will be rolled out across the country as a part of the RCMP’s Vision150 modernization plan

(13) Advocate for legislative committee re. reform Police Act*	Alignment with recommendation in accompanying staff report to write a letter to the Minister of Justice requesting a review and update of the <i>Police Act</i> .
(14) Investigate opportunities to detask*	Alignment with Action 2.1 in the Public Safety Strategy: Develop a Community Crisis Response Service for the Municipality.
(15) Ensure mental health calls are diverted to civilians*	See above
(16) Increase funding for safer-street infrastructure	The road safety budget has increased almost every year since the beginning of the road safety program. In 2019/2020 the budget was \$1,165,000 and in 2024/25 the budget was \$5,500,000.
(17) Continue to develop active transportation network	From 2019 to 2023 approximately 19kms of AAA bikeways have been built. An additional 13kms of new sidewalks have also been built (not including new developments). The total annual spending has increased from \$3.5 million in 2019/2020 to \$5.6 million in 2023/2024.
(18) Improve pedestrian safety though enhanced street lighting	The municipality applied for a grant from the Federal Government to review street lighting at intersections. An overall review of street lighting was completed as part of the LED conversion project. Staff continue to review street lighting needs on an annual basis.
(19) Advocate for 40km/h speed limit in residential areas	The municipality continues to work with the Province of Nova Scotia to allow for speed limits lower than the default speed limit of 50 km/h.
(20) Explore options to civilianize motor vehicle offences	This recommendation is not currently under consideration. Staff would require direction from Regional Council to pursue this recommendation.
(21) Develop civilian unit to direct traffic	Community Safety has reached out to the Department of Justice to explore options under the present legislative regime. Initial indications are for a positive outcome. Staff will report back to Regional Council once a response from the Department of Justice has been received.
(22) Advocate for civilian traffic control during special events	See above
(23) Explore options for automating traffic enforcement	The municipality is collaborating with the Government of Nova Scotia to establish a photo radar program. There is no timeline for implementation as of yet, but talks are ongoing.

(24) Advocate for proclamation of Traffic Safety Act	The municipality continues to advocate for the passage of the TSA with the Government of Nova Scotia.
25) Develop third party sexual assault reporting program*	Alignment with Action 1.2 in the Public Safety Strategy: Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program.
(26) Create grant for sexual assault prevention and response services	The municipality has a Community Grants Program that would be inclusive of sexual prevention and response services. Staff would require further direction from Regional Council to establish a grant program exclusively for sexual assault and prevention and response services.
(27) Convene working group to advise on drug decriminalization	Alignment with Action 2.2 in the Public Safety Strategy: Establish drug and alcohol working group.
(28) Create grant for mental health and substance use services	The municipality has a Community Grants Program that would be inclusive of mental health and substance use services. Staff would require further direction from Regional Council to establish a grant program exclusively for mental health and substance use services.
(29) Ensure human rights approach to housing and homelessness work	In the regional council-approved framework to address homelessness, the guiding principles include the recognition that housing is a human right, and this lens is applied to all activities and work of the municipality.
(30) Increase investment in affordable housing projects	The Affordable Housing Grant Program has allocated over \$2.2 million to 12 affordable housing projects since 2021. In addition, the municipality's application to the Housing Accelerator Fund was approved by the Federal Minister of Housing and an agreement was reached to deliver \$79.3 million in support of housing initiatives.
(31) Bring per capita spending in line with other cities	In accordance with s 53(3) of the <i>Police Act</i> , the HRP's budget is submitted to Regional Council by the board for approval.
(32) Exercise full authority re. funding, governance and oversight	The BoPC adopts an annual workplan and receives ongoing training regarding its governance and oversight role from the Government of Nova Scotia.
(33) Tie approval of budget to performance metrics*	Any review of police training is pending the provincial review of police standards.
(34) Direct diverted funds to participatory budgeting process	This recommendation is not currently under consideration. Staff would require direction from Regional Council to prepare a budget that includes funds for the purpose of participatory budgeting.
(35) Empower residents to design participatory budgeting processes	See above

(36) Expand the use of participatory budgeting	See above
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*Recommendation addressed in accompanying staff report

Public Safety Report Recommendations By Theme

Gender Based/Intimate Partner Violence	Alternative Responses	Police Transformation	Accountability & Transparency
<i>Defund Report</i>	<i>Defund Report</i>	<i>Defund Report</i>	<i>Wortley Report</i>
25. Develop third party sexual assault reporting program	14. Investigate opportunities to detask	13. Advocate for legislative committee re. reform Police Act	4.1. Develop a protocol that will screen new recruits for both cultural competency and racial bias
<i>Public Safety Strategy</i>	15. Ensure mental health calls are diverted to civilians	<i>Mass Casualty Commission</i>	4.2. Develop and implement mandatory anti-bias, cultural competency and race relations training
1.2. Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program	27. Convene working group to advise on drug decriminalization	P.1. Principles of effective critical incident response	4.11. Form a committee to study the strength and integrity of the current police complaints process
<i>Mass Casualty Commission</i>	<i>Public Safety Strategy</i>	P.36. Principles of policing	
V.7. Countering victim blaming and hyperresponsibilization of women survivors	2.1 Develop a Community Crisis Response Service for the Municipality	P.67. The future structure of policing in Nova Scotia	
V.9. Creating safe spaces to report violence	2.2 Establish drug and alcohol working group	P.68. Information sharing	
V.14. Mobilizing a society-wide response	2.4 Establish a Mobile Outreach and Transportation Service	P.75. Preventing violence and protecting safety	<i>Defund Report</i>
V.15. Women-centred strategies and actions	<i>Mass Casualty Commission</i>	<i>Police Transformation Study</i>	1. Review police training
V.16. Putting women's safety first	P.60. Providing mental health care to Nova Scotians	2. Formally integrated leadership of the HRP and RCMP with shared management and strategic functions including continuous improvement, performance management and communications	2. Conduct research on disarming
C.17. Promoting bystander intervention as a daily practice	<i>Police Transformation Study</i>	4. Implementation of a fully integrated model of police service delivery by coordinating, integrating and standardizing policing, services in HRM under common policies and standard operating procedures	3. Provide oversight on use of militarized equipment
	3. Community capacity for community-led services in response to non-criminal, wellbeing and outreach services to address root causes of crime and disorder and utilizing a spectrum of response options aligned to service needs, risk, and outcomes		4. Review use of force policies
			5. Improve process on use of force data
			6. Put policies online
			7. Provide explanation for confidential policies
			8. Exercise policy-making authority to implement policies
			9. Play more active role in policy review
			10. Study integrity of police complaints process
			11. Advocate for RCMP to be subject to Police Act complaints procedure
			12. Reject funding requests for body worn cameras
			33. Identify performance metrics
			<i>Mass Casualty Commission</i>
			P.57. Use of force
			P.61. Police governance in Nova Scotia
			P.62. Publish police policies
			P.74. Countering systemic bias
			<i>Police Transformation Study</i>
			1. Strengthened governance and accountability to communities through streamlined governance and a reimagined role of the BoPC

Item No. 7

Halifax Regional Council
March 5, 2024

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed

SUBMITTED BY:

Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 31, 2024

SUBJECT: Public Safety Strategy Annual Report

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

On March 7, 2023, Regional Council passed the following motions:

1. Approve the attached document, Public Safety Strategy for use as a strategy framework for municipal decision-making regarding public safety.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to provide an annual progress report to Regional Council.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, S.N.S. 2008, c.39

Purpose of Act

Section 2 *The purpose of this Act is to...*

c. Recognize that the functions of the Municipality are to (i) provide good government, (ii) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the Council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the Municipality, and

(iii) develop and maintain safe and viable communities.

BACKGROUND

On March 7, 2023, Regional Council unanimously approved the municipality's renewed [Public Safety Strategy](#) (the Strategy). The Strategy builds upon the successes of pathbreaking work that commenced in 2008 with Dr. Don Clairmont's reports on [Mayor's Roundtable on Violence in the HRM](#) and subsequent

[2014 review](#). These reports set the tone for the creation of a Public Safety Advisor (PSA), and subsequent Public Safety Office (PSO), charged with leading the municipality on a journey toward strategic investments in *more safety*—a more effective, preventative, and holistic approach than a focus on *less crime*.

The Strategy was built on successes of the previous strategy (2018-2022), research evidence, internal and external engagement, and existing Regional Council and Board of Police Commissioners recommendation reports.¹ These reports and consultations provided the basis for the Strategy's seven strategic priorities, four guiding principles, and three action areas (see [the Strategy](#)).

Inaugural Public Safety Strategy (2018-2022)

The municipality's inaugural [Public Safety Strategy \(2018-2022\)](#) created the space for leaders across the organization—from Planning to Parks to Libraries, Transit, Public Works and beyond—to strengthen their contribution to the municipality's mandate to create and maintain safe and viable communities. Through their actions in the Strategy, they added value to ways that *all* municipal services and programs build and maintain safer and more welcoming communities.

For instance, more than half of the 76 actions in the Public Safety Strategy were advanced through Parks and Recreation and Libraries, including the implementation of the Affordable Access Program to remove financial barriers to accessing recreation services, investments in service system navigation through Community Navigators at the libraries, and the implementation of the Transit Code.

Other successes of the 2018-2022 Strategy that have advanced Regional Council's **Communities** Priority include:

- In partnership with community members, HRP, RCMP, Parks and Recreation, African Nova Scotian Integration Office, and Emergency Management, and with funding from the Provincial Department of Justice, the **Community Mobilization Teams (CMT)** launched in 2018. This initiative works alongside communities disproportionately impacted by violence to repair harm and restore unity. Since the launch, CMTs have grown from one to four, with seven communities represented.
- In 2019 members of the Public Works department worked alongside the Public Safety Advisor (PSA) and the Street Navigators to develop and implement a human-rights based approach to **addressing and responding to the growing crisis of homelessness in HRM**.
- In 2019, the Mayor's Office requested to join the UN Women's **Safe City and Safe Public Spaces** program. Since then, HRM's Safe City program has helped to bring women, girls and gender diverse voices into municipal decision making in Parks, Transit, and Recreation facilities through training, tools like the Women's Safety Assessment, and division-specific workshops on gender-based safety.
- In 2020, Public Safety Office collaborated with Parks and Recreation to transform a defunct horseshoe pit at George Dixon into a **vibrant community garden** and supported the development of a new non-profit organization in the Uniacke Square community to lead the garden's development.

¹ Including the Defunding the Police report (2022); Drug and Alcohol Strategy consultation (2020); Safe Cities Safe Public Spaces Scoping Study (2021); Race and Gender Data and the Safety of Asian Women and Non-Binary People (2022); HRM and the Youth Project: 2SLGBTQ+ Engagement (2022); Conversations of Gender Equality with Indigenous Women & Two-Spirit Individuals (2022); HRM Anti-Black Racism 'What we Heard' report (2022); Rural Crime Prevention Training Workshop and Knowledge Exchange (2022). A full list of documents reviewed for the creation of this strategy can be found [The Strategy](#), in Appendix A.

- During the Covid pandemic, Libraries, ICT and the PSA improved access to **public washroom** facilities across HRM through temporary instillation of facilities, and creating a locational map (on open data) of all HRM public washroom facilities.
- In partnership with Parks and Mainline Needle Exchange, and Halifax Regional School Board supported peer-led, **evidence-based approaches** to addressing needle-debris
- With the leadership of Government Relations and External Affairs, and alongside other Business Units, the PSA participated in the development of **the Social Policy Administrative Order and Framework**, passed by Regional Council in 2021. The Framework sets priority areas and establishes a coordinated approach to social policy, aligning HRM's role in promoting health and wellbeing, with a focus on social cohesion, mobility, food security, housing and homelessness.

Since the establishment of the Strategy, the municipality has also advanced key actions that contribute to creating the conditions for safety and wellbeing across HRM with participation and advice from the PSA and program team. These include the establishment of the **Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan, the Youth Services Plan, the Multi-Service Youth Centres, HalifACT, the JustFood Action Plan and the Police Transformation Study**. For a full review of actions and initiatives that have fostered increased safety and wellbeing throughout the life of the previous Public Safety Strategy, please visit the [Public Safety Strategy website](#).

Mass Casualty Commission Recommendations and community-based alternatives to police responses

In 2023, the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) released its findings and recommendations. The PSA contributed to a roundtable discussion that informed recommendations related to community-led safety, and the implementation of the Strategy is aligned with several relevant recommendations, particularly with the Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program.² Importantly, recommendations C-14 - 17 recommend federal, provincial and territorial governments create, laws, governance structures and adequate, stable funding for community safety and wellbeing for multi-sectoral partnerships and collaboration to create and sustain preventive and community-based approaches. While the Strategy provides a solid municipal approach toward community safety and wellbeing, the structural changes the MCC recommends through these actions would maximize the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Strategy. The MCC's recommended changes—particularly the focus on investments in prevention—echo those made 21 years ago in the pathbreaking Horner Report of 1993 commissioned by the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.³

The PSA also advised the subcommittee of the Board of Police Commissioners on the Defunding the Police report, and two members of that subcommittee also served as advisors in the development of the Public Safety Strategy. Several recommendations in the Defunding report are actioned in the Strategy.⁴ In May 2024, a recommendation report is scheduled to come before Regional Council demonstrating alignment among various internal and external Public Safety reports.

² Alignment between the Safe City Program's action areas and the MCC recommendations: V.7 Countering victim blaming and hyper-responsibilization of women survivors; V9 Creating Safe Spaces to report violence; V.14 Mobilizing a society-wide response; V.15 Women-centered strategies and actions; V.16 **Putting** women's safety first; C.17 Promoting bystander intervention as a daily practice

³ Titled Crime Prevention in Canada, it acknowledged the limitations of traditional, enforcement-led approaches, and drew on emerging research in the field of promotion and prevention science. It called for investments in social development and prevention that would at least equal investments in enforcement. The Report led to the creation of the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), and a National Crime Prevention Strategy. However since its inception, most of the funding provided through the NCPC is project based funding of limited duration.

⁴ Actions in the Strategy that advance recommendations in the Defunding the Police report: Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City Program (exploring third party reporting); Action 2.1 Develop a Community Mental Health Crisis Response Model; Action 2.2 Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group

DISCUSSION

The Public Safety Strategy focuses on creating and enhancing the conditions in which people feel safe from harms, and when harms do happen, that people trust that there are services available to provide necessary supports. The strategic action areas do not enumerate *all* public safety activity in the municipality. Rather they intend to build on the foundational work of the inaugural Public Safety Strategy (2018-2022). There are a wide range of municipal, provincial, and community-led programs, services and initiatives that remain integral to the ways in which public safety is established and promoted across the municipality and its diverse communities. As an example, the strategic action areas do not mention the continuation of core policing and fire services provided by HRP, RCMP Halifax District, and HRFE. Similarly, they do not include direct discussion of important ways in which the municipality has established key forms of social infrastructure through development and maintenance of community spaces in parks, recreation centres and libraries. It is important that the actions in the Strategy are seen as building upon the strong foundations already in place. Through the implementation of this Strategy the ongoing work of **promoting community-led public safety across the municipality** is broadened, amplified, and elevated.

Year One Implementation Results

The first action area, **Community-led Public Safety Leadership**, builds capacity for the PSO to advance successes in promoting public safety as a shared responsibility across business units, including expanding existing programs, developing training capacity, and bolstering support for community-led safety with populations disproportionately impacted by violence.

Activity reports are provided in Attachment A for each of the actions in this area, and Attachment B provides Action briefs for programs and initiatives that are fully underway. A summary of highlights follows below.

After a three-month appointment to support communities impacted by the Tantallon wildfire, CMT staff commenced planning and engagement toward the development of a **Community Mobilization Team in Spryfield** in the fall. CMTs also completed several new trainings this year, including **Critical Incident Stress Management certification**. As a result, trained members, with the support of CMT staff, can now co-facilitate a debrief, play the role of an active listener and/or Peer Support in the wake of a critical incident in their community.

Staff also successfully launched new **community crisis response pilots** in partnership with the Preston Trauma Response Working Group and the Richard Preston Centre for Excellence. Both pilots aim to connect African Nova Scotian residents to education, training and support to address trauma arising from critical incidents at an individual and community level.

The **Safe City and Safe Public Spaces** program onboarded a new team member, which has enabled the program to develop and pilot, in partnership with the YWCA, training for HRM staff to effectively recognize and respond to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth. Staff also partnered with Transit to develop and host a two-day workshop to build capacity to improve **Transit Safety** for women, girls and gender-diverse riders.

A new Indigenous Strategist was also onboarded in the fall to advance **Indigenous community safety**. Currently the Strategist is leading engagement sessions with Indigenous communities across HRM to build relations and shared understanding of priority areas; supporting the **Youth Advocate Program** in efforts to better support Indigenous youth at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system, and working with Emergency Management in engaging Indigenous residents for the municipality's **Hazard, Risk, and Vulnerability Assessments** and the **Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry**.

The Research, and Development Division of Community Safety onboarded a Community Safety Training Coordinator in the summer. The training program commenced with the launch of **Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training (NCI)**, an evidenced-based fully accredited training program proven to successfully de-escalate crises and reduce incidence of violence. With the support of Executive Leadership Team and Human Resources, **240 HRM staff** and program volunteers have been trained to date (with **300** projected to be trained by end of this fiscal year). The Division has supported Parks and Recreation's Mobile Youth

Support Team staff, Parking enforcement staff and community partners to become certified NCI trainers to **strengthen municipal and community capacity to de-escalate crisis situations** and avoid police response where possible. Select staff have also become certified trainers in **Safe Talk** and **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills**, and plans are underway to develop new training offerings in 2024-2025.

In partnership with the **Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research** at Dalhousie University, an independent **evaluation of the NCI training program** has been developed and launched to assess the impact of NCI training on staff's ability to effectively de-escalate crises and more effectively respond to challenging behaviours. Ongoing updates of this three-year evaluation are being incorporated into the training program to as a part of Research and Development's commitment to supporting continuous learning and performance excellence.

Impact evaluation of the Strategy also kicked off this year, with staff collaborating with non-profit consulting firm Blueprint ADE to develop a robust **Evaluation and Monitoring Framework for the Public Safety Strategy**. The framework will enable staff to monitor, measure, and evaluate actions against the Strategy's seven key priorities. It will also create a stable set of **Key Performance Indicators** for performance management and a public dashboard for reporting. While still under development, a draft of this framework is included in Attachment C, and Attachment A's Activity reports, draw from components of this framework to report on milestone achievements and key performance indicators for each action. Staff will continue to work with the Corporate Planning and ICT to refine the Framework and develop an implementation plan for ensuring the stability of indicators and reliable reporting processes.

Staff also supported the **Capital Planning Steering Committee** by recommending future approaches to bring social equity into consideration while evaluating capital planning projects. Staff will continue to support this initiative through the development of a Social Equity Index as an evaluation and monitoring tool for capital projects.

The second action area, a **Broader Spectrum of Responses to Social Issues and Harms** primary focus is to address gaps in the municipality's mandate to create safe and viable communities by building up broader spectrum of responses as alternatives to police resources where appropriate. Activity reports are provided in Attachment A for each of the actions in this area,

To guide the development of these new approaches, year one of the Strategy focused on establishing basic administrative and program delivery capacity to realise a future state with a broader, fully integrated spectrum of response. To this end, as approved by Regional Council in the 2023-2024 budget, one additional FTE was added to the team to support the development of these new services. A Strategist was successfully onboarded in late December and has been working with the Public Safety Advisor to develop business and cost models for the **Mobile Outreach and Transportation Service**, conduct a jurisdictional scan on existing **Community Mental Health Crisis Response models**; and advance implementation of the **Stabilization Centre** (formerly Sobering Centre). This year, staff secured funding from the province (50% cost sharing) for the Stabilization Centre as well as identifying third-party service providers to operate the service and provide limited primary health care to Stabilization Centre clients. Staff continue to work with HRM's Real Estate team on securing a location for the Stabilization Centre.⁵

Staff are also participating in two provincial working groups that are **building capacity for community mental health crisis response services** in Nova Scotia, as well as enhanced **community based mental health supports** for HRM. Participation in these working groups support the province's mandate to provide universal health care for Nova Scotians, as well as advance readiness for HRM to be able to develop and implement a community mental health crisis response service and mobile outreach and transportation service. The Strategy's implementation target for launching a community mental health crisis response service is 2025-2026, however this target is dependant on several factors, including staff resources for program development (currently there is one FTE dedicated to development and implementation of several

⁵ Since Regional Council approved funding in November 2022, over twenty-five locations have been explored for suitability.

new services and initiatives— actions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, with one additional FTE to support this work proposed in the Community Safety Budget 2024-2025). Other factors that will impact implementation target date include obtaining provincial funding as a service partner, securing an adequate service provider and suitable location, as well as approval for operational funding when the business case comes before Regional Council in the 2025-2026 budgeting process.

Also included in this action area is the development and implementation of actions to address the impacts of violence on youth, with focus on **trauma-informed peer-support approaches and supporting better service integration and coordination amongst youth service providers**. Resources for the work under this action come from Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund and a Strategist to lead the development and implementation of a **municipal youth violence prevention plan** and oversee activities below was successfully onboarded in January.

Attachment B provides an overview of progress from action 2.5, but highlights include:

- With the Community YMCA and in collaboration with Diversity and Inclusion, the creation of Recommendations for reducing risks of violence for newcomer youth and an **Asset Map identifying existing resources to support these youth across HRM**. In addition, **intercultural competency training** material for HRM staff interacting with newcomer youth is under development, with materials ready by the end of this fiscal year.
- With Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) and Halifax Public Libraries, the development of a POSSE expansion to support youth in Dartmouth, through **training and youth peer-outreach**. The program is set to commence implementation before the end of this fiscal year.
- With African Nova Scotian Justice Institute development of a **Justice Navigation** program to support African Nova Scotians in navigating the justice system, with implementation planned for early next fiscal year.
- With Parks & Recreation's Youth Division, the official launch a **Mobile Youth Support Team** (MYST—Attachment D) last November. The team is made up of a Youth Counsellor and a Youth Outreach Worker who provide supports to youth (ages 13-24) seeking assistance in navigating challenges within their day to day lives with a focus on reducing the risk of gun and gang violence within our communities.
- Staff also supported research aimed at updating the evidence-base and outcome measures of the municipality's **Youth Advocate Program (YAP)**, a crime prevention program aimed at youth ages 9-15. Recommendations arising from this research is currently under consideration by the Youth Division of Parks and Recreation.

The third action area, **A Centre of Responsibility (CoR)** grounds the Strategy in the development of a CoR—a 'backbone' office, responsible for moving forward initiatives identified in the Strategy and advancing the mandate of HRM as it relates to community safety. Activity reports are provided in Attachment A for each of the actions in this area.

In April 2023, HRM established a new **Community Safety Business Unit**. This development has increased capacity for the municipality to further the actions identified in the Strategy, and assess the potential for shifting or creating programs for **civilian delivery of non-core police functions** as directed by Council. Several divisions have been brought under this new Business Unit including the reorganization of the Public Safety Office into two distinct divisions: Programs and Partnerships, and Research and Development; Housing and Homelessness Emergency Management; Community Standards; Food Security; and Crossing Guards. Other divisions/programs are under assessment for migration.

Staff continue to promote a **collaborative approach to community safety**. They support existing **community advisory structures, working groups and committees** to ensure the growth, development and maintenance of the **community safety ecosystem**, promote community-led safety initiatives, contribute to innovative approaches to creating safer communities and measuring impacts. Staff participate as members of the YWCA's Trafficking Elimination Service System; the Overdose Prevention Site's

Community Advisory Committee, provincial working groups to support enhanced mental health services and crisis supports, the Connected Cities Data table, Canadian Centre for Safer Communities Board of Directors, Dalhousie's Task Force on Unsanctioned Street Parties, HRM's Community Engagement Strategy development, and the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee. Staff also lead the development of a Collective Impact approach with the Environment and Climate Change team to collaborate on addressing the overlapping crises of climate change and community safety. In addition, staff are participating in a new international Research Advisory to create a Canada-wide Urban Safety Monitoring Tool with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities and Public Safety Canada's Crime Prevention Action Fund. The PSA is also participating in the development of the new Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research to further Regional Council's goal of ensuring a solid evidence-based to programs, services and policies. The launch of the new Centre, and a celebration of Dr. Don Clairmont's depth and breadth of contribution to Community Safety and wellbeing across HRM is being planned for June 2025.

The Strategy: Looking ahead to Year Two

Year two of the Strategy's Implementation projects the opening of the Stabilization Centre and the Mobile Outreach and Transportation Service; the development of a business plan, cost model and required partnerships for the Community Mental Health Crisis Response Service to bring to the 2025-2026 budget for consideration; the creation and implementation a Youth Violence Prevention Strategy; an Indigenous Community Safety Plan; the establishment of a CMT in Spryfield; piloting of new programs to support youth at risk or involved in the criminal justice system; a scoping study to develop a Senior's Safety Plan; the development of a Social Equity Index for use in Capital Planning decisions; implementation of the Strategy's Evaluation and Monitoring Framework; including a public dashboard; the development of a plan for enhanced (non-police) reporting of sexual and gender-based violence; new training offerings for mental health and by-stander intervention, and support for public education events and workshops.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement was not necessary for this information report

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A- Activity reports for Strategy Actions

Attachment B – Action Briefs for Strategy programs/initiatives under implementation

Attachment C – Draft Evaluation and Monitoring Framework

Attachment D - Mobile Youth Support Team

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor 902.210.0102

ACTION 1.1 ENHANCE COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION TEAMS

Community Mobilization Teams work alongside communities disproportionately impacted by gun-related violence. Through crisis preparation, preparedness and response they work toward repairing harm, restoring unity and building resilience.

There are three active Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs) covering seven areas in HRM: Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, North Preston, East Preston, Central North/Uniacke Square, Mulgrave Park. Work began in the fall to develop a CMT in Spryfield, with one engagement complete and three additional sessions planned before the end of this fiscal year. There are approximately 30 CMT members across these communities.

Crisis Preparation - Training and Workshops to help build capacity and resilience within community.

- Provided a three-day training on Critical Incident Stress Management CISM/GRIN - Assisting individuals and Groups in a Crisis Training: CMT members are equipped with tools to support community by co-facilitating a debrief after a critical or traumatic incident in community (17 participants). As a result, trained members can now cofacilitate a debrief, play the role of an active listener and/or Peer Support.
- Two-day training: Grief & Bereavement (led by Lana MacLean and Rev. Dr. Lennett Anderson) CMT members learned the difference between grief and bereavement, how to recognize it and how to support the community during a crisis or traumatic incident. They were provided tools and resources to be more comfortable in assisting the needs in community when it comes to supporting community and themselves during times of grief and bereavement (24 participants)
- Two-day Mental Health First Aid Training (9 participants)
- Emergency Preparedness & Readiness Training (17 participants)
- CMT Health & Wellness session to promote selfcare and mindfulness (14 participants)
- Foundations for Collective Impact and Participatory Evaluation training by Tamarak Institute (6 participants)
- Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training (6 participants)
- Step Up to Leadership Training (5 participants)

Crisis Prevention – Community events Support CMTs in developing, planning, and implementing community events, engagements and celebrations

- Supported one community event in each community: Preston Township Community BBQ (August), MGP days (September)
- Meet & Greet(s) held in Central North/Uniacke Square (July) & Mulgrave Park (September) to raise awareness of the CMT program in these areas and recruit new members to increase membership in those areas.
- CMTs collaborated with HRP Basketball Game at Citadel (October 2023) and RCMP at their annual Community vs RCMP Hockey Tournament at Cole Harbour Place (February 2024)
- Increased Engagements were held 2023-2024; nine CMT outreach events and 239 community members were reached through these events.
- Collaborated with over 14 community organizations and saw over 178 attendees at yearly CMT community engagements.
- CMT video premiere and launch in all four CMT communities

Crisis Prevention – Build Relationships and Networks Develop partnerships and relationships with individuals, community leaders and groups to enhance services, share information and strengthen networks to build social cohesion.

• Currently collaborating with a community led group which consists of community members, leaders and health care professionals to deliver trauma workshops to the Preston Township. This group is community led and supported by Programs and Partnerships Division, Nova Scotia Health, IWK, Health Association of African Canadians, and Association of Black Social Workers.

ATTACHMENT A ACTION BRIEFS FOR KEY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

- Collaborating with a community led group to roll out the Community Collaborative Response Plan (CCRP) pilot. CCRP is an on-going response plan and includes open and closed sessions that community members will be invited and encouraged to attend. The plan works collaboratively with community partners, residents, and leaders to further support communities who are affected by violent, natural disasters, critical, or traumatic incidents. It ensures inclusivity and cultural relevance.

Crisis Prevention - Placemaking and food security

- Worked closely with the Community Developer to successfully transition the George Dixon Community Garden under the Park & Rec's Garden program.
- Parks & Recreation and CMTs worked together to better support newcomer youth. We facilitated a connection between the Youth Advocate Program, Diversity & Inclusion Office, YWCA, and Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS). The outcome of this is that a Newcomer Asset Map has been developed by the YWCA to support Newcomer youth and their families.

Crisis Response - Mobilizing resources to better support community during critical incidents.

- There were three CMT activations in the community after a traumatic event and 15 CMT community events were held (including support interventions, debriefs, trainings and trauma pilot activities.)
- CMTs worked collaboratively with the Preston Area Response to Trauma Working Group (PART-WG) with their Trauma Workshop held on January 13, 2024. There were over 80 participants.
- Following the trauma workshop an open session was held, and 15 participants attended.

ACTION 1.2: ENHANCE SAFE CITY & SAFE PUBLIC SPACES PROGRAM

The Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program focuses on making municipal public spaces safer for women, girls and gender-diverse residents by supporting shifts in policies, programs, practices and the built environment, in collaboration with various business units, community partners and residents.

The program plays a key role in supporting the municipality's equitable, intersectional and community-based approach to public safety.

Growing Team and Capacity

In October 2023, the Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program team expanded from one staff to two. This has increased our capacity to support municipal staff to consider the safety of women, girls, and gender-diverse residents in public spaces, collaborate with more community partners and advance priorities from the Safe City & Safe Public Spaces [Scoping Study](#), [Mass Casualty Commission Report Recommendations](#) and other key guiding strategies and frameworks.

Gender and Safety on Transit Workshop- Capacity Building for HRM Staff and Partners

In September 2023, the program hosted a two-day workshop for municipal staff and partners to learn more about how gender impacts experiences of safety, well-being, and mobility within municipal public transportation systems. Halifax Transit was a key collaborator on this initiative.

Emily Grisé and David Cooper, authors of the [first comprehensive Canadian study](#) to assess women's experiences of transit, led the workshop which included site visits and a trip on the transit system. Thirty-six (36) staff from 14 teams and 2 external partners participated in the training.

Recognizing and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth (CSEC)

In winter 2023, the program worked with [YWCA Halifax](#) and [Trafficking and Exploitation Services System \(TESS\)](#) to host two pilot trainings for municipal staff and volunteers to recognize and respond to the issue of CSEC. Thirty (30) staff from 8 teams participated in the pilot. We are now using the feedback generated from the pilot to develop a plan for future trainings and resources in 2024-2025 to support staff to support young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing CSEC.

Women's Safety Assessments (WSAs)

Over the past several months, the program has facilitated 3 WSAs with 20 participants. We've also been assessing the impact of the tool, working to increase integration of the tool's principles in municipal processes and plans and planning for increased community involvement and representation in WSAs. We've been working closely with ICT's GIS team who are supporting us with technical solutions to challenges we encounter in facilitating WSAs, tracking and responding to recommendations and understanding community's impact on the safety of public spaces through the tool.

1.3 ADVANCE INDIGENOUS-LED COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Indigenous Social Policy strategist was successfully onboarded in November 2023 and will lead the Municipality on the journey to prevent and respond to harms against Indigenous people in Halifax.

The Indigenous Social Policy Strategist has been collaborating across business units and engaging in job-specific training. In November 2023 she attended the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) National Conference to stay updated on the latest trends, innovations, and best practices. Canadian policymakers, funders, researchers, advocates, community leaders and front-line workers gathered to share information, tools, and training to meet the common goal of ending homelessness in Canada. Applying an Indigenous lens to public safety attending the Indigenous Homelessness sessions highlighting the importance of Indigenous culture and belonging to housing and support programs and interventions.

In November 28-30, 2023, she participated in a knowledge exchange with other municipalities in the 6th Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Leaders' Forum, a learning platform for gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.

Community Engagement: Indigenous nonprofit consultant was hired to help coordinate engagement with Indigenous communities in HRM on violence prevention and intervention. The consultant along with the Indigenous Social Policy Strategist started conversations with Indigenous communities to identify recommendations to municipal prevention and intervention programming and services that can promote safety and reduce gun and gang violence for urban Indigenous persons. As of the time of writing this update, 9 participants from the Mi'kmaq community have been engaged with another estimated 9 sessions organized by the end of the fiscal year.

The Indigenous Social Policy Strategist has also been working with the Director of Emergency Management Community Safety to hold sessions with the Indigenous community in HRM on the Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and the Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry. To date sessions have been held in Sheet Harbour and Cole Harbour with a total combined attendance of 29.

Collaborations between the Indigenous Social Policy Strategist and the Manager of the Youth Advocate Program on undertaking an indigenous youth services review, outline of best practices for working with Indigenous youth engaged with the criminal justice system and best practices for workers engaged with Indigenous Youth.

Staff are in the process of organizing a learning exchange with the City of Vancouver, a leader in community safety and well-being across Canada. Vancouver has also received funding from the Building Safer Communities Fund, and as a result we can learn from their best practices, lessons learned and insight to guide the work of HRM. The City of Vancouver's prevention and intervention programs address key risk factors such as intergenerational trauma. The City of Vancouver's Community Safety Team has piloted a unique Youth Violence Prevention Strategy and other youth programs focused on traumas as a root cause of violence. During this visit, staff will visit youth spaces that act as hubs for youth at risk of gun and gang violence.

ACTION 1.4: ESTABLISH PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CAPACITY

Building on ongoing work, a Community Safety Educator Coordinator was on-boarded in July, to advance the creation of a training unit capable of coordinating and supporting current and future demands for public safety training across the municipality. The Community Safety Educator Coordinator has started developing curricula, delivering training, and collaborating with staff that support business units and community stakeholders.

[Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Training \(Trauma-informed\)](#)

As a priority in the Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026, the Trauma-informed *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®* (NCI) training for municipal staff and volunteers was developed in the summer of 2023 and has been offered through Corporate Training Calendar monthly since November 2023 and Business Units team-specific training upon request. Up to early February 2024, 19 Business Units team-specific NCI training (including Councillors, CMT team, Transit, Clerks, Legal & Legislative, Canada Games Centre, Planning & Development, Emergency Management, Events and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency) and 4 Monthly Corporate training were delivered across the municipality. Precisely **240** municipal staff and volunteers completed the NCI training and got certified by the [Crisis Prevention Institute](#). In addition, 17 initial meetings were held across business units to promote, tailor, and deliver training. The coordinator also collaborated with supported external stakeholders such as the [Business Improvement Districts](#), [Brunswick Street Mission](#) and [Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre](#) to register new NCI instructors and expand NCI training capacity.

Among the **240** certified participants, **157** agreed to participate in the follow-up evaluation with the [Dalhousie University evaluation team](#) to support a [two-year evaluation of the NCI training](#) to ensure evidence-based validity of the training.

[Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training](#)

The Community Safety Education Coordinator also received certification as the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) trainer with LivingWorks in December 2023 and has co-facilitated two ASIST trainings within the municipality in February 2024. A training plan is currently being developed for ASIST training for municipality staff, volunteers, and communities.

Bystander Intervention Training

The Community Safety Education Coordinator and the Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program are currently working to develop training for municipality staff, volunteers, and communities, more broadly, focused on building skills to safely and appropriately intervene when witnessing an act of violence, harassment and/or intimidation. The need for training in pro-social approaches to bystander intervention has been identified as a priority by [municipality staff, various community engagements](#), and [guiding reports](#).

Ongoing Public Safety Education Support and Training Development Across the Municipality

The Community Safety Education Coordinator also engages and collaborates closely with staff across the municipality to provide support related to public safety education to expand staff and community's capacity and a broader spectrum of emergency and crisis response. So far, the coordinator has participated in or hosted over **50** professional networking events nationally, workgroups, and community task force meetings such as Unsanctioned Street Gatherings Education and Hate Crime.

ACTION 2.5: ADDRESS TRAUMA AS A ROOT CAUSE OF YOUTH VIOLENCE AND GANG INVOLVEMENT

Since Regional Council approved funding from Public Safety Canada's *Building Safer Communities Fund*, the Community Safety, Parks and Recreation's Youth Division, Diversity and Inclusion, partners and collaborators accomplished the following under action 2.5 of the Public Safety Strategy:

Youth Services Review

HRM contracted Davis Pier Consulting to conduct a **Youth Services Review**. The review was intended to help HRM learn more about the system that supports youth who experience harm from gun violence or are at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system.

Project efforts were dedicated to engaging with **27 professionals and practitioners** who work at **15 organizations** across the municipality that support youth who are at an increased risk of harm from gun and gang violence. The findings emphasized the need for enhanced coordination and collaboration, as well as and the capacity to improve data collection within the Youth Services Sector. While the review contains many important recommendations the most impactful recommendation that HRM is adopting is developing a **Youth Equity and Violence Prevention Strategy**.

YMCA Asset Mapping and Cultural Competency Training

To further understand and develop supports that meet the unique needs of Newcomer Youth, the Public Safety Office and Diversity and Inclusion partnered with the Community YMCA to create:

1. A community asset map of culturally responsive services and resources that are available in HRM for newcomer youth (attached)
2. A list of culturally responsive mental health services, practitioners, faith-based supports, and other resources related to healing from harm related to violence (attached)
3. Recommendations on how the Municipality can better support local service providers on a coordinated and collaborative approach to youth violence prevention and intervention and,
4. A professional development workshop for HRM staff about intercultural communication with newcomer youth

Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) program expansion project

The BSCF is supporting POSSE in the development of a program expansion to support youth in Dartmouth, NS. POSSE offers weekly programming for youth 15-35, providing them with skills needed to be outreach workers in their own communities. Working from a harm reduction and human rights lens, youth receive trainings in topics such as human trafficking, gender-based violence, crisis intervention and de-escalation. Once trained, youth provide peer-based street-level outreach to connect with youth needing supportive services and provide them with harm reduction supplies. POSSE currently works out of three communities: Sipekne'katik First Nation, Sackville, and Windsor. The program expansion will allow POSSE to support youth in Dartmouth, NS.

Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST)

The MYST is comprised of 2 staff, a Youth Counsellor and Youth Outreach Worker who:

- Work across municipal recreation centers to provide drop-in and by-appointment support to youth seeking advice or assistance in navigating challenges within their daily lives, with a focus on reducing the risk of gun violence within our communities.
- Mobilize to offer debrief opportunities within municipal recreation centres, specifically for youth when crisis occurs in a community and youth are impacted.
- Engage with various community stakeholders to address concerns and be involved in community initiatives to reduce risk and harm to youth in areas of our community with higher rates of gun violence.

ATTACHMENT A ACTION BRIEFS FOR KEY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Highlights

Mobile Youth Support Team Open House: 40 service providers attended
Dartmouth North Community Centre – Bi-weekly lunch hour drop-in: 135 youth per drop-in
Power House Youth Centre Drop-in: 10 youth per drop-in
Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre – Bi-weekly lunch hour drop-in: 90 youth per drop-in
Spryfield Youth Centre weekly drop-in: 30 youth per drop-in
The Den Youth Centre weekly drop-in: 30 youth per drop-in
Sackville Sports Stadium Trivia Tuesdays (weekly lunch hour drop-in): 35 youth per drop-in
George Dixon Community Centre weekly Drop-in Night: 20 youth per drop-in
Provincial Court – Youth Court: 15 youth provided support to date

The Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST) officially launched their services to the community during the open house on November 21, 2023. MYST has been actively working with youth individually and attending drop-in centers since January 2023. Since September 2023, MYST has successfully provided services to approximately 600 youth through drop-in programs in various locations including Sackville, Bedford/Hammonds Plains, Dartmouth North, George Dixon, Youth Worx, and Spryfield.

In addition to their drop-in programs, MYST is currently meeting with approximately 30 youth outside of drop-ins on a more regular and case-specific basis. These meetings aim to address individualized concerns such as peer pressure, conflicts, family dynamics, self-esteem, violence, and mental health. MYST has also participated in case conferences with schools or healthcare provider teams as a support to the young person, upon their request.

MYST has provided court-specific support to approximately 10 youth and their families. The Youth Outreach Worker has actively engaged with multiple youth at the courthouse, providing them with information on the services MYST offers.

MYST has been directly contacted by community centers and recreation programs on approximately 7 different occasions. During these interactions, MYST has answered questions, provided space for problem-solving, and offered direct support during crisis situations.

MYST staff has undergone training and is working towards implementing ASIST and NVCI opportunities for community centres, staff, and youth to effectively respond to crisis situations. Currently, MYST is in the process of registering to become trainers of SafeTalk for March 2024. Furthermore, during the previous summer, the Mobile Youth Support Team provided crisis support to community centres and staff to ensure the well-being of youth staff, participants, and full-time staff during summer programming.

MYST organized several youth drop-in trivia events at Sackville Sports Stadium, which attracted over 30 youth each time. Additionally, on Wednesdays, MYST provided support at Dartmouth North Community Centre during lunch hours. During this time, MYST recognized the need for lunch time meal support. Realizing this, MYST collaborated with Nourish Halifax to develop a food program for youth and has provided approximately 135 meals to youth in the community since September 2023. This partnership has led to the launch of a pilot program at the community center, offering a youth cooking program before drop-in sports programs. The program aims to help youth develop cooking skills, provide healthy meals for themselves and their families, and create a safe space for counselling and outreach support.

MYST has been actively building relationships and partnerships with various organizations, including the IWK Youth Forensic Team, African Nova Scotia Justice Institute, Game Changers 902, HRCE SchoolsPlus, and Community Corrections (Probation). Some of these partners have collaborated with MYST on Trivia Tuesdays and have plans to develop training on healthy relationships for youth. MYST has also established relationships with the Youth Court Teams and Legal Aid and has been invited to present on the Mobile Youth Support Team at an NS Legal Aid training.

Annual Public Safety Strategy monitoring update – 2023-24

Public Safety Strategy monitoring framework

The Research, Advising and Development (RAD) Team is creating a framework to:

- support reporting to HRM Council and the public;
- clarify and align roles, responsibilities and outcomes among staff and partners
- support continuous improvement of the PSS by checking work against the desired impact and ensuring decisions are evidence-based.

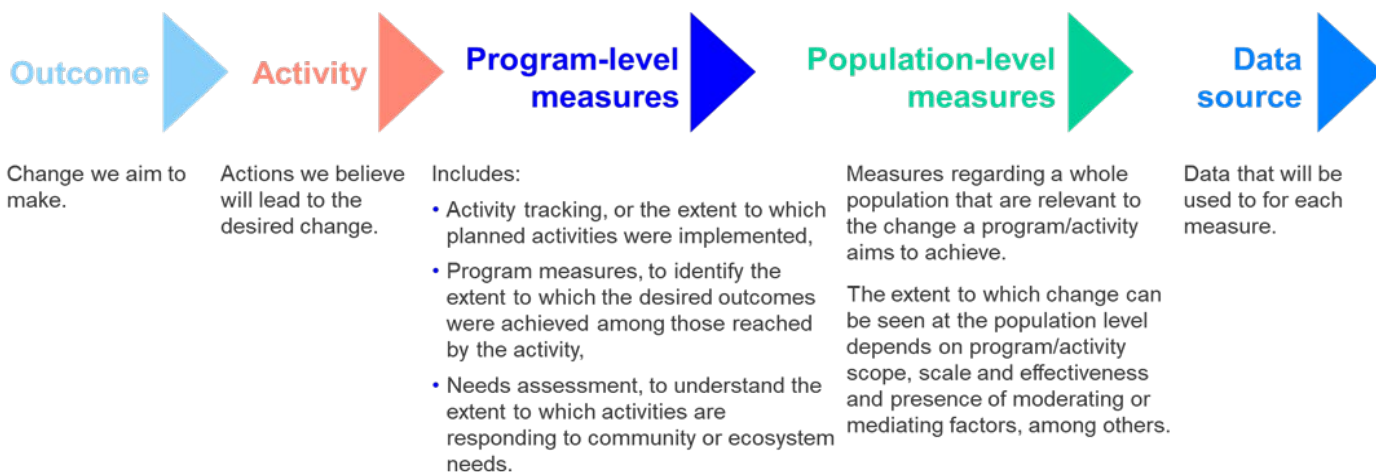
While the Framework is still under development (see Attachment C), the following illustrates application to provide an update on Year I activities and milestones that lead to the desired priority outcomes in the Strategy.

For each strategic priority, the framework outlines the following (see also Figure 1):

- One or more outcomes, or goals to be achieved related to the strategic priority
- Relevant activities undertaken by the Community Safety Business Unit, HRM Business Unit partners and/or community partners that would support achieving the outcome(s), in alignment with the strategic action areas outlined in the PSS
- **Program measures**, including those related to:
 - **Activity tracking:** what activities took place regarding PSS implementation
 - **Program measures:** to demonstrate the extent to which the desired change associated with the program was achieved
 - **Needs assessment:** narrative, qualitative or contextual data related to the strategic priority to inform an understanding of the extent to which the activity aligns with needs of the community, partners or HRM staff
- **Population measures:** relevant information about what is happening at the population level to contextualize program-level measures

As programs and their relevant measures continue to be developed, the monitoring framework will support tracking and monitoring of the PSS's impact in communities under the key priority areas. The RAD team continues to work across the organization to assemble the necessary data sources, sets, collection tools and reports that will provide the data necessary to report on measures identified in the framework.

Figure 1: PSS monitoring framework structure



Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Promote **healing** from trauma



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety

Action 1.1 Enhance Community Mobilization Teams

- **3** Community Mobilization Teams (CMT) in **6** communities
- **1** CMT under development
- **30** CMT members
- **9** CMT outreach events
- **239** community members reached through CMT outreach events
- **3 CMT activations** in community after traumatic event
- **5 critical incidents** brought to CMTs by community members
- **8 CMT trainings** with **112** members trained:
 - Trauma Informed Community Intervention and Support (**24**)
 - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (**6**)
 - Critical Incident Stress Management & Group Crisis Intervention (**17**)
 - Preparedness and Readiness (**17**)
 - Mental Health First Aid (**9**)
 - Collective Impact (**6**)
 - Grief and Bereavement (**19**)
 - Health and Wellness (**14**)
- **15** CMT community events (debriefs, trainings, support interventions, trauma pilot activities)
- **178** attendees from **14** community organizations at CMT events
- **1** CMT promotional video produced

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Promote **healing** from trauma



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Build a community-centred **approach to safety**

Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program

- **1** Program Strategist onboarded (Q1)
- **1** Program Coordinator onboarded (Q3)
- **3** capacity-building sessions held
 - Gender and Safety on Transit Workshop, with **36 HRM staff** from **14 diverse teams**, and **two external partners**
 - **2** training session for HRM staff Recognizing and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children pilot training with **30** participants across **8** municipal teams
- **4** community engagement sessions
 - **3** Women's Safety Assessments with **20** participants
 - **1** 'What We Heard' session with Muslim Women and Girls with **27** participants
- **47** participants in community engagement sessions
- **3** instances of formal advice to HRM projects
- Led/authored/contributed to **5** research projects and reports
- Contributing member of **7** networks, committees and working groups

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Promote **healing** from trauma



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety

Action 1.3 Advance Indigenous-led community safety

2 engagement sessions held with Mi'kmaq in HRM with:

- Director of Emergency Management Community Safety on the Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and the Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry.
 - Indigenous Social Policy Strategist on the new role and Mi'kmaq insight on violence prevention and intervention.
- **29** Participants in the Mi'kmaq engagement sessions.
 - **1** engagement session follow up via one-on-one interview with Mi'kmaq who was impacted by MMIWG.
 - **2** follow up sessions scheduled with youth in the engaged communities.
 - **9** scheduled sessions with Mi'kmaq in HRM to be held before the end of the fiscal year.
 - **2** requests to review and provide input into HRM staff training and a strategy.
 - **1** collaborative project with the Manager of the Youth Advocate Program undertaking an Indigenous youth services review.

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Promote **healing** from trauma



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**

Action 1.4 Establish public safety training capacity

- 1 Community Safety Education Coordinator onboarded (Q2)
- **17** meetings with HRM Business Units to promote training and tailor delivery to BU needs
- **4** certified training instructors in:
 - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (trauma-informed)
 - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills
 - SafeTALK
- **2** public safety trainings developed and offered
 - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (Trauma-informed)
 - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- **29** training sessions delivered to teams including:
 - Councillors
 - CMTs
 - Transit
 - Clerks
 - Legal & legislative services
 - Canada Games Centre
 - Planning and Development
 - Emergency Management
 - Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency
 - Events
 - Joint Emergency Management Volunteer
- **300** HRM staff and volunteers certified in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training (as of March 31)
- **30** HRM staff and volunteers trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Build a community-centred **approach to safety**

Action 1.5 Enhance research and advisory capacity

- 1 Research and Development Specialist on-boarded
- Formal Evaluation of NCI training program developed and launched with Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research
- Evaluation and Monitoring Framework for Public Safety created. Piloting and implementation planning underway

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**

Action 1.6 Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety

- Advice and formal presentation to Capital Planning Steering Committee on recommended approach to measuring social equity, including potential measurement tool;
- Plan for Social Equity Index tool under development and on track for year two implementation
- Map of Canadian Index of Multiple Deprivation created with ICT Cartographer (CIMD 2016-21)

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**



Enhance **supports** for people experiencing **homelessness**

Action 2.1 Develop a Community Crisis Response Service Model for the municipality

- Staff participation in working group led by Province of Nova Scotia's (PNS) Office of Addiction and Mental Health (OAMH) to pilot a civilian mental health crisis response service: planned to commence 2024/25 (outside area served by Mobile Mental Health Crisis Response Team-- province wide), with potential to expand service in future years to other locations
- Staff participation in working group led by PNS' OAMH, DCS-supportive housing, Nova Scotia Health, Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) ,and Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre (MNFC) for enhanced community mental health services in HRM
- New Alternative Response Strategist successfully on-boarded (Q4)
- Jurisdictional Scan of other models underway to inform business plan and cost model
- Input provided to survey underway under Dr Jamie Livingston on Nova Scotian's experience with existing mental health crisis response services. Results of survey will help inform HRM model.

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Enhance **supports** for people experiencing **homelessness**



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**

Action 2.2 Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group

- Report on Community Conversations on Drug use and Policy received and under review
- Planning for additional consultations with underrepresented populations underway

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Enhance **supports** for people experiencing **homelessness**



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**

Action 2.3 Establish a sobering centre

- Service provider identified
- Policies and operational procedures drafted
- Co-funding from province secured
- Primary healthcare service provider identified
- Procurement of furniture, fixtures and equipment underway
- Constitution of advisory committee in progress
- Search for location initiated (since January 2023)

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Enhance **supports** for people experiencing **homelessness**



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**

Action 2.4 Establish a mobile outreach and transportation team

- Cost model finalised
- Quotation obtained for outreach vehicle lease
- Environmental scan for service provider completed
- Consultations with potential service providers initiated
- Request to PNS' OAMH initiated for potential partnership options to enhance services

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Promote **healing** from trauma



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**

Action 2.5 Address trauma as a root cause of youth violence and gang involvement

- **360** youth engagements by the Mobile Youth Support Team
- **39** Youth Advocate Program active participants
- **12** Youth Advocate Program staff
- **15** Youth Advocate Program Graduations
 - **3** youth exited for other reasons
- **78** Youth Advocate Program participant connections to community services and supports
- **34** youth waitlisted for Youth Advocate Program (who have been assessed to meet program criteria)
- **1** Newcomer youth mental health Asset map created with Community YMCA
- **1** intercultural competency training curricula for HRM staff underdevelopment with Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Community YMCA
- **1** program pilot developed with Halifax Public Library and POSSE (program of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre) for peer-led outreach and training
- **1** program pilot developed with African Nova Scotian Justice Institute for Justice Navigation for African Nova Scotian youth involved in the criminal justice system
- **1** Strategist on-boarded (Q4) to lead the actions arising from the Youth Service Review, including developing a Youth Equity and Violence Prevention Strategy

Public Safety strategic priority areas:



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Build a community-centred **approach to safety**

Action 3.1 Develop a Centre of Responsibility for community-led public safety

- **1** new Community Safety Business Unit created (Q1)
- **1** Director of Programs and Partnerships on-boarded (Q4)
- **2** new divisions created from existing Public Safety Office:
 - Research, Advising and Development
 - Programs and Partnerships

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Build a community-centred **approach to safety**

Action 3.2 Establish new community voices through advisory structures, committees, partnerships and collaborations

- Research Advisor for development of Canadian Urban Safety Monitoring Tool (with Canadian Centre for Safer Communities/Public Safety Canada)
- Research Advisor with Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research
- Board Director for Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (formerly Canadian Municipal Network for Crime Prevention)
- Member of ReFix (overdose prevention site) Community Advisory Committee
- Member of Sectoral Advisory Committee for GBA+ Toolkit for Municipal Level Emergency Preparedness
- Member of YWCA's Trafficking Elimination Service System
- Participant in Public Health Approach Framework for Addressing CSEC, led by IWK Mental Health and Addictions Health Promotion team
- Participant in Connected Cities Data table
- Member of Dalhousie's Task Force on Unsanctioned Street Parties (Education working group)
- Established Collective Impact table with Environment and Climate Change (HRM)
- Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee member (HRM)
- Member of Diversity and Inclusion Champion's Table (HRM)
- Member of Municipal Community Engagement Strategy Working Group (HRM)
- Staff liaison for Women's Advisory Committee (HRM)

Public Safety strategic priority outcome areas:



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Build a community-centred **approach to safety**

Action 3.3 Assess existing municipal programs and service for migration to the new centre of responsibility (now Community Safety Business Unit)

- Several divisions migrated to new business unit including:
- Research, Advising and Development (formerly PSO)
- Programs and Partnerships (formerly PSO)
- Housing and Homelessness
- Community Standards
- Food Security
- Emergency Management
- Crossing Guards

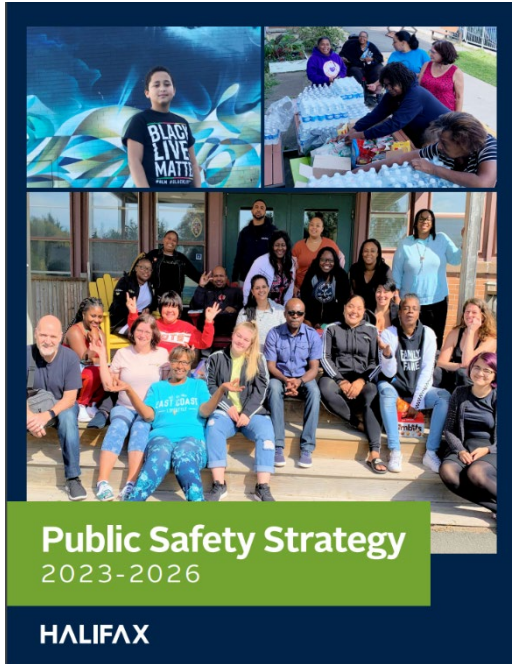
PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY

2023-26

Monitoring framework *draft*

Public Safety Strategy 2023-26

The Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026 provides a vision and mandate for the Halifax Regional Municipality and its business units to advance holistic, upstream approaches to public safety and ensure public safety is a responsibility shared across the municipality for the greatest impact.



STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS

Linked directly to our Strategic Priorities, the following action areas have been identified as important areas of focus for the municipality in the near term. These are:



COMMUNITY-LED PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP

Continue to work closely with community groups and municipal business units to support and champion public safety initiatives.



BROADER SPECTRUM OF RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ISSUES AND HARMS

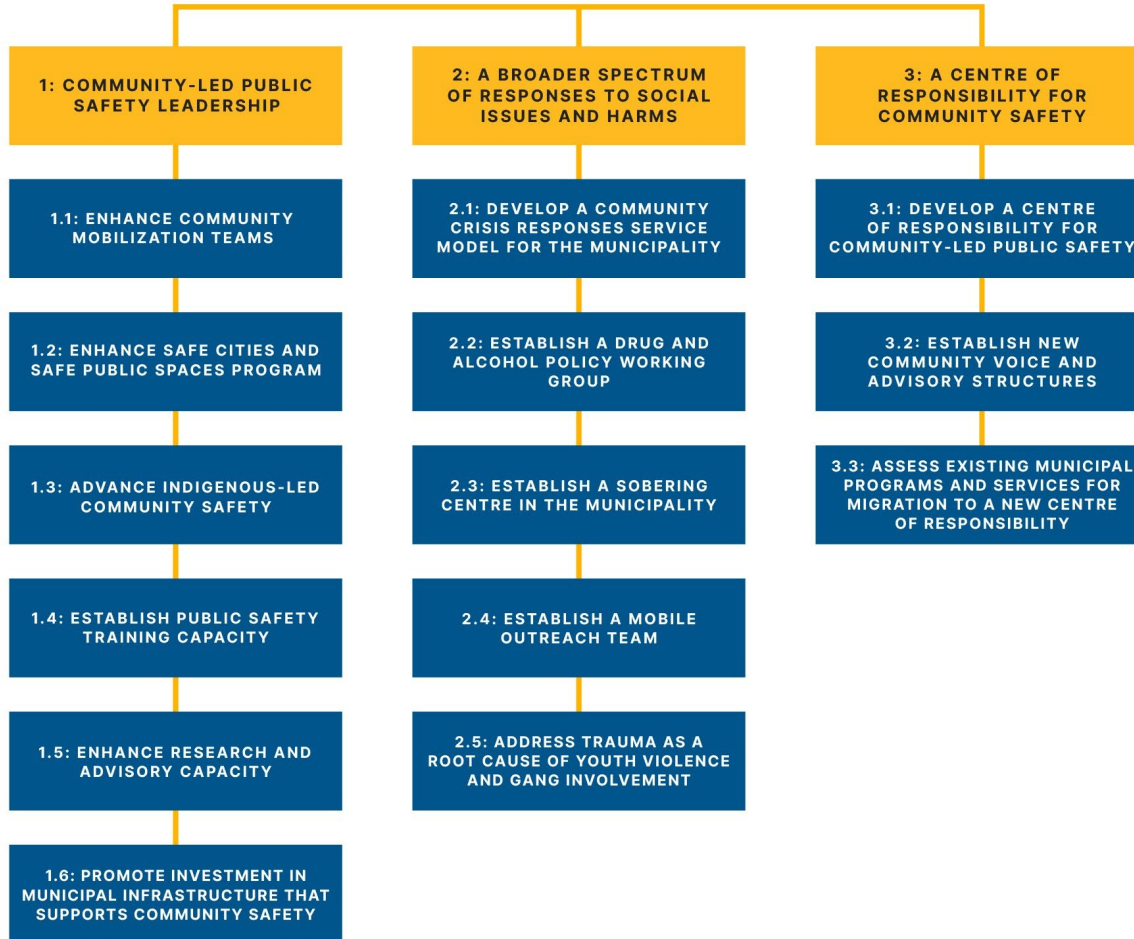
Establish a continuum of responders and responses to social harms, to ensure the most appropriate responder and reduce pressures on emergency services.



A CENTRE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

Establish an appropriate structure to advance public safety initiatives, which has the capacity and authority to lead initiatives and convene partner organizations and experts.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREAS



Public Safety Strategy 2023-26

The Strategy reflects seven strategic priorities for 2023-2026:

1. Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services
2. Create safer and more inclusive spaces
3. Promote healing from trauma
4. Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness
5. Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response
6. Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs
7. Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety

Why is an evaluation framework needed?

- When the Public Safety Strategy was developed, it included preliminary thinking about how it would be evaluated, through two methods:
 - Tracking milestone achievement for the implementation of Strategy activities
 - Measuring impact related to four categories: Community safety and wellbeing, Harm reduction and prevention, Ecosystem development, Reducing justice system pressure
- An opportunity to build on these preliminary ideas to map out the specific data needed to understand the implementation and desired outcomes of Strategy activities, at both the program and population levels.

Public Safety Strategy monitoring framework

Public Safety is developing a monitoring framework for the strategy that will:

- support the process of reporting on the PSS to HRM Council and the public;
- clarify and align across staff and partners on what PSS work is driving towards; and
- support continuous improvement of the PSS by checking work against the desired impact and ensuring decisions are evidence-based.

Public Safety Strategy monitoring framework

The framework will help answer questions like...

- Who is using the new Stabilization Centre?
- How are users experiencing the new community crisis response service?
- Do staff have the skills they need to de-escalate incidents at work?
- Do people have access to supports in their community after a traumatic event?
- Are women, girls and gender diverse people's experiences of safety reflected in HRM services and spaces?

How the framework was developed

The Public Safety Strategy evaluation framework was developed between October 2023 and January 2024 through the following approaches:

1. Leveraging insights from frameworks used in other jurisdictions
2. Collaborative workshops and meetings with the following actors:
 - All Programs and Partnerships and Research and Development team members
 - Advice and support from internal partners: Parks and Recreation, Immigration office, Government relations and external affairs, police services, 311, IT support, privacy services
 - Evaluation partner from Dalhousie University
 - Facilitation, convening, research and development support from Blueprint

Alignment between activities, outcomes and impact

Categories for impact

Ecosystem development

Enhanced community safety and wellbeing

Enhanced harm reduction and prevention

Reduced justice system pressures

Outcomes

HRM staff, volunteers and community partners are equipped to recognize, prevent, and respond to crisis behaviours using person-centred and trauma-informed responses

Communities across HRM have equitable access to the municipal social and built infrastructure that promotes safety, prevents harm and aligns with their needs
 HRM programs and services are designed to promote safety

Community members meaningfully contribute to HRM public safety approaches and initiatives
 PS BU, other HRM BUs, governments and partners collaborate effectively
 HRM has the operational capacity and skills to drive community safety and achieve its PSS outcomes

Public spaces in HRM are safe for all communities (especially communities most impacted by safety incidents)

Communities and individuals who have experienced harm have access to resources to support healing

HRM services are trauma informed

Substance users achieve positive health outcomes (e.g., reduction in overdose and substance-related deaths)

Communities across HRM see fewer criminal or violent incidents related to alcohol and drug markets
 Substance users have access to harm reduction and recovery services and supports to maintain safety and/or facilitate recovery

Residents have access to emergency and crisis response services with staff expertise that is the best fit for the incident and that avoid harm

Activities

Training

Expert advice & research

Centre for Responsibility for collective impact

Advance Indigenous-led community safety

CMTs

Safe Cities

Youth programs and spaces

Sobering centre

Mobile outreach team

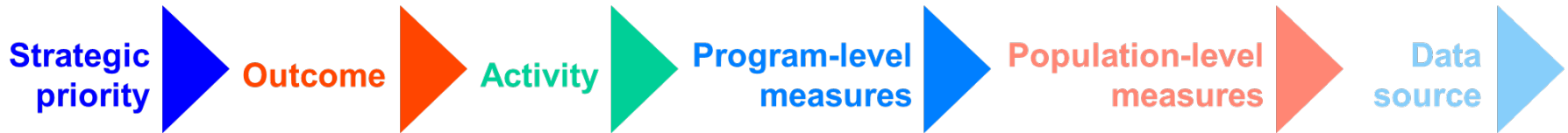
Community crisis response service model

Internal focus

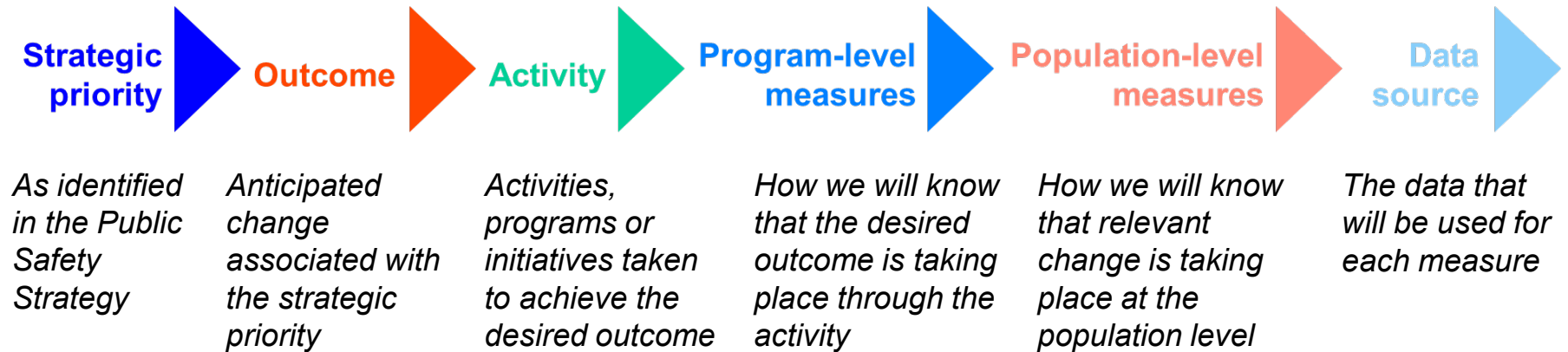
External focus

How the framework is organized

- For each strategic priority in the Public Safety Strategy, the framework identifies program level 'progress' (or change) measures and longer-term population-level progress (or change) measures.
- These measures are tied to specific investments and activities, as well as data sources, to ensure the framework is both ambitious as well as realistic and actionable.
- Some measures will continue to be refined as programs are developed.



How the framework is organized



For example...

Priority 1: Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services

CHANGE

- **Activity:** Training for HRM staff (e.g. Nonviolent crisis intervention (NCI) training, bystander intervention training, CSEC recognition and response training, ASIST)
- **Activity tracking:**
 - # training sessions held over time
 - # people (staff and volunteers) trained in each training
- **Program outcomes:**
 - % of trained HRM staff and volunteers who self-report feeling better equipped to recognize, prevent, de-escalate and respond to safety incidents using person-centered and trauma-informed responses
- **Population outcomes:**
 - Improvements in employee well-being through survey data
 - # of police calls for service to the municipal facility they work in, compared to prior to training (controlling for the relative # resident users of each facility/service)

Needs assessment:

Of HRM staff and volunteers, the extent to which they believe the trainings available are the right ones to better equip them to recognize, prevent, de-escalate and respond to behaviours and safety incidents that arise

For example...

Priority 2: Create safer and more inclusive spaces

- **Activities:** Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program, Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs)
- **Activity tracking:**
 - # activities or initiatives led or supported by Safe City, and # individuals engaged
 - # CMT volunteers and # activations
 - # CMT community outreach activities, and # individuals engaged
- **Program outcomes:**
 - # individuals engaged through Safe City activities who say they achieved the activity's desired change (e.g., greater knowledge of gender-based violence, increased awareness of how to report an incident)
 - # CMT volunteers who say they received the resources they needed from HRM to support their communities after a critical incident
- **Population outcomes:**
 - % Resident Survey respondents who report a high degree of feeling safe in Halifax public spaces
 - # police calls for service and incidents coded as hate crime, hate incident and sexual assault
 - Findings from Statistics Canada Social Survey and Survey of Safety in Private and Public Spaces
 - Data collected by community-based partners who serve women and gender diverse individuals (e.g., # requests for services or # reports of incidents)

CHANGE



Needs assessment:
Feedback from community members engaged through Safe City activities about the extent to which they believe Safe City activities align with their safety priorities; Most frequent community needs as identified on post-activation debrief templates.

For example...

Priority 3: Promote healing from trauma

- **Activities:** CMT community incident debriefs, referrals to recovery and healing supports, trauma healing pilot activities; HRM staff and volunteer training in trauma informed service
- **Activity tracking:**
 - # HRM staff trained in trauma-informed service delivery
 - # CMT community crisis debriefs, # trauma healing pilot activities delivered
- **Program outcomes:**
 - CMT staff and partner reflections about the changes observed related to community crisis debriefs and trauma healing pilot activities
 - # trained HRM staff who report knowledge gains in areas covered by training, increased capacity to respond to incidents encountered in their work through a trauma-informed lens
- **Population outcomes:**
 - # calls for service and incidents responded to by police reported as involving an individual experiencing a mental health issue
 - Average mental health and addictions occupancy by hospital
 - Suicide rate
 - HRM Police reported violent crime rate, General Social Survey on victimization (Stats Can)

CHANGE



Needs assessment:

Most frequent community concerns and issues and long-term needs raised as identified on CMT post-activation debrief template, CMT member reflection about community trauma-related needs.

For example...

Priority 5: Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response

- **Activities:** Mobile outreach team, Community crisis response service model
- **Activity tracking:**
 - # emergency and crisis response options
 - Level of capacity (staff, hours of service, vehicles) for each response option
 - Reach (# calls and responses per neighbourhood, relative to population/service area)
- **Program outcomes:**
 - # calls police diverted to community-based response
 - # referrals to social and health services
 - # service users who report a high level of satisfaction
- **Population outcomes:**
 - Survey respondent satisfaction with non-police emergency and crisis response options
 - # calls for service and incidents responded to by police involving an individual experiencing mental health issues

Needs assessment:
Emergency crisis responder staff reflections regarding needs and opportunities to improve

CHANGE



For example...

Priority 6: Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs

CHANGE

- **Activities:** Stabilization Centre, drug and alcohol policy working group
- **Activity tracking:**
 - # Stabilization Centre intakes, by intake source (police, mobile outreach team, etc.)
- **Program outcomes:**
 - # Stabilization Centre clients who achieve stabilization (basic needs met, sobriety) as assessed by staff
 - Level of community satisfaction regarding the Stabilization Centre's services
 - Development of a Municipal Drug and Alcohol Strategy
- **Population outcomes:**
 - # police calls for service and incidents related to Liquor Control Act or Public Intoxication; of these, number of PCF intakes, hospital intakes, Stabilization Centre intakes

Needs assessment:

Client and staff reflections regarding the extent to which the Stabilization Centre is meeting needs and opportunities for improvement

Potential and Existing sources of data



- Police data
- 311
- 211
- Security incident reporting in municipal facilities
- Community Safety Administrative Data/survey and evaluation data
- Resident Survey
- Provincial health data
- Statistics Canada

New sources of data, for example



Training participant feedback and evaluation



Stabilization Centre usage



Mobile Outreach and transportation service data



Community Crisis Response Service administrative data



Staff, community and partners' feedback



Community Safety Business Unit administrative data

What next?

- Develop the process for refining the framework with Corporate Planning team, ICT and Access & Privacy support
- Report back annually, using a dashboard
- Continuously improve the framework to ensure measures are meaningful, reflect the programming, and can be relevant and accurate tools for managing and refining the impact of programs, services and initiatives under the Strategy



MOBILE YOUTH SUPPORT TEAM



The Mobile Youth Support Team works across municipal recreation centres to provide drop-in and by appointment support to youth seeking advice or assistance in navigating challenges within their daily lives, with a focus on reducing the risk of gun and gang violence within our communities.

The Mobile Youth Support Team will also mobilize to offer debrief opportunities within municipal recreation centres, specifically for youth when crisis occurs in a community and youth are impacted.

The Mobile Youth Support Team will engage with various community stakeholders to address concerns and be involved in community initiatives to reduce risk and harm to youth in areas of our community with higher rates of gun and gang violence.

Contact us:

DM on Instagram: @hfxnextgen

Email: youth@halifax.ca

Text/call:

Youth Counsellor: 902.476.2595

Youth Outreach: 902.476.1668



HALIFAX

MOBILE YOUTH SUPPORT TEAM

Youth Outreach Worker

The Youth Outreach Worker provides short term outreach support through both drop-in and scheduled appointments within the municipality by connecting youth to external resources with a focus on mental health, legal, recreation, education and employment supports. They also:

- offer peer support and peer support training to youth
- offer court support to youth and their families navigating the court system for the first time
- works closely with stakeholders to identify existing resources to ensure youth are being connected with the appropriate supports within their communities

Youth Counsellor

The Youth Counsellor offers drop-in and by appointment brief intervention services. The goal is to support youth in identifying key challenges in their lives and taking the initial steps to address and make positive changes while working with them to transition into long-term external supports in their communities. They also:

- offer group program opportunities on a variety of topics including anger management, healthy relationships, grief and peer support
- offer regular group drop-in opportunities within municipal facilities
- offer one-on-one scheduled appointments within municipal facilities

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P.36 PRINCIPLES OF POLICING

The Commission recommends that

All levels of government and Canadian police agencies adopt the following principles of policing, as framed by Dr. Ian Loader, "In Search of Civic Policing: Recasting the 'Peelian' Principles" (2016):

1. The basic mission of the police is to improve public safety and well-being by promoting measures to prevent crime, harm and disorder.
2. The police must undertake their basic mission with the approval of, and in collaboration with, the public and other agencies.
3. The police must seek to carry out their tasks in ways that contribute to social cohesion and solidarity.
4. The police must treat all those with whom they come into contact with fairness and respect.
5. The police must be answerable to law and democratically responsive to the people they serve.
6. The police must be organized to achieve the optimal balance between effectiveness, cost-efficiency, accountability and responsiveness.
7. All police work should be informed by the best available evidence.
8. Policing is undertaken by multiple providers, but it should remain a public good.

These principles should govern how police do their work and how they are accountable for the work they do.