

Re: Item 9.1.1

HALIFAX

**Safe City &
Safe Public
Spaces Program**

**Women's Advisory Committee
July 4th, 2024**

UN Safe Cities & Safe Public Spaces Global Flagship Initiative



A multi-stakeholder, global initiative supporting cities to develop local approaches to preventing and responding to gender-based and sexual violence in public spaces.

Halifax's Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program

- In August 2019, Council approved a motion to join the UN Women SC SPS Global Initiative. NS Status of Women is a supporting partner
- Coordinated by the Public Safety Office, with key support from the Office of Diversity & Inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (D&I/ANSAIO)
- There are two staff responsible for overseeing and managing the program
- The program is guided, supported and advised by two committees: the Implementing Committee and WACH

What do we do?

- Focused on changing municipal physical and social environments to respond to and prevent sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence.
- Through collaboration with municipal staff, community organizations and other partners, we aim to shift policies, programs, and practices to better support the safety of women and gender-diverse residents in municipal public spaces.

Strategic Directions/ Priority Areas of Work

Partnership for Community Level Change

Support public education and community-level capacity building efforts that:

- address social norms that perpetuate and normalize sexual and other forms of gender-based violence in public spaces
- deepen healthy and equitable understandings of gender, sexuality, relationships, and masculinity
- provide residents with the information and resources they need to feel safer in public spaces
- empower bystanders to safely recognize and respond to instances of street harassment

Partnership for Community Level Change

Develop, facilitate, and champion community-based decision-making models and programs that centre lived experience and support women, girls, and non-binary residents to contribute to tangible changes in municipal policy, practices, and programs such as:

- Community Safety Assessments (formerly Women's Safety Assessments)

Supporting Change Within HRM (the organization)

Foster a culture that integrates women's, girls' and gender diverse people's safety in municipal plans, capital projects, strategies, and services, and develop processes to track, measure and report on these efforts.

Support Business Units to take action to make public spaces safer for women, girls, and gender-diverse residents through changes in built, natural and social features of municipal public spaces.

Building Collective Knowledge and Capacity

Foster and facilitate connections and relationships in and between partners to respond to and prevent sexual and other forms of gender-based violence in public spaces (e.g., collective impact efforts, hosting community learning and exchange sessions on these issues/work).

Seek opportunities to build our collective understanding of and capacity to respond to safety issues in public spaces, emphasizing the voices and experiences of women, girls, and non-binary residents.

**What are we working on
this year?**

- Developing a pilot bystander intervention training for municipal staff & volunteers
- Developing resources and capacity building opportunities re: bystander intervention for residents
- Rolling out training for municipal staff and volunteers re: understanding and supporting youth experiencing commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC)
- Working with internal & external partners to better understand how the municipality is currently supporting youth experiencing CSEC and identifying areas for further action

- Organizing and hosting Community Safety Assessments (formerly Women's Safety Assessments)
- Further developing the Community Safety Assessment tool, including development of an app for use during assessments
- Building out processes to support assessment recommendations being integrated into decision making about municipal public spaces

- Research, scoping & planning for response to Council's direction to broaden the spectrum of municipal responses to intimate partner violence
- Research and coordination with D&I/ANSAIO for response to reports regarding anti-racism, discrimination and hate and the impact on women, non-binary & gender diverse residents

- Working with other teams, business units and internal committees and working groups with a lens of gender & safety
- Working with external partners to coordinate, align and collaborate on efforts related to gender-based violence
- Connecting with other Safe City programs across Canada & internationally

Community Safety- Programming & Partnerships

- The Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program sits within Community Safety's Programming & Partnerships division
- We also work very closely with the Research & Development division
- Other areas of work in Programming & Partnerships:
 - Community Mobilization Teams
 - Youth community safety, violence prevention and intervention
 - Indigenous community safety
 - Alternative responses (stabilization centre, outreach and crisis diversion)
- Our work is guided by the Public Safety Strategy

Thank you!

Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions, comments, or to discuss anything presented here today.

Amy Brierley at amy.brierley@halifax.ca