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**Item No. 7**  
**Halifax Regional Council**  
**March 5, 2024**

**TO:** Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed

**SUBMITTED BY:**

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Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** January 31, 2024

**SUBJECT:** **Public Safety Strategy Annual Report**

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### **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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> In May 2024, a recommendation report is scheduled to come before Regional Council demonstrating alignment among various internal and external Public Safety reports.

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<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>5</sup> 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

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A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://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

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## **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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

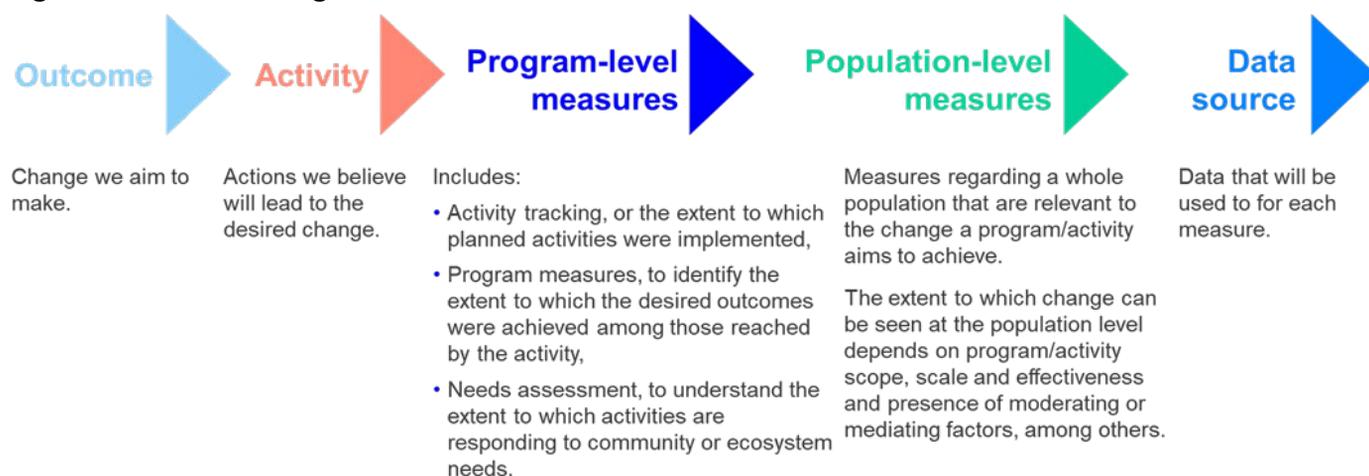
While the Framework is still under development (see Attachment C), the following illustrates application to provide an update on Year I activities and milestones that lead to the desired priority outcomes in the Strategy.

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

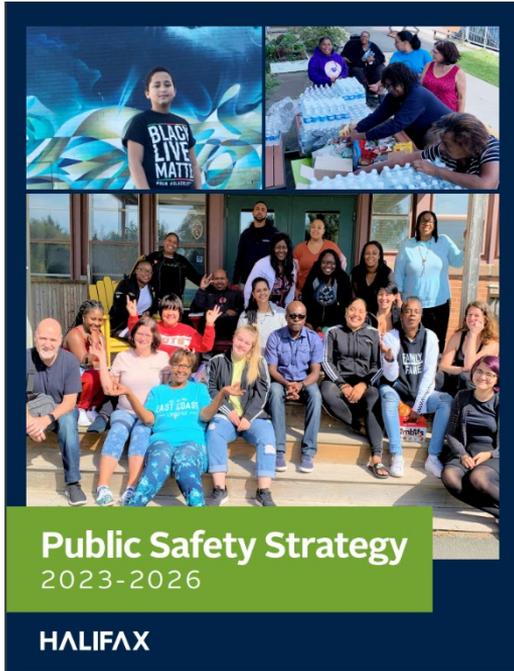
# **PUBLIC SAFETY STRATEGY**

## **2023-26**

Monitoring framework *draft*

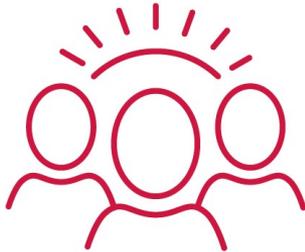
# Public Safety Strategy 2023-26

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

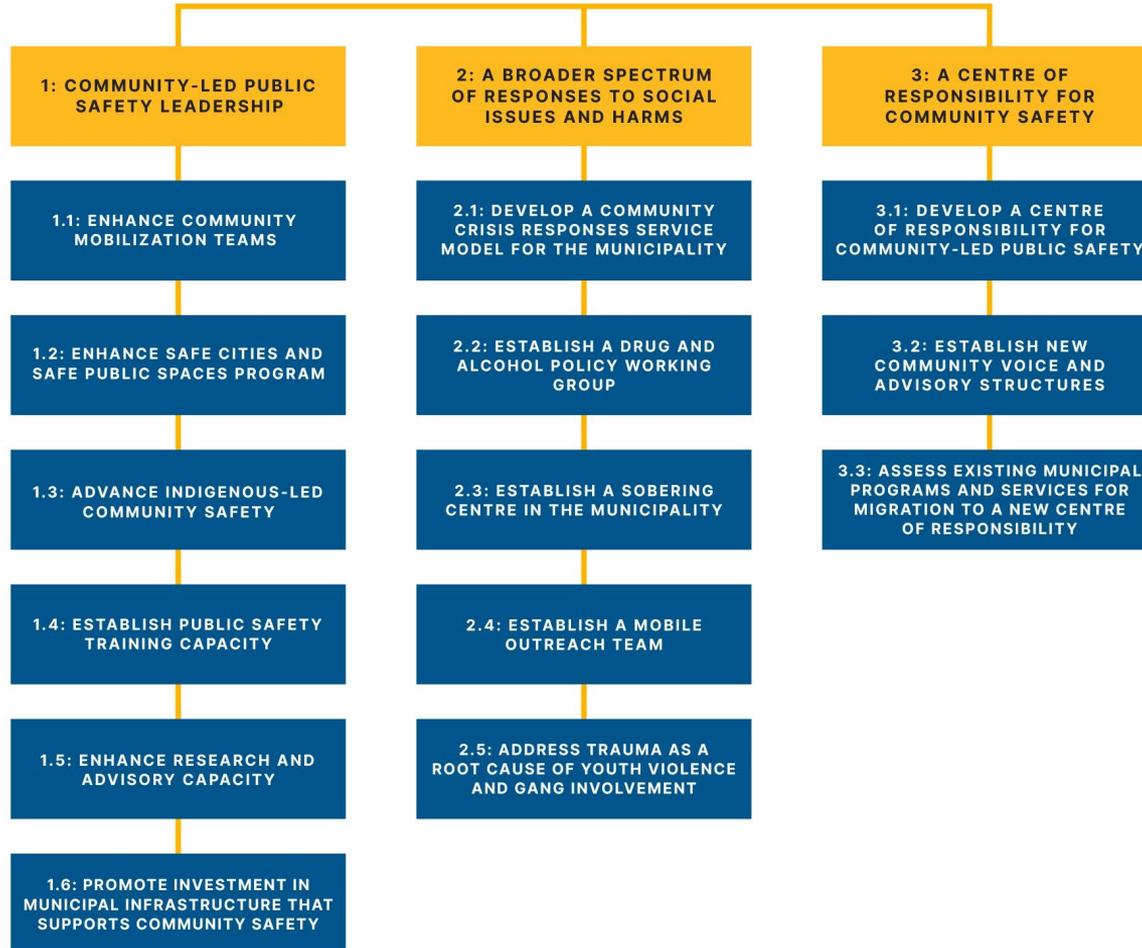
Establish a continuum of responders and responses to social harms, to ensure the most appropriate responder and reduce pressures on emergency services.



## 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?

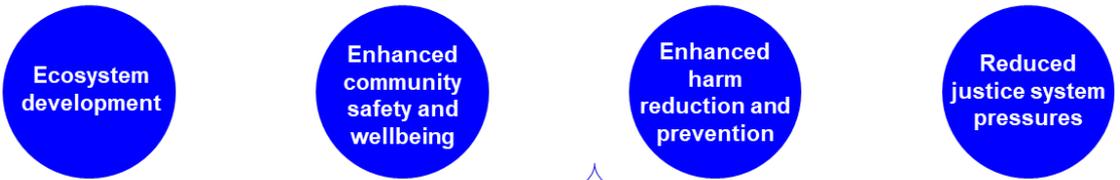
# How the framework was developed

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

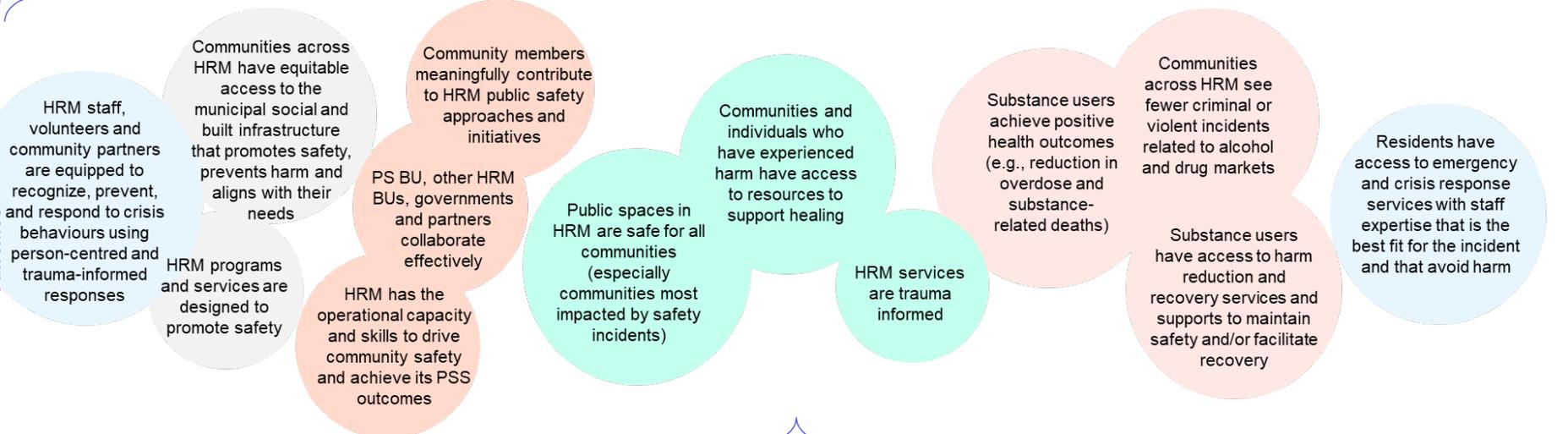
1. Leveraging insights from frameworks used in other jurisdictions
2. Collaborative workshops and meetings with the following actors:
  - All Programs and Partnerships and Research and Development team members
  - Advice and support from internal partners: Parks and Recreation, Immigration office, Government 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



Outcomes



Activities



Internal focus

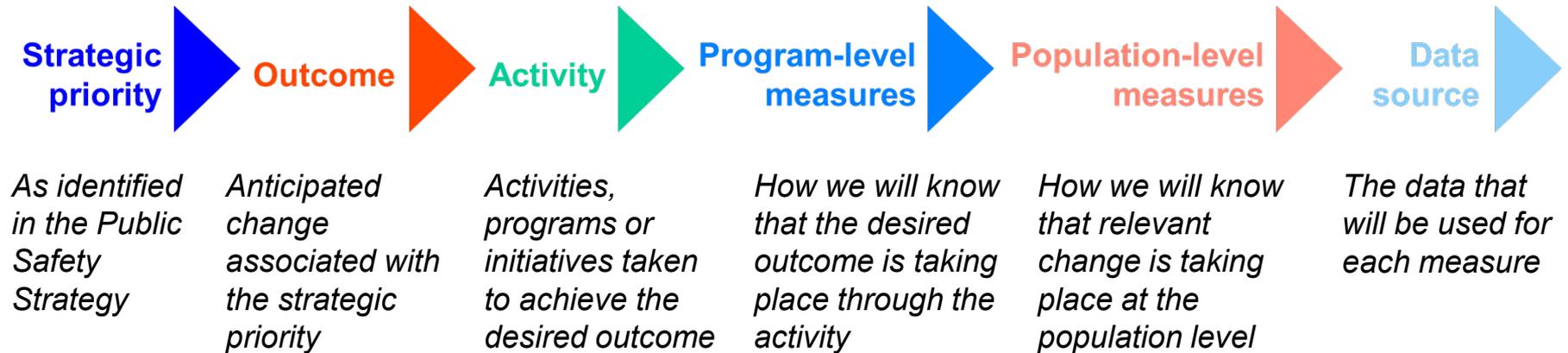
External focus

# 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

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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

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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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