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## Item No. 21.8

Halifax Regional Council  
February 11, 2025

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

**FROM:** Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

**DATE:** January 13, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Annual Public Safety Strategy Report 2024

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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

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In March 2023, Regional Council unanimously approved the municipality's renewed Public Safety Strategy. This report provides a background on the Strategy and an update on progress made since implementation, through a summary of key accomplishments. It also provides results from a monitoring framework used to track activities, progress and outcomes.
- Strategy' implementation is on track, with the majority of milestones complete and the remainder in progress. The Strategy has resulted in the development and creation of new services that are demonstrating impact, such as the Community Safety Training Program among others.
- Several initiatives in the Strategy are advancing recommendations in the Mass Casualty Commission Report (MCC) including those related to promoting by-stander interventions; healthy masculinities and creating safe spaces to report violence. Community Safety also participates in provincially led committees and taskforces advancing MCC recommendations.
- Current and forecasted implementation challenges and risks include capacity levels in the community service provider sector; capital, internal staffing and operational hurdles; and funding constraints projected to impact sustainability and scaling of pilot projects.
- Next year, Strategy implementation leads are on track to implement new trainings and services and commence research and engagement for a Strategy refresh.

## **BACKGROUND**

The municipality's renewed [Public Safety Strategy](#) (the Strategy, Attachment A) received unanimous approval by Regional Council on March 7, 2023. The Strategy guides evidence-based investments in upstream, alternative and holistic approaches to community safety and wellbeing. It frames a strategic approach to building capacity across sectors to support and growth HRM's community safety ecosystem (figure 1). Specifically, through the implementation of actions in three action areas, it:

- strengthens existing partnerships and foster new ones with the various levels of government, social agencies, educational institutions, business associations and community groups;
- builds evidence, knowledge and capacity for coordinated and holistic approaches to the root causes of crime, criminalization and victimization;
- and leads a coordinated approach to broadening the spectrum of responses to social issues and harms



*Figure 1: Community Safety Ecosystem (source: Public Safety Strategy 2023)*

The Strategy builds upon pathbreaking work that commenced with the implementation of recommendations received in Dr. Don Clairmont's reports on [Mayor's Roundtable on Violence in the HRM](#) (2008); the subsequent [2014 review](#); and follows implementation of the municipality's inaugural [Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022](#).

### **Inaugural Public Safety Strategy (2018-2022)**

Halifax's inaugural Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022 resulted in several important successes. First, it cultivated a shared vision of public safety across the municipality. All municipal business units, as well as external stakeholders, and community organizations were reflected in the strategy and held roles in implementation. Second, the Strategy guided the creation of new programs and services such as [Community Mobilization Teams](#) (CMTs) and [Safe City and Safe Public Spaces](#) program. Third, the creation of a Public Safety Office attracted significant external revenue<sup>1</sup>; promoted expert advice on community safety concerns, projects and programs<sup>2</sup>; and developed and sustained meaningful relationships with key

<sup>1</sup> Between 2019-2022 the Public Safety Office was awarded close to 4 million dollars in external funding from provincial and federal governments. This includes a 3.3-million-dollar award from Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund that has been used to resource relevant actions the new Public Safety Strategy.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Public Safety Office has lent expertise and guidance to the development and implementation of the Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan, the Youth Services Plan, the Multi-Service Youth Centres, HalifACT,

community stakeholders. Combined, this set the stage for the creation of a new Community Safety business unit in 2023. 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 consult the annual progress reports on [Public Safety Strategy website](#).

## DISCUSSION

The current Strategy, in year two of implementation, is informed by research, internal and external engagement, and existing Regional Council and Board of Police Commissioners recommendation reports.<sup>3</sup> Strategy oversight and development is led by Community Safety’s Research and Development Team, with implementation leads in Programs and Partnerships, and across other Business Units and external partners. It encompasses seven strategic priorities, four guiding principles, and three action areas (figure 2). [The first annual report](#) on this Strategy was presented to Regional Council in March 2024.

## 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:

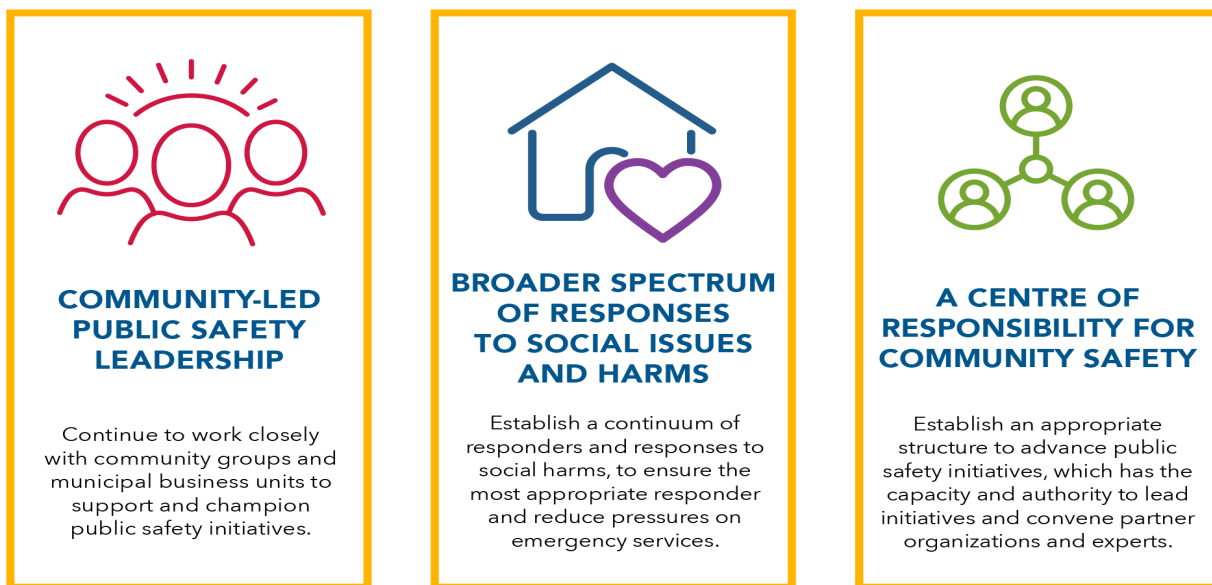


Figure 2: the Strategy's Three Action Areas (source: Public Safety Strategy, 2023)

A monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategy is under development, providing insight on progress toward outcomes for each action and the ability for continuous learning and adaptation of Strategic initiatives. Attachment B provides monitoring reports for each action and where available, outcome measures. Attachment C provides Action Briefs that describe in detail, actions in more advanced stages of

the JustFood Action Plan and the Police Transformation Study, the Diversity and Inclusion Framework, the Anti-Black Racism Framework, and the Social Policy Administrative Order and Framework, among other key initiatives.

<sup>3</sup> Including 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); the Defunding the Police report (2022). A full list of documents reviewed for the creation of this strategy can be found in [The Strategy](#).

implementation. A snapshot of implementation accomplishments for each of the three Strategic areas follows in the remainder of this report.

#### Year Two Implementation Results

The **first strategic area, Community-led Public Safety Leadership**, builds capacity to advance successes in promoting public safety as a shared responsibility across business units, including expanding existing programs, developing training capacity necessary to foster the community safety ecosystem, and bolstering support for community-led safety with populations disproportionately impacted by violence. Key highlights of this year's progress include:

- **Community Mobilization Teams** are a community-led approach to creating safer communities working in three overlapping areas: Crisis Prevention, Preparedness and Response. There are four CMTs across seven HRM communities: Mulgrave Park, North Preston, Central North/Uniacke Square and area, East Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon and most recently, Spryfield. Since their launch in 2018, **CMT membership has grown every year, with 11 new members joining in 2024**. This reflects CMTs increased capacity to mobilize and support their communities in times of crisis. CMTs participated in 8 trainings over 2024 to support crisis preparedness; enhanced local prevention capacity by collaborating with 19 community organizations on 8 different community events with more than 530 participants; and mobilized to lead or collaborate on trauma-informed responses to 13 critical incidents. Read more about the CMTs work in Attachment C, action 1.1
- The **Community Safety Training** program, launched last year, continues to expand training capacity to cultivate a broader culture shift within the municipality. The program aims to support employees and volunteers with knowledge and practical skills to seek alternatives to enforcement where appropriate, reducing reliance on police services by broadening the spectrum of crisis response option. By March 2025, we will have trained 254 employees and volunteers in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NCI), Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention. An ongoing independent evaluation of NCI reports that 49% of participants agreed that the training reduced their need to seek enforcement when resolving crisis or conflict situations. Read more about this program and its impact in Attachment C, action 1.4
- Community Safety also leads and/or fosters the development of a range of new educational and training offerings, this year involving:
  - The Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program's **Recognizing and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth (CSEC)** training. Collaborating with the [Trafficking and Exploitation Services System](#), we have trained almost 100 municipal staff and volunteers. The training educates participants to apply learnings in their roles, either directly supporting youth in crisis, or designing municipal services, plans and projects to contribute to the protective, upstream factors to reduce CSEC. Read more about the Safe City program in Attachments C, action 1.2.
  - **Intercultural Competency training**, with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth. Aimed at enhancing intercultural competency among HRM staff when working with newcomer youth, the training development leveraged participatory methods that integrated youth voices into the training materials, including a [video component](#). Piloted this year with 16 employees, with plans to implement the training as a regular offering.
  - **Bystander Awareness training** collaboration with Dr. Diane Crocker from Saint Mary's University and community organizations to refine the theory of change, outcomes and impact measures. Full implementation with a developmental evaluation is anticipated next fiscal year.
  - [The First Nations Principles of OCAP®](#) with the First Nations Information Governance Centre. The course introduced **12** invited learners from an array of Business Units to the

principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession as it relates to the collection and holding of First Nations data.

- Community Safety, the Youth Division and Diversity and Inclusion are collaborating with The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS) create a **legal glossary** to help newcomer youth and families navigate the criminal justice system. The glossary, which is being co-developed with newcomer communities, will be freely available in multiple languages; and supplemented with an educational video for service providers.
- Research and engagement are underway for the development of a **Senior Safety Strategy**, with funding from Province of Nova Scotia and collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities. Aimed at defining, aligning and strengthening how the municipality can promote senior safety across business units, a recommendation report is expected to be presented to Regional Council in the Spring of 2025.
- A partnership between Community Safety, Dalhousie's Healthy Populations Institute and Nova Scotia Health to develop an Equity-based Policy Framework received funding from Public Health Agency of Canada's Intersectoral Action Fund. This funding will enable the partners to advance the creation of a set of geographically based tools that can inform municipal planning processes, such as capital planning, road safety and other initiatives that could benefit from an evidence-based, locally relevant, equity-lens.

The **second action area**, aims to build capacity and programming to support a **Broader Spectrum of Responses to Social Issues and Harms** through developing new services that can provide alternatives to criminal justice approaches to social issues and harms, build community safety capacity, and support youth. The monitoring framework in Attachment B provides detailed updates on each action's implementation, with select highlights below:

- Immediately following budget approval from Regional Council in April 2024, a **Community Crisis Service** working group was struck to lead development and implementation planning. It has made significant progress, including developing a call intake, evaluation and dispatch model. Other milestones include the completion of two community engagements with existing crisis service providers as well as with internal and external stakeholders. These engagements helped the working group better understand current crisis needs and services/supports available in HRM's dynamic crisis service landscape; informed crisis service design principles; refined the pilot cost model; created a set of recommendations, including how the service can provide an effective alternative to police responses where appropriate including for some forms of intimate partner disputes. The working group also hosted a day of learning from Canada's longest standing community crisis diversion service, which operates in Edmonton. This event was attended by over 30 internal and external stakeholders and helped socialize and build awareness of the effectiveness of a broader spectrum of response; education on the types of data needed to monitor outcomes for continuous learning; and the types of polices, procedures and processes that need to be in place for implementation. The working group anticipates releasing a competitive bid for a crisis service provider (pending budget approvals) in Q1 2025. Read more about the development of the crisis service model in Attachment C, Action 2.1.
- Led by the Housing and Homelessness Division, the **mobile outreach and transportation service** secured a service provider and is scheduled to launch toward the end of February 2025. The service, **After Hours Individualized Engagement Mobilization Team (AIM)** will provide after-hours outreach to people experiencing homelessness, with a focus on those residing in encampments. The goal is to provide residents with supports to improve their ability to access and secure housing and health services.
- A multi-sectoral collaboration among Community Safety, Parks and Recreation, the District 7 Councillor, Basketball Canada and Buckets and Borders resulted in a community-led participatory

project to [redevelop the basketball courts at George Dixon](#). Creating 'Squaretown' involved significant external investments in the redevelopment, a youth and community designed competition for court artwork, a public launch party, BBQ and basketball game held on September 6. Over 50 youth participated in the project, developing skill in the design to build process, and over 500 community members participated in the launch party for the new courts.

- 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 is from Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund. These include:

Figure 3: POSSE project youth participants testimonials (2024)

- "[POSSE staff] taught me that I was accepted no matter  
- "I never really believed in having a "calling" until I reached POSSE. I meant it yesterday when I said it has been life changing. I'm so glad to be able to participate in an amazing project like this." (September 2024)  
- "This is what I want to do, I want to help people, I want to go back to school, and I want to support people like me... and POSSE is helping me get there." (October 2024)

- The launch of a Downtown Dartmouth-based **Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE)** program. POSSE provides peer to peer training, outreach and wrap around services for marginalized youth. Since launching in April, youth in the program have completed over 205 volunteer hours receiving outreach training (in areas such as Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, Mental Health First Aid), and completed 110 outreach contacts with 90 unique youth. They have applied

crisis interventions 20 times, and made over 40 referrals for housing, health care, and other urgent and long-term needs. Testimonials from youth participants in Figure 3 illustrate the impact this program is having on youth.

- **A Justice Navigator with the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute**. The new program aids youth navigate the criminal justice system and through wraparound supports designed to improve conditions known to reduce recidivism. The Navigator has supported 23 youth clients in 9 communities in across HRM. Client support has included wellness checks, collaborative work with defense counsel and legal aid; individualized plans based on needs assessments for housing, education, employment and mental health; and healing circles and restorative justice sessions to repair harm and foster accountability.
- The Youth Division's [Mobile Youth Support Team \(MYST\)](#). MYST develops and implements prevention and intervention initiatives to address risk factors associated with gun and gang violence. This includes mentoring, counselling, skills development, and recreational activities, among others. MYST operates within existing youth spaces at HRM municipal recreation centres, responding to community crises while focusing on prevention, crisis intervention, and strengthening the capacity of youth staff to address issues related to gun and gang violence. Building on year one successes, 2024-2025 strengthened strategies proven to help with the reduction of trauma impact in vulnerable youth following a community crisis event by increasing access to low barrier, youth friendly counselling support. Among other accomplishments (see Attachment C, Action 2.5) MYST offered counselling support to 149 youth; providing navigation and support to 14 HRM youth attending Provincial court; and coordinated with local service providers and led community debriefs at Citadel Highschool following the tragic death of Ahmad Al Marrach in April 2024.
- The funding has also enabled the municipality's long-standing crime prevention Youth Advocate Program (YAP) to dive into historical participant data, crime and demographic trends



to better understand program impacts, gaps and growth areas. These data will be collated on a **Youth Advocate Program Dashboard** currently being finalized, to communicate impact, monitor program activity, report outcomes, and participate in continuous learning and improvement.

- Advancing recommendations from the municipal led Youth Services Review (2023), a **Child, Youth and Family Response Table** design was initiated this past fiscal year. The Table aims to bring together partners to collaboratively refer, review, and provide supports to children, youth, and their families to lower their risk of being involved in violence. **30 service providers attended** the kick off, to assess process that would enable individual risk assessment and tailored solutions to ensure that children, youth, and families in the community receive the supports they need. Community Safety continues to working on guiding governance documents, screening tools, and legal considerations necessary for implementation.

Communities are safest when relationships that underpin the safety ecosystem are healthy and thriving. Strong relationships across sectors mean that priorities are the foundation of safety processes, plans and policies, and not extracted through singular points of engagement. Diverse sectoral, population and geographic representation in advisories, partnerships, committees and collaborations means that Community Safety is equipped to respect difference and co-create foundations for common ground. Community Safety's ongoing implementation of this action ensures the work remains connected to and aligned with diverse community needs. The third action area, **A Centre of Responsibility (CoR)** grounds the Strategy in the development of a CoR—a 'backbone' office, responsible for building multi-sectoral relationships, strengthening divisional alignment, and providing, leadership, support, and expert advice across the ecosystem and beyond.

Key achievements this year include:

- Since the creation of the Community Safety Business Unit in April 2023, the work to develop it as Centre of Responsibility continues through strategic alignment of corporate functions and community partnerships. Internally, this has resulted in the migration of two additional functions to the Business Unit: **Lake Patrol** and **Crossing Guards**. Moreover, the implementation of a **Commissioner of Public Safety** will advance ongoing efforts for strategic and relational alignment among community and public safety functions, resulting in more collaboration, effectiveness and efficiency.
- Collaborating on the Launch of **Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research** at Dalhousie University. 70 participants attended and became connected to the Clairmont Centre, had an opportunity to lean and exchange knowledge on ongoing local research in community safety and the vast contributions of Dr. Clairmont and his partners to the field of community safety. Participants included the following sectors: elected officials, provincial, federal and municipal administration, law enforcement, corrections, universities, private and non-for profit
- Partnering with the Provincial Department of Justice and the Nova Scotia Crime Prevention Society to host a two-day **Crime Prevention Symposium** attended by 170 multi-sector participants. Participants networked with practitioners across the province, heard from internationally renowned crime prevention experts like Dr. Irvin Waller, learned about local crime prevention successes, and received training on how to develop, monitor and evaluate Community Safety and Wellbeing plans.
- Joining the [Strong Cities Network](#), a global network of more than 250 cities dedicated to addressing all forms of hate, polarization and violent extremism. Community Safety has already benefited from their regular learning opportunities, training, regional and global summits. These activities facilitate local capacity through knowledge exchanges, learning, and evidence-building. Joining the Network has already fostered relationships to strengthen municipal capacity to prevent and respond to this issue: Community Safety is currently developing a local workshop with Public Safety Canada and the Canadian Practitioners Network for the Prevention of Extremist Violence for Spring 2025,

tentatively titled: *Towards a Shared Vision on safeguarding community safety and youth from hate and Violent Extremism in Halifax.*

### ***Strategic Alignment with Mass Casualty Commission Recommendations***

In 2023, the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) released its findings and recommendations. Community Safety contributed to the Commission's findings through interviews and Roundtables and, since the report's release, has participated in working groups and task forces charged with developing implementation plans for the recommendations. In addition, many of the initiatives and actions in the Public Safety Strategy are advancing the recommendations. These include:

- All training offerings within the Community Safety Training program align with recommendation C.8 Proactive Pre-Critical Incident Wellness Planning.
- The Safe City Safe Public Spaces program through its various initiatives including training, data generation and dissemination, expert advice and Community Safety Assessments advance the following recommendations; C.17 Promoting Bystander Intervention As A Daily Practice; C V.7 Countering Victim Blaming And Hyper-Responsibilization Of Women Survivors, V.9 Creating Safe Spaces To Report Violence; V.15 Women-Centered Strategies And Actions, V.16 Putting Women's Safety First, and C.32 Promoting And Supporting Healthy Masculinities.
- Community Safety is on the Facilitation Team in the Provincial Whole of Society Response to Bystander Intervention, aligning with V.14 Mobilizing A Society-Wide Response. It is also on the Pro-Arrest, Pro-Charge Prosecution Task force leading recommendation V8: Replacement Of Mandatory Arrest And Charging Policies And Protocols For Intimate Partner Violence Offences.

### **Strategy Implementation challenges and risks**

As noted, all Strategy actions are complete or in progress. However, current and forecasted implementation challenges and risks include capacity levels in the community service provider sector which may impact the full implementation of new services such as the Community Crisis Service; renovation delays for the Stabilization Centre location; internal staffing delays and turnover for key positions necessary to advance actions such as Indigenous safety plans; internal funding constraints which may impact the scalability of pilot projects in flight; and sustainability challenges due to the expiration of the multi-year Public Safety Canada grant at the end of next fiscal year. Next fiscal year is the final year of the grant, and funding will be reduced from approximately 1.1 million to \$660,000. Staff have submitted funding applications to Public Safety Canada to support new and ongoing work, with results anticipated in Spring 2025.

### **The Strategy: Looking ahead to Year Three**

Next fiscal year, Strategy leads are focused on implementing the Stabilization Centre and crisis service pilots; developing and implementing evaluations of each pilot project; expanding training offerings such as Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention; developing an implementation plan the Senior Safety Strategy; hosting the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities national conference; onboarding staff to continue Indigenous safety engagement and planning; and continuing to build capacity with support from external non profits and government agencies to prevent hate, social polarization and violent extremism. Community Safety will also kick off engagements for a Public Safety Strategy refresh in 2025 to align with the expiry of its current strategy in 2026.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this information report.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Communities were not engaged for this information report



## **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.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026

Attachment B Monitoring Strategy Implementation: Report on Activities and Outcomes for each action

Attachment C Action Briefs

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Report Prepared by: Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor 902.210-0102

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Attachment A Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026



# Public Safety Strategy

2023-2026

**HALIFAX**

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# Message from the Mayor



On behalf of Regional Council, I am pleased to present the Halifax Regional Municipality's new Public Safety Strategy, 2023-2026.

Cities are uniquely positioned to address some of the most important issues we face today. While cities are driving change in the world, our own city is growing and evolving at a rapid pace. As it evolves, so do its needs, including a re-examination of how we address public safety.

Since 2006, we have been working to understand how we can best foster a city that allows all residents to feel safe. With the adoption of the *Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022* we recognized that true positive impacts to public safety requires a collective effort across the municipality, and tirelessly working in partnership with communities and other levels of government.

It was clear that real transformation required a true shift in the way we think about safety in our communities, particularly in terms of having community inform what safety means to them, and how we can best meet that expectation.

We have successfully moved towards a shared vision of safe communities across the Halifax region. This includes the recognition that the municipality has a vital responsibility to advance public safety. In 2021, Regional Council unanimously supported the need for a reimagined public safety strategy. The Public Safety Strategy, 2023-2026 builds on successes to-date as it works to support the needs of a healthy, equitable and growing community.

To do this meaningfully, the municipality relies on the expertise of a public safety division capable of driving change, making strong connections, and helping to transform public safety.

I am confident that with this strategy and its guiding principles – actionable, equitable, intersectional, and sustainable – we will together build a city where everyone can feel safe and healthy.

**Sincerely,**



**Mike Savage, Mayor**

# Introduction

The *Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026* (the Strategy) 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 collective impact.

Halifax's inaugural *Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022* resulted in several important successes for the creation of a shared vision of public safety across the municipality. Over the past five years, the Public Safety Office (PSO) has created new programs and services such as Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs) and *Safe City and Safe Public Spaces* program, while expanding its capability to deliver advice on public safety issues across municipal business units and in partnership with community organizations. The new Strategy for 2023-2026 will build on these successes and identify new initiatives that enhance the municipality's ability to improve safety and wellbeing and prevent harms to residents and visitors in the Halifax Region.

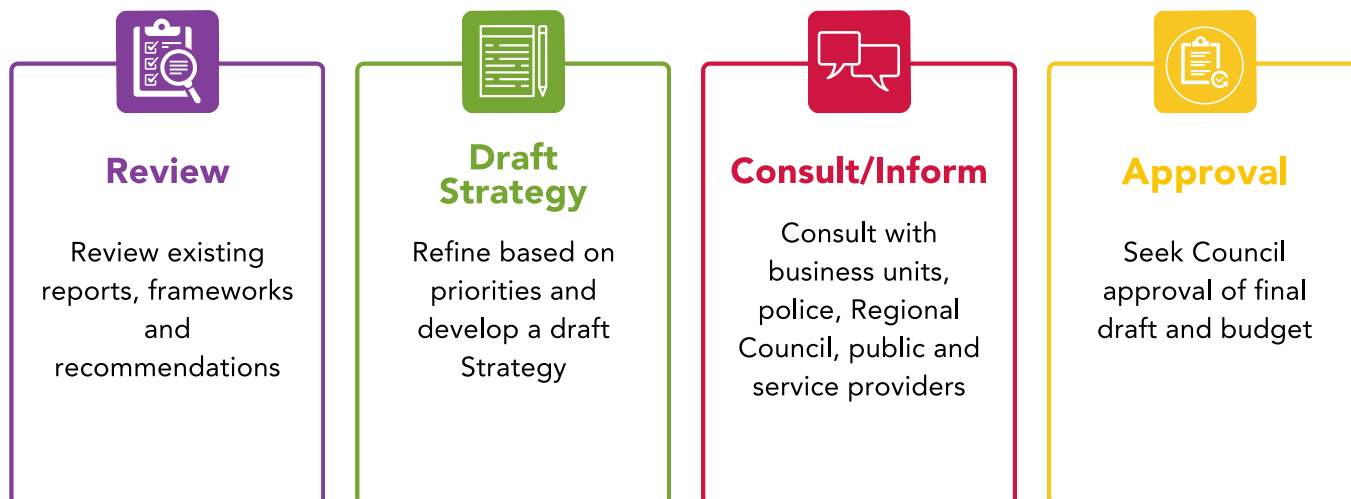
In 2021, Regional Council unanimously approved direction for the PSO to reimagine public safety in the municipality and to find ways to address social issues and harms through broadening the spectrum of available responses <sup>1</sup>. Recognizing that innovation and new response models will be required to meet current and future public safety challenges, the municipality will need to take a leading role in building new services, creating partnerships, and developing community capacity to address complex problems.

## Developing the Strategy

A project team led within the municipality's Government Relations & External Affairs division developed this Strategy with input from other business units and external consultants. The development involved three key components: a current state assessment; internal consultations with municipal partners; and public consultation.

<sup>1</sup> See municipal staff report (2021) *Reimagining Public Safety* <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/210420rc1114.pdf>

## Stages of Strategy development



## Current state assessment

The Public Safety Strategy team began by reviewing the extensive number of municipal reports, research, and consultations related to public safety completed in recent years. Over two dozen relevant documents were reviewed<sup>2</sup>, with a focus on public safety related materials that were developed through local consultations, reports developed by or for the PSO, various policy frameworks developed by the Halifax Regional Municipality, and other relevant municipal research and surveys.

### Examples of documents reviewed:

- *Defunding the Police* report (2021)
- *Street Checks* report (2019)
- *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: LGBTQ2 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 in Appendix A

<sup>2</sup> List of all documents reviewed can be found in Appendix A





## Key themes from the reports reviewed include the following:

- **The need for a broader spectrum of responses to social issues and harms:** The *Defunding the Police report* (2021), the *Drug and Alcohol Strategy consultation* (2020), and the recent public participation sessions at the Board of Police Commissioners budget debates (2023), all identify the need for the municipality to develop new services that provide better responses to social issues and harms, particularly around mental health crisis, addictions, and homelessness<sup>3</sup>. Additionally, in 2021, Council directed the municipality to identify opportunities for civilian delivery of certain police functions, and the Halifax Resident Survey conducted by the municipality in 2021 indicated that a majority (52 per cent) of people in Halifax felt that other roles could take over certain policing tasks, reinforcing public support for a new approach. The municipality's Social Policy framework, developed in 2021, also clearly indicates the municipality's intention to "forg[e] new territory", suggesting the time is right for the municipality to begin developing new service areas to address its most acute public safety challenges.

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, the [Defunding the Police](#) report recommendations 15 (regarding a civilian mental health crisis response) and 27 (regarding the establishment of a drug policy working group) are relevant here, as is the finding in that report that the [National Police Federation](#) also agree that a broader spectrum of responses is desirable.



- **The importance of an equitable and intersectional approach to service development and delivery:** The municipality’s Diversity and Inclusion and Anti-Black Racism Framework, recent consultations on anti-Asian, anti-Black and anti-Muslim racism, and Women and Gender Equity Strategy (WGES) engagements all make clear that services should be culturally responsive, centre around community needs and lived experiences and be developed and delivered in ways that recognize and respond to the systemic and intersecting forms of inequity that many Halifax residents face. Developing a broader spectrum of responses is, in and of itself, an important step towards more equitable service delivery, as highlighted in recent WGES consultations that called for, “accessible, anti-ableist, and culturally relevant community and mobile mental health support (without police involvement).”
- **The need to move intentions into action:** The *Drug and Alcohol Strategy* consultation, the [Street Checks report](#), and the Anti-Black Racism consultation, have indicated that communities in the Halifax region may be experiencing ‘consultation fatigue’ and that they are interested in seeing concrete actions on consistently identified issues. Annual reports from the PSO, the *2014 Clairmont* report, and research provided by the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) all indicate the importance of developing a Centre of Responsibility (CoR) to effectively collaborate with and support community-based public safety and deliver public safety programs and services. A robust CoR generally consists of a “backbone” administrative structure, stable and sufficient funding, research and analysis capabilities, community engagement and capacity to build and sustain partnerships through a collective impact approach.
- **The opportunity for evidence-based innovation:** A growing body of research supports demands from community for more appropriate community-based response models to mental health crisis, outreach and addictions services. The research suggests that these services can prevent deaths, reduce harms from mental health and addictions, reduce pressure on emergency services, prevent certain types of crime and improve overall health and wellbeing. The municipality is within its mandate, and well positioned to draw on best practices identified in this research to develop a spectrum of response models that will best deliver benefits to communities in the Halifax region.

Based on the reports reviewed as part of the current state assessment, the Public Safety Strategy project team developed a draft strategic framework with several proposed priority actions, building and validating this framework through subsequent internal and external consultations with the public and key partners. Additionally, the project team facilitated the development of a current state systems map that identified public safety-related programs and services offered across the municipality. The map identified whether the programs were offered by community or government, and who has access to the programs. This systems map helped provide an understanding of various levels of public safety programming and potential gap areas, and allowed the project team to further refine the stakeholder list for internal and external consultations.

# Internal consultation with municipal partners: what we heard

The project team sought feedback on the draft strategic framework from the Executive Directors of municipal business units, the RCMP, Halifax Regional Police (HRP), Regional Council members, and other internal stakeholders. Internal consultations were held from May through September 2022.

## Key findings from internal consultations included the following:

- **Internal partners support** program and policy directions proposed in the Strategy. Key partners, including HRP, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency (HRFE) and the RCMP, support a broader spectrum of responses for emergency and non-emergency services. Other business units that deliver programs or services essential to upstream public safety, such as Libraries, Parks & Recreation, Planning & Development, and Halifax Transit were also satisfied that enhanced support from the PSO, along with new services proposed would broaden and better sustain the public safety ecosystem in the municipality.
- **It is important to ensure appropriate partnerships** are in place to coordinate these new service areas effectively, with partners especially noting areas of overlap between the municipality and the province in service areas such as addictions and mental health. While the municipality does not have a mandate to deliver treatment for mental illness or substance use disorders, it does have a mandate to respond appropriately to safety concerns that these conditions may create. It is also important to leverage existing municipal programs, as well as build and create partnerships with community groups that are already delivering community-driven public safety. Roles for municipal, provincial, and community partners will need to be clearly articulated to deliver (where the municipality is responsible and empowered to deliver), support and connect (where services are delivered by provincial or community partners).
- **New capacity should be built deliberately.** While there was general agreement on a desirable end-state with a broad spectrum of response options and increased municipal attention to acute issues around mental health, addictions and homelessness, internal partners also consistently indicated the importance of deliberate planning to ensure the municipality is able to deliver new services effectively, efficiently and economically. Several proposed actions – such as the development of a civilian mental health crisis response capacity – will need to be guided by long-term plans and agreements rooted in sustainability and service coordination.





Participants in the Women's Safety Assessment Training for the Safe City, Safe Public Spaces Program

## External consultation: what we heard

While the Public Safety Strategy project team recognized the reality of consultation fatigue among key communities, it was necessary to provide an opportunity for individuals and community organizations to indicate whether the Strategy adequately reflected the messages that the municipality received in prior consultations. In total, eight community partner and public consultation sessions were held throughout September to November 2022, with feedback gathered via written responses and an online survey. Consultations resulted in approximately 20 partner organization groups and 107 individuals engaged.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> This number includes individuals who attended the partner organization sessions, those who attended the in-person sessions, and individuals from the public who completed the survey through the Shape Your City website. As the survey responses were anonymous, exact numbers are unknown.



**Importance of alternative responses:** Across all sessions and in survey responses, participants identified the lack of alternative responses to address non criminal safety and wellbeing issues arising from mental illness, addiction and homelessness. Participants underscored the Strategy's goal to prioritize broadening the continuum of response options through creating civilian and community-led supports integrated within existing systems. Gaps in the current approach are an opportunity to better meet the needs of communities, particularly those who have been marginalized and experienced (and continue to experience) racism and oppression.



**Initiatives are developed by, for, and with community:** Participants emphasized that community be at the centre of the development, implementation, and maintenance of these initiatives. Community organizations noted their desire to be meaningfully involved in the development and decision making as initiatives of the Strategy move forward. This should include established mechanisms and processes to ensure that community can guide, evaluate, and support implementation of this work, as well as adequate funding for the development and maintenance of any initiatives.



**Representation is central to the development of the initiatives:** Representation that reflects the diversity of the Halifax region and those most impacted by safety concerns is critical to ensuring that the strategy is implemented in a meaningful and successful manner. Participants noted that it was not only essential to see themselves and how their communities would be impacted by the strategic actions, but also that having the diverse needs of various communities at the table to guide and evaluate the ongoing work was pivotal to its success.



# Toward community-led public safety

Public safety is about creating 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. In the municipal context, this includes programs and services to enhance **protective factors** that build resilient individuals and communities. Protective factors can be promoted through the equitable provision of services such as youth programming and literacy development; neighbourhood planning for social cohesion and supporting community-led safety and wellbeing initiatives.

Public safety can also be understood to include programs and services that **reduce risks** (i.e., factors that make individual or community harms more likely). Risk reduction implicates a wide range of programs and services offered by the municipality, including, for example, sidewalk and road maintenance, emergency preparedness, and crime prevention programs. Public safety also includes **responding to harms** where they occur, which, in the municipal context, has traditionally involved policing, fire, and other emergency response services. Public safety can therefore be conceived of as **enhancing protective factors and reducing risks for individuals and communities and creating appropriate responses to harms where they occur.**

While certain municipal services are more closely associated with public safety than others, public safety is the responsibility of all municipal business units and effective public safety promotion requires partnership and collaboration with diverse communities from across the Halifax region, as well as other levels of government.

The *Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022* provided a wide-ranging framework for the municipality to act on four strategic priorities – **Build Resident Resilience, Ensure Safe Spaces, Strengthen Communities,** and **Prevent and Reduce Crime.** Through that Strategy, the municipality established a strong foundation for seeing all of our people, processes and places as integral to building safer communities. The municipality's inaugural Public Safety Strategy demonstrated the most important roles the municipality plays in creating the conditions for safety—its investment in **social infrastructure**<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>According to [Latham and Layton](#) (2019), “what counts as social infrastructure has other primary functions other than to promote sociality; however facilitating sociality is an essential component of how they manage to provide their primary function.” In other words, while the primary function of a space may not be commonly understood as social (for example, a library is a place to borrow books or access information; or a recreation centre is a space to engage in recreational programs), the space works best when its services are delivered in a socially conscious way, and by delivering those services socially, broad social sustainability and resilience benefits are experienced. (See also Eric Klienburg (2018) *Palaces for the People: How social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life.* New York, Penguin Random House.)



Social infrastructure is not only the physical spaces in a community where municipal programs and services occur, but the resources, relationships, and networks these places cultivate both at the local and extra-local scale. Parks, recreational spaces and programs, and libraries provide communities with safe, inclusive and accessible spaces to gather, build strong and resilient networks, engage in positive social activities, and seek safety from harm.

Since the establishment of the 2018 - 2022 Strategy, the municipality has advanced key strategic initiatives that contribute to **social infrastructure** development and **upstream prevention**. These include the establishment of the *Road to Economic Prosperity Action Plan*, the *Youth Services Plan*, the *Social Policy Framework*, and the *JustFood Action Plan*.

Following the consistent messages identified in reports and consultations, this Strategy is focused on promoting **Community-Led Public Safety**. Specifically, this means ensuring that initiatives, programs, and services are responsive to community needs, built in collaboration with affected communities, and focused on building community capacity over time. The Strategy therefore focuses on programs and services that **go beyond the core municipal programs and services** that are already in place, and in particular focuses on **ways in which the municipality can re-imagine** approaches to improve protective factors, reduce risks, and ensure an appropriate response to harms. The Strategy seeks to identify areas where the **municipality is in a position to take action**, and where these **actions are aligned with community needs** identified through recent research and consultations.



Community Mobilization Teams participate in Mental Health First Aid training

# Guiding Principles

The Public Safety Strategy is founded on four guiding principles. These principles will be applied to actions and will guide implementation of new initiatives through 2023-2026 and beyond. The principles are:



## **ACTIONABLE**

While public safety is a shared enterprise across multiple sectors and levels of government, public safety planning needs to be led and driven by a core agency or unit, to ensure that planned things get done. The actions of the Strategy will be focused on areas where the Halifax Regional Municipality and particularly the PSO, can take action and lead implementation.



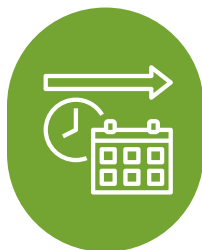
## **EQUITABLE**

The new Strategy will build on recent efforts by the municipality and the PSO to address systemic inequities across service areas. Implementation of the new Strategy will impact and benefit diverse geographic and cultural communities in the Halifax Region through ongoing and meaningful engagement with those communities, and actions have been selected that address some of the most acute service challenges faced by those communities.



## **INTERSECTIONAL**

The new Strategy will align closely with the municipality's Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Anti-Black Racism Strategy, other anti-racism work, GBA+ analysis and collaborative efforts with the municipality's Indigenous Advisor and Indigenous community partners. The new Strategy recognizes and seeks to address the multiple and compounding forms of marginalization faced by people in the Halifax region, and to address historic mistrust between the municipality and key communities including the African Nova Scotians, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+.



## **SUSTAINABLE**

The actions proposed in the Strategy will be connected to a long-term vision of public safety in the municipality, and in recognition that establishing successful and effective services takes time. New services established under the auspices of the Strategy will be developed to ensure the municipality has a clear pathway to continue service delivery and enhance the public safety ecosystem beyond the life of the Strategy.



# Strategic priorities

The municipality's Plan on a Page is a living document that is revised annually, and establishes the vision, mission, values, and priority areas for the municipality. The current plan is outlined in the figure below.



This Strategy is aligned with, and will be implemented in consideration of, the values established in the plan. While the Strategy most directly contributes to priority areas including Our People; Service Excellence; Service Delivery; Healthy, Liveable Communities; and Social Development, all the values established in the plan are reflected in various places throughout the Strategy.

**The Strategy reflects seven strategic priorities for 2023-2026.** These include:

- 1. Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services:** Since the establishment of the PSO, the municipality has worked to promote the perspective that public safety is a shared responsibility that involves a spectrum of responses to social issues and harms. Business units must consider how they can promote public safety through their programs and services and draw on available advice and expertise on how to recognize and address public safety issues and opportunities.

- 2. Create safer and more inclusive spaces:** A core component of public safety is ensuring that residents of and visitors to Halifax feel safe and included when they are in public spaces; accessing municipal buildings, programs, and services; and interacting with municipal staff. Ensuring that these spaces are physically safe and secure, welcoming to the diversity of people in Halifax, and staffed by people who have the resources necessary to provide inclusive supports and responses to members of the public, are core priorities in this Strategy.
- 3. Promote healing from trauma:** Trauma experienced at an individual or community level both increases risk factors for future harm and reduces protective factors and resilience. Ensuring that resources are in place to support healing for individuals and communities who have experienced trauma such as violence, gender-based violence, racism, hate, and disasters such as fire and extreme weather events is an important part of reducing the negative impacts of trauma.
- 4. Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness:** Halifax is facing acute challenges related to housing supply. The municipality can play an important role in connecting people experiencing homelessness to available supports and services as well as in expanding the kinds of supports that are available. New services, approaches to addressing these issues, and partnerships across communities and governments are needed urgently to address these challenges and make Halifax a city that is capable of caring for all of its residents.
- 5. Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response:** There are a wide range of situations where risks of harm, or actual harm, are present, but which do not require a police officer, fire, or ambulance response. Emergency services in Halifax have consistently indicated that they are at or beyond their capacity to respond, and that there are certain types of calls for which another responder – such as a mental health professional or community-based resource – may be better-positioned to provide support to an individual in distress. Establishing a wider spectrum of response options in the Halifax region – in partnership with the community and provincial government where appropriate – is essential to take pressure off emergency services and reduce risks associated with inappropriate responses to social issues and harms. Ensuring the most appropriate responder is also more cost-effective in the long run.



- 6. Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs:** Several data sources suggest that Halifax has among the highest per-capita use of both legal and illegal drugs and alcohol among major cities in the country. Since the first Mayor’s Roundtable on Violence, alcohol-related violence as well as violence related to drug markets have been consistently identified as priorities. Additionally, as elsewhere in Canada, people who use drugs in Halifax are at risk from a toxic illicit drug supply that is best addressed using a harm-reduction approach. Establishing new cost-effective, evidence-based services, while collaboratively leveraging the expertise of community service providers, will be necessary to enhance preventative and responsive harm-reduction capacity in the municipality.
- 7. Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety:** Public safety requires a collective effort across municipal business units and through partnerships with communities and other levels of government. Municipalities that have been most effective at developing creative responses to public safety issues have empowered a municipal Centre of Responsibility (CoR) including a ‘backbone’ office; capacity for training and program development; research, assessment, and evaluation capabilities; mechanisms for public engagement; championship of public safety across the municipality; and established multi-sector partnerships. While the current PSO has made progress in all of these areas, it must expand and evolve to respond to continuously increasing demands on the office.



Participants at a Community Mobilization Team Strategic Planning Session

# Strategic action areas

Linked directly to the municipality's [Strategic Priorities](#), the following action areas have been identified as important areas of focus for the municipality in the near term. These are:

 <p><b>COMMUNITY-LED PUBLIC SAFETY LEADERSHIP</b></p> <p>Continue to work closely with community groups and municipal business units to support and champion public safety initiatives</p>	 <p><b>BROADER SPECTRUM OF RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ISSUES AND HARMS</b></p> <p>Establish a continuum of responders and responses to social harms, to ensure the most appropriate responder and reduce pressures on emergency services</p>	 <p><b>A CENTRE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT</b></p> <p>Establish an appropriate structure to advance public safety initiatives, which has the capacity and authority to lead initiatives and convene partner organizations and experts</p>
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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, the Strategic Action Areas 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 this Strategy are seen as building upon the strong foundations already in place. **Through the implementation of this Strategy the ongoing work of promoting public safety across the municipality will be broadened, amplified, and elevated.**



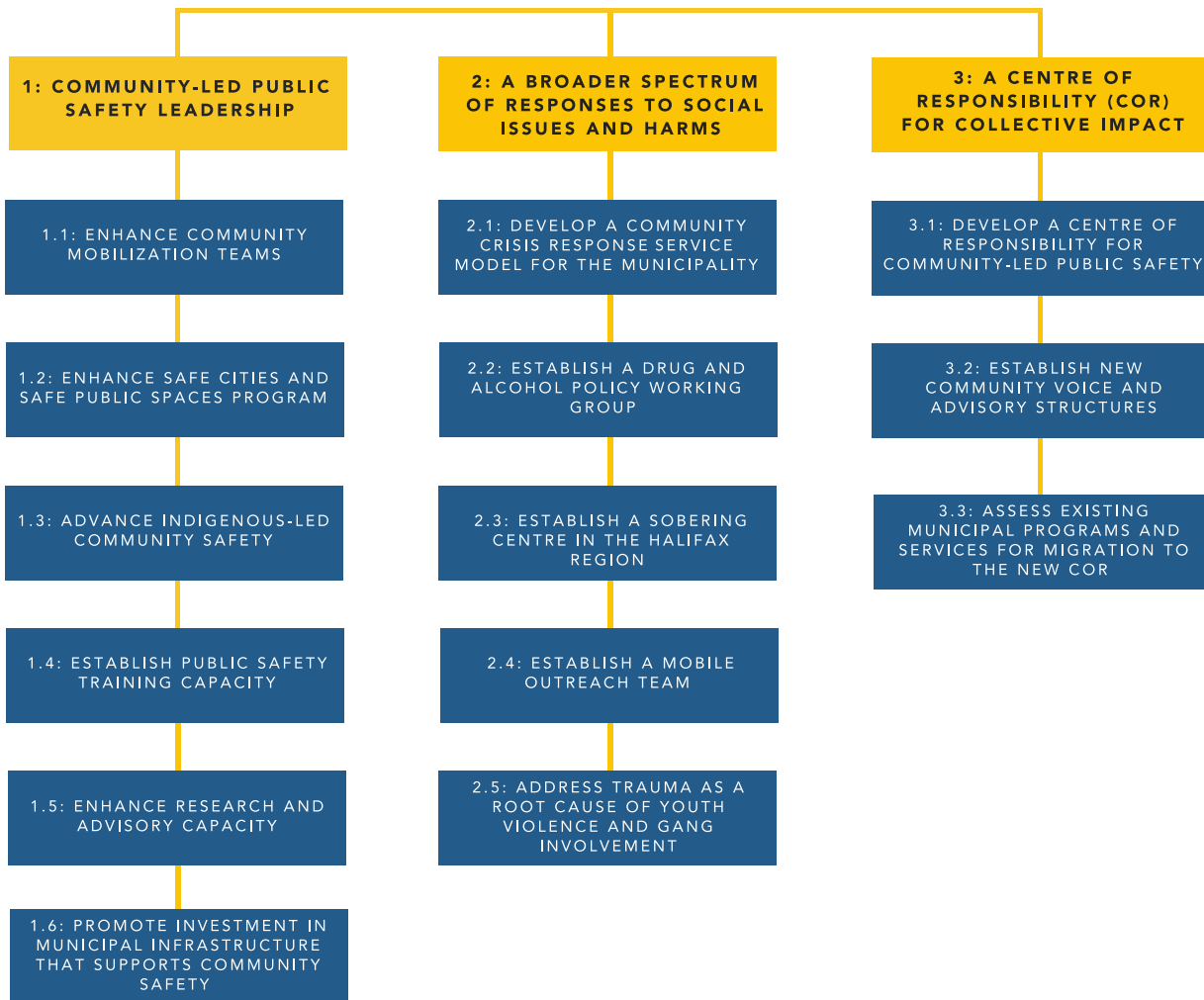
# The Strategic Action Areas focus primarily on:



By taking this focused approach to strategy development, the Strategy provides a concise set of expectations and intentions to guide municipal decision-making in the coming three years. Fourteen specific actions linked to relevant action areas are identified below, which form the core actions to advance the strategic priorities.



# Strategic action areas



## Action area I: Community-led public safety leadership

Following the 2018-2022 Public Safety Strategy, the municipality has worked extensively with community partners to co-develop initiatives that promote public safety and improve community wellbeing. At the same time, the municipality has built its internal capacity – primarily through expansion of the PSO – to promote public safety across its business units and consider public safety in how it develops its people, places, and processes.

**It remains vitally important that the municipality continue to promote public safety as a shared responsibility across its business units, and to provide leadership among partners to address complex public safety challenges. This will be done by expanding existing public safety programs as well as enhancing internal capacity to promote public safety through advice, research, and training.**

# Key actions areas for community-led public safety leadership

## Action 1.1: Enhance Community Mobilization Teams

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<b>1.1</b> Enhance Community Mobilization Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>	2023-24

Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs) were established in 2017, in partnership with the municipality’s African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office (ANSAIO), to better support communities disproportionately impacted by gun-related violence. The goal of CMTs is to work toward preventing violence by reducing distress, restoring unity, and building resilience. Research has consistently shown that addressing trauma in the aftermath of violence is among the most effective ways to prevent future violence and other forms of crime and harm.<sup>6</sup>

CMTs are resident-led initiatives, coordinated by municipal staff who support the teams in accessing and navigating community resources to prevent, prepare and respond to violent incidents. CMTs will continue to be developed a culturally responsive way, in partnership with community.

Beginning in 2023-24, the municipality will work to expand CMT services and better integrate CMTs with the municipal Joint Emergency Management (JEM) teams to support implementation of specific actions outlined in [HalifACT](#), the municipality’s response to the climate crisis. The municipality will also expand the kinds of services offered within CMTs, with a particular focus on enhancing supports – such as counselling – to youth and other community members who have experienced trauma.

<sup>6</sup>Zettler, H. R. (2021). Much to do about trauma: A systematic review of existing trauma-informed treatments on youth violence and recidivism. *Youth violence and juvenile justice*, 19(1), 113-134.



**Action 1.2: Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>1.2</b> Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

Halifax’s Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program, established in 2019, plays a key role in supporting the equitable, intersectional and community-based approach to public safety, and in promoting public safety to municipal programs, services, and spaces. Halifax’s Women’s Advisory Committee serves as a community advisory committee for the program’s development and implementation.

The program focuses on making municipal public spaces safer for women, girls and gender-diverse residents through supporting shifts in municipal policies, programs, practices and built spaces in collaboration with various business units and community partners.<sup>7</sup>



Halifax’s Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program plays a key role in supporting the municipality’s equitable, intersectional, and community-based approach to public safety.

<sup>7</sup>Heidinger, L. April 26, 2022. *Violent victimization and perceptions of safety: Experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women in Canada*. Centre for Canadian Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00004-eng.htm>

With a solid foundation for the program, it is now well positioned to:

- Enhance the program’s Women’s Safety Assessment tool that provides guidance on the safety of municipal infrastructure for fostering safer and more inclusive public spaces and communities.
- Improve the municipality’s ability to understand and respond to experiences of safety in public spaces, including supporting and developing intersectional and community-based data collection initiatives and avenues for third-party sexual assault reporting.
- Expand opportunities to meaningfully influence municipal decision making regarding safer mobility.
- Support the Planning & Development, Public Works and Halifax Transit business units to ensure safe and inclusive modes of transportation.
- Respond to critical issues central to safety in public spaces, such as responding to the Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and relevant actions identified in recent and upcoming municipal reports on gender-based violence, racism, and safety.

**Action 1.3: Advance Indigenous-led community safety**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>1.3</b> Advance Indigenous-led community safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>



In Atlantic Canada, Indigenous people create the foundations for the rich culture, history, and traditions of the land. Despite this richness, they disproportionately experience violence, poverty, homelessness, and addiction. They are overrepresented in both the criminal justice system and the child welfare system.<sup>7</sup>

Such violence against Indigenous people is a result of the devastating impacts of colonization that continue to this day. The landmark report, *Reclaiming Power, and Place: The Final Report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019)* requires a decolonizing approach to fulfill its Calls for Justice. This means recognizing that Indigenous People have inherent rights, and that space and resources rooted in Indigenous cultures, languages, institutions, and traditions are critical to advancing safety.

The addition of an Indigenous-Led Community Safety Strategist will lead the municipality on the journey to prevent and respond to harms against Indigenous people in Halifax, with a particular focus on community mobilization, public education and awareness, violence against women and two-spirited people, and human trafficking. The Strategist will also provide strategic advice and guidance to promote decolonizing approaches to Indigenous community safety perspectives across the municipality.

<sup>7</sup>Heidinger, L. April 26, 2022. *Violent victimization and perceptions of safety: Experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women in Canada*. Centre for Canadian Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00004-eng.htm>

### Action 1.4: Establish public safety training capacity

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<b>1.4</b> Establish public safety training capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> </ul>	2023-24



Expanding public safety training capacity can cultivate a broader culture shift within the municipality by supporting staff in seeking alternatives to enforcement, meeting people where they are in their interactions with the public and focusing on needs of individuals and seeking to help them meet those needs.

Expanding public safety training capacity can cultivate a broader culture shift within the municipality by supporting staff in seeking alternatives to enforcement, meeting people where they are in their interactions with the public and focusing on needs of individuals and seeking to help them meet those needs. Building on ongoing work, in 2023-24 the municipality will develop curricula, and deliver training that supports business units and community stakeholders in applying public safety principles and practices in their people, places, and processes.<sup>8</sup> The municipality will also establish a training unit capable of supporting current and future demands for public safety training across the municipality.

<sup>8</sup>As a priority, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training program for public-facing municipal staff is already in development.

## Action 1.5: Enhance research and advisory capacity

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<b>1.5</b> Enhance research and advisory capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	2023-24



The municipality will establish new roles that will expand capacity for new public safety initiatives using an evidence-informed approach.

Since its inception, the PSO has provided advice and research to support business units in promoting public safety for their people, places, and processes. Regularly, the PSO provides input into municipal initiatives that have public safety implications, as well as conducts studies in the municipality as directed by Council, and with external partners. Expanding research and strategic advisory capacity and capabilities for public safety will be an immediate priority beginning in 2023-24.

Within a new CoR (action 3.1), the municipality will establish new roles to expand capacity for new public safety initiatives using an evidence-informed approach.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>While this Strategy identifies near-term actions that have been identified through several research and consultation exercises, new priorities to promote community-led public safety will continually emerge through the life of this strategy and beyond. For example, initiatives supporting senior safety, rural crime prevention, and neighbourhood conflict resolution have recently been discussed within the municipality, and the most appropriate way forward can be identified through a deliberative and evidence-based process involving problem targeting, testing of potential solutions, and tracking of outcomes.



**Action 1.6: Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>1.6</b> Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

A central component to a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to community-led public safety is the establishment and maintenance of safe and inclusive public spaces that allow community to gather, grow their networks and build resilience. These forms of ‘social infrastructure’ are essential aspects of preventative approaches to crime and violence prevention - for example by creating spaces where young people can gather and feel safe, where people experiencing homelessness can access needed supports, programs, and services, and where community groups can organize and collaborate.

Building on past work of the PSO, and working through the new CoR, the municipality will develop greater supports for business units to ensure a social infrastructure perspective is included during planning processes related to space and infrastructure.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup>These will focus primarily on the capital planning process and will include the development of resources (such as training), building of expertise within the CoR, and identification of key personnel who can advise on making spaces safe and inclusive when new spaces or renovations are planned.

## Action area 2: A broader spectrum of responses to social issues and harms

In 2021, Regional Council directed staff to re-imagine public safety by developing a broader spectrum of response options that reflects the complexity of safety concerns it is mandated to address. Regional Council recognized that current response options, primarily police, are not always the best service to address complex, non-criminal safety concerns. Accordingly, this action area enables the municipality to broaden the spectrum of available response options to fulfill its mandate of maintaining safe and viable communities.

For example, as noted in previous policing studies, and reflected in police data, police are being asked to provide response to a wide range of calls for service which are increasingly complex and require a different skill set. Further, the municipality has substantial service gaps within its existing spectrum of response options and does not have appropriate response options for non-urgent, non-criminal and wellbeing matters.

In this Strategy, the municipality will focus on establishing several net-new services and expanding existing services to ensure the most appropriate responses and services are in place. In keeping with the guiding principles of this Strategy, these new services will be established in collaboration and communication with affected communities, utilizing new advisory mechanisms set out in the next section of the Strategy.

This approach recognizes that the most appropriate response to these social issues may differ in important ways when responding in African Nova Scotian or Indigenous communities, where greater trust needs to be established by the municipality, and where culturally appropriate responses will need to be developed. It will also differ in rural communities within the Halifax region, where the best way to ensure access to new services will look different than services delivered in the urban core.



The services currently available are often unable to provide the most appropriate response to the municipality's mandate to create safe and viable communities and situations that create risks to public safety and community wellbeing.

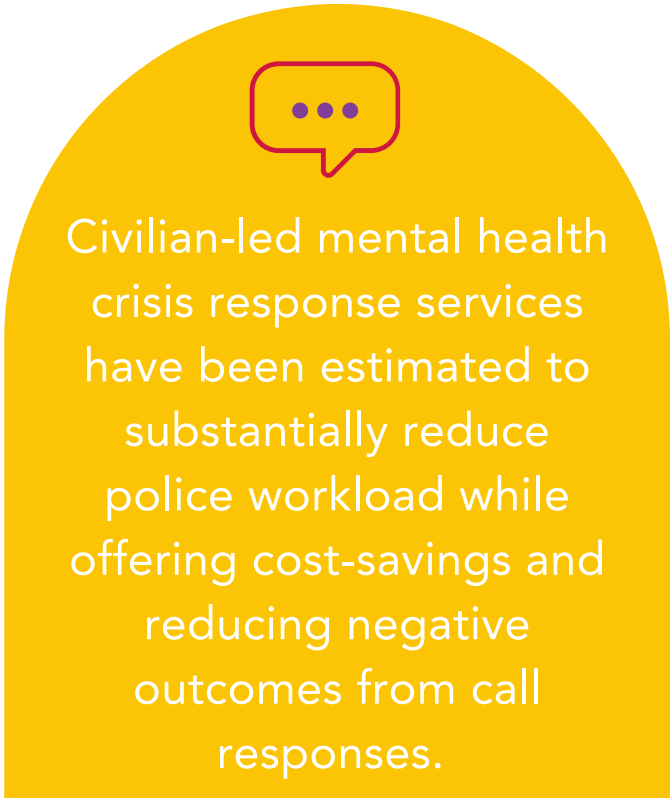


# Key actions for a spectrum of responses to social issues and harms

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

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<b>2.1</b> Develop a Community Crisis Response Service Model for the municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> </ul>	Plan <b>2023-24</b>  Pilot <b>2025-26</b>

In line with the strategic priority of ensuring the most appropriate responder to emergency and non-emergency situations and following the example of multiple municipalities across North America that have developed similar services, the municipality will work to develop a community crisis response service model tailored to the Halifax context. Civilian-led crisis response services have been estimated to substantially reduce police workload while offering cost-savings and reducing negative outcomes from call responses.



Civilian-led mental health crisis response services have been estimated to substantially reduce police workload while offering cost-savings and reducing negative outcomes from call responses.



For example, the Eugene Police Department indicates that between 3-8 per cent of all police calls are diverted to the well-known CAHOOTS program<sup>11</sup>, and the Albuquerque Community Safety program diverts thousands of calls annually that would have gone to police to other responders including Mobile Crisis Team, Behavioural Health, Community, and Street Outreach responders<sup>12</sup>. Edmonton's 24/7 Crisis Diversion Team responded to over 29,000 calls in 2021, and has demonstrated a three-year Social Return on Investment of \$1.91 for every \$1 invested in the program.<sup>13</sup>

Research conducted by Dr. Jamie Livingston at Saint Mary's University has identified over 160 civilian-led crisis response programs in North America, across several broad model types including clinician-led, crisis-worker-led, peer-support based, and community-based 'mutual aid' models, suggesting a wide range of model options from which to develop a made-in-Halifax solution.

This new service will be integrated into a broader spectrum of available response options and will be pursued as a partnership with provincial government and local service providers.

<sup>11</sup>See the Eugene Police Department CAHOOTS webpage at: <https://www.eugene-or.gov/4508/CAHOOTS>

<sup>12</sup>ACS reports can be found at <https://www.cabq.gov/acs/reports>

<sup>13</sup>See Reach Edmonton's 24/7 Crisis Diversion Teams <https://reachedmonton.ca/initiatives/24-7-crisis-diversion/>

<sup>14</sup><https://justmentalhealth.ca/programs/>

<sup>15</sup>There are many details to be determined on the most appropriate model, and this will involve a multi-stage process, including research into the available models that could be suitable for Halifax (examining necessary partnerships, funding, staffing and deployment approaches); developing a service pilot; and evaluating the pilot with an eye to scaling up the service if it is capable of providing

**Action 2.2: Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>2.2</b> Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

The roots of the opioid crisis and other substance use issues are complex and intertwined, highly influenced by local political, social and cultural components that traverse multiple jurisdictions and sectors. In Halifax, different levels of government, community-based organizations and private sector groups all contribute to preventing, preparing, and responding to substance use and policy.

Beginning in 2023-24 the municipality will establish a drug and alcohol policy working group to set the stage for a more coordinated and strategic approach to this issue across sectors. This will include partners from the municipality and province, community, service providers, and people with lived experience, to promote initiatives and actions to reduce the harms associated with drug use and its criminalization.

The core goal of the working group will be to establish a municipal drug and alcohol strategy by 2025-26. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities sees municipal drug strategies as vehicles to promote multi-sectoral dialogue and planning to address local substance use issues through a set of goals, actions and measurable outcomes and indicators.<sup>16</sup> Strategies are co-developed with all levels of government, community partners and are centred on people with lived experience. While tailored to each community, they combine at least four key pillars to achieve a comprehensive, strategic approach to drug policy and substance use: prevention/community safety, harm-reduction, treatment and enforcement. Such strategies build on private and public-sector work already taking place in the community and focus on actions that can be taken at the local level.

<sup>16</sup>Big City Mayor Caucus. May 2017. Recommendations on the Mayor’s Task Force on Opioid Crisis. Federation of Municipalities. <https://fcm.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/submission/opioid-crisis-recommendations.pdf>  
 FCM also developed a Model Municipal Drug Strategy <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%207431%20m83%202000-eng.pdf>

**Action 2.3: Establish a sobering centre in Halifax Regional Municipality**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>2.3</b> Establish a sobering centre in Halifax Regional Municipality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

A sobering centre provides, at minimum, a safe space for people to recover from intoxication due to drugs and/or alcohol. Sobering centres may also provide access to additional supports such as medical or paramedical care, referrals to other services, and mental health and addictions supports. A sobering centre is an appropriate service for people whose intoxication poses a risk to themselves or others, but who are not otherwise in need of emergency medical care, nor engaged in criminal activity. Sobering centres have been established in municipalities across the country to provide a more appropriate response to acute intoxication, while taking pressure off emergency response services such as police, fire, and emergency medical services.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>The municipality has conducted extensive research on sobering centres, including a feasibility study, business case and cost model. See <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/210629rc1115.pdf>; and <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/220322rci02.pdf>



## Action 2.4: Establish a mobile outreach team

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>2.4</b> Establish a mobile outreach team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	<p>Plan <b>2023-24</b></p> <p>Pilot <b>2025-26</b></p>

A consistent challenge identified by service providers in Halifax who support people experiencing homelessness and those precariously housed is the lack of a 24-hour service to transport people to and from shelter spaces, to connect with other outreach workers and navigators, and to conduct outreach with people to ensure they are able to access required supports. What may seem like minor instances of support – such as a ride to a medical appointment or helping someone connect with a better housing opportunity – can make a world of difference in the wellbeing of those individuals and avoid acutely negative outcomes.

Such a service would also be valuable to take pressure off emergency responders by providing an alternative option when an individual is found in need of shelter or non-emergency attention and would provide complementary service to a sobering centre and a mental health crisis service. As is the practice in other municipalities that have an outreach and transportation service, the service could be accessed through a dedicated phone number and integrated into the 911 dispatch system.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup>The correct structure for this service will need to be determined in consultation with local service providers, as well as relevant business units. The service could be provided directly by the municipality or through funding to a third-party service provider. Beginning in 2023-24, the municipality will determine the appropriate delivery model for an outreach and transportation service, with the intention of directly delivering or funding the service in 2024-25.



What may seem like minor instances of support – such as a ride to a medical appointment or helping someone connect with a better housing opportunity – can make a world of difference in the wellbeing of those individuals and avoid acutely negative outcomes.

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

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>2.4</b> Address trauma as a root cause of youth violence and gang involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

The municipality will develop an action plan for reducing gun and gang violence. This plan will guide the development of new resources for youth and their families, with a particular focus on addressing youth at greatest risk of serious violent victimization or offending. Specifically, the municipality will establish new positions within the municipality’s Multi-Service Youth Centres to provide counselling and service navigation for youth who have experienced trauma. Under this action, the municipality will also:

- Conduct research and service planning to identify effective violence prevention programs to strengthen gaps in current youth service provision in the municipality.
- Enhance community engagement and partnerships to better coordinate responses to youth violence, guns and gangs.
- Build capacity among local community members to provide support to youth who have experienced trauma.



## Action Area 3: A Centre of Responsibility (CoR) for collective impact

Halifax finds itself in the midst of a cultural shift in the provision of public safety. Beginning with the *Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022*, the municipality explicitly recognized that public safety impacts are greatest through collective effort across municipal business units and through partnerships with communities and other levels of government. To do this well, the municipality needs to establish a robust 'backbone' office capable of providing leadership and supporting partners in promoting public safety.

Like municipalities elsewhere in Canada, Halifax is working to find ways to address priority public safety issues through new approaches to service delivery. The goal is to enhance the spectrum of available responses to issues related to addictions, mental health, homelessness, and community trauma. To move forward on key goals identified by Council in recent reports and motions, it is necessary to establish an administrative structure capable of delivering net-new services, for example in relation to mental health crisis response, and supporting people experiencing homelessness. This is not possible within the current PSO, as existing structure and staff capacity are insufficient to support creation of new services, expansion of existing services, or research, policy, and advisory work.

Additionally, Council has directed the municipality to consider potential civilian delivery of certain non-core police functions; however, there is currently no appropriate administrative structure that could support the migration and delivery of these services. To guide the development of these new approaches, the municipality needs to establish sufficient administrative and program delivery capacity in a robust Centre of Responsibility (CoR) for public safety.

## Key actions for a Centre of Responsibility for Collective Impact

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

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>3.1</b> Develop a Centre of Responsibility for community-led public safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

As indicated earlier in the report, and led by evidence on effective CoRs elsewhere, the new CoR should include a ‘backbone’ office with senior management and administrative support; capacity for training and program development; research, assessment, and evaluation capabilities; mechanisms for public engagement; championship of a public safety perspective across the municipality; and established multi-sector partnerships. As a key first step, the municipality will establish a Director role and a new reporting structure in an expanded Public Safety Division, which will serve as the backbone office and support a collective impact approach to public safety in the municipality.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup>The new division will also be responsible for managing third-party contracts related to new areas of service delivery and can act as a mechanism to identify and access third-party (e.g., philanthropic) and government funding sources to promote public safety initiatives in the municipality.



**Action 3.2: Establish new community voice and advisory structures**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>3.2</b> Establish new community voice and advisory structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

The 2014 Clairmont report identified the value of establishing an advisory structure to ensure the work of the PSO remains connected to and reflective of community needs and aligned with other activities and initiatives. In particular, recent consultations have consistently identified the need for ongoing engagement with communities affected by public safety issues (and municipal responses to those issues).

It is important to recognize that certain communities, such as African Nova Scotian (ANS) and Indigenous communities have had historic distrust of the municipality due to issues including systemic racism, neglect and dispossession from land and resources. Rebuilding this trust can only be done by ensuring that existing and new services are developed in ways that recognize the different needs of these communities – for example, the way in which new mental health and addictions services should best support Indigenous or ANS communities may differ from models based on Eurocentric concepts of mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, it will be important to ensure that, as new services are developed, they are created in such a way that they can benefit not only people living in Halifax’s urban core, but that they also provide services where appropriate to rural and suburban communities.

As such, beginning in 2023-24, the municipality will develop appropriate structures through which meaningful engagement with community partners can be established, reflective of the needs of diverse communities with which the municipality will work, and respectful of the time and energy of community partners.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Given the range of public safety initiatives in which the municipality is involved, it is not clear whether a single advisory committee with a wide range of partners would be the most appropriate structure, or if smaller initiative- or policy-area-specific community consultative groups should be established to ensure opportunities for community voice and advice. Additionally, the most appropriate advisory approach will in part be determined by the research and development work to be conducted by the PSO in establishing new initiatives and expanding existing work areas. Further, the appropriate advisory structures should be developed once a Director and enhanced CoR structure have been established.

**Action 3.3: Assess existing municipal programs and services for migration to the new CoR**

ACTION	ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING
<p><b>3.3</b> Assess existing municipal programs and services for migration to the new CoR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<p>2023-24</p>

In 2021, Council provided clear direction for the municipality to “examine the potential for shifting or creating programs for civilian delivery of non-core police functions,” including but not limited to “traffic enforcement, public safety, community standards, mental health, and municipal enforcement functions.” This Strategy includes clear intentions to enhance non-police delivery of mental health and public safety functions; however, through the current state assessment and consultation processes, it was made clear that the municipality was not ready to migrate additional functions until a more robust CoR structure is established.

Beginning in 2024-25, the new Director of Public Safety will be responsible to work with the CAO and other municipal business units to determine which programs and services (such as by-law, parking, and traffic enforcement; crossing guards; certain emergency management functions; services related to housing and homelessness; and other social policy activities) could be better delivered through the Public Safety Division.



# Evaluation of the Strategy

The success of these actions will be measured in two ways. First, the municipality will establish milestones to ensure that progress is made on each action within the lifetime of the Strategy. Milestones for each action will be established in the new division's annual business planning cycle, and potential milestones are included in the summary of actions, below.

Second, the municipality will establish research and evaluation plans to measure impacts of strategic actions against four categories of impacts:

- 1. Community safety and wellbeing:** Healthy, safe, and more resilient communities are created through new and expanded services.
- 2. Harm reduction and prevention:** Harms across the community are reduced and prevented as people received equitable access to supports and services.
- 3. Ecosystem development:** The public safety ecosystem thrives as appropriate infrastructure is developed and grounded in/with community.
- 4. Reduced justice system pressures:** By connecting people to the right services at the right time, the burden on police response in the municipality is lessened.

Measuring these impacts will require analysis of existing data sources – such as data from police, fire and emergency services; data from calls to 311; resident surveys conducted by the municipality; and, where possible, provincial data sources that relate to emergency service, justice system, and health service use in the municipality. Additionally, new data sources will need to be developed related to key actions – such as input, output and outcome data related to the sobering centre, outreach service, mental health crisis service, CMT and Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program engagements; as well as, where possible, first-voice data from service users collected through interviews and focus groups.

To leverage existing data sources and establish new data collection mechanisms, the municipality will develop new capacity to conduct and deliver research and evaluation into strategic action areas, by drawing on internal resources in an expanded Public Safety Division as well as by expanding existing partnerships with the local academic community and other community-based researchers.

# Summary of actions

ACTION	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING	POTENTIAL MILESTONES
<b>Action area 1 – Community-led public safety leadership</b>			
<b>1.1</b> Enhance Community Mobilization Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>	2023-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing peer-led counselling supports</li> <li>• Expansion to Spryfield</li> </ul>
<b>1.2</b> Enhance Safe Cities and Safe Public Space program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to Public Safety</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding use of tools (e.g., Women's Safety Assessments)</li> </ul>
<b>1.3</b> Advance Indigenous-led community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing mechanism to respond to MMIWG Calls to Action</li> </ul>
<b>1.4</b> Establish public safety training capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of front-line staff training in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aid, Critical Incident Response Management, and Suicide Intervention (ASIST) training offered</li> </ul>
<b>1.5</b> Enhance research and advisory capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to Public Safety</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New research resource established</li> <li>• Evaluation mechanisms for the Public Safety Strategy established</li> </ul>
<b>1.6</b> Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social infrastructure considerations added to capital planning process</li> </ul>



ACTION	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING	POTENTIAL MILESTONES
<b>Action area 2 – A broader spectrum of responses to social issues and harms</b>			
<b>2.1</b> Develop a Community Crisis Response Service Model for the municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> </ul>	Planning: <b>2023-24</b>  Pilot: <b>2025-26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate model identified</li> <li>• Funding and partnership agreements established</li> <li>• Pilot started and evaluation plan created</li> </ul>
<b>2.2</b> Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	<b>2023-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working group established to co-develop a drug and alcohol strategy for Halifax</li> </ul>
<b>2.3</b> Establish a sobering centre in the Halifax Regional Municipality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	<b>2023-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third-party provider identified</li> <li>• Appropriate space identified and procured</li> <li>• Pilot service started</li> <li>• Initial evaluation completed</li> </ul>
<b>2.4</b> Establish a mobile outreach team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness</li> <li>• Broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response</li> <li>• Reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs</li> </ul>	Planning: <b>2023-24</b>  Pilot: <b>2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate model identified</li> <li>• Funding and partnership agreements established</li> <li>• Pilot started and evaluation plan created</li> </ul>
<b>2.5</b> Address trauma as a root cause of youth violence and gang involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safer and more inclusive spaces</li> <li>• Promote healing from trauma</li> </ul>	<b>2023-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New youth resources established in Multi-Service Youth Centres</li> <li>• Youth Services Review completed</li> </ul>

ACTION	STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	TIMING	POTENTIAL MILESTONES
<b>Action Area 3 – A Centre of Responsibility for collective impact</b>			
<b>3.1</b> Develop a Centre of Responsibility for community-led public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<b>2023-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New division created</li> <li>• Director hired</li> <li>• New reporting and staffing structure established</li> </ul>
<b>3.2</b> Establish new community voice and advisory structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<b>2023-24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New community advisory structures established</li> </ul>
<b>3.3</b> Assess existing municipal programs and services for migration to the new CoR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services</li> <li>• Create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety</li> </ul>	<b>2024-25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing municipal programs and services moved to the new CoR</li> </ul>

# Appendix A: Municipal reports and other documents reviewed

The following municipal documents have been reviewed in the preparation of this report. Most of these reports were reviewed as part of the current state assessment activities. Additional sources are referenced in text in the main report as appropriate.

## Reports and documents reviewed included:

- Municipal reports specifically focused on public safety and related issues:
  - HRM [Public Safety Strategy 2018-2022](#)
  - 2014 Roundtable Review [Clairmont main report](#) and [Watters supplementary report](#)
  - [Defunding the Police](#): Defining the Way forward for HRM
  - [Public Safety Strategy Annual Update](#) December 2021, incl. in appendices:
    - CMT Actions and Initiatives Reports
    - Alcohol and Drug Strategy Consultation Report
    - Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces scoping study
  - [Halifax, Nova Scotia Street Checks report](#) (Wortley report 2019)
    - And the [Wortley Report Two-Year Summary 2021](#)
  - [Reimagining Public Safety](#) council report March 2021
- Additional consultation reports and summaries:
  - HRM & The Youth Project: 2SLGBTQ+ Community Engagement May 2022
  - Conversations of Gender Equality with Indigenous Women & Two-Spirit Individuals March 2022
  - Race and Gender Data and the Safety of Asian Women and Non- Binary People
  - Anti-Black Racism in HRM: What we heard report 2022
  - Women and Gender Equity Strategy consultation report 2022
  - Rural Crime Prevention and Community Safety Training and Knowledge Exchange - 2022
- Municipal strategic policy frameworks that are particularly relevant to the development of the next Public Safety Strategy, including:
  - HRM [Social Policy report](#) 2020
  - HRM [Anti-Black Racism](#) framework 2021
  - HRM [Diversity and Inclusion Framework](#)
- Public opinion survey data, including data contained within the above-mentioned reports as well as:
  - HRM [2021 Resident Survey](#) (public safety section)
  - Survey data from the [Halifax Partnership](#) and [Angus Reid](#) on policing, crime and public safety in the municipality

### Public Safety Strategy (PSS) monitoring framework

In collaboration with program leads across Community Safety, Recreation, and Diversity and Inclusion units, the Research and Development team continues to implement a monitoring and evaluation framework for the PSS priorities that is designed to:

- support reporting relevant progress and impact information to HRM Council, stakeholders 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

The following report uses program measures from the PSS monitoring framework to indicate progress towards key outcomes under the strategic priority areas. The Research and Development team continues to work across the organization as well as externally to assemble the necessary data sources, sets, collection tools and reports that provide the data to report on measures identified in the framework. The monitoring framework is informed by a national project led by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities of which Halifax is a pilot site that is designed to create a tool that can be used to monitor Canadian community safety and well-being plans. The monitoring framework is also informing the development of a dashboard that will provide regular and accessible reporting of data on key outcomes of the PSS.



# Annual Public Safety Strategy monitoring update – 2024-2025

## Public Safety Strategy (PSS) monitoring framework

For each strategic priority, the framework outlines the following, informed by the logic/theory of change of each program, action or priority under the PSS (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

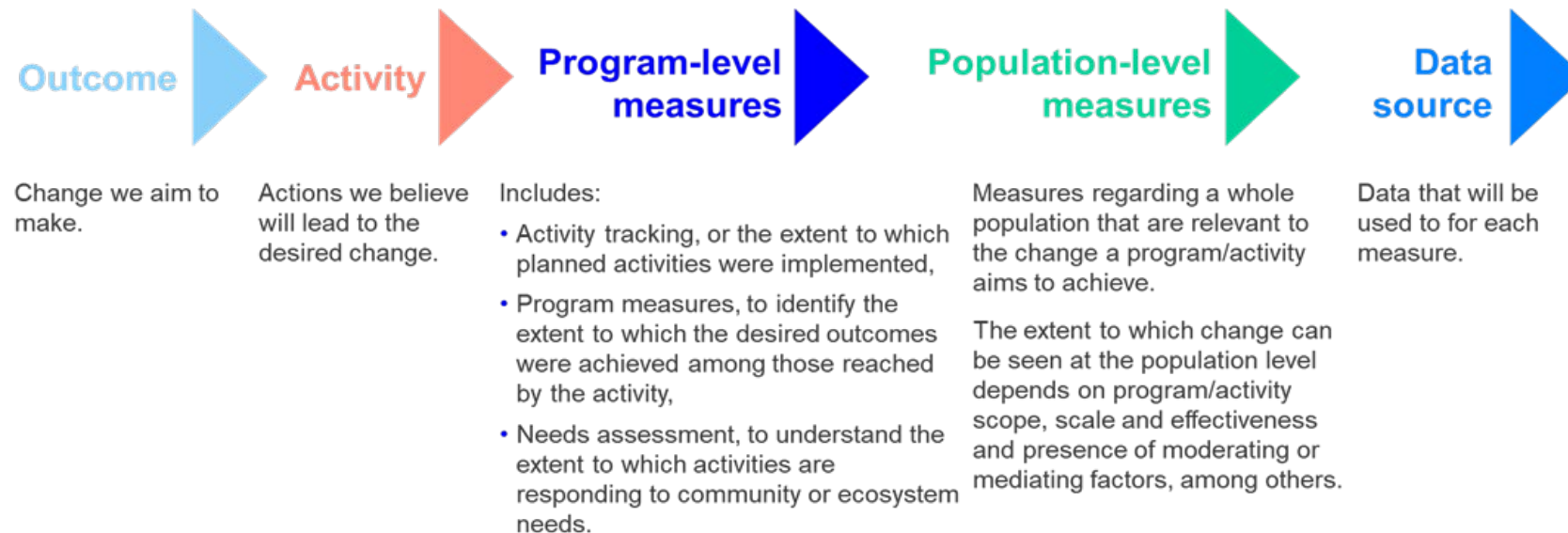


Figure 1: PSS monitoring framework structure

## Action 1.1 Enhance Community Mobilization Teams

Community Mobilization Teams (CMT) are resident-led initiatives, coordinated by municipal staff who support the teams in accessing and navigating community resources to prevent, prepare and respond to violent incidents. CMTs were established in 2017 in partnership with HRM's African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office to better support communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence. The goal of CMTs is to work toward preventing violence by reducing distress, restoring unity, and building resilience.



Promote **healing** from trauma



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety

2024-25 Year two outcome measures:	Long term goals
<p><b>CMT volunteers have the skills they need to support community members after a critical incident</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>90%</b> agreed that the training had given them new skills and/or information that will help them support their community when responding to safety incidents</li> <li>• <b>100%</b> agreed that the training provided them with resources to support individual community members</li> <li>• <b>90%</b> agreed that they learned about a new resources or support that would support their community</li> <li>• <b>90%</b> agreed they will be able to use the skills and/or information from the training in their role as a CMT volunteer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical incidents generate a response that is coordinated, community-determined, culturally-responsive, and trauma-informed</li> <li>• Community members have equitable access to supports and services to prevent, respond to and heal</li> <li>• CMT communities demonstrate resilience in the wake of a critical incident.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community members are aware of, see the value in and engage CMTs if they become aware of an incident</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>8</b> community events held in collaboration with <b>19</b> community organizations and with <b>530</b> attendees engaged</li> <li>• <b>3</b> critical response activations and <b>10</b> post-event activations (including debriefs and trauma support)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Increased knowledge of community members about trauma</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>12</b> healing circles held as part of a pilot in the Preston Township with <b>&gt;130</b> participants, <b>one</b> eight-week closed group healing program and <b>one</b> half-day workshop</li> </ul>	
<p><b>CMT volunteers and community members are more aware of existing supports and services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>100%</b> agreed that they have the resources and support needed to support their community in responding to safety incidents</li> <li>• <b>100%</b> agreed that they have the resources they need to support individuals in their community after a safety incident</li> <li>• <b>100%</b> agreed that they have learned about a new resource or support in the past year that would support their community</li> </ul>	

## Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program

HRM’s Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program, established in 2019, plays a key role in supporting the equitable, intersectional and community-based approach to public safety, and in promoting public safety to municipal programs, services and spaces. The Program focuses on making municipal public spaces safer for women, girls and gender-diverse residents through supporting shifts in municipal programs, practices and built spaces in collaboration with other business units and community partners.



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Promote **healing** from trauma



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



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

2024-25 Year two outcome measures:	Long term outcomes
<p><b>Community members have meaningful opportunities to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Share their experiences of safety in HRM public spaces</b></li> <li>• <b>Assess safety of HRM spaces</b></li> <li>• <b>Contribute to solutions for safer public spaces</b></li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led the development and improvement of <b>2</b> new tools and processes to support the facilitation and implementation of Community Safety Assessments (CSAs) (formerly Women’s Safety Assessments)</li> <li>• Led or supported <b>2</b> engagements in collaboration with community partners with over <b>30</b> participants:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Community Safety Assessment</li> <li>• One hate crime and incident information session with Halifax Regional Police’s Hate Crime Unit and Diversity Officer, hosted by Dartmouth Masjid</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRM public spaces are safe, inclusive and reflective of the experiences of women and non-binary residents, especially those most impacted by safety and equity issues</li> <li>• The municipality understands, considers, and plans for the safety and inclusion of a diversity of women and gender diverse people in municipal policies, programs, practices and design choices</li> <li>• Sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are no longer normalized in HRM public spaces</li> <li>• Residents and HRM staff experience fewer incidents of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence</li> <li>• Sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are eradicated in public spaces</li> </ul>

## Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program (cont'd)

2024-25

Year two outcome measures:

**HRM staff have greater access to information, knowledge, ideas, research, best practices and community member input regarding safety of women and gender diverse residents in public spaces**

**HRM staff better understand Safe City principles and how to promote safety for women and gender diverse residents in public spaces through HRM programs, services, spaces, facilities and staff behaviours**

**HRM staff proactively apply Safe City principles, community input and considerations regarding the safety of women and gender diverse residents early and often in the development of municipal processes, spaces and services**

- Led or supported **8** capacity building/training sessions for municipal staff with **116** participants from various municipal teams:
  - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design & Gender Based Analysis+ Training for the Facilities, Design & Construction team
  - 6 trainings in Understanding Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth
  - Pilot of new Community Safety Assessment App
- Advised **10** municipal projects, plans, strategies and working groups
- Participated as active members of **6** external networks, committees and working groups
- Led or supported progress or completion of:
  - Research, engagements and recommendations for combatting Islamophobia and improving the safety of Muslim women and girls in HRM
  - Environmental scan of North American efforts to inform work to broaden the spectrum of responses to intimate partner violence at HRM
  - Interviews with community partners and people with lived experience of intimate partner violence to inform the development of the municipal Crisis Diversion Model with YWCA Halifax
  - Participation in phase two of the national study *Understanding and Responding to the Transit Needs of Women* with Halifax Transit
  - Research and interviews with municipal staff to understand gaps and opportunities in current services and approaches to supporting young people experiencing commercial sexual exploitation with the Youth Advocate Program
  - Initial phase of development of a municipal Bystander Intervention Training program to reduce instances of gender-based violence

Long term outcomes

- HRM public spaces are safe, inclusive and reflective of the experiences of women and non-binary residents, especially those most impacted by safety and equity issues
- The municipality understands, considers, and plans for the safety and inclusion of a diversity of women and gender diverse people in municipal policies, programs, practices and design choices
- Sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are no longer normalized in HRM public spaces
- Residents and HRM staff experience fewer incidents of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence
- Sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence are eradicated in public spaces



## Action 1.3 Advance Indigenous-led Community Safety

Indigenous-led community safety work is guiding HRM on the journey to prevent and respond to harms against Indigenous people in Halifax, with a particular focus on community mobilization, public education and awareness, violence against women and two-spirited people, and human trafficking. Work under this action is also providing strategic advice and guidance to promote decolonizing approaches to Indigenous community safety across the municipality.



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Promote **healing** from trauma



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



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

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

**Long term outcomes**

**Increased access to safe and supportive municipal spaces for Indigenous community members**

**HRM spaces are welcoming to Indigenous people**

**Strengthened relationships between HRM and Indigenous communities**

**Strengthened partnerships between HRM and Indigenous organizations**

- Engagement report with Indigenous community members on safety issues is complete and planning to implement findings is underway

**Greater awareness and knowledge in HRM of responsibilities under the TRC and MMIWG reports**

**Greater awareness at HRM of issues that impact Indigenous community members, including safety issues**

- **8** Indigenous speaker sessions hosted by HRM as part of speaker series focused on raising awareness for municipal staff on implementing actions in the ‘Stolen Sisters’ Report (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls)
- **1** training course offered in Fundamentals of First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) with **12** learners

- Increased feelings of safety among Indigenous community members
- Reduced incidents of victimization by Indigenous community members
- Increased sense of belonging for Indigenous community members
- Progress in implementing TRC calls to action and MMIWG calls for justice at HRM
- Increased instances of Indigenous representation in HRM spaces

## Action 1.4 Establish public safety training capacity

Expanding public safety training capacity can cultivate a broader culture shift within the municipality by supporting staff in seeking alternatives to enforcement, meeting people where they are in their interactions with the public and focusing on needs of individuals and seeking to help them meet those needs.

 <p>Create safer and more inclusive <b>spaces</b></p>	 <p>Promote <b>healing</b> from trauma</p>
 <p>Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis <b>response</b></p>	

<b>2024-25</b> <b>Year two outcome measures:</b>	<b>Long term outcomes</b>
<p><b>Training is available to HRM staff, partners and volunteers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>190</b> staff, partners and volunteers trained in Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NCI)</li> <li>• <b>15</b> NCI training sessions held including 10 team-centred sessions</li> <li>• <b>1</b> Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training session held with <b>14</b> participants</li> <li>• <b>2</b> Mental Health First Aid sessions held with <b>30</b> participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict and safety incidents that arise in the work of frontline HRM staff and volunteers is addressed in a way that minimizes further harm</li> <li>• Reduced police involvement in incidents involving HRM frontline staff or volunteers</li> <li>• Reduce negative events between HRM staff and public</li> <li>• Reduction in negative outcomes from crisis development behaviours</li> <li>• Improvements in employee well-being</li> <li>• Shift towards a more trauma-informed service model</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training graduates apply learnings in their daily work</b></p>	
<p><b>Training graduates understand and are able to recall training content</b></p>	
<p><b>Training graduates feel better equipped to prevent, de-escalate and respond to conflict and safety incidents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>93%</b> agreed that the topics covered in NCI training were relevant to their job</li> <li>• <b>93%</b> of respondents agree that NCI training will be useful in their work</li> <li>• <b>79%</b> believe that NCI training has improved their confidence in dealing with potential crisis or conflict situations at work</li> <li>• <b>100%</b> of participants agree that ASIST training has practical use in their work life</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Training graduates feel better able to care for themselves during conflicts and safety incidents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>56%</b> believe that NCI training has reduced their level of stress when dealing with crisis or conflict situations at work</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Training graduates prevent and de-escalate conflicts that arise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>49%</b> believe that NCI training has reduced their need to seek help when resolving crisis or conflict situations</li> </ul>	

## Action 1.5 Enhance research and advisory capacity

Since its inception, the PSO has provided advice and research to support business units in promoting public safety for their people, places and processes. Regularly, input is provided into municipal initiatives that have public safety implications using an evidence-informed approach.



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



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

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

### **Public Safety projects, programs and processes at HRM have access to best practice information, research and evidence**

- Supported the achievement of **58%** of the Public Safety Strategy milestones
- Evaluation and Monitoring Framework supports learning and reporting
- Facilitated formal level 1 Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) training for interested Business Units
- Developed and delivered CPTED overview for Project Managers in Facility Design and Construction Team
- Provided CPTED advice to a new HRM facility under development
- Facilitated and sponsored a training event for community stakeholders and HRM staff on Monitoring and Evaluating Community Safety Plans in partnership with the provincial Department of Justice and the Nova Scotia Crime Prevention Society

### **Public Safety projects, programs and processes at HRM are connected to research and learning in the wider community**

- **36** learning partnerships developed and fostered through Research and Development
- Seniors Safety Strategy drafted and informed by community engagement
- Co-developed, partnered and hosted a Research Symposium and Retrospective on Dr. Don Claremont with Dalhousie University's Claremont Centre for Community Safety Research
- Co-developed, partnered and hosted a Crime Prevention Symposium with the Department of Nova Scotia (Province) and NS Crime Prevention Society.
- Invited to deliver **5** presentations and panel discussions (local-international) to promote HRM's leadership in community-centred approaches to safety and wellbeing
- Invited member of a Canadian delegation sponsored by Public Safety Canada to participate and present in the Strong Cities Network 5<sup>th</sup> Global Summit on preventing violent extremism.
- Advisor to the Public Safety Canada funded Canadian urban safety monitoring tool

**Long term outcomes**

- Public Safety projects, programs and processes at HRM are informed by best practices, evidence and research
- Public safety projects, programs and processes at HRM are aligned with community priorities

## Action 1.6 Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety

A central component to a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to community-led public safety is the establishment and maintenance of safe and inclusive public spaces that allow communities to gather, grow their networks and build resilience. These forms of ‘social infrastructure’ are essential aspects of preventative approaches to crime and violence prevention – for example by creating spaces where young people can gather and feel safe, where people experiencing homelessness can access needed supports, programs and services and where community groups can organize and collaborate.



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**

2024-25 Year two outcome measures:	Long term outcomes
<p><b>Decisions about municipal infrastructure investment are informed by socio-economic evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successfully applied and received grant funding from Public Health Agency of Canada’s Intersectoral Action Fund to adequately resource the development of an Equity-based Policy Framework informed by the Social Equity Index</li> <li>• Initiated a collaborative working relationship with Dalhousie’s Healthy Populations Institute and Nova Scotia Health to support the development of measurement indicators for equity</li> <li>• Acquired a socio-economic indicator dataset with custom HRM community-level geographies and created a data visualization tool in GIS</li> <li>• Gathered feedback and insight from internal stakeholders on the equity indicators through engagements with the Road Safety team and the Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) working group</li> <li>• Facilitated a learning event with the HRVA working group with the creator of Nova Scotia (and HRM) community-level socio-economic indicators</li> <li>• Collaborated with the Social Policy Framework leads to refine the equity measurements and evaluation for capital planning</li> <li>• Plans to test the equity measures on selected projects in the 2024-2025 capital budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer and more inclusive spaces are available in communities that will benefit most</li> </ul>

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

In line with the strategic priority of ensuring the most appropriate responder to emergency and non-emergency situations and following the example of multiple municipalities across North America that have developed similar services, the municipality is working towards developing a community crisis diversion model tailored to the Halifax context. This new service will be integrated into a broader spectrum of available response options and is being pursued as a partnership with the provincial government and local service providers.



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis response



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

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

**Long term outcomes**

### Insight from stakeholders informs a sustainable, scalable crisis service model

- Developed and executed two contracts with not-for profit organizations to develop, deliver and report back on community engagements with service providers and people with lived/living experience. Objectives were to gain insight on model development and service design principles and understand how the new crisis service could be integrated into the existing crisis service network
- Completed internal stakeholder engagements with Diversity and Inclusion, HRFE, HRP, RCMP, IES, (Transit forthcoming) to gain insight on model and develop collaborative approaches to service delivery
- Initiated a partnership with 211 Nova Scotia to service as the primary crisis intake and dispatch service
- Collaborated with POSSE and the Office of Addition and Mental Health on provincial crisis response service development, including participating in the Community Advisory for POSSE's crisis service: Crisis Intervention & Addictions Outreach (CIAO)

- Reduced reliance on law enforcement/emergency services in crisis situations
  - *measured by # of calls diverted from Police*
  - *measured by # of calls responded to*
- Improved safety outcomes for individuals in crisis
  - *measured by data from service users and allied/partner service providers*
- Increased community trust and safety
  - *measured by data from service users and allied/partner service providers*

### Halifax learns and applies lessons and best practices from other jurisdictions with similar crisis models

- Undertook two site visits to enhance knowledge of existing community crisis diversion services.
  - Developed competencies in partnership agreements, operating models, data and records management, cost models, including capita and operating costs.
  - Developed relationships with backbone organizations and service providers to ensure continuous learning opportunities.
- Hosted Reach Edmonton for an HRM workshop that was attended by 6 business units (HRP, RCMP, HRFE, ICT, CS, Finance), the Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners and community partners (Dalhousie University, 211, POSSE). Reach Edmonton oversees Canada's longest standing community crisis diversion service: Focus on service design, records management, partnerships, policies and program delivery.
- Refined cost model for crisis service prototype based on validation with budgets for similar services in other jurisdictions.



## Action 2.2 Establish a drug and alcohol policy working group

The municipality is establishing a drug and alcohol policy working group to set the stage for a more coordinated and strategic approach to the issue across sectors. The group will include partners from the municipality and province, community service providers, and people with lived experience to promote initiatives and actions to reduce the harms associated with drug use and its criminalization.



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety



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

2024-25 Year two outcome measures:	Long term outcomes
<p><b>Relationships, knowledge and stakeholder insight inform the creation of a multi-sectoral Drug and Alcohol Policy working group tasked with developing a drug and alcohol strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations held with key communities to inform and finalize a report containing recommendations for the development of a municipal multi-jurisdictional drug policy working group</li> <li>• Concerted work undertaken to ensure the inclusion of historically marginalized voices from Black, African Nova Scotians and Indigenous communities</li> <li>• Next steps will be to establish a working group responsible for overseeing the implementation of programs, policies, service changes as well as goals, actions and measurable outcomes and indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harms from alcohol and drugs in HRM are reduced</li> <li>• The Municipality’s approach to drug and alcohol use is informed by people who are most impacted by the issue</li> </ul>

## Action 2.3 Establish a Stabilization Centre

A stabilization centre will provide, at minimum, a safe place for people to recover from intoxication due to drugs and/or alcohol. The stabilization centre will also provide access to basic primary health care and referral to other support services such as mental health and addiction supports and will be an appropriate support for people who are no in need of emergency medical care or engaged in criminal activity. These centres have been established in municipalities across the country to provide a more appropriate response to acute intoxication and take pressure off emergency response services such as police, fire and EHS.



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**



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

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

**Halifax develops stabilization centre location, services, processes and policies that are sustainable and have input from key stakeholders**

- Contribution agreement near finalisation with new service provider
- Polices and operational procedures drafted
- Contribution agreement signed with province (Office of Addictions and Mental Health)
- Advisory committee constituted and four meetings held
  - Member organisations include Halifax Regional Police, RCMP, EHS, Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency, John Howard Society, Mobile Outreach Street Health, Street Navigators and HRM Community Safety, D&I and GRE teams.
- Primary healthcare service provider is a member of the advisory committee
- In-kind contributions to the service secured from Halifax Harbour Bridges and John Howard Society
- Location has been identified; renovation design and cost estimate is being prepared by the architect; renovation to commence soon

**Long term outcomes**

- Clients, partners and stakeholders are satisfied with SC services
- Decrease in the number of repeat users taken to prisoner care facility and SC for public intoxication
- Cost/time savings to other parts of the system (justice, health)

## Action 2.4 Establish a mobile outreach and transportation team

A consistent challenge faced by people experiencing homelessness and those precariously housed is the lack of a 24-hr service to transport people to and from shelter spaces, to connect with other support workers, to conduct outreach and to ensure people can access supports – such as medical appointments or a better housing opportunity. This service can also take pressure off emergency responders by providing an alternative transport option and can support the mobile crisis diversion service and stabilization centre.



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**



Reduce harms associated with **alcohol and drugs**



Broaden spectrum of emergency and crisis **response**



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

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

### Increased after hours outreach for people experiencing homelessness

- Funding secured from Regional Council to develop the mobile outreach model
- Establishment of a service model for an outreach and transportation after hours team-
- Contract with a service provider to implement the service in place
- Service provider has secured 2 vehicles, and office space
- Staff onboarded and trained
- Service delivery commenced February 2025 offering supports to residents in encampments after 4pm and on weekends

### Long term outcomes

- Broadened spectrum of response to non-emergent crises
- Enhanced support for people experiencing homelessness
- Increased connectivity for people experiencing homelessness to supports and services

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

The municipality is developing an action plan for reducing gun and gang violence. This plan will guide the development of new resources for youth and their families, with a particular focus on addressing youth at greatest risk of serious violent victimization or offending. The municipality has established new positions within the municipality’s Multi-Service Youth Centres to provide counselling and service navigation for youth who have experienced trauma. The municipality is also conducting research and planning to identify and strengthen gaps in youth service provision and violence prevention; enhance engagements to better coordinate responses to youth gun and gang violence; and build capacity among local communities to provide support to youth who have experienced trauma.



Promote **healing** from trauma



Create safer and more inclusive **spaces**

2024-25 Year two outcome measures:	Long term outcomes
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### Increased coordination among youth service support organizations

- **30** youth service providers convened to develop Child, Youth and Family Response Table
- Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST):
  - Coordination with **21** youth-serving organizations
- **80** attendees at a networking event for youth crime prevention service providers

### Youth voices incorporated into community safety planning

- **10** art-based youth engagement sessions held with **>30** participants towards the development of a Youth Community Safety Plan

### Increased capacity for staff to support youth

- **1** report created on best practices for working with Indigenous Youth
- **1** youth emergency guide translated into Arabic
- Youth Advocate Program (YAP) guide translated into Arabic
- **16** HRM staff trained in intercultural competency when working with newcomer youth at one pilot session
- Staff attendance at Youth Gun and Gang violence prevention summit in Vancouver

- Strengthen youth and family resilience
- Decreased risk factors for youth violence
- Stronger peer and social support networks
- Increased youth protective factors
- Improved community resiliency and well being
- Improved youth resilience
- Reduction in long-term impacts of trauma

## Action 2.5 Address trauma as a root cause of youth violence and gang involvement (cont'd)

2024-25

Year two outcome measures:

Long term outcomes

### Increased supports for youth most at risk of crime and/or victimization

- Youth Advocate Program (YAP):
    - **65** youth participants in the YAP
    - **15** youth graduated (completed YAP Action Plan)
    - **62** participants have increased/improved protective factors
    - **1** YAP historical data dashboard created
  - Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST):
    - Rapport building with **76** youth at rec facilities in HRM
    - Assistance and support for **14** youth at provincial court
    - Counselling/crisis intervention offered to **149** youth on various issues
    - Community-based support programming offered to **441** youth
    - **5** trainings and information sessions held or attended
  - Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE) activities in Dartmouth:
    - **206** youth volunteer hours
    - **40** Referrals (housing, health, etc)
    - **20** applications of non-violent crisis intervention
    - **110** individual outreach contacts
    - **90** unique individual support with safer substance use, pregnancy, mental health, service navigation, housing and shelter, interpersonal disputes
  - Redevelopment of Basketball courts at George Dixon
    - **500** participants at the grand reopening of the courts
    - Over **30** neighbourhood youth participated in the redevelopment process– from design to build
- Strengthened youth and family resilience
  - Decreased risk factors for youth violence
  - Stronger peer and social support networks
  - Increased youth protective factors
  - Improved community resiliency and well being
  - Improved youth resilience
  - Reduction in long-term impacts of trauma



## Action 2.5 Address trauma as a root cause of youth violence and gang involvement (cont'd)

2024-25

Year two outcome measures:

Long term outcomes

### Increased supports for youth most at risk of crime and/or victimization (cont'd)

- African Nova Scotian Justice Institute Justice Navigation project:
  - Justice Navigator onboarded and trained
  - Justice Navigator supporting youth navigation of criminal justice system
  - **23** youth clients supported and **6** upcoming in **9** communities in HRM
  - **23** support plans created
  - Practical interventions include:
    - Collaborative work with defense counsel and NS legal aid
    - Providing emotional support during court proceedings
    - Assisting clients with understanding their legal options and connecting them with legal representation
    - Intervention in a meeting with the Department of Community Services (DCS)
    - Providing support letters to the court
    - Wellness check with clients at the 3- and 6-month mark
    - Sharing community events
    - Breaking down legal documents in plain language
    - Developing individualized support plans based on assessed needs, such as housing, education, employment, or mental health services
    - Meet with neighboring agencies to create client support plan
    - Bridging clients to community resources such as housing programs, employment services, and health care providers
    - Providing Information for local food banks
    - Providing support in healing circles and restorative justice sessions to repair harm and foster accountability
- Strengthened youth and family resilience
- Decreased risk factors for youth violence
- Stronger peer and social support networks
- Increased youth protective factors
- Improved community resiliency and well being
- Improved youth resilience
- Reduction in long-term impacts of trauma

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

A backbone Centre of Responsibility (CoR) is a central office with senior management and administrative support, capacity for training and program development, research, assessment and evaluation capabilities, mechanisms for public engagement, championship of a public safety perspective across the municipality; and established multi-sector partnerships. The municipality has established a Director role and a new reporting structure which serves as the backbone office for implementing a community-centred approach to safety across the municipality.



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



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety

**2024-25 - complete**

- This action is complete with the creation of the **Community Safety Business unit** and initiation of the **Public Safety Commission** structure

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

In 2021, Council provided clear direction for the municipality to “examine the potential for shifting or creating programs for civilian delivery of non-core police functions” including but not limited to “traffic enforcement, public safety, community standards, mental health, and municipal enforcement functions.” Since its inception, the Community Safety Business Unit has worked with the CAO and other municipal business units to determine which programs and services could be better delivered through the Community Safety Business Unit.

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

**Public safety functions are supported by administrative and program delivery capacity**

- Lake Patrol migrated to Community Safety
- Crossing Guards migrated to Community Safety (from HRP)
- In collaboration with Legal and Legislative Services, staff have aligned public safety actions from the Mass Casualty Commission report, Policing Transformation Study and Defund the Police Report

**Long term outcomes**

- Halifax creates a community-centred approach to public safety
- Halifax supports the effective and appropriate delivery of safety programs and services

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

Communities are safest when relationships that underpin the safety ecosystem are healthy and thriving. Strong relationships across sectors mean that priorities are the foundation of safety processes, plans and policies, and not extracted through singular points of engagement. Diverse sectoral, population and geographic representation in advisories, partnerships, committees and collaborations means that Community Safety is equipped to respect difference and co-create foundations for common ground. Community Safety’s ongoing implementation of this action ensures the work remains connected to and aligned with diverse community needs.



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



Provide expert **advice** to promote public safety

**2024-25**

**Year two outcome measures:**

**Long term outcomes**

### Strategy implementation is relational, co-created, influenced and aligned with priorities across the community safety ecosystem

Active learning partnerships/collaborations include:

#### Multi-sectoral

- Dalhousie Healthy Populations Institute
- Dr. Diane Crocker (St. Mary’s University)
- Canadian Centre for Safer Communities
- University of Alberta Transit Census for Women project
- Ryan Dowd Homelessness Training Institute
- Halifax/Dartmouth Business Improvement Districts (downtown)
- Crisis Prevention Institute
- LivingWorks – ASIST
- Mental Health Commission of Canada – Mental Health First Aid
- Dr. Jamie Livingston (St. Mary’s University)
- Pier Labs
- Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research
- Canadian Practitioners Network for the Prevention of Extremist Violence

- Nova Scotia Health Public Health – Healthy Communities x Design
- Nova Scotia Health Cancer Care
- Office of Addictions and Mental Health
- Public Safety Canada – Building Safer Communities Fund
- Public Health Agency of Canada – Intersectoral Action Fund
- Strongest Cities Network

#### Community-based

- 211
- YWCA
- African nova Scotian Justice Institute
- Refix Community Advisory Committee
- Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia
- Peer Outreach Support Services and Education (POSSE)
- Roots of Hope
- YMCA
- ISANS
- Immigrant and Refugee Mental Health Project
- Brunswick Street Mission

#### Intergovernmental

- Reach Edmonton
- NS Crime Prevention Society
- NS Executive Council Office
- First Nations Institute of Governance Centre – OCAP
- NS Department of Seniors and Long-term Care
- NS Department of Justice

- Best practices, community needs, experiences and priorities are reflected in Halifax’s public safety work

## Public Safety Strategy Milestone progress – 2024-2025

In addition to reporting and monitoring under the PSS monitoring framework, the strategy identified a number of key milestones to help ensure that progress is made on each action within the lifetime of the strategy. **In 2024-25, staff are pleased to report that work under all milestones is underway and 58% of milestone are considered complete.** Please see below for a summary of progress on milestone actions.

Action	Strategic priorities	Milestone	Milestone status
1.1 Enhance Community Mobilization Teams	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, promote healing from trauma	Establishing peer-led counselling supports	in progress
		Expansion to Spryfield	in progress
1.2 Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, promote healing from trauma, create safer and more inclusive spaces, create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety	Expanding use of tools (e.g., Women’s Safety Assessments)	complete
1.3 Advance Indigenous-led community safety	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, create safer and more inclusive spaces, promote healing from trauma	Establishing mechanism to respond to MMIWG Calls to Action	in progress
1.4 Establish public safety training capacity	Create safer and more inclusive spaces, promote healing from trauma, broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response	Implementation of front-line staff training in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training	complete
		Mental Health First Aid, Critical Incident Response Management, and Suicide Intervention (ASIST) training offered	complete
1.5 Enhance research and advisory capacity	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety	New research resource established	complete
		Evaluation mechanisms for the Public Safety Strategy established	complete
1.6 Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services	Social infrastructure considerations added to capital planning process	in progress

## Public Safety Strategy Milestone progress – 2024-2025 (cont'd)

Action	Strategic priorities	Milestone	Milestone status
2.1 Develop a Community Crisis Response Service Model for the municipality	Enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness, broaden the spectrum of emergency crisis and response	Appropriate model identified	complete
		Funding and partnership agreements established	in progress
		Pilot started and evaluation plan created	in progress
2.2 Establish a Drug and Alcohol Policy Working Group	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, create safer and more inclusive spaces, enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness, reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs	Working group established to codevelop a drug and alcohol strategy for Halifax	in progress
2.3 Establish a Stabilization Centre in the Halifax Region	Create safer and more inclusive spaces, promote healing from trauma, broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response, enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness, reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs	Third-party provider identified	complete
		Appropriate space identified and procured	complete
		Pilot service started	in progress
		Initial evaluation completed	in progress
2.4 Establish a Mobile Outreach Team	Create safer and more inclusive spaces, enhance supports for people experiencing homelessness, broaden the spectrum of emergency and crisis response, reduce harms associated with alcohol and drugs	Appropriate model identified	complete
		Funding and partnership agreements established	complete
		Pilot started and evaluation plan created	in progress
2.5 Address Trauma as a Root Cause of Youth Violence and Gang Involvement	Create safer and more inclusive spaces, promote healing from trauma	New youth resources established in Multi-Service Youth Centres	complete
		Youth Services Review completed	complete



## Public Safety Strategy Milestone progress – 2024-2025 (cont'd)

Action	Strategic priorities	Milestone	Milestone status
3.1 Develop a Centre of Responsibility for Community-led Public Safety	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety	<b>New Business Unit created</b>	complete
		<b>Executive Director hired</b>	complete
		<b>New reporting and staffing structure established</b>	complete
<b>3.2</b> Establish New Community Voice and Advisory Structures	Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services, create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety	<b>New community advisory structures established</b>	in progress
<b>3.3</b> Assess Existing Municipal Programs and Services for Migration to the New COR	Provide expert advice to promote safety across municipal programs and services, create a centre for a collective impact approach to public safety	<b>Existing municipal programs and services moved to the new CoR</b>	in progress

### Action 1:1: Enhance Community Mobilization Teams

Community Mobilization Teams (CMT) have been fundamental in building community resilience through three key areas, crisis prevention, crisis preparation and crisis response. The CMTs have been pivotal/instrumental in addressing the needs of HRM communities affected by critical incidents and trauma. A summary of accomplishments this year follows:

- There are currently four active CMTs across seven HRM communities: Mulgrave Park, North Preston, Central North/Uniacke Square and area, East Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon and Spryfield.
- There is a total of 47 CMT members, including 11 new members joining in 2024.
- Spryfield CMT is currently under development with recurring members attending monthly meetings, community events and training.

#### Crisis Preparation – Training and Workshops

Training and wellness events built capacity of CMTs increasing crisis preparedness.

- Emergency Preparedness Training: learned how to mobilize during emergencies, such as comfort center openings – **19** participants
- Food Handlers Course: received training on safe food handling practices ahead of mobilizing during a critical incident or natural disaster and to support during community events – **14** participants
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention (NVC): trained on intervention techniques for managing aggressive behaviors – **4** participants
- Building Intercultural Competence Training: trained to build cultural competency and better support new immigrants – **17** participants
- CMT Health & Wellness Retreat – How to take care of yourself before, during and after a crisis: this training equipped the CMTs with tools to maintain physical, mental and emotional health in times of crisis. It also emphasized the long-term benefits of selfcare, improving both individual health and the broader community impact. The aim is to prevent burnout, promote sustained wellbeing and enhance community impact by fostering healthier volunteers – **20** participants
- Crime Prevention Symposium – **10** participants
- ASIST Training: CMTs are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills – **10** participants
- Climate Connections Training: CMTs were trained to incorporate climate resilience into community support efforts – **12** participants

These trainings have equipped CMTs with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively handle crisis, support community needs and build stronger more resilient communities. It also enhances their professional development and strengthens community ties.

#### Crisis Prevention

CMTs contributed efforts this year to preventing crisis through proactive community engagement and event support. The team collaborated with over 19 community organizations and engaged with more than 530 attendees. These initiatives help build unity

and foster connection with communities. A few of the events they engaged in are listed below:

- Preston Township Community BBQ
- Mulgrave Park Community Event

- Family SOS Community BBQ
- Caring and Learning Center Community Christmas event
- George Dixon/Uniacke Basketball Courts Grand Re-Opening
- CMT Resource Fair – which included nine service provider booths
- HRM Volunteer Conference
- Annual CMT December Social

The wide range of community events and social gatherings helped build relationships, strengthen community cohesion within HRM communities and create opportunities for dialogue and mutual support. Also reducing the risk of trauma through engagement and support.

### Crisis Response

The 2024-2025 fiscal year was a period of significant advancement in the implementation of the Community Collaborative Response Plan (CCRP) with a strong focus on enhancing community mobilization and providing support for communities affected by trauma, particularly related to gun violence, traumatic and critical incidents in marginalized communities.

- Rapid response to critical incidents saw three activations and ten support activations (including debriefs and trauma support interventions)
- Nine healing circles were held in the Preston Township pilot with a total of 129 participants. These sessions saw varied participation from 7-24 individuals per session
- Upcoming sessions are planned for January, February and March 2025 with continued interest to participate in the program
- As a key expansion of our trauma informed initiative an 8-week closed group is planned for Q4; this component of CCRP aims to provide deeper exploration of trauma, further supporting the participants emotional and psychological wellbeing. Candidates will be selected from those who have engaged in previous healing circles during the pilot; as they will have the tools and baseline knowledge already. An intake assessment will take place
- In addition, a half day trauma workshop will take place in 2025. This workshop will aim to further support the community addressing the ongoing impacts of trauma.

The rapid mobilization during critical incidents ensured timely and effective support for communities in crisis, demonstrating the impact and preparedness of the network. Also healing circles have become a cornerstone of the CCRPs implementation fostering trust and emotional (peer) support in communities that have faced an overrepresentation of trauma.

Both CMT and CCRP initiatives will continue to build upon these successes, focusing on:

- Expanding the CMTs to additional HRM communities
- Continuing to deliver essential training to strengthen CMTs capacity for crisis response and prevention
- Continue building strong relationships and cohesion with internal and external stakeholders. This will allow a collaborative and unified approach when supporting community
- Enhancing community engagement through more events, workshops and social gatherings to foster stronger relations and build resilience
- Further refine and implement the closed group healing sessions for deeper trauma work
- Continue strengthening our rapid response capacities, ensuring communities are supported promptly and effectively after critical incidents
- Expand our healing circles to more communities

Both the Community Collaborative Response Plan and Community Mobilization Teams have played key roles in improving community resilience and support across HRM communities. While CCRP focuses on trauma healing and crisis response, the CMTs focuses on community mobilization, training and prevention. Together these efforts have significantly contributed to the wellbeing of HRM communities, with the 2024-2025 fiscal year marking a period of growth, learning and impact. Progress in enhancing CMTs crisis preparation and response to critical incidents has laid a strong foundation for sustained success. With the continued support of community members and dedicated volunteers, both programs will move forward in their mission to foster healing, unity and resilience in HRM communities.

## **Action 1.2: Enhance Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program**

The [Safe City and Safe Public Spaces \(SCSPS\) Program](#)<sup>1</sup> collaborates with municipal Business Units, government and community partners to develop and implement policies, programs and initiatives that aim to foster municipal public spaces free from gender-based violence and safe for all women, girls and gender-diverse residents.

The program plays a key role in supporting the municipality's equitable, intersectional and community-based approach to public safety and contributes to the following 2023-2026 Public Safety Strategy strategic priorities:

- Provide expert advice to promote public safety across municipal programs and services
- Create safer and more inclusive spaces
- Promote healing from trauma

The program also advances the Safe City & Safe Public Spaces [Scoping Study](#) priorities and [Mass Casualty Commission Report Recommendations](#).<sup>2</sup>

### ***Collaboration to Advance the Safety of Women & Gender Diverse Residents in Public Spaces***

*Contributes to MCC recommendations V.14 mobilizing a society-wide response, V. 15 women-centered strategies and actions, V.16 putting women's safety first*

Building off the success of last year's Gender Responsive Transit workshop, this year the SCSPS Program, Community Safety Research & Development and Halifax Transit partnered to join transit agencies across the country in the second phase of Canada's [first comprehensive study](#) of women's experiences of transit, *Understanding and Responding to the Transit Needs of Women*. The project will take a data-driven and community engaged approach to capturing how women experience and navigate transit and identify interventions to contribute to more inclusive transit planning. The three-year research project launched in November 2024.

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

*Contributes to MCC recommendations 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 and C.32 promoting and supporting healthy masculinities*

Applying learnings from pilot training sessions in 2023-2024, the SCSPS Program collaborated with [YWCA Halifax](#) and [Trafficking and Exploitation Services System](#) to train almost 100 municipal staff and volunteers to better understand the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth and

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<sup>1</sup> Halifax is a member of a global network of cities through United Nations Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative that have committed to responding to and preventing sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence in public spaces.

<sup>2</sup> In particular, the SCSPS Program contributes to recommendations 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, and C.32 promoting and supporting healthy masculinities



apply these learnings in their roles, either directly supporting youth or designing municipal services, plans and projects to contribute to the protective, upstream factors that contribute to reducing CSEC.

***Processes and Tools for Community Safety Assessments (CSAs) (formerly Women's Safety Assessments (WSAs))***

*Contributes to MCC recommendations V.14 mobilizing a society-wide response, V.15 women-centered strategies and actions and V.16 putting women's safety first*

This year, SCSPS Program and Information Technology developed and launched a new Community Safety Assessment App and processes in Cityworks to improve participants' experience during CSAs, allow for more robust assessment data collection and analysis, and improve tracking and evaluation of the impact of Community Safety Assessments on safety improvements to municipal public spaces. These new tools and processes are a critical foundation for SCSPS Program efforts to expand the reach and impact of Community Safety Assessments in the coming year.

**Broadening the Spectrum of Municipal Responses to Intimate Partner Violence**

*Contributes to MCC recommendations 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*

SCSPS Program staff collaborated with the municipality's Crisis Diversion Model Working Group and YWCA Halifax to carry out research and engagements with community partners and people with lived experience to inform the design and implementation of the municipal Crisis Diversion Model. These research projects focused on understanding current municipal responses to intimate partner violence and identifying important design and implementation considerations for the Crisis Diversion Model resources or support related to intimate partner violence.

**Bystander Intervention Training Development**

*Contributes to MCC recommendations 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 and C.32 promoting and supporting healthy masculinities*

The SCSPS Program and Community Safety Education Coordinator are in the early stages of developing a bystander intervention training for HRM staff and eventually residents. The training will equip individuals with skills and knowledge to safely recognize and respond to instances of street harassment in public spaces, including incidents related to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence. Staff are working with Dr. Diane Crocker, Professor in the Department of Criminology at Saint Mary's University, to develop a logic model, theory of change, and evaluation framework and collaborating with various local organizations and partners through a process facilitated by the Province to develop a whole of society approach to bystander intervention training (in response to Mass Casualty Commission and Desmond Fatality Inquiry Recommendations).

#### Action 1.4: Establish Public Safety Training Capacity

As projected in Year Two of the Strategy's Implementation, the Community Safety Education Coordinator expanded training offerings and enhanced engagement with municipal staff, volunteers, and **12** external stakeholders. Expanding public safety training capacity can cultivate a broader culture shift within the municipality by supporting staff in seeking alternatives to enforcement, meeting people where they are in their interactions with the public and focusing on needs of individuals and seeking to help them meet those needs. A Training Needs Assessment, completed this year, guides the development of the training program and ensures alignment with Public Safety Strategy (PSS) strategic priorities.

#### Key Training Developments and Achievements

From April 2024 to January 2025, **215** participants were trained through the training program, which encompasses several key trainings. These efforts directly supported the strategy's goals. Key achievements include:

- [Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Training \(Trauma-informed\)](#): Since its inaugural last year, the Trauma-informed *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention®* (NCI) training received significant positive feedback as the Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research reported:
  - From the interim evaluation report, **269** participants completed immediate post-training evaluation forms, with over **90%** rating 11 questions about the training's objectives, relevance, and delivery as 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree'.
  - **49%** of participants in the six-month post-training survey stated that the training reduced their need to seek enforcement when resolving crisis or conflict situations.
  - From April 2024 to January 2025, **173** participants completed NCI training, with **190** projected to be trained by the end of this fiscal year.
  - **10** team-specific NCI training (including Ferry, Property Fleet & Environment, Community Mobilization Team, Canada Games Centre, Community Standards & Compliance, Business Improvement Districts, Brunswick Street Mission).
  - **5** Corporate training sessions.
  - The coordinator collaborated and supported new NCI community trainers from Business Improvement Districts, Brunswick Street Mission, and Peer Outreach Support Services & Education to broadly expand NCI training capacity.
- [Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training \(ASIST\)](#): The coordinator co-facilitated ASIST training with Mobile Youth Support Team staff for **14** CMT members in November and addressed training liability concerns with the support of the Risk & Insurance Services and Legal & Legislative Services. Meanwhile, staff stays engaged with LivingWorks and Roots of Hope to expand training capacity.
- [Mental Health First Aid Training \(MHFA\)](#): As projected in PSS's Year Two milestone, the coordinator passed the rigorous pre-screening and successfully became a certified MHFA trainer in November, with pilot training delivered in January and **60** participants projected to be trained by the end of this fiscal.
- [The First Nations Principles of OCAP®](#): In September, the team launched an online self-paced course by the First Nations Information Governance Centre to introduce the principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession as it relates to the collection of First Nations data to **12** selected learners from various divisions.

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

The municipality continues to develop, together with key partners and stakeholders, a model for a community-based mobile crisis diversion team that can provide a viable alternative for non-emergent crises. The service is a key action in line with the Public Safety strategic priority area of broadening the spectrum of response to harms and ensuring the most appropriate responder to emergency and non-emergency situations. A collaborative working group with representation from Research and Development, Programs and Partnerships, Housing and Homelessness, HRP and Dalhousie University guides community partnerships, engagements, research, data analysis, evaluation and refinement of the model towards the launch of a pilot service in the coming months. The municipality is designing a service that will encompass the following principles:

- person-centric;
- scalable and sustainable;
- enabling public safety priorities of equity and intersectionality and considering the diverse experiences of marginalized communities, women, and gender diverse people;
- providing for accountability and collaboration;
- and effective, efficient and responsive.

### Community and stakeholder engagement

In 2024-25 the municipality engaged Pier Labs and YWCA to undertake targeted community engagement with key service providers presently engaged in crisis diversion/support work in HRM as well as people with lived experience, informed by community-based data that has already been collected. Key objectives of the engagement were to understand how a municipal model would integrate with service provision underway at the community level, as well as how the model could safely and effectively support people who are experiencing non-emergent crises related to intimate partner violence. In addition to targeted community engagement, the working group has collected critical insights that have shaped the model from key stakeholders, including Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services, Integrated Emergency Services, RCMP, Halifax Regional Police, and Diversity and Inclusion.

### Learning from other jurisdictions

The HRM model continues to benefit from valuable learning and best practices from municipalities across Canada who have developed similar services. Staff undertook two site visits to enhance knowledge, build relationships and gain firsthand ride-along experience with similar community-based crisis diversion services in Canada. Community Safety hosted Reach Edmonton for a local workshop that was attended by six business units (HRP, RCMP, HRFE, ICT, Community Safety, Finance) as well as the Chair of the Board of Police Commissioners, Dalhousie, 211 and POSSE. The workshop focused on service design, records management, partnerships, policies and program delivery and strengthened collaborative relationships and provided enhanced learning opportunities.

### Design and pilot

Valuable learning from the pieces of work referenced above continues to inform the crisis diversion model as the working group builds toward an advisory group that will oversee and support a pilot service. Ongoing research and data analysis of HRP and RCMP call data helps to inform service elements of the model and geographic boundaries of a pilot service along with input from stakeholders and partners. The working group is also designing outcome measures and evaluation plans to ensure that key objectives and metrics can support learning from and adaptation of the pilot service. The working group remains

connected to work at the provincial level including the community-based crisis response pilot in West Hants and work on broadening the spectrum of response at the Department of Justice and the Office of Addictions and Mental Health to ensure that learnings are shared as these services are developed and that HRM work aligns with and takes advantage of opportunities for support in this arena.

#### Partners and procurement

HRM is establishing strong partnerships that will support service delivery, including selection of a service provider for call intake, evaluation and mobile dispatch. 211 has been identified as an appropriate and apposite intake and dispatch partner, validated by community and stakeholder engagement and strong service relationships with other community-based models in Canada. Procurement processes are underway to select a mobile response provider and support proponents to develop training, intake and dispatch policies and procedures, data collection, reporting and records management.

### Action 2.3: Establish a Stabilization Centre

This action brief highlights the progress made in the development and implementation of the Stabilization Centre from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. The Stabilization Centre aims to provide a safe and supportive environment for intoxicated individuals, reducing the burden on emergency services and enhancing community safety.

#### Key Achievements

Significant strides have been made in service provider engagement. A new service provider, The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia (JHS) has been identified to administer the service. JHS has completed pre-launch activities including drafting of the Centre's operational policies and procedures as well as site visits to an existing stabilization centre to gather insights and experience. A contribution agreement with the JHS is in its final stage, and coordination meetings are being held regularly to ensure alignment on goals and deliverables.

Infrastructure development has also progressed as a project manager has been assigned to coordinate the renovation and fit-up of the proposed facility space. Major updates, such as upgrading the water line to accommodate sprinkler installations, and construction of accessible washrooms and bathrooms were identified. Additionally, we have secured in-kind contributions, including furniture from the Bridge Commission and mattresses from JHS.

Stakeholder engagement has been a critical component of the Centre's progress. An Advisory Committee has been established, meeting bi-monthly to provide input on policies and operational strategies. The committee was inaugurated 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2024 and four meetings have been held to-date. The committee includes representatives from the service providers, HRP, RCMP, the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, Street Navigators, Housing and Homelessness Navigators, EHS, HRF, and HRM's Community Safety Unit. This diverse group, while advisory in nature, has fostered a collaborative approach to planning, offering valuable expertise, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered, and aligning the Centre's objectives with broader community goals.

Funding and budget management have been carefully monitored. Evaluation planning is underway, a logic model, with inputs from the advisory committee has been developed as well as a draft evaluation plan to guide data collection, reporting, and monitoring. This plan will help assess the Centre's outcomes and inform adjustments to improve service delivery.

#### Challenges and Considerations

Some challenges remain, such as renovation delays due to required design adjustments, external contracting and balancing stakeholder inputs with funding availability. Funding is also an issue, the service provider has had to streamline the scope of operations to accommodate the available funds.

#### Next Steps

Renovations will commence once the architectural design is finalized, on track to commence at the end of this fiscal year. The John Howard Society will lead community engagement efforts to educate the public and address concerns about the Centre's operations. Strengthened partnerships with emergency services and community organizations will enhance service delivery, and a long-term sustainability plan will be developed.



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

### Mobile Youth Support Team

The Mobile Youth Counsellor and Youth Outreach Worker are positions funded within the Youth Section of Parks & Recreation aimed at developing and implementing prevention and intervention initiatives to address the risk factors associated with gun and gang violence. These initiatives include mentoring, counselling, skills development, and recreational activities, among others. The positions operate within existing youth spaces at HRM municipal recreation centres, responding to community crises while focusing on prevention, crisis intervention, and strengthening the capacity of youth staff to address issues related to gun and gang violence.

The 2024-2025 fiscal year focused on strategies to help with the reduction of trauma impact in vulnerable youth following a community crisis event by increasing access to low barrier, youth friendly counselling support. Below is the list of activities completed in the fiscal year.

The Youth Counsellor and Youth Outreach Worker supported youth in the following areas:

- Rapport Building with **76** youth throughout the following recreation facilities within the Halifax Regional Municipality.
  - Acadia Centre (The Den)
  - Dartmouth North Recreation Centre
  - George Dixon Recreation Centre
  - Sackville Sports Stadium
  - The Power House
- Assistance and support for **14** youth at the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia.
  - Communities in need of youth support include Downtown Halifax, Spryfield, Sackville, Downtown Dartmouth, Clayton Park/Fairview.
- Counselling/Crisis Intervention offered to **149** youth within recreation facilities
  - Summary of conversations/services provided:
    - Peer pressure and crisis support
    - Suicide intervention support
    - Drug use/abuse
    - Family conflict
    - Pregnancy
    - Restorative justice and conflict with the law
    - Education and employment support
    - Relationship issues
    - Mental Health support and assist youth with finding suitable therapist form trauma
    - Restorative Justice
    - Probation officer & Correctional services
    - Provide access to social services and supports and enhance collaboration between municipal youth services and community organizations
- Community-based support programming offered to **441** youth with the municipality:
  - Services offered during sessions:
    - Provided youth with meal or snack during programs
    - Encouraged youth to participate in programs Project at Youth Drop-in for information sessions (crafts, baking etc.)
    - Team building activities

- Education & employment support (connected with HRCE)
- Community Event Support (Buckets without Borders Event)

### Community Support

On April 22nd, the Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST) was informed of a stabbing incident that led to the tragic death of a 16-year-old Syrian youth. In response, MYST offered support to the staff, youth, and families affected by the incident. MYST collaborated with local service providers to extend further assistance to the community. Additionally, MYST hosted debrief sessions at Citadel High School on May 1st and 2nd to provide support to the students.

### Training Offered

Facilitated 3 ASIST trainings for staff and community members

Facilitated 1 Information session at the HRM Volunteer Conference

### Training Attended

Crime Prevention Conference

### Coordinating Mobile Youth Counselling, Outreach and Navigation Services

Coordinate Mobile Youth Counselling, Outreach and Navigation Services took place together with the following organizations:

- Richard Present Centre for Excellence
- East Preston Daycare
- The People's Counselling Clinic
- The North End Health Clinic
- North End Parent Resource Centre
- The Youth Project
- Provincial Youth Court
- Schools Plus
- Nova Scotia Youth Centre (Waterville Facility)
- Department of Justice
- IWK
- Nourish Halifax
- Posse
- HRP/RCMP
- Community Justice Society/Restorative Justice
- Lucasville Educational Committee
- Autism NS
- NS Legal Aid/Dalhousie Legal Aid
- Fairview Family Resource Centre
- Bayers Westwood Family Resource Centre
- ISANS Youth Outreach