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Item No. 21.2
Halifax Regional Council
April 14, 2026

TO: Mayor Fillmore and Members of Halifax Regional Council

FROM: Brad Anguish, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: April 7, 2026

SUBJECT: Annual Public Safety Strategy Report

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In March 2023, Regional Council unanimously approved the municipality's renewed Public Safety Strategy. The Strategy directs investments in programs and services that prevent violence, crime, and victimization and builds municipal and community capacity for more cost effective and appropriate alternatives to police response for substance use, mental health, addictions and other non-criminal issues
- This report provides a background on the Strategy and an update on progress made since implementation, through a summary of key accomplishments and includes the 2025 Monitoring and Evaluation framework. This framework concretely demonstrates progress toward outcomes for each action in the strategy (Attachment B).
- Since Regional Council approved the Strategy, it has attracted over **five million dollars** in direct external funding and over **half a million** in kind funding.
- Strategy implementation is on track, with 80% of milestones complete or in progress. The Strategy has resulted in the development and creation of new services that are demonstrating impact, such as the municipality's new **Crisis Assistance and REsponse (CARE)** service: a 24/7 community-based, trauma-informed alternative response team for residents experiencing distress related to substance use, public intoxication, thoughts of suicide, mental health or well-being.
- Several initiatives in the Strategy continue to advance Mass Casualty Commission Turning the Tides Report (MCC) recommendations related to bystander interventions; healthy masculinities and creating safe spaces to report violence. Community Safety continues to engage with provincially led committees and taskforces advancing the MCC report recommendations.

- Current and forecasted implementation challenges and risks include capacity levels in the community service provider sector particularly in relation to significant spending reductions at all branches of government; capital, internal staffing and operational hurdles; and funding constraints projected to impact sustainability and scaling of pilot projects such as **CARE**.
- Research, engagement and design are underway for a renewed Public Safety Strategy, expected to be presented to Regional Council toward the end of 2026.

BACKGROUND

The municipality's renewed [Public Safety Strategy](#) (the Strategy) 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 implementation, it:

- Leads a coordinated approach to broadening the spectrum of responses to social issues and harms with community partners
- strengthens and fosters relationships with the various branches of government and non-governmental sector to build capacity across the sector, increase coordination, and attract funding and partnerships
- builds evidence, knowledge and capacity for coordinated and holistic approaches to the root causes of violence, crime, and victimization.



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

The municipality recognizes that *prevention* is core to its legislative mandate “develop and maintain safe and viable communities”¹ and has built the infrastructure to ensure that its approach to prevention can grow and thrive. This includes more than 15 years of foundational work and key milestones:

¹ [Halifax Regional Municipality Charter Section 2iii](#)

- **The Mayor’s Roundtable on Violence and the Clairmont Reports (2008 and 2014)**, which emphasized the need for holistic, preventative, and community-driven responses to public safety concerns.
- **The inaugural Public Safety Strategy (2018–2022)**, which established a shared vision of public safety across HRM and created several cornerstone programs such as [Community Mobilization Teams](#) to address gun violence and the [Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program](#) to prevent sexual violence in public spaces. The Strategy also strengthened the awareness and built capacity within HRM’s vast social infrastructure—libraries, recreation centres, parks, public transit, and youth programs—recognizing the essential role they play in creating safer communities. 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](#).
- Building on this foundation, the unanimous approval of HRM’s 2023–2026 Strategy set a clear mandate to advance **community-led public safety**, address root causes of harm, and broaden the spectrum of responses to social issues. Its seven strategic priorities focus on creating safer and more inclusive spaces; promoting healing from trauma; reducing harms associated with alcohol and drugs; supporting people experiencing homelessness; strengthening emergency and crisis response pathways; and establishing a Centre of Responsibility (CoR) to align public safety work across sectors.
- The Strategy is informed by internal and external engagement insights, research evidence, and existing Regional Council and Board of Police Commissioners recommendation reports.² [The first annual progress report](#) on this Strategy was presented to Regional Council in March 2024 and the second in [February of 2025](#).
- Since Regional Council approved the Strategy, it has attracted over **five million dollars** in direct external funding and approximately \$600,000 in kind funding through pilot projects with Public Safety Canada.

DISCUSSION

Year Three Implementation Progress

The municipality’s Public Safety Strategy is in year three of implementation. Strategy oversight and development sits in the Executive Director’s Office, led by Community Safety’s Research and Development Team, with implementation leads across Business Units and with external partners and collaborators. It encompasses seven strategic priorities, four guiding principles (figure 2), and three action areas (figure 3).

² 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](#).



Figure 2: Strategy Guiding Principles (source: Public Safety Strategy 2023)

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:

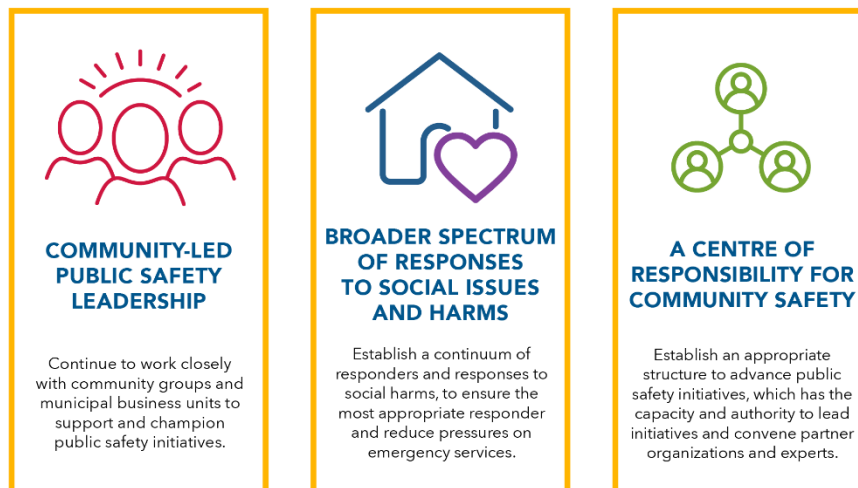


Figure 3: the Strategy's Three Action Areas (source: Public Safety Strategy, 2023)

Based on an overarching Theory of Change, the Public Safety Strategy is guided by a **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** (figure 4, Attachment A) that provides key insight and a common basis for communicating progress toward outcomes for each action under the above areas, and evidence for continuous learning and adaptation.



Figure 4: Public Safety Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The remainder of this report captures key highlights from this past year’s implementation for each Strategic area of the PSS and a summary of challenges and next steps in Strategy renewal.

Action Area One: Community-Led Public Safety Leadership

The **first strategic area, Community-led Public Safety Leadership**, builds capacity to promote public safety as a shared responsibility across the ecosystem, including expanding existing programs, trainings, and bolstering supports for community-led safety with populations disproportionately impacted by violence. Key highlights of this year’s progress include:

- **Community Mobilization Teams (CMTs)** stand as a cornerstone of the municipality’s community-led approach toward creating safer communities. There are four CMTs across seven HRM communities: Mulgrave Park, North Preston, Central North/Uniacke Square, East Preston, Cherry Brook, Lake Loon and Spryfield. Since their launch in 2018, CMT volunteer membership continues to grow, with **49** active volunteer members. A small team of employees in the Programs and Partnerships Division provide backbone support to CMT volunteers in three overlapping areas: **Crisis Prevention, Preparedness and Response.**



Figure 5: CMT members at a training retreat

- This year they strengthened community-led **crisis preparedness** through trainings such as Critical Incident Stress Management, Mental Health First Aid, and Emergency Preparedness among other trainings; collaborated with community organizations to **prevent crises**, strengthen social cohesion and belonging at the community level, through several events such as the Preston

area community BBQ, Mulgrave Park Days, the Spryfield Sunday Market; and led **crisis response** through the Community Collaborative Response Plan (CCRP). CCRP was developed to enhance the

CMT response mode to be more culturally relevant and consists of a community-based network of spiritual and mental health supports that are able to mobilize in the wake of a critical incident. CCRP led **six rapid mobilizations** this past year, ensuring timely and effective support for communities in crisis, demonstrating the impact and preparedness of the network. The CCRPs timely crisis response implementation fosters trust and emotional (peer) support in communities disproportionately impacted by violence.



Figure 6: NCI Impact Highlights from an independent evaluation (see Attachment B)

Indigenous Cultural Humility, Intercultural Competency, neurodivergence, and other equity-informed practices.

- **Social polarization, hateful and extremist behaviours and violence** have been on the rise across Canada and the HRM, alongside their impacts on individuals and communities.³ Over the past year, Community Safety in collaboration with Diversity and Inclusion is leading the development of a range of new training and capacity-building initiatives to prevent and respond to this issue. We have been selected as a pilot site for two national projects funded by Public Safety Canada’s [Centre for Community Engagement and the Prevention of Violence](#), who lead the Government of Canada’s efforts to counter radicalization to violence: [Project UPSTREAM](#) and the [Prevention Academy](#). These pilots have brought significant resources to HRM’s efforts to build capacity to address this issue through collaborative,

- The **Community Safety Training** program, launched in 2023, continues to expand training capacity to cultivate a broader culture shift for alternative crisis response and improved safety and wellbeing outcomes for residents, HRM employees and volunteers. This past year, **450 HRM** employees and volunteers are expected to be trained. A two-year independent evaluation of **Trauma-Informed Non-Violent Crisis Intervention** by Dalhousie’s Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research validated the significant impact of the program (See figure 6 and Attachment C) The full evaluation report is available on the Public Safety Strategy [website](#).

- Community Safety’s Training Program also led the **curriculum development** of the municipality’s new Crisis Assistance and Response service: [CARE](#). This **four-week**, trauma-informed, person-centred, culturally relevant training comprises **17** interconnected training topics, such as trauma-informed care, Anti-Black Racism,

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) is a comprehensive approach that encompasses primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts aimed at preventing extremist violence. These prevention efforts often occur on a community level and aim at reducing factors like social isolation, discrimination, or inequality that might drive individuals towards extremism.

³ See Ahmed, K, [Nihilistic violent extremist networks recruit vulnerable people — and our youth need support](#), *The Conversation*, Feb 19, 2026; Board of Police Commissioners. [The Police Response to Hate Crimes & Hate Incidents in Halifax](#). 2025; Rousseau, Cécile, et al. “Ideological and Nihilistic Violence in Adolescents Referred to a Specialized Clinic for Violent Extremism.” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice/La Revue Canadienne de Criminologie et de Justice Pénale*, vol. 67, no. 2, 1 Apr. 2025, pp. 30–48, <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj-2024-0057>; Madriaza, Pablo, et al. “Exposure to Hate in Online and Traditional Media: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Impact of This Exposure on Individuals and Communities.” *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, vol. 21, no. 1, 16 Jan. 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.70018>

community-centred approaches and will inform action areas in the municipality's renewed Public Safety Strategy. This year's progress includes:

- A groundbreaking workshop on Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) that convened over **45 participants** from a wide array of community and government sectors to better understand how these issues were surfacing and to gauge local awareness and capacity across the community safety ecosystem. This resulted in a report ['Toward a Shared Vision of Safeguarding Youth from Hate and Violent Extremism'](#) in Halifax with recommendations that have been guiding subsequent work in this area.
- A two-day youth consultative workshop, where **30 youth** shared experiences of extremist behaviours, hate and social polarization and recommendations to address these issues. These learnings were captured in a report titled, [Centering Youth Voices to Prevent Violence in Halifax](#) and are being used to inform the Youth Safety Plan currently under development.
- A two-day training and capacity building workshop held in March 2026 that built on learnings described above. Expert practitioners from across the country co-designed with workshop with HRM and came to Halifax to share their knowledge, skills and experiences in the field. The workshop brought together **63 practitioners** across a range of sectors (youth



servicing, health, education, etc), and was designed to support practitioners entering the Prevention of Extremist Violence (PVE) field, covering fundamental principles, Canada's PVE landscape, practitioner positionalities, risk and protective factors, case management, collaboration, and well-being. A report on learnings and next steps is forthcoming.

Figure 7: Practitioner Capacity Building Workshop on PVE (see Attachment C for overview of workshop, partners and key PVE definitions)

- [The Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces \(SCSPS\) Program](#) continues to work toward making the municipality a safer place for women, girls and gender diverse people. Over the past year, the SCSPS Program significantly advanced municipal efforts to prevent gender-based violence and create safer, more inclusive public spaces. The program advised eight municipal projects across multiple business units, strengthened collaboration through participation in national and global networks, and supported Regional Council's Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee. Staff facilitated four Community Safety Assessments (CSA) **78** participants, produced summary reports, and enhanced data tools through a new CSA app and internal systems. The program also broadened municipal responses to intimate partner violence by supporting the development of the CARE Service and partnering with Transition House Association of Nova Scotia and Halifax Public Libraries to deliver Neighbours, Friends and Families training to **60 residents**. In addition, the program funded four culturally responsive learning spaces for Black and African Nova Scotian communities, engaged **65 participants**, and advanced the development of municipal Bystander Intervention Training, finalizing a theory of change and progressing curriculum development in partnership with community experts, with a pilot planned for summer 2026.

- The Research and Development Division led a comprehensive research and engagement project to better understand **Senior Safety across HRM** (see Attachment D). This project sought to define, align and strengthen how the municipality can promote senior safety across business units and in collaboration with community partners. The research process involved **surveys** of both seniors and service providers within the HRM, **eight focus groups** across diverse communities, and a literature review and jurisdictional scan to identify evidence and promising practices. The research identified **five interconnected core challenges** shared by Seniors: Social isolation & loneliness, falls, elder abuse, experiences of crime, and inequities in access to services and supports. To address these challenges, a set of recommendations were developed. These recommendations will help shape the direction and be embedded as a cross-cutting focus in the upcoming renewed Public Safety Strategy.

Led by Research and Development, an interdepartmental Working Group and partnership with Nova Scotia Health is developing an **Equity Based Policy Framework** to provide an accessible, objective, and community-informed framework to integrate geographically based equity considerations into HRM's capital planning processes. The Framework will aid in understanding how HRM's social infrastructure assets (such as transit, active transportation (AT), parks, recreation centres, and libraries) are distributed and accessed across the municipality in relation to community socioeconomic conditions. The Framework will help identify where social infrastructure does not align with a community's social and material needs, highlighting existing resource inequities at the community level. The project will wrap up in the summer of 2026, with the goal of supporting the capital planning process for 2027/28. Read more about it in Attachment E)

Action Area Two: A Broader Spectrum of Responses to Social Issues and Harms

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, build community safety capacity, and support youth safety.

- The municipality launched the **Crisis Assistance and REsponse Team** or **CARE**, an alternative response program grounded in person-centred, trauma-informed, scalable, and equity-driven principles. CARE launched in a phased approach beginning October 2025 expanding to 24/7 service in January 2026. Developed through a cross-departmental partnership, the model was shaped by extensive engagements with community organizations, shelters, and emergency services. These sessions, along with table-top exercises involving police, Integrated Emergency Services, allied service providers and community partners, validated operational assumptions, refined triage pathways, strengthened information-sharing processes, and identified key training and documentation needs. Over the past year, partnerships were formalized with service providers for call intake/dispatch (to access CARE, call **211**) and supported by jurisdictional learning, staffing preparation, and service agreements outlining roles and accountability. CARE is supported by an independent developmental evaluation to provide guidance on service design adjustments, and to report on key outcome measures. A formative evaluation will report on metrics



such as number of call diversions, types of services provided, and community and partner referrals.

The How and Why of CARE

CARE Theory of Change

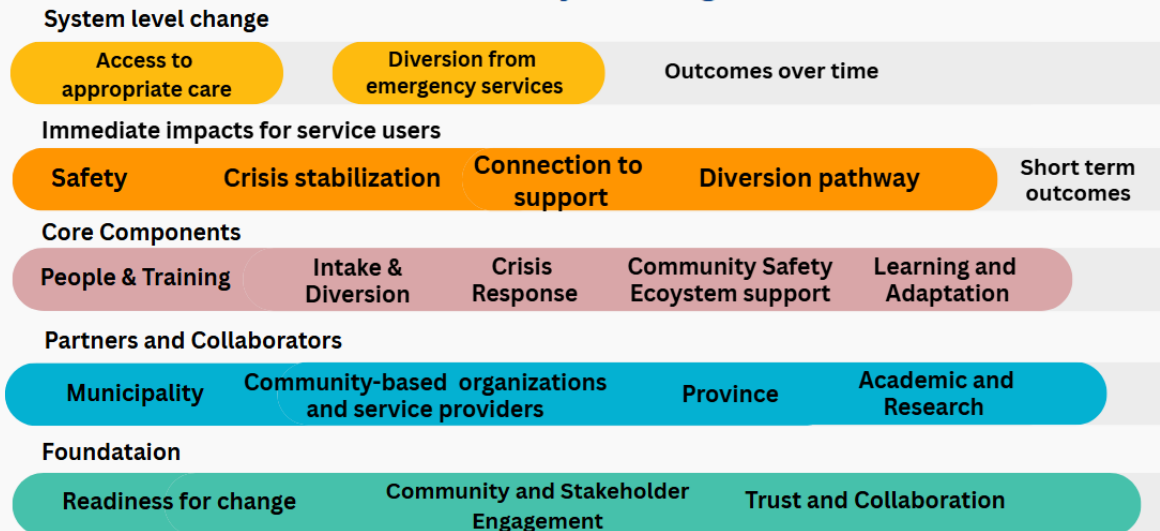


Figure 8: CARE theory of change

- Led by the Housing and Homelessness Division, the **mobile outreach and transportation service** launched **After Hours Individualized Engagement Mobilization Team (AIM)**. AIM provides 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 and support the safety and wellbeing of encampment residents and the broader community. This year, AIM made **1, 524 encampment visits**, providing a range of support that included meals, clothing, wellbeing support, and transportation.

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:

- Youth violence and gang involvement are closely tied to unaddressed trauma, chronic instability, exploitation, and inconsistent access to support. The **Child and Youth Response Table (CHART)** is coordinated, non-police, youth-centred approach to strengthen system alignment and early intervention across youth-serving sectors. Over 2025, CHART held **12 multi-sector coordination sessions with 250 participants representing more than 12 organizations**, resulting in stronger cross-sector trust, improved information-sharing, and clearer collective accountability for youth safety. Capacity-building efforts also enhanced system ability to identify and respond to emerging risks such as cyberbullying, online grooming, digital exploitation, and gender-based violence.

Through CHART, **35 complex youth cases** were reviewed with real-time, multi-agency response plans addressing trauma, school disengagement, housing instability, habitual runaway patterns, and exploitation linked to gang-related vulnerability. These coordinated efforts have produced clearer, faster, more trauma-informed service pathways for youth at highest risk of harm. Documented system gaps are now informing the development of a non-police, youth-centred CHART, contributing to greater system readiness, stronger referral pathways, earlier identification of youth facing exploitation risk, and increased capacity to address root causes of youth violence.

- A collaboration between Community Safety, Diversity and Inclusion, **The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia** (LISNS) and Coverdale Court System are working **to improve youth justice navigation, with emphasis on immigrant and newcomer youth and their families**. This collaboration will deliver in-person training that equips staff with a deeper understanding of the youth criminal justice system, including key legal processes, rights and responsibilities of young people, the role of restorative practices, and how involvement in the justice system can affect other areas of law such as immigration, family, and housing matters. This training will help staff better support clients by recognizing the interconnected legal challenges youth may face and by strengthening their ability to provide informed guidance and referrals. The project also includes the development of multilingual materials in eight languages—Arabic, Farsi, French, Hindi, Mandarin, Somali, Spanish, and Ukrainian—significantly expanding accessibility. Once completed, all project materials and webinars will be available for free on the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia website, shared with HRM and community partners, supported by professional graphic design and promotional outreach, and integrated into ongoing programming and information sessions with youth and families through schools and community service providers.
- The Youth Division's Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST) **MYST** developed and implemented prevention and intervention initiatives to address risk factors associated with gun and gang violence. MYST provided both drop-in and appointment-based supports to youth ages 13–24. The team consisted of a Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) and a Youth Counsellor who collectively supported youth across several established youth centres. The YOW engaged **44 youth** from April–November through regular visits to the Power House, George Dixon Community Centre, The Den, and the Spryfield Youth Centre, averaging 2–3 interactions per evening. The Youth Counsellor supported **22 youth** through Provincial Court, offering guidance and adult-ally support, and an additional **17 youth** through drop-in services between April–May 2025. Both positions experienced turnover—YOW in November and the Counsellor in June—which significantly limited overall service capacity and uptake for the remainder of the project. These challenges, combined with the funding model (a grant from Public Safety Canada until March 31, 2026), the program was terminated.

Key learnings from MYST will help inform current and future youth programs and services. For instance, overall, MYST was most successful in established youth-dedicated spaces, where youth participation was consistent and trust could be built over time. Expansion into general recreation rooms saw low engagement, confirming youth preference for familiar, youth-specific environments. Court support filled an important gap for justice-involved youth, though post-court engagement remained low, with only two youth subsequently accessing municipal youth centres. Key lessons include the critical importance of staffing continuity, maintaining consistent schedules even with low attendance, and prioritizing relationship-based supports over broad, location-based outreach.

Action Area Three: Centre of Responsibility for Community Safety

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. Immediately following Regional Council's approval of the current Public Safety Strategy, a 'backbone' Community Safety Business Unit was established, responsible for building multi-sectoral relationships, providing, leadership, support, and expert advice across the ecosystem and beyond, and nurturing a collaborative, community-centred approach to safety. In 2025, the Office for the Commissioner of Public Safety was established to strengthen coordination across the community safety ecosystem, including alignment with Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services, RCMP and HRP. Community Safety is also now a pillar at the Board of Police Commissioners, reporting as a Business Unit alongside RCMP and HRP.

With this backbone in place, designing, implementing, and adapting the municipality's Public Safety Strategy is achieved through ongoing collaboration with communities, institutions, agencies, and organizations. Safety priorities are thus created and validated with insight and foresight from across sectors and grounded in shared processes, plans, and policies. The summary below highlights activities outside of core program delivery that illustrate how the Strategy is implemented through relationships with the broader community safety ecosystem:

- Strengthening cross-sector learning and knowledge-mobilization efforts through **62 new or renewed partnerships**, including **13** in research/education, **six** in health and social services, **31** in the community/non-profit sector, **four** Business Improvement Districts, and **eight** intergovernmental/public sector bodies.
- Events and engagement with local, regional and national community safety actors also expanded through major initiatives such as hosting the [Canadian Centre for Safer Communities' National](#)



Figure 9: Youth PVE panel at the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities National Conference in Halifax 2025

[conference](#) that convened **155 participants** including a delegation of youth for three days of learning and knowledge mobilization (see figure 10).

- Capacity building involved delivering **three youth events**; **three workshops** on preventing hate and violent, and facilitation of **six focused community engagements** involving **28 participants** on senior safety and equitable service delivery.

Strategic Alignment with Mass Casualty Commission Recommendations

In 2023, the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) released its final report, *Turning the Tide Together*. Community Safety contributed to the Commission's work through interviews and participation in Roundtables. Given the strong alignment between many of HRM's Public Safety Strategy (PSS) actions and the MCC's recommendations, members of the Community Safety team have been actively involved in developing implementation pathways—either by advancing existing PSS actions or collaborating with the Province of Nova Scotia and other key partners:

- **C.8 – Proactive Pre-Critical Incident Wellness Planning:**All training offerings within the Community Safety Training Program support this recommendation by strengthening individual and organizational preparedness, resilience, and early intervention capacity.
- **V.14 – Mobilizing a Society-Wide Response:**Community Safety participates on the Facilitation Team for the Province's Whole-of-Society Bystander Intervention Response. HRM's Bystander Intervention Training focuses on equipping municipal staff to recognize harassment in public spaces and safely support affected individuals. The training is expected to launch in summer 2026.
- **Gender-Based Violence, Extremist Ideologies, and Mass Harm:**Capacity-building and training initiatives related to Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), hate, and social polarization reinforce the documented connections between gender-based violence, misogyny, ideological influences, and the risk factors that precede many mass casualty events—as highlighted throughout the MCC report.

- **V.9 – Creating Safe Spaces to Report Violence:** The MCC report speaks to the unique position frontline social services staff play in initiating difficult conversations, recognizing early signs of abuse and supporting people to access services.

The CARE program was developed with the recognition that intake and response staff may encounter people experiencing crisis who are also experiencing Gender-based, intimate partner or domestic violence. CARE staff receive training on these issues and providing a safe and appropriate pathway for people to seek further support. Gender-based violence service providers and individuals with lived and living experience shaped the program's design and continue to guide adaptations to the CARE program.

Advancing Additional MCC Recommendations: Through training, data generation and dissemination, expert advice, and Community Safety Assessments, the SCSPS advances several additional MCC recommendations, including:

- **C.17 – Promoting Bystander Intervention as a Daily Practice**
- **V.7 – Countering Victim Blaming and Hyper-Responsibilization of Women Survivors**
- **V.15 – Women-Centered Strategies and Actions**
- **V.16 – Putting Women's Safety First**
- **C.32 – Promoting and Supporting Healthy Masculinities**

Strategy Implementation Challenges and Mitigations

As noted above, all but one Strategy action is either complete or in progress. Funding for the Stabilization Centre (Action 2.3) was removed from the Community Safety budget, due to having exhausted options for leased space to operate the facility. Current and anticipated implementation challenges and risks include limited capacity within the community service provider sector; difficulties filling key positions required to advance actions such as Indigenous safety plans; internal funding constraints that may affect the scalability of ongoing initiatives; and sustainability concerns related to the expiration of the multi-year Public Safety Canada Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) on March 31, 2026. For example, community-based programs such as POSSE and the African Nova Scotian Justice Navigator can no longer be supported through the BSCF; however, staff have worked with service providers to adapt programs where possible.

Many initiatives initially developed through the BSCF have now been integrated into core Community Safety programming and services, including the Community Safety Training Program, enhanced research, engagement and development capacity, CHART, and the CCRP. Sustainability planning under the BSCF has also strengthened data collection, monitoring, and reporting tools, ensuring that service delivery continues to be guided by evidence-based practices that contribute to safer communities. Collectively, the BSCF's investment has positioned the Strategy's achievements to sustain their impact well beyond the end of the grant cycle.

The Strategy: Looking ahead to Strategy Renewal

Next fiscal year, Strategy Leads will continue advancing the implementation of PSS actions. Key priorities include developing and implementing plans to mitigate the risks identified above, refining the monitoring and evaluation framework and creating a corresponding dashboard, launching the Equity-Based Capital Planning Prioritization Framework, expanding training offerings, and further building capacity to prevent hate, social polarization, and violent extremism. Work has also begun on the upcoming refresh of the Public Safety Strategy, with emerging focus areas informed by research and engagement related to Senior and Youth Safety, Preventing Violent Extremism, and Gender-Based Violence.

New project funding from Public Safety Canada will enable Community Safety to implement a Community Healing Project focused on African Nova Scotian Youth, while participation in Project UPSTREAM and the Prevention Academy will continue into the next fiscal year. Achievements from the current strategy, along with insights from ongoing research, engagement, and the development of proposed action areas, will be integrated into the renewed Public Safety Strategy, expected to be presented to Regional Council near the end of 2026.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this information report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communities have been engaged throughout design and implementation of the Public Safety Strategy

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 Strategy Implementation Monitoring and Reporting Tool:Activities and Outcomes for each Public Safety Strategy Action
- Attachment B Independent Evaluation Infographic: Trauma Informed Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Training
- Attachment C Preventing Violent Extremism: Workshop overview and key term
- Attachment D Senior Safety Research and Engagement Update
- Attachment E: Equity Based Policy Framework Update

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

The Public Safety Strategy's Theory of Change Monitoring and Evaluation Framework Report 2025

In upstream violence prevention work, one of the greatest challenges practitioners face is *'how do we measure something that we've prevented from happening?'* This is especially challenging when the outcomes we expect to see are not immediately realized.

The best approach to understanding our impact is to develop strategy and programs with a Theory of Change. A Theory of Change can help us visualize what should happen if certain activities occur and certain conditions are met. We use it to identify known risk and protective factors and build strategy, programs, and interventions around these to address those factors. The following report illustrates program and intervention activities that took place over 2025 and illustrates how they relate to their longer-term outcomes. The report also includes an update on the milestone progress made in the overall implementation of each component of each action outlined in the strategy.

We developed this report to:

Communicate

Share progress with Regional Council, community partners and the public so everyone knows what is happening and why



Clarify

check activities against milestone markers and desired outcomes to stay on course



Continuously Improve

Document what has happened to understand lessons learned and refine our approach



Our Framework tracks progress on each strategic priority to communicate our impacts on community safety



Outcomes

The change we aim to make over time



Activity

Activity tracking under each action/program informed by a Theory of Change or Logic Model



Program level measures

Outputs from activities that advance outcomes; Program-specific evaluations / needs assessments



Population level measures

Indicators on broader social change; Monitoring trends to adapt to changing contexts

Action 1.1 Enhance Community Mobilization Teams

Community Mobilization Teams (CMT) are resident-led initiatives, coordinated by HRM to support resource access and navigation to prevent, prepare and respond to violent or harmful incidents in their communities. The strategic focus has been on program expansion to Spryfield and service enhancements for trauma awareness and recovery.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

CMTs have the skills they need to support community members

- **100%** agreed that the training had given them new skills to support their community
- **100%** agreed that training provided them with resources to support individual community members
- **75%** agreed that they learned about new resources or supports available that would help their community
- **100%** agreed they apply skills and/or information in their CMT role

Community members engage CMTs to support incident response

- **Eight** community events held in collaboration with **22** community organizations and engaged with **> 1500** attendees engaged
- **Six** critical response activations with **96** participants and **seven** post-event activations

Community members understand trauma and its impacts on resilience

- **12** healing circles held in the Preston Township with **>154** participants;
- **Two** Mental Health workshops and **one** Mental Health First Aid training session

Outcomes

1

A coordinated, community-determined, and trauma-informed response to violence or harm

2

Communities have equitable access to supports and services to heal

3

Communities are resilient in the wake of violence or harm

Action 1.2 Enhance Safe City and Safe Public Spaces program

HRM's Safe City and Safe Public Spaces Program focuses on making municipal public spaces safer for women, girls, and gender-diverse residents. Strategic service enhancements include refining the Public Space participatory assessment tool (Community Safety Assessment); building better ways to capture, monitor, and report on program activities; and advancing recommendations in the Mass Casualty Commission and Fatality Inquiry related to Gender-Based Violence.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Women and gender diverse residents have meaningful opportunities to share and assess their experiences to contribute to solutions for safer public spaces.

- **Two new internal Community Safety Assessment (CSA) tools** developed to improve baseline measures, data collection, and user experience.
- **Four CSAs** with **78** participants: **two** assessments in North End Halifax and **two** in Dartmouth.

Residents have greater access to resources on gender and safety in public spaces.

- Co-developed **five Neighbours, Friends & Families Community Workshops** with Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, with **60** total participants.
- Contributed funding to **four** culturally responsive spaces for conversation and learning about gender-based violence for Black and African Nova Scotian community members with the Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers, with **65** total participants.

HRM employees are better equipped and motivated to integrate Safe City principles and community-informed considerations into municipal programs, services, and spaces to improve safety for women and gender-diverse residents.

- Advised **eight** municipal projects, plans, strategies and working groups across Transit, Planning & Development, Diversity & Inclusion, and Community Safety.
- Collaborated with **two** external networks, committees, and working groups to advance the goals and objectives of the Safe City & Safe Public Spaces Program.

Outcomes

1

Public spaces are safe and inclusive with fewer incidents of sexual and gender-based violence

2

HRM considers and plans for the safe inclusion of women and gender diverse people in service design

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 also includes providing strategic advice and guidance to promote decolonizing approaches to Indigenous community safety across the municipality.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

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

- **One** engagement session with **six Indigenous Seniors and Elders** on Senior Safety in HRM
- **One percent** of respondents in each of the Senior Safety Surveys identified as Indigenous and Indigenous serving organizations
- **Four** Community Safety events with Indigenous-led protocols implemented (**one** at the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities National Conference; **Two** community organizations workshop and **one** youth workshop)

Strengthened partnerships between HRM and Indigenous organizations

- **Two** Community Safety BU representatives in **Refix Community Advisory**, a program of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Funding (\$42,000) from the Federal Building Safer Communities Fund allocated to **POSSE**, a program of the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre to support programming and outreach at HRM facilities (Bridge Terminal and Alderney Library)

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

- **Two learners enrolled** in Fundamentals of First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP)
- **Two learners completed** Indigenous Blanket Exercise

Outcomes

- 1** Increased feelings of safety among Indigenous residents
- 2** Reduced incidents of victimization of Indigenous residents
- 3** Measurable progress implementing TRC calls to action and MMIWG calls for justice

Action 1.4 Establish Public Safety Training Capacity

Expanding public safety training capacity is cultivating a broader culture shift within the municipality by building alternatives to enforcement: equipping employees and volunteers to meet people where they are at; focusing on their immediate needs and helping them meet those needs.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Training is available to HRM employees, partners, and volunteers

- **450** staff, partners and volunteers trained through **26 sessions (194 training hours)**
- **14** Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training sessions delivered, including **9** team-specific sessions and **4** corporate sessions
- **10** Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) sessions delivered
- **2** Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) sessions delivered
- **4-week** training curriculum with **17 interconnected trainings** developed and implemented for the CARE Team

Training graduates feel better equipped to prevent, de-escalate, and respond to conflict and safety incidents

- **84%** agreed that the topics covered in NCI training were highly relevant to their job
- **70%** of six-month survey respondents use NCI strategies at least monthly
- **100%** of participants agree that ASIST training has practical use in their work life

Training graduates understand and recall training content

- **98%** scored above 80% on six-month knowledge check for NCI

Training graduates feel better able to care for themselves during conflicts and safety incidents

- **78%** believe that NCI training has improved their confidence in dealing with potential crisis or conflict situations at work

Outcomes

1

Reduced police involvement in non-criminal safety incidents in HRM facilities

2

Shift toward more trauma-informed community safety approaches

3

Improvements in employee wellbeing

Action 1.5 Enhance Research and Advisory Capacity

Providing research evidence, advice, and critical community insights to support business units in promoting public safety for their people, places and processes, and attracting external investment in HRM community safety programs through partnerships, funding opportunities, and expertise.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

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

- Contributed to the achievement of **80%** of the Public Safety Strategy milestones through service design development; research, engagement and evaluation including research, development and service design of HRM's new CARE team.
- Refinement of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Public Safety Strategy.

Public Safety projects, programs, and processes at HRM align with research and learning in the community safety ecosystem

- Selected as a pilot site for **two** national Public Safety Canada funded projects on preventing hate, social polarization, and violent extremism.
- Developed an evaluation plan for CARE; secured Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research to partner on CARE pilot evaluation; received CARE's first interim evaluation report.
- **38** learning partnerships developed, fostered and/or maintained through Research and Development
- Co-developed, partnered and hosted the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities National Conference, which brought **150** delegates from across Canada and the US.
- Invited to deliver **six** presentations and panel discussions (local-national) to promote HRM's leadership in community-centred approaches to safety and wellbeing.
- **Two** HRM representatives funded for Canadian delegation for Strong Cities Network 6th Global Summit on Preventing Violent Extremism.
- Participated in the International Advisory Group for National Canadian Urban Safety Monitoring Tool.
- Seniors Safety Strategy further refined through engagement with Indigenous and Black Elders and Seniors.

Outcomes

1

Public Safety projects, programs and processes are informed by best practices, research evidence, and community insights

2

Public safety projects, programs and processes are aligned with community priorities

3

Public Safety projects attract external funding through direct and indirect contributions

Action 1.6 Promote investment in municipal infrastructure that supports community safety

A comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to community-led public safety recognizes the value 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, or where people experiencing homelessness can access needed supports, or by offering programs and services and where community groups can organize and collaborate.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Develop an equity-based prioritization framework for capital infrastructure planning, specifically related to social infrastructure

- Established multi-disciplinary working group comprised of **seven** Business Units to collaborate on developing the **Equity-Based Policy Framework (EBPF)** that will guide Capital Investment planning.
- Drafted a literature review and jurisdictional scan to develop the evidence-base for infrastructure prioritization equity framework
- Build a model for conducting an **Access Analysis** between HRM facilities and Active Transit and Transit networks.
- Developed a **community engagement strategy** to inform the development of the EBPF
- Conducted **four** focus groups and created **one** Community Liaison Group for generating community insight

Outcomes

1

Safer and more inclusive spaces are available in communities that will benefit most

2

Access to municipal facilities is equitable

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

Halifax Regional Municipality has advanced the implementation of the Crisis Assistance and Response (CARE) service, launching in October 2025. The service was developed to provide a community-based alternative to police response for non-emergencies in HRM.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Evidence and community-informed implementation of a functioning community crisis response service

- Service design was built upon insights from **20+** community-based organizations prior to service launch to review the proposed CARE model.
- Completed **four** table-top exercises with allied emergency services (police and EMS) and service delivery partners
- Formalized partnerships with **two community service providers** to deliver CARE.
- Successfully launched CARE in Dartmouth, Woodlawn, and Cole Harbour through a phased implementation approach, enabling safe start-up and operational learning.
- Continuous collaboration through post-launch engagement with service providers to strengthen shared understanding of service scope, access pathways, and early service trends, while providing a structured opportunity to gather feedback to support continuous learning.

CSBU establishes the foundational systems, partnerships, and governance needed to evaluate impact and inform decisions

- Implemented a structured governance and service coordination framework to support accountability, operational oversight, and continuous learning across CARE partners, including executive, operational, and learning-focused committees.
- Established baseline operational data collection and reporting processes to support evaluation of service utilization, responsiveness, and system interaction.
- Built a foundation for future police integration in the next phase by identifying operational considerations, decision points, and system interfaces to be addressed.
- Developed and implemented an evaluation plan in partnership with Dalhousie’s Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research.

Outcomes

- 1** Reduce reliance on law enforcement or emergency services in crisis situations
- 2** Improve safety outcomes for individuals in crisis
- 3** Increase community trust and safety

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.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Relationships, knowledge, and community insight inform the creation of a multi-sectoral Drug and Alcohol Policy working group tasked with developing a drug and alcohol strategy

- Member of Advisory for ReFix, HRM's Supervised Consumption Site, and active participation in quarterly meetings with service providers and people with lived and living experience.
- Drafted a Terms of Reference to guide the establishment of a working group, timelines, and implementation plan.

Outcomes

1

Substance use related harms at individual and community levels are reduced

2

HRM's approach to addressing substance use harms is informed by those most impacted

3

HRM's approach to substance use related harms is coordinated with allied sectors and services

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 not 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 to take pressure off emergency response services such as police, fire, and EHS.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

HRM adapts the Stabilization Centre model to respond to implementation constraints while maintaining alignment with community safety objectives

- Assessed feasibility of the original centralized Stabilization Centre model and identified significant barriers related to securing a compliant physical space, including fire prevention requirements.
- Developed a revised, decentralized service model that would distribute stabilization beds across multiple community-based providers, with the intent of improving feasibility, flexibility, and scalability while maintaining the core objective of providing an alternative to police custody for intoxicated individuals.
- Engaged the Office of Addictions and Mental Health (OAMH) to share and explore the revised decentralized model, supporting continued provincial collaboration and alignment on service direction.

HRM advances planning, funding readiness, and system design despite delays in physical implementation

- Submitted a funding proposal to Health Canada's Emergency Treatment Fund (ETF) 2025 to support implementation of stabilization services, positioning HRM to advance the model once funding and space constraints are resolved.

Outcomes

1

Clients, partners allied service providers see value in the service

2

Reduction in volume of repeat clients in prisoner care facility for public intoxication

3

Clients are accessing stabilization centre services (housing referrals, health care, addiction support, etc)

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.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Increased after hours outreach for people experiencing homelessness through establishment of a mobile team

- After Hours Individualized Mobile Engagement Team (AIM) launched in Feb 2025
- **Two** vehicles with **two** staff operating 4pm-12am Monday to Friday and on weekends

Consistent outreach to designated and non-designated encampments and support to unhoused residents with services including: sheltering supplies, food, referrals, conflict resolution, transportation, and triage

- **1,524** Encampment visits (Designated and Non-designated)
- **71** Transportation supports
- **421** Clothing requests delivered
- **2,068** Meals provided

Outcomes

1 Reduce reliance on enforcement approaches to homelessness

2 Increase access and navigation pathways to resources for people experiencing homelessness

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

The municipality is advancing a trauma-informed, community-centred approach to youth safety by strengthening coordination, prevention, and early intervention for youth experiencing or at risk of violence, exploitation, and victimization. Through **CHART** (Child, Youth and Family Response Table) and complementary engagement mechanisms, HRM is improving system responsiveness, strengthening service navigation, and addressing underlying trauma-related risk factors contributing to youth violence and exploitation.

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Child Youth and Family Response Table (CHART) established and maintained as a standing, multi-sector coordination table, supporting non-enforcement, trauma, and youth-centred approaches to safety:

- **10** CHART sessions convened with a cumulative total of **310** participants.
- Participation from **15** youth-serving organizations, including YWCA, SchoolsPlus, Restorative Justice, Boys & Girls Club, Phoenix Youth, POSSE, HRCE, Community Justice Society, Department of Justice, Parks & Recreation, Chebucto Connections, and others.

CHART strengthens early intervention pathways, cross-sector collaboration, and system capacity:

- **40** complex youth cases reviewed, with multi-agency plans developed in real time to address overlapping risks related to trauma, violence, grooming and sexual exploitation, housing instability, and habitual runaway patterns.

CHART creates capacity for trauma-informed cultures and practice through knowledge mobilization

- **Four** educational sessions on emerging risks for youth (Cyberbullying, Online Grooming and Digital Exploitation, Behavioural and Digital Threat Assessment, Toxic Masculinity and Gender-Based Violence Prevention).

Outcomes

1

Increased protective factors through earlier identification and coordinated intervention

2

Strengthened coordination across youth-serving systems

3

Reduced long-term impacts of trauma through sustained, system-level collaboration

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

The municipality is advancing a trauma-informed, community-centred approach to youth safety by strengthening coordination, prevention, and early intervention for youth experiencing or at risk of violence, exploitation, and victimization. **MYST** (Mobile Youth Support Team) and **SNAP** (Stop Now and Plan) were piloted with the federal Building Safer Communities Fund. MYST (consisting of Youth Outreach worker and Youth Counsellor) was piloted to understand how best to supports youth seeking advice or assistance in navigating challenges within their day to day lives with a focus on reducing the risk of gun and gang violence within our communities for youth aged 12-24. SNAP supported children aged 6–11 with disruptive behaviours by working with their families, schools, and communities to prevent future conflict with the law. It was piloted to see if it could help reduce Youth Advocate Program (YAP) waitlist through earlier interventions

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

Youth have supports available to them in HRM facilities to help navigate systems and access supports

- **Youth Outreach Worker (YOW): 44 youth** accessed services (April–November. NOTE: Service ended early due to staff departure in November); Approx. **2–3 youth interactions per night** at youth centres (less uptake in summer months).

Youth with lower protective factors are supported in navigating the criminal justice system and accessing mental health supports

- **Youth Counsellor: 22 youth** supported at Provincial Court; **17 youth** accessed drop-in counselling supports (April–May 2025 - Service ended in June due to staff departure)

Children and their families have access to evidence-based approaches to managing and reducing challenging behaviours (SNAP)

- Served **6 families** (6 boys + 6 parents) from priority (YAP communities).
- Successfully delivered a full SNAP cohort targeted at reducing the Youth Advocate Program waitlist.
- Early results pending; long-term tracking underway.

Outcomes

1

Increased protective factors through earlier identification and coordinated intervention

2

Strengthened coordination across youth-serving systems

3

Reduced long-term impacts of trauma through sustained, system-level collaboration

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 the Community Safety Business Unit which serves as the backbone office for implementing a community-centred approach to safety across the municipality.

complete

This action was completed in 2024-2025 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.

complete

This action was completed in 2024-2025 with the creation of the Community Safety Business unit and initiation of the Public Safety Commission structure

- Community Safety Business Unit now comprises Emergency Management, Community Standards, Research and Development, Programs and Partnerships, Housing and Homelessness, Food Security.

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

Designing, implementing, and adapting the municipality's Public Safety Strategy is achieved through ongoing collaboration with communities, institutions, agencies, and organizations. Safety priorities are thus created and validated with insight and foresight from across sectors and grounded in shared processes, plans, and policies. The summary below highlights activities outside of core program delivery that illustrate how the Strategy is implemented through relationships with the broader community safety ecosystem

Year Three Activity Reporting and Program Measures

New and renewed learning and knowledge mobilization partnerships/collaborations across sectors

- **13** from **Research, Education and Training**: organizations and institutions focused on applied research, evaluation and training.
- **Six** from **Health and Social Services**: Organizations delivering or supporting health promotion, mental health, social care, and public health functions.
- **31** from **Community-based and Not For Profit** sector: Local agencies and service providers working directly with communities.
- **Four** from **Business Improvement Districts**: organizations focused on economic development and business community support.
- **Eight** from **Intergovernmental and Public Sector**: Municipal, provincial, federal, national and International agencies and departments involved in policy, funding, knowledge transfer and system coordination.

New and renewed learning and knowledge mobilization partnerships/collaborations with residents

- **Hosted One national Conference: Canadian Centre for Safer Communities** that brought **150** participants from government, community, non-profit organizations to build capacity in violence prevention, connect, build relationships, and share best practices.
- **Seven events and engagements** with youth, representing a total of **68** participants on topics of preventing violent extremism, hate, and social polarization.
- **Two capacity building workshops** on Preventing Hate and Violent Extremism with **105 participants**
- **Six** focused engagements with special populations and/or priority communities representing a total of **28** participants on topics of senior safety and equitable service delivery.

Outcomes

1

Strategy implementation is relational and multisectoral, embedded across the community safety ecosystem

2

Community insights and lived experiences are reflected in Strategy design, implementation and program evaluations

Public Safety Strategy Milestone progress – 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 2025, staff are pleased to report that work under all milestones is underway and 80% of milestones 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	Complete
		Expansion to Spryfield	Complete
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, data collection and reporting (e.g., Community 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 municipal MMIWG calls for Justice and TRC recommendations	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 – 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	Complete
		Pilot started and evaluation plan created	Complete
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 co-develop 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	In Progress
		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	Complete
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	Complete
		Youth Services Review completed	Complete

Public Safety Strategy Milestone progress – 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	New Business Unit created	Complete
		Executive Director hired	Complete
		New reporting and staffing structure established	Complete
3.2 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	New community advisory structures established	Complete
3.3 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	Existing municipal programs and services moved to the new CoR	Complete

NCI Training: Expanding How We Respond to Crisis Across HRM

Adapted from the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training in Halifax Regional Municipality: Final evaluation report (July 2025) prepared by Dalhousie University's Clairmont Centre for Community Safety Research

About the training

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training helps municipal employees recognize and respond to crisis situations using trauma-informed strategies. It was implemented as part of the municipality's Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026 to broaden the spectrum of crisis response. The training builds confidence, promotes empathy and supports safer interactions with residents and co-workers. Evaluation shows strong uptake, lasting relevance and clear benefits across the municipality.



Breadth of training delivery

- **448 participants** trained across 39 sessions (September 2023–May 2025)
 - **289** in team-based sessions
 - **159** in corporate sessions
- Participants from over **18** municipal business units, divisions or teams, plus volunteers and community organizations
- Training was prioritized for employees, community organizations and volunteers who directly interact with residents.



Depth of evaluation

346 post-training surveys	51 six-month follow-up surveys
32 interviews	9 training session observations
3 focus groups	



Staff who use [nonviolent crisis intervention] skills more frequently also report higher confidence, lower stress, and stronger teamwork.

Impact highlights

89%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed with all positive indicators post-training (of the skills and techniques learned, training delivery and facilitation)

98%

scored above 80% on six-month knowledge check

78%

reported increased confidence

55%

reported reduced stress and improved public wellbeing

84%

said training was highly relevant to their role

70%

of six-month survey respondents use NCI strategies at least monthly

22% weekly **16%** daily



How NCI Is Making a Difference

- Strong praise for facilitators and learning environment
- Participants retained core principles like de-escalation and empathetic listening
- Team-based sessions fostered stronger engagement, peer learning, and workplace integration
- Corporate sessions still showed high value and uptake

“Such a great training that made me know how to treat people in distress”

“This training really tied a lot of pieces together... made me feel more confident in what I know and how to apply it”





PREV

Canadian Practitioners Network for
the Prevention of Extremist Violence

Réseau des Praticien·ne·s Canadien·ne·s
pour la Prévention de l'Extrémisme Violent



VPIIP

Capacity Development On PVE

Halifax | March 12–13, 2026

This workshop was made possible by our partner organizations



Canadian Centre for
Safer Communities

HALIFAX

 **NSCSW** | NOVA SCOTIA
COLLEGE OF
SOCIAL WORKERS



PREV



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



VPIP

Organizations in the co-design workshop



HALIFAX





Design process

- This module was co-designed by 23 practitioners and professional organizations who joined forces to create a learning experience tailored to the specific needs of the local context.
- By pooling diverse expertise, we embody the principles of multisectoral collaboration.
- The module serves as a living example of how different sectors can work together effectively to respond to the multifaceted dynamics of prevention and response work.

The facilitators team:

- **Ahmed Jama** (ETA Ontario)
- **Ciara Middlebrook** (Organization for the Prevention of Violence - Evolve Program),
- **Gabriela Zarama** & **Hana Hadzifejzovic** (Project Reset at John Howard Society of Ottawa),
- **Amy Siciliano**, (HRM)
- **Elliot Simpson** (Moonshot),
- **Saed Abu-Haltam**,
- **Tyler Colbourne**, (NSCSW)
- **Ghayda Hassan & Zeina Ismail-Allouche** (CPN-PREV).



NOVA SCOTIA
COLLEGE OF
SOCIAL WORKERS

NSCSW exists to serve and protect Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work.

Primary responsibilities:

- oversee the social work profession,
- public safety
- title protection & registration
- primary & secondary assessments of competence; ongoing competence
- complaints & compliance
- advocacy & systems change

Snapshot:

- 3000+ social workers in NS;
- largest population of mental health professionals in NS
- NSCSW has a team of seven: four social workers, three administrative staff
- Offer ethical consults to employers and social workers
- 10 years as a self-regulated profession

Self-regulation — Government Regulation



organization for the prevention of violence

Dedicated to preventing & countering targeted violence: Violence motivated by ideologies, conspiracy theories, hate and grievances; *not personal gain*.

Psycho-social services: Provide relationship-based, trauma-informed, strength-based services through the **Evolve Program**

- Team of social workers, psychologists, religious scholar (Imam), and mentors with lived experience (formerly involved in extremism)
- Attend to psycho-social needs; Reduce risk factors, increase protective factors
- Disengagement from hate content and violent behaviours
- Service is free, confidential, and individualized

Research: Publish evidence-driven and practitioner-oriented research

Training & Awareness

Project ReSet



- a multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention program designed to support individuals and families who are at risk of involvement, or already involved, in targeted violence influenced by hate, bias, or extremist ideology
- provides high-intensity, individualized, case management and wrap around supports to increase protective factors and directly target both vulnerability and risk factors
- 1 of 7 CVE programs within Canada
- Team consists of a Program Coordinator & 2 Team Lead, 4 caseworkers



Moonshot is a social impact business working to end online harms, applying evidence, ethics and human rights. We work with global NGOs, governments, and tech companies to provide insight into emerging online threats and inform strategic responses.

Estimated Time of Arrival (**ETA**) is a rapid access service from Yorktown that supports youth, young adults and adults in Toronto, the GTA and the greater regions of Ontario to reconnect with their communities in a pro-social and positive way and steer away from ideological based violence

Using an anti-oppressive framework, ETA uses evidence-based mental and social health interventions to help individuals build resilience against violent extremism

ETA provides flexible approaches and interventions to working with individuals, being aware of the individuals needs



Workshop's learning objectives



Capacity development training workshop

Develop understanding of self and positionality

Explore fundamentals of violent extremism and prevention

Apply dignity and strength in the case management cycle

Build capacity to connect and collaborate

Ensure safety and well-being for themselves and the service participants



PVE key definitions



Key PVE definitions

Hate crime

Social polarization

**Violent extremism
(VE)**

**Preventing Violent
Extremism (VE)**

**Violent
Radicalization**

**Radicalization to
Violence**



Key PVE definitions

Hate crime is a criminal offence motivated, entirely or in part, by hostility or hate towards a person's race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factors. Hate crime is linked to power mechanisms that seek to preserve unjust social structures in which some groups or individuals remain marginalized (RCMP, 2024).

Social polarization is a process where escalating intergroup conflict, driven by perceived threats to identity, economic security, or core values, leads to a breakdown of moderate discourse and a hardening of opposing viewpoints. Groups abandon compromise and embrace rigid, uncompromising stances, demanding drastic social change and often resorting to confrontational tactics to achieve their goals.

Violent extremism (VE) involves the use or support of violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals (UNODC, 2018). This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated violence. It is worth noting that violent extremism is a broader and more complex phenomenon than terrorism alone, and no single universally agreed definition exists in international law (UN Human Rights Office).



Key PVE definitions

Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) is a comprehensive approach that encompasses primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention efforts aimed at preventing extremist violence. These prevention efforts often occur on a community level and aim at reducing factors like social isolation, discrimination, or inequality that might drive individuals towards extremism.

Disengagement, in the context of tertiary PVE programs, refers to the process of distancing individuals from extremist violence, extremist groups and ideologies, aiming to facilitate their reintegration into society.

Deradicalization is a cognitive shift in which a radicalized individual abandons extremist beliefs and violence.

Violent radicalization (VR) is a non-linear process by which an individual, a group, or a State undergoes behavioural, social, economic, psychological/systemic, and/or ideological transformations that lead them to delegitimize the status-quo, and which necessarily includes a plan to resort to, support, or facilitate the use of violence to bring about changes in society.

Canadian Government definitions of Violent Extremism



An umbrella term – The act of using violence to support or advance extreme beliefs



Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE)

Mix of overlapping
ideologies

Politically Motivated Violent Extremism (PMVE)

Violence intended to
influence government
systems

Religiously Motivated Violent Extremism (RMVE)

Violence justified by
religious doctrine

Single Issue Violent Extremism (SIVE)

Violence tied to a single
non-political, non-
religious cause

Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE)

Violence driven by
extreme anti-society,
apocalyptic beliefs

HRM's Seniors' Safety Research

Purpose

To outline Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM) recent research on Seniors Safety, done in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC).

Background

HRM has programs and services that relate to seniors' safety and well-being, including home safety education, transit supports, snow removal assistance, affordability programs, emergency response initiatives, community grants, and the Seniors Recreation Services Plan which is currently under development. While most of these supports were not designed as a coordinated system for older adults, they contribute to conditions that influence safety and well-being across the region.

Municipalities across Canada are increasingly using coordinated frameworks to address aging, mobility, isolation, access to services, and protection from abuse and crime. Many municipalities draw on the WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework. Others embed seniors' priorities into community safety and well-being plans or develop stand-alone seniors' strategies.

With funding from Province of Nova Scotia and collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities, the HRM sought to define, align and strengthen how the municipality can promote senior safety across business units. The research process involved surveys of both seniors and service providers within the HRM, eight focus groups across diverse communities, and a literature review and jurisdictional scan to explore what other bodies and municipalities are doing with regards with Seniors' Safety.

Findings from this report will be used to integrate Senior Safety as a cross-cutting focus within the renewed Public Safety Strategy.

Research Highlights and Identified Challenges for Seniors in the HRM:

- This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, including:
 - A survey of seniors (81 respondents)
- A survey of service providers (15 respondents)
- Eight focus groups with diverse communities including: 2SLGBTQ+, newcomer and multicultural communities, women in rural communities, men in rural communities, urban seniors, African Nova Scotian communities, and Indigenous seniors (total of 61 participants across all focus groups)
 - A literature review and jurisdictional scan
- Strengths within the HRM:
 - Survey respondents and focus group participants listed social and recreational programming as an established strength within the HRM, highlighting the value of recreation centres, public libraries, hobbies and exercise groups, community halls and drop-in programs.
 - In rural areas, close-knit community and informal support networks were also listed as a strength, even in the face of service limitations.

- Another strength identified was identity-affirming programming and spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ and newcomer seniors.
- Five core challenges were identified for seniors in the HRM:
 - Social Isolation & Loneliness
 - Falls
 - Elder Abuse
 - Experiences of Crime
 - Inequities in Access to Services and Supports
- While each challenge identified presents distinct risks, it is important to note that they are deeply interconnected. The same underlying factors of disconnection, inequitable access, and systemic barriers appear across the core challenges, reinforcing one another and compounding vulnerability over time. At the same time, due to the connected nature, progress addressing one area is likely to result in positive change within another.

Alignment with Strategic Goals:

In HRM, several existing strategies, including the [Public Safety Strategy 2023-2026](#) and the [Seniors Recreation Services Plan](#) (under development), address elements that affect the well-being of older adults. Seniors' services and supports remain distributed across departments and programs. As the HRM seeks to renew the Public Safety Strategy, it will be important to consider the distributed supports that impact the safety and well-being of seniors in the region.

Next Steps:

To address challenges identified through the research, the following recommendations were identified in the research report:

1. Build inclusive and accessible community infrastructure
2. Strengthen communication, information, and digital inclusion
3. Advance equity and address structural determinants of safety
4. Invest in prevention and community-based safety supports
5. Strengthen data, evaluation, and accountability for monitoring the impact of Seniors-focused programming across all business units

While presented as distinct areas of focus, these recommendations are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, meaning that progress in one area will strengthen outcomes in others.

Findings from this report will be used to integrate Senior Safety as a cross-cutting focus within the renewed Public Safety Strategy.

Conclusion:

The findings and directions outlined within the Seniors' Safety Report provide a foundation for collective action across sectors, grounded in the voices of older adults and those who support them. Ongoing reflection, adaptation, and collaboration will be essential to ensuring that this framework remains responsive, relevant, and rooted in the lived realities of seniors across the HRM.

Equity Based Policy Framework Project UPDATE

Objective: to provide an accessible, objective, and community-informed framework to integrate geographically based equity considerations into HRM's capital planning processes.

The **Equity-Based Policy Framework** focuses on **Distributional** and **Structural Equity**. Its purpose is to better understand how HRM's social infrastructure assets (such as transit, active transportation (AT), parks, recreation centres, and libraries) are distributed and accessed across the municipality in relation to community socioeconomic conditions. The Framework helps identify where social infrastructure does not align with a community's social and material needs, highlighting existing resource inequities at the community level.

The Framework is guided by the following questions:

1- What are the geographic differences in socio-economic conditions across communities in HRM?

Why this matters: Communities with higher socio-economic vulnerability benefit most from social infrastructure such as libraries, recreation centres, parks, and playgrounds. These spaces support protective factors that strengthen individuals, families, and communities. However, vulnerable communities often face greater barriers to accessing these resources. A more equitable approach to resource allocation may therefore prioritize these areas for future investment and improvements.

2- How does public and active transportation infrastructure impact access to HRM's other social infrastructure such as libraries, recreation centres, parks and playgrounds?

Why this matters: Transportation infrastructure significantly affects residents' ability to reach community resources. This is especially true for socio-economically vulnerable populations who rely more heavily on public transit and active transportation options. An equitable approach to program and service planning may prioritize transportation improvements in areas where access is currently low and needs are high.

3- What are residents' perceptions and experiences of social infrastructure in socio-economically vulnerable communities?

Why this matters: Residents' lived experiences may reveal strengths, challenges, and patterns not visible through spatial analysis alone. Their insights help surface emergent issues, validate analytical findings, and strengthen the Framework's ability to meaningfully address inequities.