



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 16, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Community Safety and Well-Being Annual Report 2024 (HSC24015) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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COUNCIL DIRECTION N/A

INFORMATION

In June 2021, Council unanimously approved Hamilton’s first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (HSC19032(a)). Co-chaired by the City and Hamilton Police Services, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is led by a system leadership table comprised of partners from the health, social service, and public safety sectors. The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is provincially legislated for municipalities and aims to ensure residents feel safe, have a sense of belonging and can meet their needs for education, healthcare, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression. The purpose of this information report is to provide an annual update to Council as the community advances the goals and priorities of the plan.

Based on extensive community consultation, in Hamilton, priorities of the plan include hate incidents, violence, mental health and stigmatization, substance use, homelessness and access to affordable housing, and access to income. Many of these priorities align with the 2022-2026 Term of Council Priorities especially as they relate to investments in sustainable economic development and safe and thriving neighbourhoods. Embedded throughout the Community Safety and Well Being Plan is a

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focus on the importance of ongoing public engagement and equity, diversity and inclusion to inform the plan.

Hamilton is facing a human service crisis that has prompted the City to declare emergencies in housing, gender-based and intimate partner violence and opioid overdoses. A recent report by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada highlights that many of the social challenges faced by communities are the by-product of unmet social needs and poses a substantial cost that all bear. More specifically, the average cost of crime is significant with a single incident of homicide estimated to cost between \$4.8 and \$5.9 million; costs associated with sexual assaults were estimated around \$136,000 to \$164,000 and robberies ranged from \$28,000 to \$92,000 per incident.¹

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan provides a framework to address the social challenges faced by our community. It is an evidenced based model and a mechanism that can be leveraged to assist us in achieving improved safety and well-being for our community. Well-being is a key driver to economic prosperity, by providing people with opportunities for greater well-being and helping them realise those opportunities, policymakers are not only promoting well-being as an intrinsic good, they are also investing in people's potential as a key driver for long-term economic growth, societal resilience and stability.²

Work is currently underway within the plan to leverage existing resources, focus funding on targeted interventions, and enhance system coordination across human service sectors. Advancing key actions outlined in the plan has been made possible by substantial funding provided by a three-year grant from federal Public Safety Canada in place until March 2026. Beyond this, a sustainable funding model for the plan will be necessary to ensure there are resources to support the work moving forward.

Community Safety and Well-Being Highlights

Since the last update, the focus for the plan has been on strengthening governance, aligning City initiatives and implementing community-driven solutions supporting enhanced community safety and well-being. Hamilton has many assets in place and it is critical that we empower community members to continue this work through community driven solutions. This approach also provides an opportunity to utilize local knowledge and expertise and foster collaboration through co-created solutions designed to meet the needs of residents that can be sustained over time.

¹ Cost of Crime and Criminal Justice Responses Report 2015 Thomas Gabor Ph.D. Public Safety Canada

² Llana-Nozel, A. N Martin and F. Murtin (2019) "The economy of well-being: Creating opportunities for people's well-being and economic growth", *OECD Statistics Working Papers.No./2019/02*, OECD Publishing, Paris

More specifically, advancements to the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan include:

Strengthening Community Safety and Well Being Governance:

- System Leadership Table Membership – focus has been on strengthening relationships, increased committee representation and membership expansion at the of the Community Safety and Well-Being System Leadership Table (see Appendix A). The following partners recently joined the table:
 - Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
 - Hamilton Child and Family Supports (formerly Children’s Aid Society)
 - Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
 - Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
 - Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
 - United Way Halton & Hamilton
- Data Strategy – established partnership with Muflehun³ and community partners in December 2023. For the strategy, quantitative and qualitative data is used to better understand the risk and protective factors that contribute to overall community safety and well-being in Hamilton. This furthers our understanding of local challenges, identifies targets to focus our efforts and aligns resources for greatest impact in the community.

Implementing Community-Driven Solutions:

- Building Safer Communities Grant Program – through investments made by Public Safety Canada and in alignment with the Building Safer Communities Multi Year Plan, this grant program provides funding to community organizations that will launch new or expanded initiatives in response to youth gun and gang violence in Hamilton. Initiatives empower Indigenous, Black, Female, and Newcomer youth to consider alternatives to gun and gang involvement.

As part of the application process, joint submissions from multiple organizations were strongly encouraged to support greater collaboration and coordination across the system. A review panel of City staff and community representatives carefully evaluated applications using equity-based assessment criteria. Nine initiatives involving more than 15 organizations were selected for funding (see Appendix B) and will complete training in anti-racism, anti-oppression, and trauma-informed care to ensure culturally sensitive and responsive service

³ Muflehun is a resource centre that supports the development of data-driven program development. Funded Public Safety Canada, Muflehun is leading various data-driven projects across Canada to address various safety concerns.

delivery. The City will also provide evaluation resources to support organizations assess the impact of their initiatives. Funding is available until March 2026.

- Situation Table – bringing together over 20 partners from the health, social service, and public safety sectors, a Situation Table has been developed in response to identified community need and will launch as a 12-month pilot in 2024 (HSC24006). This Situation Table will focus on supporting youth ages 8 to 14 and their families experiencing acutely elevated risk in areas such as alcohol and substance use, emotional and physical violence, and mental health.
- Gender-Based Safety Audit – the YWCA, in collaboration with City staff and community partners, is leading the development of gender-based safety audit in Hamilton. The goal of the audit is to understand key safety concerns of women and gender-diverse individuals in public spaces to improve physical environments, policies, operations, and service delivery. The audit is underway and will acknowledge and account for the nuanced experiences, perceptions, and needs of Hamiltonian women and gender-diverse individuals across different identity backgrounds. Working with YWCA, staff will report back to Emergency and Communities Services Committee with key recommendations by January 2025.
- Gender-Based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence – working with Council, community partners, and City staff, a motion was developed to declare gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence an epidemic in Hamilton. The motion also allocated funding to support the Women Abuse Working Group in identifying strategies to address gender-based and intimate-partner violence in Hamilton. A focus of the plan is to improve advocacy for victims and implement recommendations that further address gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence. Community Safety and Well-Being staff have joined the Women Abuse Working Group to strengthen these connections.
- Hamilton for All and Anti-Hate Toolkit – partnered with community agencies to support and fund the Hamilton for All Campaign to raise awareness and encourage Hamiltonians to stand up against prejudice and discrimination, which included the launch of No Hate in the Hammer's Anti-Hate Toolkit. The Toolkit provides guidance and recommendations on addressing hate as well as the Belonging Pledge that individuals and organizations can sign to affirm their commitment to equality, freedom and anti-discrimination. The Anti-Hate Toolkit has been adapted by the early year sector to support educators and families with resources required to foster a culture of belonging amongst young children. These initiatives were organized by No Hate in the Hammer, Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, and Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion. The City

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supported these activities through funding, staff support and endorsement, and signing onto the Belonging pledge.

- Canadian Institute for Health Research Grant – partnering with McMaster University, Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Empowerment Squared and Hamilton’s Youth Strategy, a research study to explore the effects of racism and discrimination on youth mental health is underway. The aim of this youth focused research project is to better understand and address the connection between hate related violence and youth mental health.

Aligning City Initiatives that support Community Safety and Well-Being:

- Hate Prevention and Mitigation – to address the challenges of hate, racism, and discrimination, plans are under way for the City’s Hate Prevention & Mitigation Plan to transition from from the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division to Community Safety and Well-Being. This transition aligns the plan with broader community safety goals and builds on partnerships with community initiatives such as the No Hate in the Hammer, Hamilton for All, and Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre. The ongoing focus includes strengthening the City's response to hate incidents, implementing proactive measures to reduce hate and discrimination, and creating inclusive community spaces that foster belonging and diverse interactions.
- Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction – a closer connection to this committee has formed through adding Roundtable representation at the system leadership table and aligning existing funding to advance shared priorities related to access to income through advocacy and local action.
- Pride Awareness Campaign – in partnership with the LGBTQ Advisory Committee and a local artist from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, the first “Pride in Hamilton” campaign was designed and delivered on HSR buses from June to August 2023. This campaign celebrated the lives and contributions of 2SLGBTQIA+ Hamiltonians and aimed to raise awareness of the impact of homophobia and hate incidents within our city.

2024 Community Safety and Well-Being Implementation Plan

Guided by the System Leadership Table and building on community feedback, we will continue to prioritize the following key focus areas of implementation for 2024:

- Implement and evaluate a Situation Table pilot that will support youth ages 8 to 14 and their families experiencing acutely elevated risk;

- Further develop data strategy to better understand risk and protective factors and align resources accordingly;
- Continue to enhance community driven solutions to support community safety and well-being
- Advance the work on hate prevention and mitigation;
- Advocate for a living wage, basic income, and food security initiatives;
- Advance equity and community engagement as central tenets to addressing community safety and well-being.

Ongoing focus to enhance coordination across safety and well-being committees and sectors is paramount for greatest impact.

In April 2024, a new Community Safety and Well-Being Plan regulation under the Community Safety and Policing Act set out obligations for municipalities across Ontario to review, and where appropriate, revise plans within a four-year time period. Hamilton's plans must be revised by July 1, 2025. The System Leadership Table will provide leadership to support the next iteration of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan in Hamilton and ensure community engagement informs the revision.

Resource Allocation and Sustainable Funding

The City recognizes and appreciates the many community partners that provide in-kind contributions through human resource support in advising and advancing the work of the plan. Council approved the funding of 1.0 FTE for Senior Project Manager (HSC19032(b)) to advance the work of Community Safety and Well Being, and additional temporary in-kind resources are provided through collaborative efforts within the City of Hamilton and community partners. As well, funding from Public Safety Canada until March 2026 will support key initiatives of the plan during this period. Dedicated resources to ensure progress on the plan are critical and sustainable funding has been a key conversation at the System Leadership Table. As demonstrated through receipt of the Public Safety Canada grant, partners are exploring potential funding sources to advance this work, including federal and provincial grants. Requests for municipal funding to support this work will be brought forward to future budget processes.

Next Steps

Community Safety and Well-Being provides an opportunity to identify, plan and respond collectively to the complex human service challenges facing our community. In 2024, Community Safety and Well-Being will continue to advance the priorities through ongoing collaboration with community and residents.

The accomplishments of the plan are a testament to a combination of collaborative partnerships and dedicated staffing resources providing backbone support to the plan. Investment in the local priorities to improve outcomes related to safety and well-being is beyond that of a single organization and is a shared responsibility between different levels of government, community partners and funding networks. The development of a sustainable funding model to support community development is required to address the priorities through upstream prevention and intervention and fully realize the goals of Community Safety and Well-Being. In turn, we will advance our city's vision to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" Community Safety and Well-Being System Leadership Table Membership to Report HSC24105

Appendix "B" Building Safer Communities Grant Recipients and Programs to Report HSC24105