



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Emergency and Community Services Committee

Date: September 11, 2025

Report No: HSC25007(a)

Subject/Title: Community Safety and Well-Being: Gender-Based Safety Audit Action Plan

Ward(s) Affected: (City Wide)

Recommendations

1. That the Gender-Based Safety Audit Action Plan, attached as Appendix "A", **BE APPROVED**;
2. That the leads of the Gender-Based Safety Audit be **DIRECTED** to prioritize the implementation of Gender-Based Safety Audit initiatives through the corporate departmental budget process beginning in 2026 and beyond; and,
3. That staff be **DIRECTED** to report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee in Q3 2026 with a progress update on the implementation of the Action Plan, attached as Appendix "A".

Key Facts

- This report presents an action plan developed to address the recommendations of the HSC25007 Community Safety and Well-Being: Gender-Based Safety Audit Consideration Report that directed staff to develop a detailed action plan to address the audit recommendations approved by Council in March 2025.
- The Action Plan identifies 191 actions across 13 City divisions, 87% of which are underway through existing initiatives.
- The Action Plan responds to four core audit themes: training and education; public safety and security infrastructure; accessibility in transit and sidewalks/roadways; and addressing root causes of safety.
- The work is aligned with the City's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and guided by cross-departmental collaboration and community engagement.

- Implementation will be prioritized using criteria, including alignment with Council priorities; urgency; feasibility; return on investment related to safety impact; and equity and inclusion.

Financial Considerations

The Gender-Based Safety Audit and recommendations that are already underway are funded within existing operating budgets or supported through federal or provincial grants. Future funding opportunities or expansion proposals will be brought forward by each Department and Division through the annual budget process, if required.

Background

In September 2023, Council approved the Gender-Based Safety Audit initiative, with the YWCA Hamilton funded to lead engagement and develop recommendations.

In March 2025, Council approved the Gender-Based Safety Audit Consideration Report that included the adoption of the Ministry of the Solicitor General's definition of community safety and well-being to guide municipal policies, programs and strategic planning and the YWCA's audit findings which included the following recommendations:

1. Expand training and education,
2. Enhance public safety and security infrastructure,
3. Improve accessibility in transit and sidewalks/roadways, and
4. Address root causes of safety.

Following these recommendations, City staff were directed to work across the corporation and community to develop a detailed action plan and report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee.

Analysis

Current Status and Progress

Through cross-departmental working sessions, staff identified 191 City-led actions aligned to the Gender-Based Safety Audits recommendations:

- 87% of these activities are already underway or embedded in existing strategies.
- 13% are newly developed in direct response to the audit findings.

Though existing activities are underway, additional investigation and investment is required to address key gaps, identified in the table below.

Breakdown by Priority Area

Gender-Based Safety Audit – Priority Area	# of Activities	Key Gaps Identified
Expand training and education (e.g., anti-racism, gender identity, de-escalation).	46 Activities	De-escalation training. Self defense training and education. Third party contractor requirements for training.
Enhance public safety and security infrastructure.	45 Activities	Install emergency call buttons at key public locations (transit stops, trails, washrooms and parks). Raising awareness about the vulnerability of disabled and immunocompromised individuals to infectious disease.
Improve accessibility in transit and sidewalks/roadways.	30 Activities	No gaps identified, however opportunities for enhancement of work identified.
Address root causes of safety (e.g. laws, policies, procedures, funding, etc.)	70 Activities	Local health supports. Community mental health and grief supports.

Key Highlights

The City of Hamilton has taken significant steps to address gender-based safety across the organization. Ongoing initiatives include:

- Continued rollout of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) training for all City staff.
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV) training plans for Council and staff.
- Expanded gender-responsive programming in Recreation.
- Public awareness efforts on transit safety.
- Launch of the Downtown Creative Placemaking Grant.

Strategic Decision-Making Criteria

The following criteria will guide prioritization of new initiatives and investments:

- **Council priorities:** Aligns with Council's strategic goals and commitments.
- **Urgency:** Addresses an immediate or high-risk safety concern identified through data or lived experience.
- **Feasibility:** Realistic to implement given resources and constraints.
- **Return on investment:** Delivers strong impact to cost, including improved safety and community trust.

- **Equity and inclusion:** Centres lived experience to reduce systemic barriers and improve safety for equity-deserving groups.

Staffing and Policy Considerations

The Action Plan is coordinated through the Community Strategies team and leverages existing work structures. Strategic alignment with the City's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan ensures integration into long-term policy and service delivery.

Next Steps

The City has made strong progress but recognizes the need to expand engagement and implementation. Key next steps include:

- **Increase internal engagement:** Continue outreach to additional City divisions to explore opportunities for action, informing the evolving action plan.
- **Strengthen community partnerships:** Continued collaboration with partners such as the YWCA Hamilton, BGC Hamilton-Halton, the Hamilton Public Library and Hamilton Police Services to advance shared safety goals.
- **Broaden community outreach:** Engage with local organizations and residents to ensure the plan reflects community priorities and lived experiences.
- **Ongoing Collaboration with the Woman Abuse Working Group:** Partner on delivering Gender-Based Violence training to Council members and updating Council on the Woman Abuse Working Group's action plan, including strategies to prevent gender-based and intimate partner violence.
- **Apply Decision-Making Criteria:** Use the approved criteria to identify and prioritize actions that have the greatest potential to improve safety and inclusion.
- **Support opportunities for equitable resource allocation:** Engage staff across departments in identifying opportunities to apply a gender lens during the City's budgeting process, supporting more equitable resource allocation and service delivery.

Alternatives

N/A

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report aligns directly with the City Council's strategic priorities, particularly under the Safe & Thriving Neighborhood's and Responsiveness & Transparency priorities.

Priority 2: Safe and Thriving Neighborhoods

Outcome 2: Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit, or car.

Integrating gender-based safety audits into urban planning will create safer, more inclusive environments by identifying areas where vulnerable groups feel unsafe. This

data-driven approach guides improvements in lighting, signage, and infrastructure, enhancing mobility and fostering a sense of belonging for all residents.

Outcome 3: Provide vibrant parks, recreation, and public space.

Gender-based safety audits of parks and public spaces highlight the needs of diverse users and inform improvements like better lighting, clear pathways, and accessible facilities. These changes promote inclusive, welcoming spaces where all residents feel safe to gather, be active, and enjoy nature.

Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency

Outcome 2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving.

Partnering with YWCA Hamilton to lead the gender-based safety audit reflects the City's commitment to open, transparent public engagement. This trusted, community-led approach builds inclusivity and informs improvements to spaces, programs, policies, and services.

The resulting recommendations and actions support Council's strategic priorities by making public spaces and transportation safer, more inclusive, and supportive of community well-being—ensuring all residents can move freely and confidently throughout the city.

Previous Reports Submitted

HSC25007 Community Safety and Well-Being: Gender Based Safety Audit

Consultation

City departments consulted on the project include:

Department	Division
Healthy and Safe Communities	Children's and Community Services Recreation Housing Services Long Term Care
Public Works	Corporate Facilities and Energy Management Environmental Services Transit Hamilton Street Railway Transportation
Planning & Economic Development	Tourism and Culture Economic Development
City Manager's Office	Government Relations and Strategy Communications and Community Engagement Human Resources

External Consultations conducted with:

- Hamilton Public Library
- Hamilton Police Services
- Community Safety and Well-Being System Advisory Leadership Table
- Woman Abuse Working Group

Appendices and Schedules Attached

- **Appendix A:** Community Safety and Well-Being: Gender Based Safety Audit Action Plan

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