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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

To: Finance and Administration Committee
From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: 2024-A-9
Date: June 11, 2024

Subject:

Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan Update

Recommendation:

That this report be received for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 This report provides an update on Community Safety and Well-Being activities being undertaken to address the priority risk factors of criminal involvement and victimization; social isolation; and monitoring, evaluation and learning.

2. Background

2.1 The Regional Municipality of Durham Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan was adopted by Durham Regional Council on November 24, 2021, in accordance with legislative amendments to Ontario's Police Services Act. The goal of the CSWB Plan is to ensure residents of Durham Region feel safe and have a sense of belonging, and their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, as well as social and cultural expression are met. The CSWB Plan establishes a collaborative framework for integrated service delivery, working with community partners to encourage an upstream approach in addressing the priority risk factors to community safety and well-being in Durham Region.

2.2 For more information and to view the Plan, visit the [CSWB Information Hub](#).

3. Preventing and Responding to Criminal Involvement and Victimization

3.1 Leveraging the support of Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) initiative, and under the leadership of the DEI Division's Community Safety

and Well-Being team, the Region is implementing a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing community violence, particularly gun and gang activity. Since the last report to Council, the following activities have been undertaken:

- a. Establishment of a CSWB Fund to mobilize, enable and empower community partners to develop, implement and evaluate projects/programs that focus on the reduction and prevention of community violence, particularly youth gun and gang violence.

The Building Safer Communities Grant Program of the CSWB Fund has been launched. There are four funding streams in this program: 1) Stream One – Program Funding, supports programming and direct service provision which addresses the needs of children and youth experiencing one or more risk factors for involvement in serious violence and crime; 2) Stream Two – Capacity-Strengthening; supports one-time training and capacity-strengthening activities to enhance staff, organizational, and/or sector capacity to meet the needs of the listed priority populations; 3) Stream Three – Advocacy and Public Awareness supports one-time advocacy, public awareness, and knowledge mobilization activities; and 4) Stream Four Community Micro-Grants, supports small not-for-profits, and community groups (including small and emerging groups) to lead projects in their communities.

Calls for applications for Stream One closed on May 7. A total of 18 applications were received. Award notifications will be made in June 2024.

Applications for Stream Two and Stream Three may still be submitted, and are being reviewed on a rolling basis. Program guidelines and the application form are available at Durham.ca/CSWB-Fund.

Through Stream Four, a total of ten resident-led projects were implemented between November 30, 2023 and February 29, 2024. Projects focused on the provision of low-barrier sporting opportunities, peer support/mentorship, vocational training, arts, drama and story-telling and fostering intergenerational connections between youth, seniors and older adults.

In total 268 individuals participated in programs delivered through these projects. Of these, 18 were adult caregivers, the remainder were children and youth. In addition to those 268 individuals who directly benefited from these programs, 70 Durham Region residents were involved in the delivery of these programs. The majority (but not all) of these residents were adults, and served as project leads, guest speakers, program mentors, artists, and volunteers.

The sustainability of program results has been supported through the development of project management and grant acquisitions skills amongst project leaders, which they are currently using to access more funding and continue their work; and imparting positive life skills to participating children and youth through the direct interventions delivered through the program.

- b. Establishment of a Youth Action Group (YAG) which enhances the skills and leadership experience of identified Durham Region youth, such that they are empowered to participate fully in decision-making and community governance, provide strategic advice to the Region's CSWB Secretariat as the Community Violence Prevention Strategy and associated projects are carried out, and implement a youth-led community project. The inaugural meeting of the YAG was held in February 2024. This group consists of 17 youth between the ages of 14 and 18. The YAG serves as a venue through which youth participate in the development and implementation of the Region's Community Violence Prevention Strategy. It also has the purpose of strengthening young people's capacity for civic engagement, and leadership, through dedicated mentorship, training, and support. During this reporting period, the YAG recruitment plan was complete, and 18 hours of YAG meetings have taken place, including a focused discussion of priority risk and protective factors for youth criminalization and victimisation.
- c. Establishment of a Community Healing Protocol. Trauma is a root cause of community violence, particularly youth gang involvement. Restorative, culturally-affirming, community-led practices play a crucial role in disrupting cycles of interpersonal violence and other forms of trauma; and in restoring balance and wellness within communities following an incidence of violence or trauma. A Community Healing Protocol is therefore in development, which will:
- Document lessons learned and best and promising practices from other jurisdictions within the GTHA, Canada, and internationally, with respect to community-led healing response
 - Document and reflect the insights, needs, experiences and expertise of local community members (youth, families, service providers etc.) with respect to community-led healing response
 - Identify a 'watchlist' of priority geographic locations for activation of community healing interventions, and community leaders and ambassadors within these areas
 - Document a response protocol and suggested activities into a public-facing community healing toolkit/manual
- d. Addressing the Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic

A motion was approved by Regional Council on April 26, 2023 to implement Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 10 of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations.

Following the Council-approved motion, the CSWB Secretariat and Durham Region's Violence Prevention Coordination Council (VPCC) have been

developing a joint action plan and implementation schedule outlining the Regional response to the intimate partner violence epidemic.

Recommended priority outcomes and actions within the action plan include the following:

1. Increase the scale of IPV and GBV awareness and prevention initiatives

1.1 Plan and implement a wide variety of broad public education and awareness campaigns/initiatives to grow understanding of IPV and GBV in the community, using a coordinated approach.

1.2 Provide information and training to front-line workers (e.g., caseworkers, public health nurses, paramedics, etc.) who are likely to first notice and respond to the warning signs of IPV and GBV, to help stop violence before it occurs and connect survivors to the supports they need.

1.3 Strengthen partnerships with the education sector to increase prevention programming in schools and post-secondary academic institutions, which addresses and disrupts harmful attitudes and behaviours that normalize violence, and helps children, youth and young adults learn about IPV and GBV and how to foster healthy relationships.

1.4 Engage men and boys in GBV awareness and allyship strategies to help end violence in the future.

1.5 Share information and resources about IPV and GBV (e.g., makeitourbusiness.ca) with the business sector (e.g., local BIAs, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) to help employers and other workplace stakeholders to meet their obligations under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

1.6 Continue to educate members of Regional Council about IPV and GBV through delegations and presentations.

2. Increase outreach and engagement with target populations who are disproportionately impacted by IPV and GBV

2.1 Support targeted outreach and engagement with diverse and vulnerable populations (e.g., South Asian, Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQI+, newcomers/immigrants/refugees, women with disabilities, senior women etc.) in partnership with Indigenous peoples, community organizations and leaders, to increase awareness of the warning signs of IPV and GBV and services/supports available.

3. Improve sustainable funding for preventing and responding to IPV and GBV

3.1 Develop and implement an advocacy strategy directed toward all levels of government to influence policy and funding decisions regarding sustainable funding for preventing and responding to IPV and GBV in Durham Region.

3.2 Seek out and leverage alternative sources of funding (e.g., grant opportunities, academic institutions to conduct research, etc.) for the delivery of prevention and response programming and services.

4. Improve the provision of safe and affordable housing for victims/survivors of IPV and GBV to address barriers for leaving abuse

4.1 Develop and implement an advocacy strategy directed toward all levels of government to influence policy and funding decisions, including improved provision of safe and affordable housing options for those leaving abusive situations.

5. Improve data collection and monitoring of IPV and GBV prevalence and trends

5.1 Work collectively to enhance data collection, monitoring, and analysis to better understand IPV and GBV impacts community wide.

- e. The CSWB Secretariat and VPCC will continue this joint work and will share further updates in a future report.

4. Social Isolation

- 4.1 The CSWB Secretariat partnered with Durham Regional Transit and the Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to deliver an integrated project aimed at reduced social isolation amongst older adults. The CSWB Secretariat implemented the *Making Connection, Building Community* project, which raised awareness of essential safety and well-being programs and services for older adults through the development and delivery of Durham Region's [Guide to Community Resources for Seniors and Older Adults](#).
- 4.2 The Guide features services and programs from 109 non-profit organizations that are organized into ten categories -- Food and Clothing, Health, Mental Health, Housing, Income, Legal, Safety, Settlement, Social and Recreation, and Transportation.
- 4.3 Printed copies of the Guide were made available at approximately 130 locations across Durham Region including public libraries, recreation/community facilities, health centers/clinics, seniors' residences, and community partners. An estimated 3,400 individuals have had the opportunity to engage with this information and

increase their awareness of culturally-responsive programs and services for older adults through this approach.

- 4.4 In addition, approximately 1,170 Ontario Works clients between 55-65 years of age received a mail-out of the Guide.
- 4.5 DRT developed and delivered "Get Moving with On Demand workshops" in rural and remote communities, with a specific focus on equipping and supporting older adults with tools to use the Region's On Demand Transit Service to connect with community resources and other transit connection hubs.
- 4.6 Approximately 700 older adults received information from the Get Moving with On Demand workshops through participation in one of the 17 in-person workshops delivered across Durham Region, with a focus on rural and remote areas of Brock, Uxbridge and Scugog. The workshop sessions provided participants with information on how to use the On Demand app to book trips outside of regular hours and scheduled routes and how to connect and transfer to other transit services.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

- 5.1 In consultation with Regional staff and community partners, the [CSWB Data Dashboard](#) has been re-released with new data visualization features and additional progress indicators for each priority risk factor. A total of 22 indicators are displayed on the Dashboard.
 - a. An external organization has been retained to collate and produce reports analyzing the most recent data available for all priority risk factors; and finalize the outcome and indicator identification process.
 - b. A robust theory of change will be developed, which displays a problem statement; logically connected immediate, intermediate outcomes; barriers to change; drivers of change; and program strategies. The outputs of this work will then be validated with Durham Region community members, and community-serving organizations, to support its ultimate finalization, and use in CSWB plan implementation.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is aligned with the following objectives found in the Region of Durham 2020 -2024 Strategic Plan:
 - a. Under Goal 2: Community Vitality Objective: To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighbourhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being:
 - 2.1 Revitalize existing neighbourhoods and build complete communities that are walkable, well-connected, and have a mix of attainable housing;

- 2.2 Enhance community safety and well-being;
 - 2.3 Influence the social determinants of health to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations;
 - 2.4 Support a high quality of life for all through human services delivery;
 - 2.5 Build a healthy, inclusive, age-friendly community where everyone feels a sense of belonging;
- b. Under Goal 3: Economic Prosperity Objective: To build a strong and resilient economy that maximizes opportunities for business and employment growth, innovation, and partnership:
- 3.1 Position Durham Region as the location of choice for business

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Preventing and Responding to Criminal Involvement and Victimization requires a robust, sustainable, community-led response. Durham Region's community violence prevention programming will strengthen the capacity of community-serving organizations of all sizes, while empowering residents, and centring the experiences of those with lived experience.
- 7.2 Improving awareness of safety and well-being programs and services is essential for reducing social isolation amongst older adults. Durham Region's [Guide to Community Resources for Seniors and Older Adults](#) bridges an important gap in awareness, and will therefore improve access to programs and supports.
- 7.3 Improved data visual tools, such as the new [CSWB Data Dashboard](#) and a theory of change will enable community partners, including residents, community-serving organizations, and institutions, to plan coordinated responses and monitor change at a population level.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer