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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2022-INFO-71
Date: September 2, 2022

Subject:

Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Symposium Summary

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Symposium, held virtually on June 10, 2022. To view the full “GTHA CSWB Symposium - What We Heard Report”, please visit the Document Library on the [CSWB Information Hub](#).
- 1.2 The GTHA CSWB Symposium focused on the combined responsibility of all sectors in addressing the escalation of gun violence and crime severity across the GTHA.

2. Background

- 2.1 In January 2019, legislative amendments to the Police Services Act mandated communities across the province to develop CSWB Plans. Community safety and well-being describes a place where everyone feels safe, has a sense of belonging, where individuals and families can meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, as well as social and cultural expression.
- 2.2 Durham Regional Council adopted the CSWB Plan in November 2021. For more information and to view the plan, please visit the [CSWB Information Hub](#).

- 2.3 The Region's CSWB Plan included a year one implementation plan, which outlined key steps toward realizing plan objectives, as identified by the community. One of the action items was to host a CSWB Symposium, in partnership with Durham Region Police Services and GTHA municipalities.

3. GTHA CSWB Symposium Purpose

- 3.1 The event included presentations on a number of topics, with a total of five sessions and 31 speakers. More than 250 participants from over 140 organizations were represented from more than 30 Ontario municipalities. This shared willingness to participate, speaks to our collective understanding that a collaborative approach to this work is necessary.
- 3.2 The GTHA CSWB Symposium provided an opportunity for practitioners to come together to identify and share common areas of concern, as well as identify opportunities to work collaboratively on priority issues. It also created space to collectively raise awareness of CSWB Plans, priority risk factors and the role of data to make meaningful impacts in our communities.
- 3.3 No one organization or sector can have all the responsibility of reducing gun violence and escalating crime severity. Only when we work together can we address the root causes of these complex problems. The Symposium invited key players to see themselves in the solutions by highlighting necessary changes through recommended action items.

4. Symposium Action items

- 4.1 One of the Symposium's key outcomes was to identify action items for municipalities and community partners to work together on CSWB issues. The following section of the report provides highlights of action items from speakers and attendees. Actions are separated into high-level "overarching actions" and concrete "specific actions".
- 4.2 Overarching actions include:
- Connect people to the right services at the right time.
 - Apply a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to CSWB work; acknowledge intersectionality.
 - Employ a trauma-informed, culturally responsive approach to interventions; consider the impact of historical and generational trauma.
 - Use a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach; do not operate in silos.
 - Undertake ongoing, inclusive engagement with communities to build trust; enhance the representation of diverse groups in engagement processes.
 - Validate and incorporate learnings from people with lived experience.
 - Ensure interventions are impact-focused and informed by data; use cross-sectoral networks to validate community-based data.
 - Build the capacity of social services to support community needs; support community driven initiatives.

- Work towards a sustainable funding model for CSWB; ensure adequate investment for actions.
- Direct funding to top risk factors in each community; pursue intervention strategies that are nuanced to specific neighbourhoods.
- Leverage existing work and strategies already underway in communities.
- Meet communities where they are when providing services; ensure communication channels are appropriate for the audience.
- Be mindful of language choices (e.g., use "at-promise youth" instead of "at-risk youth"); be optimistic when talking about change.
- Facilitate greater collaboration and co-ordination of services across municipalities.
- Continue the conversation between municipalities and community partners.
- Increase public awareness of community safety and well-being initiatives.

4.3 Specific actions include:

- Undertake quantitative and qualitative data collection with on-the-ground monitoring and evaluation of gaps. Use data to inform intervention strategies.
- Re-engineer police services to work collaboratively with other service providers. Ensure the right provider and right response.
- Create teams for non-criminal response (e.g., an officer and a social worker for intimate partner violence calls).
- Ensure services are accessible through a "no wrong door" approach; provide a centralized model for intake and referral.
- Develop a cross-jurisdictional approach to addressing gun violence.
- Develop shared language for responding to and addressing issues (e.g., common definition for "hate crime").
- Align data collection and evaluation frameworks across the GTHA.
- Use common assessment tools to encourage connectivity between agencies.
- Develop a GTHA CSWB Community of Practice.
- Develop a guide for CSWB Plan implementation considerations.
- Develop a searchable information hub to share data and resources across partners and municipalities.
- Provide support and resources for caregivers and compassion fatigue.
- Provide on-the-ground support to communities through local ambassadors (e.g., youth engagers, violence disruption workers).
- Provide education on available tools and resources, so they can be accessed and used by those that need them.
- Provide front-line officers and service providers with holistic training (e.g., how to support victims of sexual violence, how to identify red flags of human trafficking).
- Involve Councillors as champions of the CSWB Plan.
- Host a "data day" to share and learn about data collection.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 5.1 This report aligns with the following strategic goals and priorities in the Durham Region Strategic Plan:
- a. Goal 2: Community Vitality - To foster an exceptional quality of life with services that contribute to strong neighborhoods, vibrant and diverse communities, and influence our safety and well-being.
 - 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. Goal 4: Social Investment - To ensure a range of programs, services and supports are available and accessible to those in need, so that no individual is left behind:
 - 4.2 Build awareness and community capacity to address poverty;
 - 4.3 Demonstrate leadership in poverty prevention;
 - 4.4 Expand access to existing life stabilization programs
 - c. Goal 5: Service Excellence - To provide exceptional value to Durham taxpayers through responsive, effective, and fiscally sustainable service delivery:
 - 5.1 Optimize resources and partnerships to deliver exceptional quality services and value

6. Conclusion and Next Steps

- 6.1 The GTHA CSWB Symposium brought together diverse stakeholders from across the province. This was an opportunity to make connections, learn from one another and start conversations that lead to meaningful change.
- 6.2 Collectively, this work will continue as we strive toward action for improved community safety and well-being. Next steps include the establishment of a GTHA CSWB working group to focus on shared issues and to work through the recommended actions from the Symposium. This will be done in partnership with area municipalities and community agencies through the Region's CSWB framework.
- 6.3 The CSWB plan focuses on improving early interventions and preventative services to direct attention and investment toward the root causes of the complex issues facing our communities. The CSWB plan provides the framework to work across sectors to achieve system level change in how we develop policies, identify programs, provide services and support our partners.

6.4 For additional information, contact: Kiersten Allore-Engel, Manager of CSWB at Kiersten.Allore-Engel@durham.ca.

Respectfully submitted,

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Durham