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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

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To: Finance and Administration Committee  
From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer  
Report: #2023-A-15  
Date: September 25, 2023

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**Subject:**

Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan Update

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**Recommendation:**

That this report be received for information.

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**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; mental health, substance use, and homelessness; 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 The CSWB Secretariat has continued strategic engagement with key community partners to guide the implementation of the CSWB Plan. In April and March 2023, a total of 91 individuals, representing 34 community organizations, Durham Region Police Services, Regional Departments and Divisions, and staff members from the municipalities of Ajax, Clarington, Pickering, Oshawa, and Whitby, took part in two

full-day planning sessions, resulting in the development of theory of change prototypes for each priority risk factor.

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

### **3. Preventing and Responding to Criminal Involvement and Victimization**

#### **Partnership with Public Safety Canada**

3.1 Durham Region community members and partners have identified addressing criminal involvement (e.g., gangs, use of guns, other illegal activities) and victimization (eg sexual and/or physical assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, and robbery) as priorities for community safety and well-being (CSWB Plan, 2021). 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 developing and implementing a comprehensive, coordinated approach to addressing community violence, particularly gun and gang activity. Key outcomes of this work include the following:

- a. Development of a holistic community violence prevention and reduction strategy, which identifies features and trends attributing to the root causes of community violence in Durham Region, particularly gun and gang-related violence; and recommended programming and policy actions to reduce and prevent community violence in Durham Region;
- b. Systems and asset mapping to identify the programs, services, and agencies supporting violence prevention and intervention, as well as the gaps and opportunities within the current service landscape;
- c. Organizational capacity strengthening for service providers delivering community and youth violence prevention and intervention programs and services, including the provision of necessary equipment and supplies, and formal training opportunities;
- d. Delivery of advocacy and public awareness activities which increase political commitment and awareness around community and youth violence; increase community engagement towards ending community and youth violence; and reduce stigmatization of those affected by community and youth violence;
- e. 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 funding stream of the CSWB Fund will provide up to \$60,000 to eligible resident-led groups and small, not-for-profit organizations to implement locally focused projects, to be implemented between November 2023 and February 2024, and which address the root causes of youth criminal involvement.
- f. Establishment of a Youth Action Group 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.

### 3.2 Addressing the Intimate Partner Violence Epidemic

- a. At the April 26, 2023 Regional Council meeting, a delegation led by Vanessa Falcon, Executive Director of Herizon House, highlighted the increasing prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) and femicide in Durham Region, and resource constraints to address growing needs. The presentation also highlighted the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations, which are 86 recommendations for preventing and responding to intimate partner violence, that were made following the coroners inquest into the murders of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County;
- b. The presentation highlighted the following recommendations: formally declare intimate partner violence as an epidemic (recommendation #1); and encourage that IPV be integrated into every municipality's CSWB plan (recommendation #10);
- c. A motion was approved by Council to implement Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 10 of the Renfrew County Inquest Recommendations; and
- d. Following the Council-approved motion, the CSWB Secretariat and Durham Region's Violence Prevention Coordination Council (VPCC) have been developing a joint work plan outlining the regional response to the intimate partner violence epidemic. To date, recommended priority actions within the work plan include the following:
  - Increase the scale of IPV awareness and prevention initiatives;
  - Increase outreach and engagement with target populations who are disproportionately impacted by IPV;
  - Improve sustainable funding/core funding for the prevention of IPV;
  - Improve the provision of affordable housing for victims/survivors of IPV, in order to address barriers for leaving abuse;
  - Include survivors in planning and decision-making; and
  - Improve data collection and management on IPV trends and outcomes, to support reporting through the CSWB Plan.
- e. The CSWB Secretariat and VPCC will continue this joint work and will share further updates in a future report.

## 4. Mental health, Substance Use, and Homelessness

- a. The CSWB Secretariat is coordinating the Downtown Oshawa Management-Level Working Group, which includes representatives from the City of Oshawa, Regional departments, DRPS, and Lakeridge Health.
- b. Development of communications resources for Downtown Oshawa residents and business owners, which directs them to appropriate avenues to support

individuals that they witness are struggling with mental health, homelessness, and addictions, has been a key action of the group.

- Most recently, the *How Can I Help* guide has been developed to direct residents and business owners to immediate supports for food, housing, and mental health outreach, when they encounter those in need. Information specific to the Downtown Oshawa community is available online at [Durham.ca/SupportsforDowntownOshawa](https://Durham.ca/SupportsforDowntownOshawa) and information relevant to communities across the Region is available at [Durham.ca/HowCanIHelp](https://Durham.ca/HowCanIHelp).
- c. An annual workplan further articulating the direction of efforts around communication, information, and education; advocacy to other levels of government; and leveraging coordination opportunities, is in development.

## 5. Social Isolation

- a. The CSWB Secretariat is partnering 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 *Making Connection, Building Community* project is raising awareness of essential safety and well-being programs and services for older adults. A multi-pronged approach will be used to promote resource material and enhance their reach to the most socially-isolated and underserved populations. In addition, Durham Region Transit will deliver *Get Moving with On Demand* workshops to rural, remote and Indigenous communities. These workshops will build older adults' capacity to utilize Durham Region Transit's On Demand Transit Service and increase their access to community services and other transit connection hubs.

## 6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

- 6.1 On March 31, 2023, and April 5, 2023, planning sessions were conducted to identify long-term outcomes, priority shorter-term actions, and progress measurement indicators for the priority risk factors identified in the CSWB Plan. Support from the Region's Innovation team was integral to this effort. A total of 91 individuals were in attendance, representing 34 community organizations, Durham Region Police Services, Regional Departments and Divisions, and staff members from the municipalities of Ajax, Clarington, Pickering, Oshawa, and Whitby. Drafts or 'prototypes' of the theories of change have been shared for comment with workshop participants, the CSWB Steering Committee, the CSWB Area Municipal Working Group, the CSWB Internal Working Group. Further iteration of these prototypes is in progress. The CSWB Secretariat will share an update in a future report.
- 6.2 The CSWB Secretariat has received support from the Region's Innovation team and the Mitacs Student Fellowship Program to redesign the [CSWB Data Dashboard](#). The updated data dashboard will include new progress indicators more aligned with

the theories of change and will allow for filtering of data where possible. The updated data dashboard is expected to be released in early 2024.

## **7. Relationship to Strategic Plan**

7.1 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

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The Region of Durham's partnership with Public Safety Canada will allow for concrete next steps to be taken in delivering essential social development, violence prevention, violence intervention, and violence interruption programs and services for children, youth and communities that are currently experiencing, or at risk of violence and criminal involvement. Through partnerships with resident-led groups and community service providers, sustainable pathways for reducing violence will be developed.
- 8.2 A further update will be provided through a future report on the development of a regional response to the Intimate Partner Violence epidemic. Time and attention from a wide range of stakeholders will be needed to develop a plan that is robust and sustainable.
- 8.3 Improving public awareness of mental health, substance use, and homelessness is an essential action for both reducing stigma and connecting affected individuals and communities to the right services at the right time. The CSWB Secretariat will continue work in this regard and will provide a further update through a future report on its progress.

8.4 Improving awareness of safety and well-being programs and services is essential for reducing social isolation amongst older adults. The CSWB Secretariat will continue work in this regard and will provide a further update through a future report on its progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Original Signed By

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Allison Hector-Alexander  
Director, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Recommended for Presentation to Committee

Original Signed By

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Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair  
Chief Administrative Officer