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The Regional Municipality of Durham Report

From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: #2026-INFO-007
Date: February 13, 2026

Subject:

Engagement Summary Report – Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan Workshops

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a high-level summary of community engagement conducted in fall 2025 to inform updates to [Durham Region's Community Safety and Well-Being \(CSWB\) Plan \(2025–2029\)](#), including the co-development of [Roadmaps for Collective Impact](#).

1.2 For additional information, please see Attachment #1: Engagement Summary Report: CSWB Plan Workshops.

2. Background

2.1 Between September and October 2025, the Region hosted seven half day workshops, one for each CSWB priority risk factor – criminal involvement, experiences of racism, homelessness and basic needs, mental health, social isolation, substance use, and victimization – to validate draft outcomes, actions, and data points that would inform Roadmaps for Collective Impact.

2.2 These workshops brought together community partners from various sectors to continue to learn, deepen and strengthen our collective efforts to advance CSWB work together in Durham Region, and to ensure this work happens in a community-informed, coordinated and evidence-based manner.

2.3 Nearly 300 participants from over 50 organizations contributed feedback during the engagement process. They included rights holders, Indigenous-led organizations, municipal and regional staff, Durham Regional Police Service, service providers, organizations and community agencies across social services, health, justice, and education sectors. Engagement was facilitated through a variety of activities, including small-group discussions, large group breakouts, and individual written reflections.

3. Previous Reports and Decisions

3.1 CSWB initiatives are detailed in [several reports](#) that have been prepared for Regional Council, including most recently: [#2025-COW-35 Updated Community Safety and Well-Being Plan \(2025-2029\)](#).

4. Overview of Engagement Findings

Continued Relevance of Priority Risk Factors

4.1 Across all sessions, participants reaffirmed that the seven priority risk factors identified in Durham Region's 2021 CSWB Plan – criminal involvement, experiences of racism, homelessness and basic needs, mental health, social isolation, substance use, and victimization – remain highly relevant, critical, and deeply interconnected. They emphasized that these risk factors often compound one another, underscoring the need for coordinated, multi-sector responses.

CSWB Plan: Roadmaps for Collective Impact (Roadmaps)

4.2 Participants confirmed strong alignment between their work and the high-level actions and outcomes outlined in the Roadmaps. They emphasized the importance of the following across all seven Roadmaps:

- a. Improve collaboration, service integration, and shared care planning across sectors.
- b. Increase timely, equitable access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed supports and wraparound services.
- c. Strengthen navigation tools and trusted referral networks.
- d. Reduce stigma and increase sense of safety, belonging, and empathy.
- e. Strengthen social determinants of health to enhance protective factors.
- f. Expand prevention, early intervention, youth-led and family-focused supports.
- g. Coordinate discharge planning and transitional supports to ensure continuity of care.
- h. Advocate collectively for stable, long-term provincial and federal funding.

- 4.3 Suggestions from participants for improving descriptions in the Roadmaps include:
- a. Recognize high intersectionality among risk factors and root causes.
 - b. Stronger emphasis on upstream social development efforts alongside prevention and early intervention.
 - c. Broaden recognition and inclusion of priority populations (for example youth, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with complex needs such as dual diagnosis, racialized communities, rural communities, caregivers, 2SLGBTQI+, and individuals living with low income).
 - d. Reduce systemic barriers – such as transportation, cost, digital access, language, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, eligibility criteria and administrative barriers – to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
 - e. Increase public education and tailored outreach about priority risk factors, programs and services.
 - f. Co-create programs and policy with broad community participation, especially people with lived experience.

CSWB Risk Factor Data Points

- 4.4 While existing CSWB dashboard data points/indicators were viewed as helpful, those in attendance noted additional details could help to enhance the dashboard. These ideas included:
- a. Adding demographic detail (age, gender, geographic, cultural identity, and other intersectional data).
 - b. Including qualitative data from local lived experience to complement quantitative measures.
 - c. Expanding data sources for more granular indicators and measurement of contributing factors/early risk indicators.

Collaboration Opportunities

- 4.5 Durham Region is already home to incredible collaboration, with many examples shared by workshop participants across and within sectors. This energy and willingness to work together is a strong foundation for advancing the CSWB Plan. At the same time, engagement revealed opportunities to deepen coordination, clarify roles, and amplify collective impact through:
- a. Public education and awareness
 - b. Expanded partnerships
 - c. Capacity building
 - d. Policy and advocacy
 - e. Advancing data and shared measurement

- 4.6 Across all workshops, participants emphasized that advancing Durham Region's CSWB Plan cannot be done by any one sector or organization alone. In a complex and evolving environment – marked by ongoing service pressures and uncertain funding – strong collaboration, shared responsibility, and continued community engagement remain essential to moving this work forward.

5. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 5.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

a. Connected and Vibrant Communities

- C2. Enable a full range of housing options, including housing that is affordable and close to transit.
- C7. Create accessible, lively, and culturally welcoming public spaces, including opportunities to access nature.

b. Healthy People, Caring Communities

- H1. Implement preventive strategies to support community health, including food security.
- H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.
- H3. Integrate and co-ordinate service delivery for positive life outcomes, including investments in poverty prevention, housing solutions, and homelessness supports.
- H4. Support the development of healthy children and youth, including access to affordable and quality child care.
- H5. Provide services for seniors and work with community partners to support aging in place.

c. Strong Relationships

- S1. Enhance inclusive opportunities for community engagement and meaningful collaboration.
- S2. Build and strengthen respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
- S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.
- S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

- 5.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The fall 2025 engagement process reaffirmed strong alignment with Durham Region's CSWB priorities and the Roadmaps for Collective Impact, highlighting the need for coordinated and community-informed action. This feedback guided the update of the [CSWB Plan \(2025–2029\)](#), endorsed by Regional Council in November 2025.
- 6.2 The [Roadmaps for Collective Impact](#) set a clear starting point for CSWB Plan implementation. In 2026, we will work with partners to finalize detailed implementation plans for each priority risk factor.
- 6.3 For additional information, contact: Kiersten Allore-Engel, MCIP, RPP, MPPAL. Manager CSWB, at 905-668-7711, extension 2321.

7. Attachments

Attachment #1: Engagement Summary Report: CSWB Plan Workshops

Attachment #2: [Updated Durham Region CSWB Plan \(2025-2029\)](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer



Engagement Summary Report: CSWB Plan Workshops

February 2026

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

About the engagement process:

What we did:

This report summarizes high-level feedback from seven community workshops held in fall 2025, which informed the update to Durham Region's [Community Safety and Well-Being \(CSWB\) Plan \(2025–2029\)](#) through the co-development of [Roadmaps for Collective Impact](#). Almost 300 people from over 50 organizations attended the sessions, with a shared goal to collaboratively develop plans for where we want to go (outcomes) and how we want to get there (actions) (see Appendix A: CSWB Workshop Participants).

Why we engaged:

The workshops ensured community perspectives, knowledge, and expertise directly informed and validated outcomes, actions and data points used in the Roadmaps for Collective Impact. These Roadmaps address seven priority risk factors identified in the CSWB Plan – criminal involvement, experiences of racism, homelessness and basic needs, mental health, social isolation, substance use, and victimization.

These workshops brought together community partners from various sectors to continue to learn, deepen, and strengthen our collective efforts to advance Community Safety and Well-Being work together in Durham Region, and to ensure this work happens in a community-informed, coordinated and evidence-based manner.

When sessions took place:

These half-day workshop sessions took place between mid-September and early October 2025.

- Friday, September 19 from 9 a.m. to noon – mental health
- Friday, September 19 from 1 to 4 p.m. – substance use
- Tuesday, September 23 from 9 a.m. to noon – homelessness and basic needs
- Tuesday, September 23 from 1 to 4 p.m. – victimization (gender-based violence and intimate partner violence)
- Friday, September 26 from 9 a.m. to noon – criminal involvement
- Thursday, October 9 from 9 a.m. to noon – experiences of racism
- Thursday, October 9 from 1 to 4 p.m. – social isolation

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

Where sessions were held:

All workshops were held at Ajax Convention Centre, located at 550 Beck Crescent in Ajax. There was no cost to attend.

Who participated:

Durham Region reached out to a broad range of partners and collaborators, including rights holders; Indigenous-led organizations; municipal and regional staff; Durham Regional Police Service; community agencies, services providers and organizations across social services, health care, justice and education sectors.

How we engaged:

Engagement was facilitated by Amplify Strategic Consulting Inc. through a variety of activities. Facilitators used small-group discussions, large group breakouts, and individual written reflections. Feedback was collected using flipcharts, sticky notes, and participant workbooks.

Highlights of what we heard:

Participants reaffirmed that the seven priority risk factors identified in Durham Region's 2021 CSWB Plan – criminal involvement, experiences of racism, homelessness and basic needs, mental health, social isolation, substance use, and victimization – remain highly relevant, critical, and deeply interconnected. They emphasized that these risk factors often compound one another, underscoring the need for coordinated, multi-sector responses. The updated [2025 CSWB Plan](#), which includes the updated [Roadmaps for Collective Impact](#), emphasizes the urgency of addressing these issues through focused attention, strategic investment, and collaborative action to achieve shared goals.

This section summarizes the most common themes and ideas that emerged across all seven community workshops. These insights helped shape the updated CSWB Plan and will continue to guide implementation. Ongoing community engagement will remain a cornerstone, essential to this collaborative work.

CSWB Plan: Roadmaps for Collective Impact (Roadmaps)

Participants confirmed that their work spans one or more levels of the CSWB risk mitigation framework: social development, prevention, risk intervention and/or incident response. They reported strong alignment between their outcomes and the high-level outcomes outlined in the Roadmaps for each priority risk factor.

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

Participants emphasized the importance of the following across all seven Roadmaps:

- Improve collaboration, service integration, and shared care planning across sectors.
- Increase timely, equitable access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed supports and wraparound services.
- Strengthen navigation tools and trusted referral networks.
- Reduce stigma, and increase sense of safety, belonging, and empathy.
- Strengthen social determinants of health as a foundation for enhanced protective factors and reduce risk factors/harms.
- Prevention, early intervention and resilience building through youth-led, school-based programming and family focused supports.
- Coordinate discharge planning and transitional supports (such as from institutional facilities, justice system, hospitals) to ensure continuity of care and prevent crises.
- Advocate collectively to secure long-term, stable provincial and federal funding to support service providers and strategies at all levels of the risk mitigation framework and influence policy change.

Suggestions from participants for improving descriptions in the Roadmaps include:

- Recognize high intersectionality among risk factors and root causes.
- Stronger emphasis on upstream social development efforts alongside prevention and early intervention.
- Broaden recognition and inclusion of priority populations (for example youth, newcomers, Indigenous peoples, older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with complex needs such as dual diagnosis, racialized communities, rural communities, caregivers, 2SLGBTQI+, and individuals living with low income).
- Reduce systemic barriers—such as transportation, cost, digital access, language, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, eligibility criteria and administrative barriers—to advance diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Increase public education and tailored outreach about priority risk factors, programs and services.
- Co-create programs and policy with broad community participation, especially people with lived experience.

Roadmap design feedback:

Participants found the Roadmaps to be visually appealing and well organized, but noted they were text-heavy and used complex language for public audiences.

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

Suggested improvements include:

- Use of plain language and simplified versions with more imagery and concise text.
- Clear definitions for each priority risk factor.
- A glossary of key terms and a list of acronyms to enhance accessibility for diverse audiences.

CSWB risk factor data points

While the current CSWB dashboard data points/indicators were seen as helpful, those in attendance noted additional details could help to enhance the dashboard. These ideas included:

- Adding demographic detail (age, gender, geographic, cultural identity, and other intersectional data).
- Including qualitative data from local lived experience to complement quantitative measures.
- Expanding data sources for more granular indicators and measurement of contributing factors/early risk indicators.

Data emerged as a unique opportunity for collaboration across workshops. Some partners expressed interest in shared data collection, monitoring, and evaluation to inform decisions, planning and advocacy.

Collaboration opportunities

Durham Region is already home to incredible collaboration, with many examples shared by workshop participants across and within sectors. This energy and willingness to work together is a strong foundation for advancing the CSWB Plan. At the same time, engagement revealed opportunities to deepen coordination, clarify roles, and enhance impact.

Key collaboration opportunities identified by workshop participants include:

Public education and awareness

- Coordinate public messaging and deliver enhanced education and awareness campaigns.

Expanded partnerships

- Partner with academic institutions, public libraries, grassroots organizations, resident groups, and faith-based organizations. These partnerships can advance research, innovation, and culturally responsive practice, while connecting formal systems to trusted community touchpoints and informal networks.
- Leverage private sector partnerships for funding and innovation.

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

Capacity building

- Expand cross-sector training and co-ordination.
- Create centralized service maps and shared communication hubs.
- Strengthen cross-sector tables, referral networks, and wraparound supports.

Policy and advocacy

- Advocate for sustainable, long-term funding from provincial and federal governments.
- Align messaging to influence policy and resource allocation.

Advancing data and shared measurement

- Enhance shared data points/indicators and measurement frameworks to help align planning and advocacy.

We are navigating a complex and evolving landscape, including an uncertain funding environment, and this work requires strong collaboration. Shared responsibility and continued partnership are essential to advancing the CSWB Plan.

What's next?

Regional Council endorsed the [updated CSWB Plan \(2025–2029\)](#) in November 2025. The [Roadmaps for Collective Impact](#) set a clear starting point for implementation. In 2026, the Region will work with partners to finalize detailed implementation plans and track outcomes for each priority risk factor.

As we move forward from dialogue to action, we do so with optimism and determination. Together, we will create a safer, healthier, and more connected Durham Region.

Acknowledgements

The Region of Durham extends sincere gratitude to our partners and collaborators for their invaluable contributions. Your insights, expertise, and commitment were instrumental in shaping the updated CSWB Plan (2025–2029). We appreciate your dedication to fostering safety, well-being, and inclusivity across our communities.

Comments

Questions and comments about this report may be directed to cswb@durham.ca.

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

Appendix A: CSWB workshop participants

- Bethesda House
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Durham and Northumberland
- Blueprint Consulting
- Brock Community Health Centre
- Catholic Family Services Durham (CFSD)
- Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC Durham)
- Christian Faith Outreach Centre - Doors of Compassion
- City of Pickering
- Clarington Library, Museums & Archives (CLMA)
- Community Development Council Durham (CDCD)
- Community Justice Alternatives of Durham Region
- Community Living Ajax-Pickering-Whitby
- Community Living Durham North
- Community Living Oshawa Clarington
- Dedicated Advocacy Resource Support (DARS)
- Developmental Services Ontario
- Durham College, Social Impact Hub
- Durham Community Action Group (DCAG)
- Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC)
- Durham Elder Abuse Network (DEAN)
- Durham Family and Cultural Centre
- Durham Mental Health Services
- Durham Rape Crisis Centre
- Durham Region Transit
- Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)
- Durham Workforce Authority
- Grandview Kids
- Herizon House
- Ifarada Centre for Excellence
- John Howard Society of Durham Region
- Lakeridge Health

Engagement summary report: CSWB Plan workshops

- Luke's Place
- Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Municipality of Clarington
- Murray McKinnon Foundation
- Northstar
- Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
- Ontario Tech University
- Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council
- Oshawa Public Libraries
- Pickering Public Library
- Region of Durham
- The Salvation Army
- The Barrett Centre – Durham College
- The Denise House
- The Nourish and Develop Foundation
- The Participation House (Durham Region)
- Town of Ajax
- Town of Whitby
- Victim Services of Durham Region
- Violence Prevention Coordinating Council (VPCC)
- Whitby Public Library
- YWCA Durham