

DISTRICT OF NIPISSING SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan – City of North Bay

Planning Framework and Research Design

DNSSAB Project Team

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Contents

- 1) Planning Framework..... 2
 - 1.1 Purpose..... 2
 - 1.2 Goal..... 2
 - 1.3 Outcomes..... 2
 - 1.4 Strategies and Action..... 3
 - 1.5 Critical Success Factors 4
- 2) Research Approach and Methodology..... 6
 - 2.1 Data Sources 6
 - 2.2 Data Collection..... 7
 - 2.3 Data Analysis 9
 - 2.4 Study Risks/Limitations..... 10
- Glossary 12
- References..... 13

1) Planning Framework

1.1 Purpose

Effective January 1, 2019, as part of legislation under the *Police Services Act*, municipalities in Ontario are required to develop and adopt Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plans. The plans are intended to make communities safer and healthier by taking an integrated, community approach to address local crime and complex social issues on a sustainable basis.

This legislative requirement applies to all single and lower-tier municipalities and regional governments, and is being directed by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The CSWB plans are required to meet a number of legislative requirements and are to be developed in partnership with a multi-sectoral advisory committee comprised of representation from the police service board and other local service providers in health/mental health, education, community/social services and children/youth services. In North Bay, the situation table *Gateway Hub* will serve as the community advisory committee for the plan's research and development.

The City of North Bay has authorized the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) to develop its Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. For the purpose of this planning and implementation, 'community safety and well-being' is defined as *a multi-sectoral approach to mitigate the reliance on reactionary and incident driven response by implementing social development practices through identification and response to risks that increase the likelihood of criminal activity, victimization or harm.*

The planning process is scheduled for approximately six months with a completion date of March, 2021 (see Appendix 3 for planning activities and timelines). The planning will then shift to the implementation phase once the plan has been adopted by the City of North Bay.

1.2 Goal

The overarching goal in developing and implementing North Bay's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan is to *create a safe and healthy community by reducing harm and victimization for all members of the community.* Upon implementing the plan over time, the goal will be realized by achieving a number of desired outcomes:

1.3 Outcomes

The CSWB plan outcomes represent everything the plan is to accomplish in reaching the above goal. The outcomes have been set through provincial CSWB legislative requirements and the City of North Bay's strategic priorities (it is realized that the community may add additional outcomes once the planning process is underway):

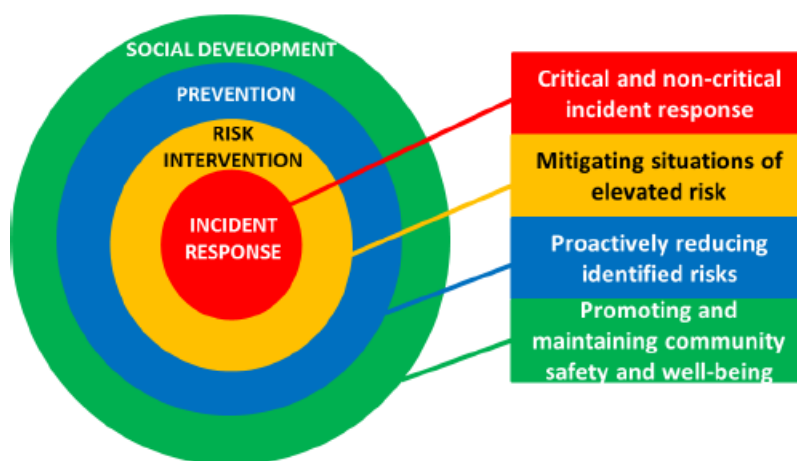
- A reduction in harm and victimization for all members of the community and a decrease in the upward trends in demand for, and costs of, incident (emergency) responses.

- Local risk factors are identified, prioritized, and addressed before they escalate and reach critical levels.¹
- The response matches the need: individuals are receiving the right response at the right time by the right service provider.
- Risks to community safety in areas such as mental health, addiction, homelessness and housing, are addressed without the use of emergency resources where possible.
- The demand for incident responses and acute care resources is reduced.
- Community resources relevant to community safety and well-being are coordinated and aligned.
- An implementation framework and system is in place to implement the CSWB plan and monitor, evaluate, and report on the plan's progress and outcomes.

1.4 Strategies and Action

The North Bay CSWB planning process will centre on developing strategies and action items to address community risk factors and meet the above goal and outcomes. As per the provincial CSWB guidelines the strategies will be developed across four core areas of *social development, prevention, risk intervention, and incident response*. These areas of focus and their relationships are shown graphically in Figure 1 below, followed by a brief description of each:

Figure 1. Community Safety and Well-being Framework



Source: Ministry of the Solicitor General,
*Community Safety and Well-being
 Planning Framework.*

¹ Risk factors include systemic discrimination and social factors that contribute to crime, victimization, poverty, addiction, drug overdose, domestic violence, and suicide.

In terms of *social development*, a wide range of community sectors, agencies and organizations will need to come together to share their different perspectives and expertise and formulate strategies to address complex social issues such as poverty, from every angle. Work in this area will also help to identify who to contact and when to contact them so the response matches the need.

Turning to *prevention*, the CSWB research and planning process will help to identify and prioritize local risk factors so they can be addressed before they escalate and reach critical levels. Developing and implementing preventative strategies will reduce risks to community safety and well-being before they result in crime, victimization and/or harm. This will also help to reduce costs in crises management.

The focus on *risk intervention* is intended to reduce harm before situations or incidents of elevated risk can occur, or in other words, *stop something bad from happening before it is about to happen* (Community Safety and Well-being Planning Framework). This is an immediate intervention that will also require a multi-sector response and collaboration between various community and acute care agencies. Forming effective strategies and solutions in this area will be dependent on information and data-sharing between organizations and the analysis of risk-based information and data.

Lastly, *incident response* is the traditional area of crime and safety, and includes immediate and reactionary responses that may involve a sense of urgency from first responders such as the police, fire, and emergency medical services. Planning in this area will also focus on community collaboration and solutions to ensure the most appropriate response. Similar to above, the sharing of relevant information and data, such as the types of occurrences and victimization, will be important to ensure the best use of resources and the most appropriate service provider is responding.

The planning and development of strategies and action items in the above areas will be evidence-based and informed through community and applied research. The research will include community consultation and engagement, and the analysis of other various sources of relevant information and data (see also, Research Approach and Methodology below).

1.5 Critical Success Factors

The provincial planning framework identifies the following critical success factors to guide the plan's development in the above areas and ensure its success – these will be front and centre during the planning process:

Strength-Based

Planning must recognize of the great work that is already happening within individual agencies and organizations, and utilize collaboration to further take advantage of local experience and expertise.

Risk-Focused

Planning should focus on risks, not incidents, and should target the circumstance, people and places that are most vulnerable to risk. “Risk-focused” believes that it is far more effective, efficient and beneficial to an individual’s quality of life to prevent something bad from happening rather than trying to find a “cure” after the fact.

Awareness & Understanding

Planning partners will need to understand their role in making the community a safe and healthy place to live before they fully commit time and resources.

Highest Level Commitment

This type of planning is a community-wide initiative that requires dedication and input from a wide range of sectors, agencies, organizations and groups.

Effective Partnerships

A plan will only be as effective as the partnerships and multi-sector collaboration that exist among those developing and implementing the plan.

Evidence & Evaluation

It will be important to gather information and evidence to paint a clear picture of what is happening in the community to support the identification of local priority risks. If gaps in service or programming are found in locally-identified areas of risk, research should be done to determine the most appropriate evidence-based response to be put into place.

Cultural Responsiveness

The plan must have the ability to effectively interact with, and respond to, the needs of diverse groups of people in the community. This involves being open to, and respectful of, cultural differences and developing skills and knowledge to build effective cross-cultural relationships.

2) Research Approach and Methodology

Carrying out the CSWB planning process is largely a community research exercise involving the collection, analysis, and presentation of information and data to inform the plan's development and community strategies in pursuit of the desired outcomes and goal (described above). The research for North Bay's CSWB plan will take a mixed-methods approach involving qualitative and quantitative research and data analysis. This provides the benefit of mixing the qualitative views and input from the community with the quantitative 'hard data' from a variety of other sources and databases.

The mixed approach will provide a better understanding of North Bay's community safety and well-being environment than just one of these research methods on its own. This mixed methodology will also provide data integration (triangulation) and help to ensure the plan is developed taking a systematic, empirical approach that is based on local input and evidence. The findings from the research will establish the city's current safety and well-being situation and baseline, while also identifying and prioritizing community risk factors and informing mitigating strategies and action items for the plan's implementation.

2.1 Data Sources

On the qualitative side, stakeholder engagement and community consultation will provide a rich, primary source of information and data to provide insights into local risk identification, intervention and prevention, and strategy development. This community engagement will include target groups such as those with lived experiences and community organizations and service providers with a wealth of expertise in the subject matter. Although a secondary data source in nature, a literature review and content analysis will provide another source of qualitative information and data to complement that from the stakeholders and community (see also, Literature Review below).

On both the qualitative and quantitative fronts, the analysis of relevant secondary datasets – public, administrative, and community – will provide a statistical description and measure of the city's safety and well-being environment and help to reveal statistical patterns, trends and relationships to further inform the planning process. Examples of secondary data sources include relevant census data; social services and housing program data; EMS call volume on related risk factors; North Bay police crime data; social assistance caseloads; public health unit datasets (e.g. opioid overdoses); and risk-based data (e.g. Gateway Hub RTD). As mentioned above, a literature review will also provide another source of secondary information and data to inform planning.

In summary, the CSWB plan research will draw information and data from a number of primary and secondary sources – an example of these are shown in Table 1 on the following page. It can be noted that the research will also be an exploratory and emergent process and not all these sources will necessarily be chosen for analysis. Similarly, the data will not be confined to these sources as other sources may be identified once the research and planning is underway.

| Data Sources Primary Data: Focus Groups, Interviews, Surveys | Table 1 Secondary Data: Public datasets, Administrative databases, Community data |
|---|--|
| Citizens of North Bay; General Public Private Sector (DIA, landlords, chamber of commerce) Education Sector (college, university, schools) Health Services (hospital, outreach programs, mental health services) Emergency Services (police, fire, EMS, CAS) Service provider agencies/organizations Vulnerable populations | Canada 2016 Census (Stats Can) Canada Taxfiler (Stats Can) CIHI (Canadian Institute for Health Information) Canadian Community Health Survey Risk Tracking Database (Gateway Hub) OW and ODSP caseloads EMS call volume North Bay Police Services; OPP Nipissing Parry Sound District Health Unit North Bay Regional Health Centre HIFIS; emergency shelter data Housing Access Nipissing Literature Review Other various secondary sources |

2.2 Data Collection

The following sub-sections provide an overview of the various methods that will be used to collect data from the above sources:

2.2.1 Primary Data Collection (Generally Qualitative)

Primary data is collected specifically for the purpose of developing North Bay’s CSWB plan and informing the strategies and action plan. Thus the collection methods (below) are designed to meet the plan’s objectives and answer specific research questions. This information and data does not currently exist anywhere in the local CSWB planning context.

As mentioned earlier, the main source for this data is community input gathered from CSWB stakeholders, service providers, target groups, and the general public. The following are the primary methods of data collection from these sources. It should be noted that while these are the main data collection methods for the plan, other collection methods may emerge through work with the Advisory Committee or as the research gets underway. For example, these might include case studies, personal experiences, visual text/methods, or life stories for those with lived experience.

(Note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions, public consultations, town halls, and open forums may not be possible or will take place but with smaller numbers as per public health directives at that time. Alternatively, these sessions will be replaced with synchronous (real-time) meetings where possible. The methods of community engagement will be determined, based on the status of COVID and public health measures at that time).

2.2.1.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups will be one of the primary data collection methods. These sessions will be designed around a set of questions and discussion points to gather valuable input from various stakeholders on local risk identification, intervention and prevention. The appropriate number of

local focus groups to hold is dependent on achieving adequate representation in the respective target groups and gathering enough information and data to answer the research questions. This in turn is influenced by the structure of the focus groups, the availability of participants, and the variability of participants, both within and across groups. The size of the research team to conduct the focus groups is another consideration. These and other factors will be considered when designing the focus group sessions with input from the CSWB Advisory Committee.

2.2.1.2 Interviews (one-on-one)

Interviews will be administered to key stakeholder informants and people with lived experience. Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter for those with lived experience (e.g. homelessness, domestic violence), this is the preferred method for receiving their input and feedback (although some may also participate in surveys). As interviewing this population calls for special interviewing skills and considerations, additional researchers and/or experienced staff familiar with their clients, will be invited to participate in conducting the interviews. Similar to the focus groups, the stakeholders and target population to be interviewed will be confirmed in consultation with the CSWB Advisory Committee.

2.2.1.3 Surveys

Surveys will be a common platform to gather various information and data from various groups in support of the research questions and objectives. Various electronic surveys (and paper-based surveys if need be) will be available for the general public and will also go out to community service provider agencies/organizations and other stakeholder groups. The survey design will likely follow a nonprobability sampling methodology with more of an emphasis on receiving input from specific groups to inform planning decisions and activities, rather than generalizing to a given population. The research team will develop and implement the surveys with input and support from the Advisory Committee.

2.2.2 Secondary Data Collection (Quantitative & Qualitative)

Secondary data refers to data that already exists and which, can be analyzed beyond what it was originally intended for – in this case for CSWB research and planning purposes. Generally, this data will include both quantitative and qualitative (categorical) data.

The following sub-sections provide an overview of the various methods that will be used to collect data from these sources.

2.2.2.1 Public and Open Data

There are numerous public data sources offering data that is relevant to CSWB planning. Some of these were mentioned earlier and include Statistics Canada, CMHC, CIHI, Health Quality Ontario, and Employment Ontario to name a few. Most of this data can be downloaded from websites and imported to statistical software for further analysis.

2.2.2.2 Administrative Databases

The community is sitting on vast amounts of administrative data and other datasets that could provide rich insight for informing the CSWB planning and strategy development process. As just one example, the Gateway Hub has a membership - including ad hoc members - of 46 local organizations, most of which have some sort of role to play in community safety and well-being.

The administrative data of these organizations alone would offer a powerful dataset when combining and cross-tabulating variables and fields of interest, and applying a lens of community safety and well-being. Collecting this (deanonymized) data will involve extensive data coordination with various organizations and service providers and may require data-sharing agreements that go beyond those which are currently in place.

2.2.2.3 Community /Unstructured Data

In addition to the administrative data above, some organizations will also have unstructured data which may be useful for CSWB research and planning purposes. This data is often in the form of loose Excel worksheets or workbooks floating around the office and is not necessarily structured or organized, or part of any database. Although this data often needs extra cleaning and work to prepare it for analysis and presentation, it may offer valuable nuggets of information and insights that otherwise would be missed.

2.2.2.4 Literature Review; Content Analysis

Data will also be collected through an informal literature review of community safety and well-being literature relevant to North Bay. The review will identify, evaluate, and descriptively synthesize, the community safety and well-being content from various reports, studies, and plans. As the review will be confined to content that is specific to North Bay it is expected that most of the content will be grey (unpublished) literature.

2.3 Data Analysis

Analyzing the above datasets will involve various statistical techniques which include thematic analysis, and descriptive and inferential statistics depending on the type of data collected. The analysis will also include GIS mapping of certain variables to provide a geographical perspective and deeper understanding of the data (for example, identifying high-risk neighborhoods in the city).

2.3.1 Asset Mapping

As referred to in the provincial CSWB planning framework, the researchers will also conduct an asset mapping exercise with analysis in various areas to help achieve the planning objectives and CSWB outcomes. The mapping will establish an inventory of community strengths and resources that can be used to build upon the existing experience and expertise in the community. It will also identify 'who is doing what', and gaps or duplication in the service system that need to be addressed to achieve desired outcomes such as matching the response to the need and coordinating community resources. The asset mapping will include analysis in the following areas:

Existing Body Inventory

Identifying CSWB-related organizations, service providers, committees, and community planning tables is important to see 'who is doing what' and the respective connections and roles these bodies play in developing and implementing North Bay's CSWB plan. The inventory will also help to reveal various characteristics of North Bay's multi-sectoral CSWB service system and set up the social network mapping and other inventory work to follow:

Social Network Mapping

Closely related to the above, it will be important to understand the relationships between the various bodies identified above (e.g. the Gateway Hub membership). Mapping this network will show the structure and level of integration of the network, and the extent to which sector partners and organizations work together, coordinate programs/ services, and share information and data.

Programs/ Services, Strategy Inventory

This inventory will establish the current CSWB-related programs and services offered in the community and the various strategies that are underway for reducing community risk and improving safety and well-being. The inventory will reveal any gaps or duplications in the service system and opportunities for coordinating and aligning resources.

2.3.2 Environmental Design

The concept of *crime prevention through environmental design* (CPTED) will also enter in to the analysis where relevant, and when considering strategies that may involve connecting the physical design of the environment to safety, crime reduction, and social interaction.

2.4 Study Risks/Limitations

The validity of any research project can be affected by certain risks and limitations and North Bay's Community Safety and Well-Being plan is no different. In this type of community study, the main risks and limitations pertain to error involving the research design itself - particularly data collection and potential bias. These are summarized below:

2.4.1 Focus Groups

The CSWB project will involve a number of focus groups across multiple sectors to capture the full range of experience and opinions. The prospective participants will be selected on the basis that they belong to a specific sector or group that has been identified as being important in the CSWB planning process. With this type of purposive sampling there is a possibility that those selected to participate in the focus groups will not be representative of the sector or group of interest. This can lead to unrepresentative and biased data. Additionally, and depending on group composition and dynamics, the group itself may influence the very data it produces. Or in other words, some participants may withhold things that they might otherwise say in private which also presents a representation problem.

To mitigate the above risk, the research team will work with the Community Advisory Committee in designing the focus groups and having the committee assist with participant selection and recruitment to ensure the best possible representation. The focus groups will also be less structured, and segmented by sector and relatively homogeneous to encourage free-flowing dialogue.

2.4.2 Interviews

From a CSWB perspective, people with lived experience include those that are experiencing or have lived through poverty, homelessness, crime, victimization, harm or other identified risk factors. Engaging this population and conducting interviews with them may prove to be difficult

given the challenge of locating and recruiting participants and the sensitivity of the topic. Similar to the above, the research team will need to work with the various organisations and service providers in the community to help identify suitable respondents and coordinate and conduct the interviews. (Note: some of those with lived experience may also participate in surveys).

2.4.3 Surveys

Community Organizations / Service Providers

Low survey response rates can also undermine the quality and accuracy of the data if representation is weak. As an example, the asset mapping described earlier will depend heavily on information and data that is collected through surveys sent to community organizations and service providers. If there is a low survey response rate this can bias the data and undermine the conclusions drawn from the results.

To reduce nonresponse it will be important to have project buy-in and enlist the cooperation of the community through effective communications and promotion. This can include sending out a letter in advance to intended survey respondents informing them of the survey and its importance and purpose, and how the information and data will be used. Additionally, community groups such as the Gateway Hub can help to promote the surveys and emphasize completion. Where possible, following up with those who have not responded to the surveys will also be an important part of the survey implementation and process.

General Public

While most of the CSWB plan survey work is based on purposive sampling for defined sub-populations and target groups, it is also necessary to receive planning input from North Bay's general public. Ideally, a probabilistic survey based on random sampling would be employed which would be more representative of the city's total population and allow generalizations to be made from the survey findings and conclusions. However, as this survey methodology is beyond the CSWB plan scope and budget, the public surveys will also be based on nonprobability sampling. Thus, the extent to which these survey results can inform the plan may be limited as they only apply to those who complete the surveys. While the research team will strive for a relatively large number of completed surveys to strengthen the results, adequate population representation is the more pressing issue.

2.4.4 Community and Administrative Data

There could be a relatively large amount of community and administrative data to be collected and analyzed as part of the research and planning process. Depending on the availability of the data and whether there are any barriers or conditions for accessing it (such as data sharing agreements), this may require extensive coordination with various organizations/service providers which could affect the process and project timelines.

Glossary

Collaboration: individuals, agencies or organizations, working together for a common purpose; acknowledging shared responsibility for reaching consensus in the interest of mutual outcomes; contributing complementary capabilities; willing to learn from each other; and benefiting from diverse perspectives, methods and approaches to common problems.

Community Safety and Well-Being: the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Crime Prevention: the anticipation, recognition and appraisal of a crime risk and the actions taken – including the integrated community leadership required – to remove or reduce it.

Evidence-based: policies, programs and/or initiatives that are derived from or informed by the most current and valid empirical research or practice that is supported by data and measurement.

Harm: physical or psychological damage or injury.

Incident Response: for the purpose of CSWB planning, an incident response is an immediate and often reactionary response involving a sense of urgency such as police, fire, emergency medical services,

Partners: agencies, organizations, individuals from all sectors, and government which agree to a common association toward mutual goals of betterment through shared responsibilities, complementary capabilities, transparent relationships, and joint decision-making.

People with Lived Experience: Those who have experienced or lived through any of the risk factors identified in the CSWB plan.

Primary Data: data that is collected by a researcher from first-hand sources, using methods like surveys, interviews, or experiments.

Risk Factors: negative characteristics or conditions in individuals, families, communities or society that may increase social disorder, crime or fear of crime, or the likelihood of harms or victimization to persons or property.

Secondary Data: data that is collected by someone other than the user. Common sources of secondary data for social science include censuses, information collected by government departments, organizational records and data that was originally collected for other research purposes.

References

Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework, *A Shared Commitment in Ontario*; Booklet 3, Version 2.

Appendix

1. DNSSAB Project Team

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2. CSWB Advisory Committee (Gateway Hub-Primary Members)

Children's Aid Society of Nipissing and Parry Sound

Community Counselling Centre of Nipissing

Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord

Conseil scolaire public du Nord Est de l'Ontario

Crisis Centre North Bay

District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (OW)

Hands - The Family Help Network

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Near North District School Board

Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services

Nipissing Parry Sound Catholic School Board

North Bay Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

North Bay Police Services

North Bay Regional Health Centre (Crisis Intervention, ER)

Ontario Health North

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) North Bay

3. North Bay CSWB Planning and Research Activities Timeline