THUNDER BAY COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING (CSWB) PLANNING

"What We Heard" Report: Phase 2 CSWB Community Engagement: Actions and Strategies
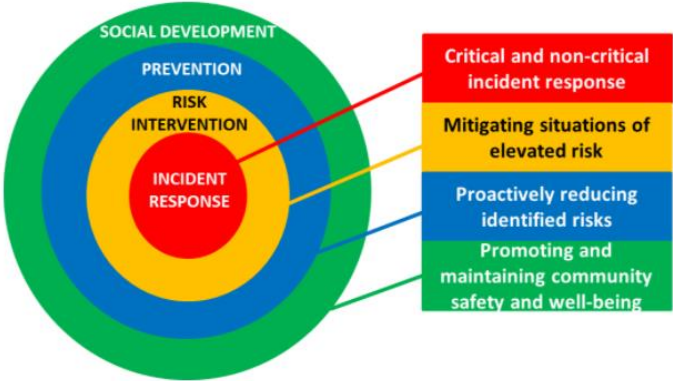
May 2021

"What We Heard" Report – Phase 2

In accordance with the direction of Thunder Bay City Council, the Crime Prevention Council is tasked with coordinating the development of a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan for our municipality, as required under provincial legislation. This work is taking place with the guidance and collaboration of the CSWB Steering Committee, which is comprised of members of the Crime Prevention Council and other community partners. While City Council will have the approval authority for the plan, we all have a role to play in the development of local priorities and actions. The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of 'what we heard' from Thunder Bay residents and stakeholders throughout the second engagement period of the project, which began on March 2, 2021 and closed on May 2, 2021. This engagement data will be used to help inform the actions and strategies selected for Thunder Bay's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

BACKGROUND

Effective Jan. 1, 2019, new legislation mandates all Ontario municipalities to prepare and adopt a community safety and well-being (CSWB) plan that proactively addresses locally identified priority risks to community safety and well-being. Additional requirements are also outlined in the legislation pertaining to conducting consultations, contents of the plan, and monitoring, evaluating, reporting and publishing the plan. On March 11, 2019, Thunder Bay City Council appointed the Crime Prevention Council as the Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the CSWB plan for Thunder Bay. The province has developed a Framework to guide municipalities in this work, which encourages a deeper understanding of four areas to ensure local plans are efficient and effective in making communities safer and healthier. These include Social Development, Prevention, Risk Intervention and Incident Response.

Figure 1: Provincial Framework for CSWB Planning

While the original deadline for municipal approval of community safety and well-being plans was January 1, 2021, due to the pandemic, the provincial government authorized the Solicitor General to delay this deadline until July 1, 2021. In 2019, the Crime Prevention Council established Working Groups and a Steering Committee to guide the development of the plan. The Community Engagement Working Group coordinated and implemented both Phase 1 and Phase 2 Community Engagement processes,

which resulted in the identification of the local priorities for the CSWB plan and will inform specific actions and strategies for each. The Data Working Group conducted a comprehensive local data review, including the selection of seven domains and numerous indicators that help tell the story of community safety and well-being in Thunder Bay. A data report will be made available in the summer of 2021. The goal throughout the project has been to ensure a collaborative approach with different engagement formats to be used throughout the project timeline. Furthermore, the plan will not duplicate any work already underway but rather, will align with, complement, leverage and build on work already occurring.

OBJECTIVES OF PHASE 2 CSWB ENGAGEMENT

The purpose of Phase 2 was to:

• Share back with the community the results of Phase 1 Community Engagement through the Phase 1 What We Heard Report, including the six local priorities;

• Continue to raise awareness amongst residents and stakeholders about Thunder Bay's CSWB Plan;

• Inform residents and stakeholders of their role in the planning process; and

• Obtain feedback on specific actions and strategies that can be taken to address the local priorities in Thunder Bay.

ENGAGEMENT TEAM

The CSWB Community Engagement Working Group, comprised of members of the Crime Prevention Council, planned for, coordinated, and implemented the Phase 2 Community Engagement process. Through this process, they captured feedback on the key challenges and barriers related to the six local priorities, and specific actions and strategies to be considered to help address these priorities in Thunder Bay.

HOW WE ENGAGED

Methodology
Mixed engagement methods were used in an effort to reach more residents from different backgrounds. Unfortunately, all engagement methods were conducted and/or made available online only. We recognize the limitations of this approach; however, this consultation period took place during an extended lock-down period related to the COVID-19 pandemic, when it was not possible to offer any inperson engagement opportunities. We acknowledge that there are voices missing in the information gathered, and we are committed to creating opportunities to include their voices whenever possible moving forward.

Three engagement methods were used, as follows:

1. Virtual Community Forums

2. Community Conversations

3. Online 24/7 Portal on the City of Thunder Bay's Get Involved Public Engagement Platform

On March 2, a Virtual CSWB Information Session was held to share with the community the results of the CSWB Phase 1 Community Engagement, including the six local priorities that were identified during that phase. Seven Virtual Community Forums followed, between March 9 and March 18. See Table 1 for a full list of engagement activities and participants. A Community Conversations Facilitators' Guide for Phase 2 Community Engagement was also developed. This included background information on CSWB planning and guiding questions and was made available so residents could host their own engagement sessions.

Communications

In January 2020, the City of Thunder Bay's Corporate Communications developed a page on the City of Thunder Bay's Get Involved Public Engagement Platform. The page includes background information on the CSWB plan requirements, and details on Phase 1 and 2 Community Engagement opportunities. Phase 2 Community Engagement opportunities were promoted through this platform and via the City's and the Crime Prevention Council's social media pages, as well as through email lists and a media release.

Engagement Reach:

• 200 people participated in the Virtual Forums

• 8 people participated in the Online 24/7 Portal

Phase 1 Community Engagement Activities and Participants

Thirty-six people participated in the Virtual Community CSWB Information Session on March 2, 2021.

Twenty-eight people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Housing on March 9, 2021.

Forty-two people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Racism and Discrimination on March 10, 2021.

Eighteen people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Mental Well-Being on March 11, 2021.

Ten people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Youth on March 12, 2021.

Twenty people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Community Violence with a focus on Gender-based Violence on March 16, 2021.

Eighteen people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Poverty Reduction and Financial Empowerment on March 17, 2021.

Twenty-one people participated in the Virtual Community Forum: Local Priority – Supports for Children, Youth and Families on March 18, 2021.

Seven people participated in the People with Lived Experience Committee on April 8, 2021.

Eight people participated in the 24/7 Online Portal from March 2 to May 2, 2021.

A total of 208 people participated in the above-listed community engagement activities.

Phase 2 Community Engagement Results: Summary

Participants in this phase were asked to identify actions and strategies to address each local priority.

Data from all engagement methods were themed to identify top responses, which are outlined below. Please note: these results represent the themes heard and the actions recommended for each of the six local priorities.

Local Priority 1: Housing

What actions should be considered to address housing and homelessness?

• Develop more supportive and transitional housing

• Establish a women's-only shelter

• Provide more affordable housing options

• Create more affordable housing options for youth aging out of care

• Provide diverse housing options such as tiny homes, cooperatives, non-profits, housing for larger families and blended families

• Make more 1-bedrooms and larger units (4+ bedrooms) available

• Increase accessible housing options

• Increase supports for seniors so they can age in place/home

• Provide better housing options for people from out of town who come to Thunder Bay to access services

• Provide wrap around services for individuals who require more support to access and maintain housing

• Create more community navigator positions

• Increase access to technology

• Provide more support with the housing application process

• Advocate for more capital funding from federal and provincial governments to address housing needs

• Use the Housing First model

• More political action

• Address poverty, mental health, substance use

• Spread subsidized units throughout the city so neighbourhoods will not be identified and stigmatized

• Develop incentive program for homeowners to add one additional unit for rent

• Encourage densification of downtown commercial cores; make these areas more vibrant

• Change City Zoning to all for tiny homes

• Advocate for funding models that reflect we are a regional hub

• Review City bylaws and assist developers in building more housing

Local Priority 2: Racism and Discrimination

What actions should be considered to address racism and discrimination?

• Create more educational opportunities for the community to learn about the Indigenous history in Canada, colonization, racism and related issues (i.e., Kairos Blanket Exercise)

• Develop an equity and human rights lens

• Encourage and support agencies, organizations and businesses to join the Anti-Racism and Inclusion Accord, and publicly commit to addressing racism within their organization

• Call out racism within our social circles

• Establish a Human Rights committee

• Create more welcoming spaces within the city

• Make all municipal facilities safe and inclusive spaces

• Improve education in schools and all institutions

• Identify our own biases

• Create more opportunities for inclusion of people with disabilities in sports and events

• Deconstruct colonialism, oppression, and do not rely on members of the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) community to educate us

• Work more closely with Fort William First Nation

• Create more cultural events for diverse groups

• Complete a review of the TRC recommendations to see what more can be done

• Encourage more reporting of hate crimes • Address stigma, racism and discrimination when applying for jobs and housing

Local Priority 3: Mental Well-Being

What actions should be considered to address mental well-being?

• Create more treatment options and services

• Advocate for a crisis center model to provide holistic services and support immediate needs

• Advocate for more treatment services for children closer to home, so they don't have to leave their communities to access mental health, developmental, or treatment services

• Increase awareness about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma and resilience

• Increase access to recreational opportunities

• Address systemic racism and inequity

• Create more social navigator positions

• Increase harm reduction services: meet people where they are at

• Advocate to provincial and federal governments for increased supports and services for this region

• Advocate for more supports for First Nation communities

• Create more peer mentorship programs for youth

• Establish alternatives to wellness checks by police

• Improve digital equity (devices and data plans)

• Create spaces for teaching lodges and culture camps

• Increase supports for families

• Increase supports for those who use substances

• Develop a community/neighbourhood hub model to offer services and reduce barriers (i.e., transportation)

• Reduce waitlists for accessing children and youth mental health services

• Reduce waitlists for treatment

• Develop pre-treatment centres

• Ensure cultural safety is included in programs

• Create more opportunities for education, and education that is culturally safe

• Explore feasibility of alternative/specialized courts (i.e., drug court and mental health court)

Local Priority 4: Community violence with a focus on gender-based violence

What actions should be considered to address community violence, with a focus on gender-based violence?

• Increase community education and awareness around violence and gender based violence (i.e., workshops, social media campaigns)

• Improve systemic response to domestic violence that holds everyone to account and keeps women and children safe

• Build protective factors

• Create a women's only shelter

• Create better options for individuals when they are ready to exit human trafficking

• Support community groups that are taking action (i.e., grassroots)

• Increase efforts to address mental health

• Increase supports to address elder abuse

• Raise awareness about what resources are currently available

• Make perpetrators more accountable for violence against women and children

• Find efficiencies in existing systems

• Celebrate successes in our community and share information about positive efforts like the Impact Pilot Project

• Prevent and mitigate adverse childhood experiences

• Teach healthy relationships to younger children

• Develop primary violence prevention efforts to reduce risk factors

• Develop more mentorship and youth programs

• Promote 211 as community referral service

• Create a Neighbourhood Watch program

Local Priority 5: Poverty Reduction and Financial Empowerment

What actions should be considered to address poverty?

• Advocate for Universal Basic Income and Living Wage

• Make public transportation, healthy food, dental care, housing, childcare, elder care, and prescription drugs more affordable

• Improve access to digital technology (i.e., cellphones and internet)

• Increase awareness and accessibility of information, resources and opportunities

• Make information about poverty reduction efforts more visible

• Increase access for all children to participate in activities in the community, such as organized sports, music or clubs (i.e., ProKids)

• Establish opportunities in neighbourhoods where people can access help and help each other

• Create more jobs with apprenticeships for students leaving school

• Create more accessible fitness opportunities

• Establish more programs to help people transition from dependency to self-sufficiency

• Invest upstream to address poverty at the systems level

• Keep the poverty reduction conversation going in the media, with MPs, MPPs

• Develop educational opportunities for the community to learn about the roots of poverty, to help address stigma. Must be culturally safe.

• Advocate for ongoing funding for projects-to continue after COVID funding ends

• Increase community understanding about the social determinants of health and adverse childhood experiences

• Improve access to all benefits people are eligible for/entitled to

• Increase financial literacy and empowerment

• Promote local programs that help to increase financial literacy and empowerment

• Provide financial education to youth (i.e. how to manage, budget and save their money)

Local Priority 6: Supports for children, youth and families

What actions should be considered to improve supports for children, youth and families?

• Increase awareness of services available in the community

• Increase supports for youth so all youth graduate high school

• Increase housing supports for youth transitioning our of care

• Increase number of youth navigators in neighbourhoods

• Create a youth-only shelter

• Create more transitional housing for youth

• Create more affordable recreation options

• Provide access to digital technology

• Increase free and safe activities for families to participate in

• Promote youth peer leaders and role models who can support resilience, and develop youth capacity to counter negative influences

• Create more safe spaces/hubs for youth where they can hang out.

• Make the educational system as accessible and welcoming as possible

• Create more neighbourhood approaches to supporting families

• Use recreation centres in all neighbourhoods

• Promote parenting/kids bonding at community events

• Support more grassroots Indigenous presence in leadership, administration and committees

• Empower community-driven efforts

• Focus on upstream investment

• Increase police presence in some areas-they need to be more visible; increase in neighbourhood programs so police can get to know people in the neighbourhood

• Reconnect people back to language and land

• Complete an asset mapping and have a common repository, i.e. 211 with categories, by age, location, services available

• Offer professional development in neighbourhoods and empower them; give more power to the people in neighbourhoods

• Provide education about gangs and human trafficking

• Improve promotion of youth programs in Thunder Bay

• Increase representation of Indigenous and people of colour in positions of power

• Promote the Kids Help Phone

• Create neighbourhood hubs where everyone can feel safe

• Increase safe recreation and art spaces

• Provide more systems navigation for youth

It is important to note that the full engagement data also includes other actions that were shared and are meaningful to some residents. Some comments are not included here, but they did help us better understand the intersectionality and interconnectedness of other issues raised, and the impacts on different groups of people.

Next Steps:

This input will help guide the development of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, which will be presented to Thunder Bay City Council in June 2021. A data report, which identifies the domains and indicators for the CSWB plan will be released in June of 2021.

Thank you to all residents and stakeholders who took the time to provide valuable feedback for the development of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

We look forward to co-developing a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan that truly reflects the needs and priorities in our community, and improves safety and well-being for all.