KELOWNA COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2021 PRIMER

COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN (CSP)

Purpose Statement: Engage systems, organizations, and citizens to co-create a shared vision and a realistic five-year action plan to address, through collaborative effort, the risk and protective factors underlying crime, vulnerability, and harm in Kelowna.

Vision: Creating a community where all people are safe and feel safe.

Background: Since 2017 when Ontario legislated municipalities to create CSPs, such efforts have become increasingly common across Canada. Although there is no single approach or form for CSPs, they all seek to engage a cross-section of government and non-government leaders as well as the broader community through a process designed to generate a shared vision and commitment to actions that address local conditions to improve community safety and sense of safety.

CSPs are grounded in the knowledge that social, economic, community, familial, and individual conditions and experiences (i.e., trauma) significantly influence whether a person is likely to come in conflict with the law. Consistent with the social determinants of health, CSPs focus on decreasing risk and conditions *and* increasing protective factors known to impact pathways to pro-social values, attitudes, and behaviour or, alternatively, crime.
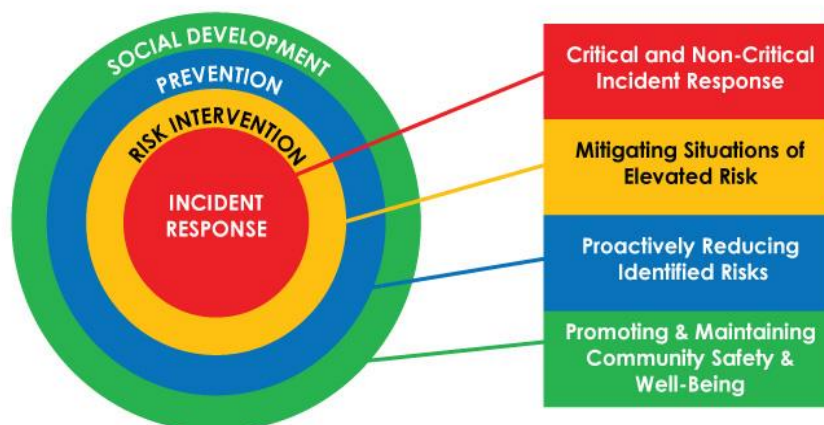
Risk and protective factors are varied. Some, typically led by federal and provincial governments, require broad-based, long-term, sustained investments and commitments by example, social inequalities such as racism, poverty, and conversely privilege. Others are readily achievable through localized consensus, leadership, and commitment to action. For example:

- Community: neighbourhood cohesion via access to social, recreational, and cultural resources.
- Schools: focus on academic underachievement and attachment to school.
- Families: positive family dynamics and consistent rather than erratic parenting.
- Individual: good mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health along with the ability to seek and acquire support, when needed.

Evidenced in these examples is that risk and protective factors align directly with the mandates of all orders of government and varied institutions (i.e., community, cultural, education, social, health and enforcement). Accordingly, CSPs are fundamentally based on the belief that a "systems-based approach", one that has varied organizations enhancing how they work together is critical for success.

Essentially, CSPs are focused on reducing risks, vulnerabilities, and harm. While police are focused on **crime reduction** (attending to the people, places and situations already known to have a crime and victimization issue), CSPs are more about <u>upstream approaches to crime prevention</u>; attending to the people, places and situations not yet troubled/known. The Community Safety Framework below highlights the different "levels" of prevention/interventions that are possible.

COMMUNITY SAFETY FRAMEWORK

Social Development	Longer-term strategies (>five years) to improve social determinants of health for the general population and enhancing local capacity (skills, knowledge, and resources).
Prevention	Pragmatic, medium term (two to five years) strategies that collectively identify and target priority risks and/protective factors at the level of community.
Risk Intervention	Targeted, short to medium term (6 months to three years) efforts to prevent escalation/recurrence of vulnerability / criminality / harm often at the level of individual or groups before an enforcement response is required
Emergency Response	Immediate response to urgent incidents to stop harms, minimize victimization and hold individuals responsible.

The Kelowna Community Safety Plan is committed to being tangible, pragmatic and targeted. While remaining aspirational and challenge the status-quo of how systems operate, it will endeavor to be realistic in the context of "real-world" constraints (i.e., organizational structures and budgets) and the great complexities of bringing together multiple organizations and communities to co-create and implement a plan. The Kelowna CSP will seek solutions that are *achievable locally* and *within the next five years*.

With this focus on delivering tangible results and having measurable impact through localized action, the Kelowna CSP priorities/objectives/initiatives will focus on prevention, risk intervention and social development to reduce the demands for incident response.

DEFINING COMMUNITY SAFETY

There is no single or universal definition of community safety. Often, it is viewed and assessed simplistically by the presence or absence of crime and victimization and, in more recent years, a reported sense of safety. Critically, in the Kelowna CSP, community safety will be:

- broadly interpreted as much more than the frequency or severity of crime and victimization or the visible presence and profile of "social issues",
- understood to include people's perceptions, sense of safety and sense of vulnerability;
- recognized as one piece of overall community vitality and well-being;
- regarded as fundamental to the quality of life and the ability of people to fully participate in community; and
- assumed to be relevant to <u>all</u> who live, work, learn and play in Kelowna.

Fundamental to community safety is the reduction of vulnerability and a decrease in the number of people already on a *pathway to criminality.* In doing so, we seek to create an ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, feels safe, has sense of belonging, and access to the services and opportunities that Kelowna has to offer.

COMMUNITY SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Generally, developing a CSP includes looking at what currently exists and is working well to support community safety as well as identifying challenges and needs to be met. To do so, conducting a community safety assessment is a vital step. It is important to include quantitative and qualitative data sources in this process because in combination, they can provide a more holistic understanding of local risks and protective factors.

Quantitative Data (Data Collection and Analysis)
Quantitative data and analysis involve the identification, collection, and analysis of indicators that speak to community context, demographics, crime and disorder, health and well-being, perceptions of safety, risk factors, as well as impact and economic costs of various local issues. The use of quantitative data is an important part of any community safety assessments as they can powerfully convey **the dimensions** of a particular problem or issue, providing answers to questions about what and how much is happening.

Qualitative Data (Community Consultations), May 2021
Qualitative data supporting the development of Kelowna's CSP was collected through community consultations. Such consultations help to overcome gaps in the quantitative data, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of safety, particularly among those who tend to be more marginalized or experience more challenges related to community safety and crime prevention when compared to the rest of the population. Incorporating qualitative data when assessing community safety (both real and perceived) helps ensure the inclusion of different but important perspectives on community safety such as more in-depth, personal information and, in some cases, experiences of citizens.

The goals of engaging with the community are to:

- Inform the planning process
- Understand how people think and feel about safety
- Ensure that needs and priorities of the community are addressed in the plan.

IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY SAFETY PLANS

Crime prevention experts and practitioners, governments, and inter-governmental agencies have identified a list of "essentials" for the successful implementation of community safety efforts. Municipalities that have implemented these essential elements have achieved positive results and fostered *sustainable* implementation of community safety efforts.

DEDICATED RESOURCES IN CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Dedicated resources that can be the "energy" behind developing and implementing local community safety plans goes a long way in achieving the planning objectives. The role of the local office includes mobilizing talent, facilitating the exchange of information between various sectors, and disseminating and exchanging pertinent information to key stakeholders and the public.

INFORMED BY PREVENTION SCIENCE AND DATA

Basing community safety and crime prevention efforts on a multidisciplinary foundation of knowledge about community safety challenges, their multiple causes, and promising and proven practices is also important for success. Since 2010, the availability of solid prevention science has exploded on portals and in national and international science reports and evidence-based data are thus readily available.

PLANNING USING ASSESSMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION

A local plan that mobilizes various community and economic sectors to prevent harm and is supported by local government can ensure that the assessments of community safety challenges remain locally focused. The plan can also outline performance standards, targeted solutions, training protocol, and outcome indicators.

MOBILIZING SECTORS AND LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS TO TACKLE CAUSES

Because of the nature of the risk factors that lead to violence and lack of safety, a permanent crime prevention office can mobilize talent to help solve the problems. These individuals might include social workers, educators, health professionals, employment specialists, and sports figures as well as Criminal Justice System workers. Furthermore, it is important to leverage partnerships among relevant ministries and sectors to ensure buy-in and accountability at the decision-making level.

ADEQUATE AND SUSTAINED FUNDING

Sustainable funding of community safety and crime prevention initiatives with a clear accountability for implementation, and evaluation furthers the achievement of planned results. We cannot expect small, temporary, and neighbourhood-based projects funding alone to lead reductions in violence across an entire city.

STANDARDS AND TRAINING FOR HUMAN TALENT

For innovations to be successful, they require the human talent capable of planning and implementing effective solutions. Just as we would not expect a police officer to make an arrest without training or a lawyer to prosecute without attending law school, we should not expect the planning, community engagement, or monitoring and evaluation functions of community safety plans to happen without training human talent.

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

The public can play many roles in applying violence prevention science. They can become mentors, take precautions, and help to map crime. They also advocate for funding to implement local community safety plans/strategies.

CHAMPIONSHIP

It is not enough to just raise awareness; the need for action is urgent. To that end, politicians and decision-makers in all orders of government must be brought to the community safety table and be provided with new tools to increase community safety and well-being.