

# Report to Council



**Date:** June 17 2024  
**To:** Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** Community Safety Plan Annual Update  
**Department:** Community Safety

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**Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Safety Department dated June 17, 2024, with respect to the 2024 progress of Kelowna’s Community Safety Plan.

**Purpose:**

To provide Council with the second annual progress report for Kelowna’s Community Safety Plan.

**Council Priority Alignment:**

- Crime & Safety
- Affordable Housing
- Homelessness

**Background:**

In 2021, the City convened and led the development of the first-ever Kelowna Community Safety Plan (CSP) through a comprehensive and collaborative process with social, health, education, and justice system leaders. It was informed by the diverse voices of nearly 900 people including community members, representatives from 30+ organizations, City Council, and national subject matter experts.

The CSP is a five-year action plan to reduce risk, vulnerability, and harm, and create a community where all people are safe and feel safe. It is intentionally pragmatic with its focus on “upstream” actions that are realistically achievable through concerted efforts locally. The CSP provides a strategy to align the work and resources of diverse sectors and agencies and to re-shape how we, together, prioritize issues and interventions, and improve our collective response. The CSP was endorsed by City Council in spring 2022 and this report reflects progress and results accomplished in the second year of implementation.

**Implementation:**

*Five Priorities, 15 Recommendations, 30 Actions*

Since 2022, implementation has been led by a Stewardship Team comprised of senior representatives from City of Kelowna, RCMP, Interior Health, Ministry of Children & Family Development, Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction, Okanagan College, School District 23, and KCR Community

Resources (KCR). This Team, supported by operational Action Teams, has advanced all five CSP Priorities with quantitative and qualitative data in place to monitor and evaluate. Notably, 55 organizations and agencies have actively engaged, to date, on a pathway to impactful results for our community through their CSP Action Team participation. Currently, 12 of the 30 Actions are at various stages of implementation, including five projects that deemed “completed” in the last year (Table 1).

**Table 1: CSP Actions Completed & In Progress (June 2024)**

#	Action	Lead Agency/Organization	Status	Estimated Timing
<b>1 Crime Prevention, Intervention and Sense of Safety</b>				
1.1	Enhance effectiveness of referral systems/committees (e.g., KOaST) with the mandate to connect at-risk people to appropriate services.	City of Kelowna	Initiated	2024 - 2025
1.2	Explore the creation of alternative, community-based responses (e.g., intervention, outreach, and social navigation) to police calls involving people in crisis.	City of Kelowna and RCMP	Completed	
2.2	Support and expand family support services (e.g., through a community hub) to promote and strengthen healthy lifestyles and to enhance child and family development.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Initiated	2024 - 2025
2.4	Build on early intervention and prevention approach to identify and connect at-risk youth to integrated, wrap-around supports and services with the goal of reducing school disengagement, preventing homelessness, and connecting youth requiring mental health supports.	BGC Okanagan and School District 23	Completed	
4.3	Expand the Strong Neighbourhoods program to further support neighbour connection, engagement, safety, and sense of belonging. Empowering residents to animate and enhance public spaces, and inspiring new social opportunities.	City of Kelowna	Planning	2024 - 2026
<b>2 Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence</b>				
7.2	Enhance collaborative community partnerships to wrap around affected youth and adults.	Ministry of Children and Family Development	Completed	
<b>3 Housing and Homelessness</b>				
8.2	Improve planning and emergency responses to vulnerable populations. (e.g., warming/cooling stations, shelters, and disaster response).	City of Kelowna	Monitoring	2022 - 2024
9.1	Advance city planning initiatives to ensure Kelowna has a balanced housing system positioned to address the social and economic needs of the region. (e.g., Healthy Housing Strategy and Official Community Plan 2040)	City of Kelowna	Monitoring	2022 - 2025
9.2	Support individuals who are precariously housed or experiencing homelessness with connections to income support and services within the community.	Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction	Monitoring	2022 - 2026
9.3	Implement an anti-stigma campaign aimed at changing people’s perceptions and levels of understanding regarding homelessness, especially those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.	City of Kelowna	Completed	
<b>4 Mental Health and Problematic Substance Use (including alcohol)</b>				
10.2	Improve accessibility of mental health services for youth.	Interior Health	Monitoring	2022 – 2024
<b>5 Racism and Discrimination</b>				
13.2	Create an action table to assess and explore strategies to reduce racism and discrimination.	KCR Community Resources, United Against Discrimination Coalition	Completed	

Highlights over the last year are offered in Appendix A.

### **Learnings and Opportunities:**

#### **1. Role of Stewardship Team Members and City Secretariat**

As with all collaborative initiatives, the ability of senior leaders from partnering organizations to fully participate amidst the pressures and constraints of their respective portfolios can be challenging. Even with these realities, CSP Stewardship Team members are demonstrating exceptional commitment and dedication. Their participation, and the critical ongoing support from their respective organizations, remains paramount to the ultimate success of the vision and CSP.

Re-prioritizing work within the Community Safety Department enabled a dedicated person to serve as a “Secretariat” for the CSP and the Stewardship Team. Facilitating resources, establishing communication channels, and staying abreast of community and other developments that influence implementation is ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the CSP.

#### **2. Metrics and Evaluation**

Increasingly, there is a realization that evaluating and monitoring comprehensive multi-sector initiatives is challenging and complex. A multitude of questions such as what outcomes to focus on in each priority area, what indicators should be chosen and how information can be sought and collected from the Action Teams continue to arise.

In May 2024, the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) selected the City of Kelowna as one of 10 pilot cities for the Community & Urban Safety Monitoring Project. This project offers guidance, tools, and training on evaluating and monitoring our local CSP, while creating a cross-Canada support network.

### **Next steps and Timelines:**

Action 1.1 will initiate an Action Team focused on enhancing the effectiveness of referral systems/committees (e.g., KOaST) in collaboration with outreach community partners to connect at-risk people to appropriate services.

Action 4.3 Team has established their project framework to expand the Strong Neighbourhoods program, intentionally focused on expanding the Block Connector Program to have a presence in targeted neighbourhoods based on community safety data. This Action will also support Recommendation 2.1 of the Mayor’s Task Force on Crime Reduction.

In Q3, four CSP Actions are on target to conclude, creating an opportunity for new Actions to be initiated by the Stewardship Team. The CCFSC Community & Urban Safety Monitoring Project has initiated its onboarding and training process, and the first steps of applying the framework will soon follow.

### **Conclusion:**

The CSP is on track, and while the results highlighted within this report show positive progress, we continue to explore new and well-defined ways to describe the achievements of each Action Team with the assurance we stay on track for final project resolution.

The CSP continues to inspire and, importantly, enable a shift in “how we work”; from siloed organizations advancing isolated interventions toward a truly coordinated and collaborative approach in which this

cross-section of organizations and people work differently by elevating their partnerships to accomplish collective impact.

Momentum amongst the Stewardship Team and the supporting Action Teams is evident as measurable actions and results emerge. The breadth of initiatives, their “reach” in terms of the number of community organizations and members involved, and their impact is significant and growing. The Stewardship Team is well positioned for continued advancement of the CSP.

**Internal Circulation:**

Active Living & Culture  
Communications Department

Submitted by: D. Caul, Community Safety Director

**Approved for inclusion:**



Stu Leatherdale, Divisional Director, Corporate & Protective Services

cc: J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
L. Corcoran, Acting Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services

## APPENDIX A: Highlights

### Priority 1: Crime Prevention, Intervention & Sense of Safety

**CSP Recommendation:** Strengthen upstream prevention and early intervention to reduce risks, harm, crime, and victimization.

**Action 1.2:** The creation of an alternative, community-led peer-assisted (non-police) model for responding to select police calls involving a person in crisis.

**Results:**

Through a collaborative process involving government and non-government social and health partners, the Downtown Kelowna Association and RCMP, an evidence-based model was developed. In support of Action 1.2, City Council recently approved \$250K for 2024, increasing to \$500K ongoing in 2025. This funding enables City staff to engage potential funding partners (i.e., provincial government and/or grants) in discussions to fully realize and operationalize this ~\$1.2M annual initiative.

**Action 2.4:** CSP-action enabled BGC Okanagan to increase grant funding available to the Upstream Program; a community-based initiative that provides prevention and early intervention services to Grade 8 students and families.

**Results:**

Three schools participated – KLO, Spring Valley and Dr Knox Middle Schools

- 702 students surveyed
- 243 identified as needing support
- 110 new referrals consented to support

Of 158 participants, 93 per cent report improvement in their mental health and well-being

This initiative fosters a sense of belonging and an increased resilience for students, offering comprehensive services and support to keep youth in school and prevent homelessness. The long-term goal is to have this program in ALL schools in the Okanagan.

### Priority 5: Racism & Discrimination

**CSP Recommendation:** Recognize and reject racism and discrimination in Kelowna.

**Action 13.2:** Identification and strengthening of a community table to continue to explore strategies to reduce racism and discrimination. Comprehensive reviews and community engagement activities were conducted to understand the prevalence and causes of racism and discrimination, leading to the development of actionable strategies and initiatives.

**Results:**

- Increased awareness and stronger allyship in the community
- Public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives reached a wide range of organizations and agencies across the Central Okanagan
- Collaboration efforts with KCR Community Resources provided an opportunity for residents to engage in anti-racism work and network with community members in a safe space.

This initiative has emphasized the need to strengthen the ability to address racism and hate to build a safe and inclusive community for all.