



Committee of the Whole

April 2, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Council Chambers, Town Hall

359 Main Street

Agenda

1. Approval of Agenda

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Committee of the Whole Minutes, March 5, 2024
- b. Special Committee of the Whole Minutes (Budget V3), March 19, 2024

3. Presentations

- a. MacKayla Ogilvie, East Kings Community Health Coordinator
- b. Community Safety Office Final Report and Recommendations presentation by Dr Stephen Schneider

4. Public Input / Question Period

PLEASE NOTE:

- Public Participation is limited to 30 minutes
- Each Person is limited to 3 minutes and may return to speak once, for 1 minute, if time permits within the total 30-minute period
- Questions or comments are to be directed to the Chair
- Comments and questions that relate to personnel, current or potential litigation issues, or planning issues for which a public hearing has already occurred, but no decision has been made by Council, will not be answered.



5. Committee Reports (Internal)

(No reports)

6. CAO Report

7. Staff Reports for Discussion

- a. IR 006-2024 Accessibility Report Card to March 2024
- b. IR 010-2024: Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model Draft Study and Planning Document
- c. IR 008-2024: Wolfville International Support Program
- d. RFD 017-2024 Policy#110-010, Public Input policy Amendments
- e. RFD 018-2024 Policy#110-015, Presentation to Council Policy
- f. RFD 019-2024 Policy# 120-006, Flag Flying Policy Amendments
- g. RFD 020-2024 Policy#120-012, Repeal of Town and Gown Policy
- h. RFD 021-2024 2024 Spring Debenture Pre-Approval
- i. RFD 024-2024 Welcome Centre Extra Costs for Unsuitable Soils

8. Committee Reports (External)

- a. Wolfville Business Development Corporation (WBDC)
- b. Diversity Kings (DK)
- c. Inter-Municipal Services Agreement for Valley Waste & Kings Transit (IMSA for VW & KTA) *(report to follow)*
- d. Valley REN
- e. Regional Recreation Facility

9. Public Input / Question Period

10. Regular Meeting Adjourned

Economic Prosperity * Social Equity * Climate Action * Community Wellness

Information Updates

Engineering and Public Works

The leaf and yard waste service level option review has been delegated to Corporate Services for Inter-Municipal Service Agreement discussions. Details will flow back to Council as they are available.

Work on Fairfield has resumed and is expected to wrap up quickly if the weather holds. Notifications for access restrictions due to sidewalk construction have been issued door-to-door.

The University Ave water transmission main project is back on track. CBCL was asked for a design re-work due to Acadia infrastructure is now complete, and work should resume at the start of April. The contractor is in direct contact with Acadia to manage access restrictions to their parking lot.

Staff also met with representatives from Acadia to begin infrastructure discussions focused on possible land swap scenarios for the dyke lands, and some of this year's projects. We need further discussion to determine who is responsible for ownership and maintenance of what pieces of infrastructure, and for what costs when repairs are required.

Willow Park Welcome Centre

The new Welcome Centre build has started. The demolition of old building is complete as is the placement of reinforced, engineered fill allowing formwork for the foundation to proceed.

Due to the construction, there is a high likelihood that opening the splashpad will be delayed until due to the dangers associated with an active construction site. Communications will be drafted once we are closer to the end of the school year when the splash pad has historically been opened.

Siding colours have been selected for the new Welcome Centre - Maibec MB 315 Porcelain for the siding, and MB 016 Hematite for the trim. An accessible shower has been approved by Council and has been added to the plans. Council did not approve a metal roof so shingles will be used.

Information Technology

The IT Department has undergone a cyber security assessment conducted by Grant Thornton. Ethical hackers have been evaluating the Towns vulnerabilities. This was accomplished by performing external network penetration tests, and internal network exposure analysis.

The measures that IT has put in place over this past year, including: a world class firewall; password length, complexity and forced changes; as well as a state-of-the-art antivirus system, have resulted in greatly increased security. The evaluation has returned positive reports on user security.

We will be working on more ventures to further our security which will include, among other things, user training.

CAO REPORT

April 2, 2024

Office of the CAO



Economic Prosperity * Social Equity * Climate Action * Community Wellness

Parks and Recreation

Staff are planning to partner with the Front Street Community Oven on a 'kick-off' event for their Community Cookout season on Thursday, May 30th, which coincides with the start of the Apple Blossom Festival. There will be apple-themed food items to cook in the Oven (for free), along with musical entertainment. Our hope is to include this with the Apple Blossom Festival programming schedule.

The hammock installation at Waterfront Park is booked for the first week in April, but this may change if the weather is uncooperative.

With Willow Park as a construction zone, plans for temporary Welcome/Visitor Information Centre at Waterfront Park are coming together. Staff have been meeting with the Wine Bus and the WBDC to determine capacity and needs and it is likely that a small information hut (kind of like an adorable garden shed) will be installed close to the West entry to the Park. Staff hope to have this ready by May 15. Wine Bus pickup/drop-off will be relocated to this area until new Welcome Centre is completed, and a shaded area is being developed as well.

Safety signage at the Wolfville sign in Waterfront Park is delayed until the warmer weather as the signage must be attached to the rocks with adhesive. Temporary signs will remain in place until this is completed.

Economic Development and Planning

Parks and Open Space Master Planning Process

Staff are focused right now on preparing budget and plans/information for Council for 2024/25 budget year investments, including:

- West End Park (initial Phase 1 investment) and trail;
- Reservoir Park – bathrooms, change room and other smaller upgrades (shade);
- Investigating improving the current Pickleball arrangement (Tower Park and Wolfville school) eg fix surfacing;
- Tennis Court resurfacing at Rotary Park;
- Working with East End Developer on their trail and park contributions;
- Clock Park accessibility improvements;
- Waterfront Park – working with WBDC on hammocks, signage update, fence removal
- AT, Park and Trail wayfinding (along with broader, multi-year Wayfinding scope)
- Discussing Community Oven needs

Active Transportation

After review by the AT working group – a final tender package is complete and will be issued ASAP. The AT working group will now move into spring/summer programming, priority recommendations for Council, and detailed design input on the next set of projects.

CAO REPORT

April 2, 2024

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Economic Prosperity * Social Equity * Climate Action * Community Wellness

2024/25 budget year projects include: 1) finishing Highland Avenue (paint, signage, crosswalk); 2) Connecting Highland to the Harvest Moon trail through the festival theatre property; 3) paving the harvest moon trail from the Farmers' Market to Harbourside Drive; 4) traffic calming and improved safety measures along Cherry Lane and Kent Avenue; and 5) an improved AT connection from Main Street to the East End Gateway trailhead/Harvest Moon Trail. Staff are Another working group meeting date is currently being finalized.

Staff were successful in securing additional support funds for the AT network implementation. \$100,000 grant has been received to purchase additional bikes – for all ages and abilities (as part of bike share program); purchase bike racks and provide support for programming and the AT working group as we move forward.

Housing Accelerator

Staff (Devin, Lindsay and Barb) have been accepted to a University of Toronto, School of Cities program called "[Leading Urban Change](#)" that will act as a project and idea accelerator as we being the heavy lifting of rolling out the six-project components of Wolfville's Accelerator Fund program.

Compliance

Reports of dog bites

Staff have been working to determine next steps after several dog bite incidents were reported to the Town. The incidents occurred in Reservoir Park.

Staff have reviewed the dog by-law and feel it is in good shape, but public education needs to be rolled-out to ensure that all Park users understand responsibility and risk when using the shared space. Staff will report back to Council once more information is available.

Community Safety

St Patrick's weekend resulted in No Summary Offence Tickets nor Nuisance Party Orders issued by (Town) Compliance Staff. Local establishments on Main Street were busy throughout the evening. RCMP issued three warnings related to the Nuisance Party Bylaw. Other charges were laid under the Criminal Code. One large gathering was identified, and the property was cleared.

"Cheaton Cup" Weekend saw staff on shift starting at 10 am on Saturday, March 23. RCMP provided 12 additional members on top of the general duty members scheduled for the weekend and an operations centre was set-up at Raymond Field.

Celebrations were lighter and later than previous years and RCMP used a staged-approach to enforcement, starting with drive-bys and then member walk-throughs on Summer Street, the usual hotspot.



Economic Prosperity * Social Equity * Climate Action * Community Wellness

Staff report an early shut-down of off-campus gatherings and few tickets issued.

Finance and Corporate Services

Staff are working to have Town Water and Sewer bills sent out by the end of March.

The Town's insurance renewal application and pricing package has been completed; the Director and Finance Manager will meet with the broker on April 9, 2024, to go through renewal, amendments, and limit changes.

GIS work continues with priorities and planning complete. Programming updates are done for Permittable (Landscape Form Design on Tablet) and staff have reconfigured Web Maps for apps, and implemented Shared Map Services Resource Pools within the GIS Server.

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: Accessibility Report Card

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Office of the CAO



SUMMARY

Each year, the Accessibility Coordinator is required to present an update to Council, outlining achievements and barriers to completion of the report card in the Town's Accessibility Plan.

1) CAO COMMENTS

This report is for information purposes only.

2) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

Access By Design

3) DISCUSSION

A few pieces have yet to be completed from our plan. A public education campaign, advocacy through NSFAM and accessing Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART).

For awareness, CART is the live, word-for-word transcription of speech to text so that individuals can read what is being said in group settings and at personal appointments on a laptop or a larger screen. CART services can be provided on-site or remotely, in both English and French, via a secure website.

4) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Accessibility has an annual budget amount of \$5,000.

5) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

[Accessibility Legislation](#) The Town has been prescribed as a Public Sector Body (PPSB) under the Act.

[Access By Design](#) The Town's Accessibility Plan

6) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

The presentation to Council satisfies the reporting and communication requirements noted in the plan.

7) FUTURE COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

Council may want to consider the advocacy piece that was mentioned in the plan. This was a carry-forward from the previous Accessibility Plan that staff, due to role changes, has no awareness of. This makes completing this piece challenging.

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: IR 010-2024 Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model
Date: 2024-02-04
Department: Office of the CAO



SUMMARY

Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model Draft Study and Planning Document

By the end of 2022, through an engagement cycle completed as part of our Policing Services Review, our community had identified on-going, unmitigated, and unmanaged nuisance party occurrences and road safety as priority areas needing attention in the Town. Community members also noted the need for better efforts on small crime, property damage and residents had expressed a desire to experience relationship building with law enforcement.

In conversation with Dr. Stephen Schneider, from Saint Mary's University, the Policing Services Review Committee was hopeful that these areas of concern could be addressed through the provision of a Community Safety Office. A Community Safety Office would be able to provide additional service in the Town, filling gaps that result from the limitations of our current policing services provider.

In April of 2023, Dr. Schneider was engaged to consider feasibility and develop a plan for a Community Safety Office pilot project for the Town of Wolfville that would include the hiring of a Community Safety Coordinator.

This planning phase required delivery of a report that would articulate the mandate, goals, principles, strategies, programs, and services of the proposed office. It was also expected to provide a preliminary estimate of the resources required for this office, an initial description of the Community Safety Office Coordinator position, and a framework to monitor and assess this pilot project.

In March 2024, Dr. Schneider delivered a *Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model Draft Study and Planning Document*.

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: IR 010-2024 Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



1) CAO COMMENTS

Council is asked to receive the report, and Dr. Schneider's presentation, for information purposes.

2) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- RFD 020-2023
- *Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model Draft Study and Planning Document*

3) DISCUSSION

In his report, Dr. Schneider presents a model where a Community Safety and Wellness Society would be created. This charitable/not for profit organization would be separate from the Town, Acadia and the RCMP.

The Society would employ a community navigator and potentially two additional coordinators. One coordinator would oversee Community Safety and Prevention and the other would focus on Social Development and Wellness. Each coordinator would support working groups with between 9 and 13 members representing different agencies, organizations, and stakeholders.

The complexity of Dr. Schneider's recommendations and model goes far beyond the usual scope of a municipal unit of our size. This confirms our understanding that everything from the misuse of alcohol to theft, violence and vandalism can be linked back to complicated root causes.

While staff are committed to working through the report with our partners at Acadia and the RCMP, there does seem to be some indication that our current approach is already moving in a direction that the report recommends, albeit on a much smaller scale.

The on-going, collaborative efforts of the Town, Acadia and now, notably, the RCMP, have allowed us to adopt a far more effective way of tackling concerns that were raised in our 2022 community engagement cycle. Staff have never hesitated to connect with other levels of government, or to pull in community experts and organizations when there is a need. This approach has allowed us to be agile and effective in managing some on-going issues in our community.

The idea of a navigator that is outlined in Dr. Schneider's report is also something that staff are already contemplating in terms of accessibility and inclusion with our service delivery. This is something that staff can continue to focus on.

It's also crucial to note that during the year that Dr. Schneider worked on this study, our relationship with both the RCMP and Acadia has evolved to a level of cooperation and collaboration that we have never previously enjoyed. While road safety continues to be a major concern for our community, nuisance party issues have declined thanks to a community safety approach and harm reduction strategies. Staff anticipate more positive outcomes on major issues as we continue working in a

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: IR 010-2024 Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



cooperative and collaborative manner, using proactive communications with all partners focused on removing the real and perceived barriers that exist in the community.

Dr. Schneider will walk Council through his report at Committee of the Whole and time has been booked for questions and discussion. After this presentation, Dr. Schneider will be preparing an additional, final report that will come back to Council later in the spring.

4) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

From Dr. Schneider's draft report, the financial implications are unclear. Between one and three staff are proposed through the not-for profit described in the report. Grant funding from the Province would be required as well as partnership dollars from Acadia University. Dr. Schneider further suggests reducing the number of RCMP members to offset the cost of two of the proposed coordinator positions. Staff are not sure this is feasible but welcome dialogue with Justice and the RCMP to explore what this might look like.

As staff unpack this report and make recommendations on which model, if any, should be piloted, full costing will be provided to Council.

No additional resources are being requested for the 2024/25 budget year.

5) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

- [Community Engagement Report – Policing Services Review](#)
- RFD 020-2023
- *Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model Draft Study and Planning Document (Attached)*

Reference from the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan:

- Economic Prosperity
- Social Equity
- Community Wellness

6) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Staff have completed preliminary discussions with Acadia to review the draft report. We will require additional time and conversation to determine next steps. The draft report will be brought to the Town and Gown Committee in April for additional review.

Wolfville Blooms will be updated accordingly.

7) FUTURE COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

Staff will bring back any recommendations for future Council input and decision. Council is asked to receive the report, and Dr. Schneider's presentation for information purposes only.



WOLFVILLE
COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND WELLNESS
MODEL

Draft Study and Planning
Document

Submitted to:
The Town of Wolfville
Acadia University

Submitted by:
Stephen Schneider

March 7, 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned by the Town of Wolfville to explore alternatives to the RCMP in addressing crime, violence, nuisance problems, and other community safety issues. A multi-methods research design was employed to understand local community safety concerns, analyze current initiatives and resources, and explore alternative models.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS CONCERNS IN WOLFVILLE

The research found that any alternative problem-solving model implemented in Wolfville must include strategies to reduce opportunities for crime, violence, and nuisance problems while addressing root causes, social determinants, and risk factors. In this context, the study identified the following community safety and wellness concerns that should be given priority.

- 1) Mental health and addictions,
- 2) Violence against women and girls (sexualized violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sex trafficking),
- 3) Alcohol-related problems,
- 4) Off-campus student conduct issues (noise by-law infractions, public drinking, vandalism, and other nuisance and disorder problems) and
- 5) Challenges and risk factors facing Acadia students and other young people (mental health, substance abuse, affordability issues, climate change

crisis, cyber-victimization, toxic social media, the synthetic drug epidemic, and marginalization of Acadia students).

All the prioritized issues are influenced by the presence of more than 3,000 Acadia students in Wolfville. Post-secondary students are at a higher risk of mental health and addiction disorders, sexualized violence, and binge drinking. Many towns and cities with large post-secondary populations have grappled with student conduct problems that have escalated into bylaw infractions as well as crime and violence. At the same time, post-secondary students and other young people are facing unprecedented adversities in their lives that must be addressed.

These local safety and wellness concerns are not independent of each other but are interconnected in correlational and causal ways. Resolving these issues necessitates a comprehensive problem-solving framework that targets and mitigates shared determinants, root causes, and risk factors.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

There are local resources in Wolfville to address community safety and wellness issues. However, the traditional reactive law enforcement approach predominates, while problem-solving measures are lacking to tackle root causes and minimize risk factors. The absence of a systematic, comprehensive, and coordinated multi-stakeholder approach results in fragmented responses that mostly address the symptoms of deeper social problems. There is also a notable scarcity of resources available off-campus for Acadia students, especially those with elevated risk factors.

Power and resources are concentrated at the provincial level, limiting the community's ability to address local problems.

Despite these shortcomings, there has been progress in integrating evidence-based approaches for community problem-solving in Wolfville. This includes multi-stakeholder committees that plan for high-risk off-campus events. Acadia is increasingly supporting students' mental health and overall well-being. It also has taken on a more proactive approach to student conduct issues and sexualized violence through public health, education, and restorative justice.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS MODEL

The results of this research have led to the development of the Community Safety and Wellness Model (CSWM). This model is applied to Wolfville to explore its potential effectiveness as an alternative and complement to law enforcement. Five main principles guide the CSWM:

- 1) Prevention (proactive interventions to stop risk factors from becoming harms),
- 2) Problem-oriented (targeting the causes of local problems through the most appropriate solutions that fall outside the criminal justice system),
- 3) Collaboration (among multiple stakeholders across multiple sectors),
- 4) Community-based (initiatives developed and implemented at the local level), and
- 5) Comprehensive (tackling multiple, intersecting problems in a systematic and coordinated fashion using various complementary resources and strategies).

The CSWM is further informed by problem-solving conceptual frameworks: public health, crime prevention, and social ecology.

The public health model is concerned with protecting and improving the health and well-being of entire populations rather than focusing solely on individual patient care. It aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. A public health-informed community safety model is concerned with protecting and improving the safety and well-being of entire populations rather than focusing solely on individual offenders through criminal justice approaches. At the core of a public health approach to community safety are "primary prevention" interventions that target root causes and risk factors.

The CSWM also adapts the systematic processes and functions the public health model uses for preventing health, safety, and wellness problems. This includes:

- research (to understand the scope, nature, causes, and trends of local issues to be addressed),
- strategic planning (priorities, goals, and strategies to be implemented based on the research findings and analysis),
- program and service development and delivery (emphasizing prevention),
- multi-stakeholder partnerships and integrated service delivery,
- public education campaigns (information dissemination to help change risky and harmful behaviours and attitudes),
- community engagement (encouraging grassroots involvement in local problem-solving),

- capacity building (strengthening the abilities, expertise, resources, and capacities of individuals, organizations, and the community to prevent local problems) and
- public policy advocacy (efforts to gain government commitment to local goals or programs).

Crime prevention is a well-established subfield of criminology and has become an essential part of community safety theory and practice. Community-based crime prevention strategies assume a proactive approach to inhibiting the onset of criminal and violent behaviour or averting the occurrence of a criminal act in a particular time and place. Crime prevention strategies can be divided into five categories: (i) crime prevention through social development, (ii) situational crime prevention, (iii) crime prevention through environmental design, (iv) community crime prevention, and (v) community and problem-oriented policing.

The social-ecological model operationalizes the “whole-of-society” approach to serious problems as recommended by the Mass Casualty Commission (2003, p. 138). It does so by fostering an understanding of:

- how problems and risk factors are manifested at different levels of society,
- the complex interplay between individual, interpersonal, community, and societal risk factors,
- how this complex interaction of risk factors across various sectors of society impacts people and communities,
- the role that each societal level can play in addressing problems, and

- the interactions between these different levels are necessary for a holistic multi-sectoral problem-solving approach.

There is a significant overlap between these three conceptual models in local problem-solving. They all espouse proactive strategies to prevent risk factors from becoming harms. They all encompass a systematic and comprehensive approach that recognizes solutions must be implemented along a spectrum that includes various levels of society, from a population-level (community-wide) focus to delivering personalized services and care to individuals with elevated risk factors.

PILOT PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the CSWM be implemented in Wrentham as a five-year pilot project that encompasses:

- the incorporation of a non-profit Community Safety and Wellness Society (to provide a legal framework, governance structure, and funding mechanism),
- a Community Safety and Crime Prevention working group and coordinator,
- a Social Development and Wellness working group and coordinator and
- a Community Navigator.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVE

The mandate of this working group and coordinator would be to implement strategies to reduce the opportunity for crime, violence, and nuisance problems to

occur using situational crime prevention, CPTED, community crime prevention, community policing, and traditional law enforcement tactics. A strategic, “population-level” approach to safety and security embraces tactics that reach the greatest number of community members while organizing residents at the block level through programs such as Neighbourhood Watch and the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program.

The community safety issues to be addressed by this working group would include:

- violence against women and girls
- alcohol-related problems
- student conduct issues
- by-law infractions
- property crimes
- drug trafficking
- pedestrian safety
- senior safety and
- cyber-victimization.

This working group would build upon the current “Town and Gown” committee by (i) employing a more systematic, comprehensive, problem-oriented, proactive approach, (ii) expanding the number of stakeholders involved, and (iii) increasing the number of community safety problems addressed.

The reconstituted working group would comprise the following partners:

- Town of Wolfville (By-Law Compliance Officers, Planning, Engineering and Public Works)

- Acadia University (Department of Safety and Security, Student Conduct and Community Support, Sexualized Violence Response and Education Coordinator)
- Acadia Students’ Union (to represent the student population and help address student conduct problems)
- RCMP (Community Engagement Officer)
- Provincial Government (Department of Justice, Public Safety Division)
- Wolfville Business Development Corporation
- Representative of licenced establishments (focusing on alcohol-related problems, violence and predatory behaviour at high-risk venues)
- Representative of multi-residential property owners
- Community Members (e.g., Neighbourhood Watch Captains)

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SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLNESS INITIATIVE

This working group and coordinator position would be tasked with pursuing a social problem-solving approach to prevent the onset of criminal, violent, and other maladaptive and harmful behaviours by addressing their determinants, root causes, and risk factors. The following lists the local priorities amenable to this social developmental approach:

- Violence against women and girls
- At-risk families and children
- Mental health and addictions

- Poverty, financial and food insecurity
- Affordable housing and homelessness
- Acadia students and other young adults with elevated risk factors and
- Intolerance towards marginalized groups (women, racialized people, gay, lesbian, trans, and gender-fluid communities, migrant workers, and international students)

This working group would apply social problem-solving strategies for those at risk of maladaptive behaviours (children and youth from high-risk social environments, Acadia students) and those at risk of victimization (college-aged women, those who identify as LGBTQ2+, racialized people, migrant workers, and international students).

Potential participants in this working group would include:

- Town of Wolfville (Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Library)
- Acadia University (M.Ed. Counselling program, Red Spruce Centre, Clinical Psychology program, Community Development program, Women and Gender Studies program, Acadia International, Mental Health and Counselling Centre, Human Rights and Equity Office)
- Acadia Students' Union
- Provincial Government (Department of Community Services, Child, Youth and Family Supports, Mental Health and Addictions, Provincial Housing Agency; Manager, Supported Housing, Office of the Status of Women)

- Kings County Family Resource Centre
- Wolfville School, Schools Plus, and the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education
- Wolfville Children's Centre
- Kids Action Program
- Big Brother / Big Sisters
- The Portal Youth Outreach Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia
- Wolfville Business Development Corporation
- Chrysalis House
- Banks and other financial service providers, and

- Community members and those with lived experiences (including young people).

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PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Coordinator Positions

The functions to be carried out by the working group coordinators include:

- assemble, chair, coordinate, and facilitate working groups,
- strategic planning,
- implement working group recommendations: carry out public health, crime prevention and social development initiatives,
- community organizing and capacity building, and

- supporting the Community Navigator.

Community Navigator

The Community Navigator connects individuals in need with human service providers to reduce barriers and facilitate effective and efficient care. This position would entail three functions: (i) referring those in need to the most appropriate resources, (ii) helping individuals navigate complex (government) systems, and (iii) advocating for and supporting the client throughout the process. The navigator position assumes a proactive, problem-oriented approach by helping individuals with elevated risk factors to prevent more serious behaviours or situations.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The recommended governance structure for the Wolfville CSWM is a non-profit, charitable society: the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society.

FUNDING, BUDGETING AND OTHER FISCAL MATTERS

Funding, in-kind donations, and other resources to implement the CSWM recommendations would come from two sources: (i) stakeholders represented on the working groups and (ii) external funding (fundraising, support from local businesses, government grants).

It is recommended that any future Municipal Policing Service Agreement (MPSA) between the Town and the RCMP eliminate two constable positions. The savings could then fund the three proposed personnel positions (through a budget transfer from the Town to the Community Safety and Wellness Society). This arrangement would

satisfy the over-arching goal of this project: to fund alternatives to the RCMP. It would also be fiscally prudent for the Town as it would not impose any extra staffing costs.

PILOT PROJECT WORK PLAN

The CSWM pilot project would consist of five stages to be phased in over five years:

Phase 1: Create, fund, and fill the Community Navigator position,

Phase 2: Organizational planning and governance (incorporate the non-profit Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society),

Phase 3: Community safety and crime prevention initiative,

Phase 4: Social development and wellness initiative, and

Phase 5: Assess and modify; explore future options.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Besides the working groups and personnel positions recommended for the pilot project, other options can be considered over a longer time frame. These long-term options include a mobile mental health unit, integrated risk-driven rapid response teams, a community safety and wellness storefront office, an increase in issue-specific working groups, and implementation of the CSWM across Kings County.

CONCLUSIONS

These recommendations align closely with the mandate of this study: implementing a community-based alternative to the RCMP in Wolfville that can effectively address

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various community safety issues and their underlying determinants and risk factors.

The two working groups, the coordinator and navigator positions, are collectively designed to ensure a holistic and multifaceted approach to local problem-solving. Initiatives are implemented on a population-level scale to protect and enhance the community's health, safety, and well-being. The working groups and coordinators are tasked with implementing situational (opportunity-reduction) and social developmental (social problem-solving) strategies. The Community Navigator complements the working groups by providing personalized support to individuals with elevated risk factors.

The incremental rollout of the pilot CSWM is to ensure a measured process, affording ample time for necessary planning and adjustments. By implementing the CSWM in stages, stakeholders can monitor progress, gather feedback, and make necessary refinements to optimize its success and sustainability. The phased-in and flexible nature of the CSWM allows it to adapt to Wolfville's expected population increase.

The CSWM and the pilot project recommendations are cost-effective and should not require extensive investments from stakeholders' budgets. The three proposed staffing positions can replace RCMP constables, while the multi-stakeholder working groups can mobilize

existing resources efficiently. The creation of the charitable, non-profit society allows it to fundraise and apply for grants, which helps to ensure the stakeholders' limited resources are not over-extended.

The Wolfville CSWM appears to have the backing of the key stakeholders. The four main local stakeholders—the Town of Wolfville (including elected officials and staff), Acadia University (administration, student support units, faculty and academic program heads), the ASU, and the RCMP (at both the District level and senior division levels)—have indicated support for a collaborative, community-based, problem-solving model. Various other potential stakeholders have communicated similar support. This includes officials from provincial agencies representing the mental health, housing, social welfare, and criminal justice sectors.

The receptivity of the potential stakeholder groups to the pilot project, however, is based on their understanding of a partially developed conceptual model. Moreover, this study could not contact and seek input from all the potential partners in a collaborative pilot project. As such, it is advisable to reach out to other potential stakeholders before the initial phases of the pilot project for further input on their commitment and participation.

DRAFT



INTRODUCTION



This study was commissioned by the Town of Wolfville to explore alternatives to the RCMP in addressing community safety issues. This is consistent with the increasing calls for community-based options beyond traditional policing. In its final report issued in 2023, the Nova Scotia Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) calls for “decentring” the criminal justice system in addressing certain crime and violence issues. The MCC concludes police are important partners in protecting public safety but should not be the primary responders or lead agency in many types of calls for service. Instead, the Commission called for a community-based, proactive, multi-stakeholder, “whole-of-society” approach using the most appropriate resources to prevent crime, violence and other community safety concerns from occurring (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023).

The broader implication of this conclusion is that local solutions must be implemented using a holistic framework structured to prevent the onset of community safety and security issues by mitigating root causes and risk factors. That is, community-based strategies must be understood and implemented within a broader developmental and wellness framework. Crime and violence do not occur in a vacuum; they result from entrenched health and social welfare risk factors that must be addressed, not simply because they contribute to crime and victimization but because of the harm they exact on individuals, families, and communities in their own right.

As such, a holistic community safety and wellness model places a premium on fostering healthy, cohesive and prosperous communities by addressing such underlying

and interrelated issues as poverty, inequality, family dysfunction, marginalization, disadvantage, mental health and substance abuse disorders, maladaptive behaviours, and homelessness.

Central to this alternative, community-based approach is crime prevention, which can be defined as any pre-emptive intervention intended to prevent the opportunities for crime to occur in a particular time and place (“situational crime prevention”) or to address the root causes of criminal and delinquent behaviour (“crime prevention through social development”). Another foundation for alternative approaches to community safety is the public health model, which aims to prevent the occurrence of diseases, injuries, or other health problems at the population level. When applied to community safety, “primary prevention” public health strategies target the determinants of criminal behaviour and violence. Crime prevention and public health share a common focus on the “health, safety and well-being of entire populations” through a proactive, systematic, evidence-based, multi-stakeholder approach (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The MCC declares that mental health illnesses and violence against women both constitute a “public health emergency” that requires “complex, nuanced, and community-wide” solutions (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 160).

The results of this research have led to the development of the Community Safety and Wellness Model (CSWM), which embodies the above principles and is applied to Wolfville's unique circumstances to explore its potential effectiveness as an alternative and complement to law enforcement.

REPORT OBJECTIVES

The over-arching goal of this study is to apply the Community Safety and Wellness Model to Wolfville to explore its applicability, feasibility, and potential effectiveness in preventing crime, violence, nuisance problems, and other community safety and wellness issues.

This goal can be further divided into three broad objectives. The initial step is to pinpoint, assess, and rank the problems that undermine the safety and well-being of the Wolfville community. The second is to articulate the vision, mandate, goals, principles, and strategies of the proposed CSWM as adapted to the unique circumstances of Wolfville. This report will present various options for consideration that can be implemented through a five-year pilot project. The third objective is to assess the feasibility of the recommendations in mobilizing local resources, engaging key stakeholders, and effectively and cost-effectively mitigating the prioritized problems.

More specifically, the goals of this study are to:

- 1) Identify, analyze, and prioritize local community safety and wellness issues for Wolfville based on an understanding of their scope, nature, impact, trends and causes.
- 2) Identify and assess the current approaches to prioritized community safety and wellness concerns.
- 3) Identify and detail the theory, principles, disciplines, and strategies underlying the proposed Community Safety and Wellness Model.
- 4) Adapt the model to Wolfville and the circumstances of each of the prioritized issues.
- 5) Present different options for delivering this model in Wolfville, including various configurations of the multi-stakeholder approach, as well as staffing and personnel options.
- 6) Make recommendations concerning the CSWM's goals, principles, strategies, programs, and services as applied to Wolfville and to each prioritized issue.
- 7) Identify potential stakeholders, seek their input regarding the proposed CSWM, and gauge their receptiveness to taking part in a pilot project.
- 8) Assess the feasibility of the proposed CSWM in terms of costs, capacity (availability of resources and funding, the prospect of stakeholders taking part in a pilot project), effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.
- 9) Provide details on a pilot project's planning, management, implementation, and goals, including a work plan.

RESEARCH METHODS

A multi-methods research design was employed to gather information. This includes a review of secondary literature, online sources, the news media, and documents obtained from the Town of

Wolfville, Acadia University, and the RCMP; semi-structured interviews, a community safety survey, and a review of statistical data on criminal occurrences; RCMP calls for service; and municipal by-law infractions.

REPORT OUTLINE

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

Needs Assessment: Circumstances that substantiate the consideration of an alternative community safety model in Wolfville.

Community Safety and Wellness Model:

Overview of the CSWM, including its goals, principles, influential conceptual models, underlying theories, and strategies.

Research Findings and Analysis: The research results concerning Wolfville's safety and wellness issues, including those that should be prioritized when applying the CSWM.

Recommendations: Options and recommendations on adapting the CSWM

to Wolfville, including its structure (governance, configuration of the multi-stakeholder approach, staffing and personnel), functions (roles and responsibilities of working groups and personnel), and local priorities (recommendations specific to each of the prioritized local community safety and wellness problems).

Work plan: A suggested plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations made in the report.

Conclusion: An analysis of the feasibility of this project in terms of capacity (availability of resources and funding, the prospect of key stakeholders participating in a pilot project), effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability.

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT: RATIONALE FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY ALTERNATIVES IN WOLFFVILLE



There are several reasons for investigating and implementing alternative community-based solutions to crime and other pressing local issues in Wolfville. Some are specific to the characteristics and dynamics of the

town. Others result from critiques of the RCMP, the criminal justice system, and centralized provincial government agencies, programs, and services.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND DYNAMICS OF WOLFVILLE

The distinctive qualities of Wolfville shape its social, economic, and cultural landscape while presenting challenges and opportunities that influence local problems and potential solutions.

Agriculture has historically been an economic base of the Annapolis Valley and an abundant source of local fresh food. But despite their picturesque setting and charm, rural areas also have limited access to services and opportunities commonly found in more urban areas.

As a college town, the social, economic, and cultural fabric of Wolfville is shaped by Acadia University. A large student population brings energy, diversity, and a labour force to the community. But it also introduces unique difficulties. The presence of Acadia students creates opportunities for both intergenerational connections and potential conflicts. The influx of students during the academic year can strain local resources and housing. Problems have emerged over the coexistence of a large young transient student population and long-term residents, homeowners, young families, and seniors. Students have clashed with other residents over excessive partying, noise complaints, public drinking, vandalism, trespassing, and parking violations. A transient student population can undermine local social cohesion and stability. But students can also be marginalized and made to feel unwelcome

in a town that does not always cater to its needs.

Wolfville has been experiencing rapid population growth in recent years (Hoffman, 2022b). This can lead to instability and increase problems such as overcrowding, traffic congestion, pedestrian injuries, environmental degradation, crime, a lack of affordable housing and homelessness (McNicoll, 1984). With students comprising half the town's population during the academic year, demand for affordable rental housing continues to exceed supply. The local government and other key partners must plan for the population growth that is projected to continue. This means anticipating, preparing for, and mitigating the accompanying problems, including the potential for increased crime.

The child poverty rate in Wolfville remains a concern (Saulnier & Frank, 2023). Poverty not only has immediate effects on the well-being and development of children, but it can lead to a range of future problems, such as academic failure, mental health and substance abuse disorders, poverty, homelessness, criminality, and violence.

The growing influence of the alcohol industry in the local economy and the town's emerging identity as a destination for drinking (and wine tours) also raises concerns related to underage and binge drinking among students, addiction issues, and alcohol-related violence.

“HIDDEN” CRIME AND VIOLENCE PROBLEMS

Wolfville does not have a high property crime rate, which typically drives community-based safety and personal security initiatives. Like any other community, however, Wolfville experiences serious crimes that are less public, operate in the shadows of private settings and intimate relationships, and have low rates of reporting to police. This is particularly true of violence against women and children, including domestic violence, intimate partner violence and sexual assault. As the Mass Casualty Commission emphatically made clear, violence against women is a provincial and national epidemic (Mass Casualty Commission, 2009). As explained in more detail later in this report, Wolfville is at an elevated risk of sexualized violence. Post-secondary students have higher rates of sexualized violence relative to the general population, which is compounded by the availability of alcohol (Beaver, 2017; Fedina, Holmes, & Backes, 2018).

Drug trafficking and illegal drug use are also largely hidden criminal issues, although there is evidence suggesting that the supply of cocaine has increased in Nova Scotia (Al-Hakim, 2020). Research conducted in the U.S. (Chamberlain, Lust, & Grant, 2021) and for this study suggests cocaine use is

prevalent among university students (although reliable figures are not readily available). Of even greater concern, perhaps, is an increase in the local supply and use of high-potency opioids and other synthetic drugs that have caused an epidemic of addictions, overdoses, hospitalizations, and deaths in Canada (Kouyoumdjian, 2018).

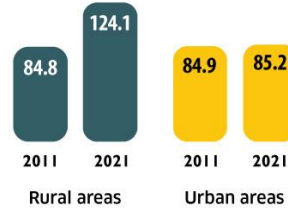
Crime rates are also generally higher in rural areas. According to Statistics Canada, in 2021, police forces providing services to primarily rural populations served 15 percent of the provincial population but reported 24 percent of violent crimes, 18 percent of property crimes, 30 percent of *Criminal Code* traffic offences and 23 percent of other *Criminal Code* violations. The Crime Severity Index (CSI), which measures the volume and the seriousness of crimes, was 33 percent higher in rural areas (91.9 on the index) than in urban areas (69.3). In 2021, the Violent CSI was 124.1 in rural areas, compared to only 85.2 in urban areas (Perreault, 2023). Norms and values that perpetuate domestic violence tend to be more prevalent in rural areas, while survivors of violence are less likely to report abuse compared to those living in urban areas (DeKeseredy, Hall-Sanchez, Dragiewicz, & Rennison, 2020).

Police-reported crime in rural and urban areas, 2021

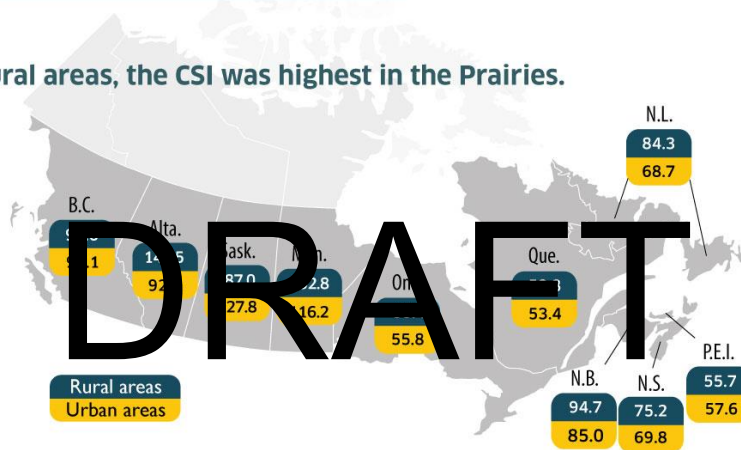
Rural areas accounted for **15%** of the population of the provinces, but...



The Violent Crime Severity Index (CSI) measures the volume and severity of violent crimes.



In rural areas, the CSI was highest in the Prairies.



Crime is higher in the northern part of the provinces.



Intimate partner violence is almost **twice** as prevalent in rural areas as it is in urban areas.



There were **545** victims per 100,000 persons aged 12 and older in rural areas, compared with **296** victims in urban areas.

For more information, please consult the *Juristat* article "Police-reported crime in rural and urban areas in the Canadian provinces, 2021."
Source: Statistics Canada, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

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Catalogue number: 11-627-M | ISBN: 978-0-660-47489-2

Figure 1 - Police-reported crime in rural and urban areas, 2021; Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023016-eng.htm>

POLICY, PROGRAM, AND SERVICE DELIVERY LIMITATIONS

A critical analysis of current government policies, programs, and services also exposes the need for more community-based alternatives to local problem-solving.

Poverty and other social welfare challenges experienced by families, children, Acadia students, and marginalized populations are exacerbated by a shortage of local social services. Like most municipal governments, the town of Wolfville has a small tax base, so it is limited in funding such services (most of which fall under provincial authority anyway). Accessing these services often requires transportation to Kentville or even Halifax. The only medical clinic in town moved to New Minas, leaving the Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre and the Acadia Students Health Clinic as the only healthcare facilities locally.

Provincial governments in Canada have jurisdiction over most of the issues that directly impact the health, safety, and well-being of communities and their residents (i.e., health care, criminal justice, social welfare, child welfare, education, labour and job training). However, provincial governments have struggled to cope with the scope, increase, and complexity of the various problems, including those confronting Nova Scotians. Many provincial systems and institutions have become overwhelmed, strained, and broken in crucial human support and care sectors. These shortcomings have led to a public disregard for and a lack of confidence in provincial governments and agencies to address pressing problems (Angus Reid Institute, 2021).

Government systems that address social and health problems are also constrained

by a predominately reactive approach driven by the necessity of “putting out fires.” This is exemplified by the criminal justice and the mental health care systems, both of which commit relatively few resources towards preventing the onset of criminal behaviour or mental health and substance abuse disorders, respectively. The lack of proactive mental health wellness resources has contributed to an increase in the criminalization of those with mental health and substance abuse disorders (Brown, Barker, & McMillan, 2018; Kouyoumdjian, Schuler, Matheson, & Hwang, 2016).

The traditional criminal justice approach to crime and criminality is a microcosm of the challenges and shortcomings facing government responses to social problems. According to Statistics Canada, less than 50 percent of Canadians had confidence in the justice system and courts (Ibrahim, 2020). Less than half of Canadians believe their local police are doing a good job of upholding the law (46%), guaranteeing citizen safety (44%), treating people fairly (42%), promptly responding to calls (40%), and providing the public with information on how to prevent crime (37%). Only 18 percent of Canadians “felt that the local police were doing a good job on all six of these measures” (Ibrahim, 2020).

Low confidence in police is due to several factors, including allegations of racism, corruption, and excessive use of force. Police and the criminal justice system also suffer from inherent and systemic shortcomings that negatively impact their effectiveness and credibility in controlling crime. These include:

- an overly reactive response to crime and violence,
- a failure to prevent crimes, detect most criminal incidents, solve serious crimes, and lower crime rates,
- a lack of attention to the causes of and long-term solutions to crime and violence problems,
- a lack of responsiveness to community safety and “quality of life” issues that are often prioritized by local communities and municipal governments, and
- staffing shortages resulting from difficulties in recruiting and retaining peace officers.

For most municipal government budgets, policing is the single largest line item. Yet, the traditional patrol and investigative functions have little impact on crime rates.

Canadian study found “no consistent association” between police funding and crime rates in Canadian cities. The study analyzed police budgets and crime rates in 20 major cities, including Hamilton, Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Montreal, between 2010 and 2021. The researchers concluded increasing police budgets does not reduce crime rates (Seabrook et al., 2023).

The final report of the Mass Casualty Commission determined that RCMP contract policing in Nova Scotia suffers from significant failings, including a lack of accountability, transparency, oversight, and community engagement. In its scathing indictment, the commission concluded that the RCMP is unsuited for Nova Scotia's diverse and evolving provincial and municipal policing needs (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023).

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ALTERNATIVE, COMMUNITY-BASED, PROBLEM-SOLVING MODELS

The conclusions and recommendations of the MCC echo a growing recognition that a community-based approach to crime, violence, and other safety issues beyond policing and criminal justice is required. There have long been calls for policymakers to consider alternative approaches, particularly those that address the social determinants of crime and violence. This includes greater investments in poverty reduction, parenting programs, youth programs, gender equity, education and job training, preventing mental health and substance abuse disorders, and affordable housing—all of which may be more effective at reducing crime rates and maximizing

community safety than increasing police budgets (Lab, 2023; McManus & Steele, 2022; Porter, 2016; Sakala & La Vigne, 2019; Schneider, 2020; Sherman, 1997; Welsh, Brandon & Farrington, 2012).

One essential criterion for the strategies recommended in this report is that they are evidence-based. This means that they have proven effective through rigorous research. The principles, disciplines, conceptual models, and strategies that guide the CSWM are supported as effective and, in most cases, “best practices” by the empirical literature.

In its recommendations regarding the dual public health emergencies of mental health illnesses and violence against women, the MCC recommends “decentring justice.” This means replacing police as primary responders for many types of calls for service with health care or social welfare professionals. The MCC (2023) also emphasized the need for more community-based solutions that use a public health approach.

In a 2018 report on reforming the criminal justice system by the federal Department of Justice, provincial and territorial stakeholders voiced their support for limiting the criminal justice system's involvement in responding to marginalized populations. Instead, they advocated for:

- alternative approaches for people with mental illness and addictions and other vulnerable people caught up in the criminal justice system,
- integration of the criminal justice system with the other social support systems and more inter-agency collaboration among police, social welfare agencies, and mental health care providers,
- a problem-solving approach instead of one that only considers facts, guilt, and sanctions,
- community-based services to help vulnerable individuals navigate and connect with support systems, and
- a greater use of diversion, such as restorative justice and wellness courts, for marginalized individuals who come into contact with the criminal justice system (Government of Canada Department of Justice, 2018).

In its report entitled *Learning About What it Will Take to Prevent Domestic Violence*, the Standing Together Group convened by the Nova Scotia government argued the following:

- the current system is not well suited to preventative work; it focuses too much on response and not enough on prevention,
- government and community silos create barriers to prevention and coordination,
- there must be a greater collaboration among government, academic, and community stakeholders,
- agencies that do not typically focus on domestic violence are ready to contribute, and
- there is a need to shift policies and interventions towards a more preventative orientation that addresses gender inequality and other norms and values that perpetuate violence against women (Crocker & Ternoway, 2022)

While many local resources are available on and off campus to prevent crime, violence, and other local problems in Wolfville, the traditional reactive law enforcement approach continues to predominate. This is compounded by a lack of multi-stakeholder coordination and integration, which results in a fragmented response. This research also shows an absence of systematic and comprehensive approaches to addressing local problems, which recognizes that such issues as crime, mental health illnesses, addictions, homelessness, poverty, and family dysfunction are not mutually exclusive but critically interconnected. The initiatives to address local social problems primarily address symptoms and are mostly

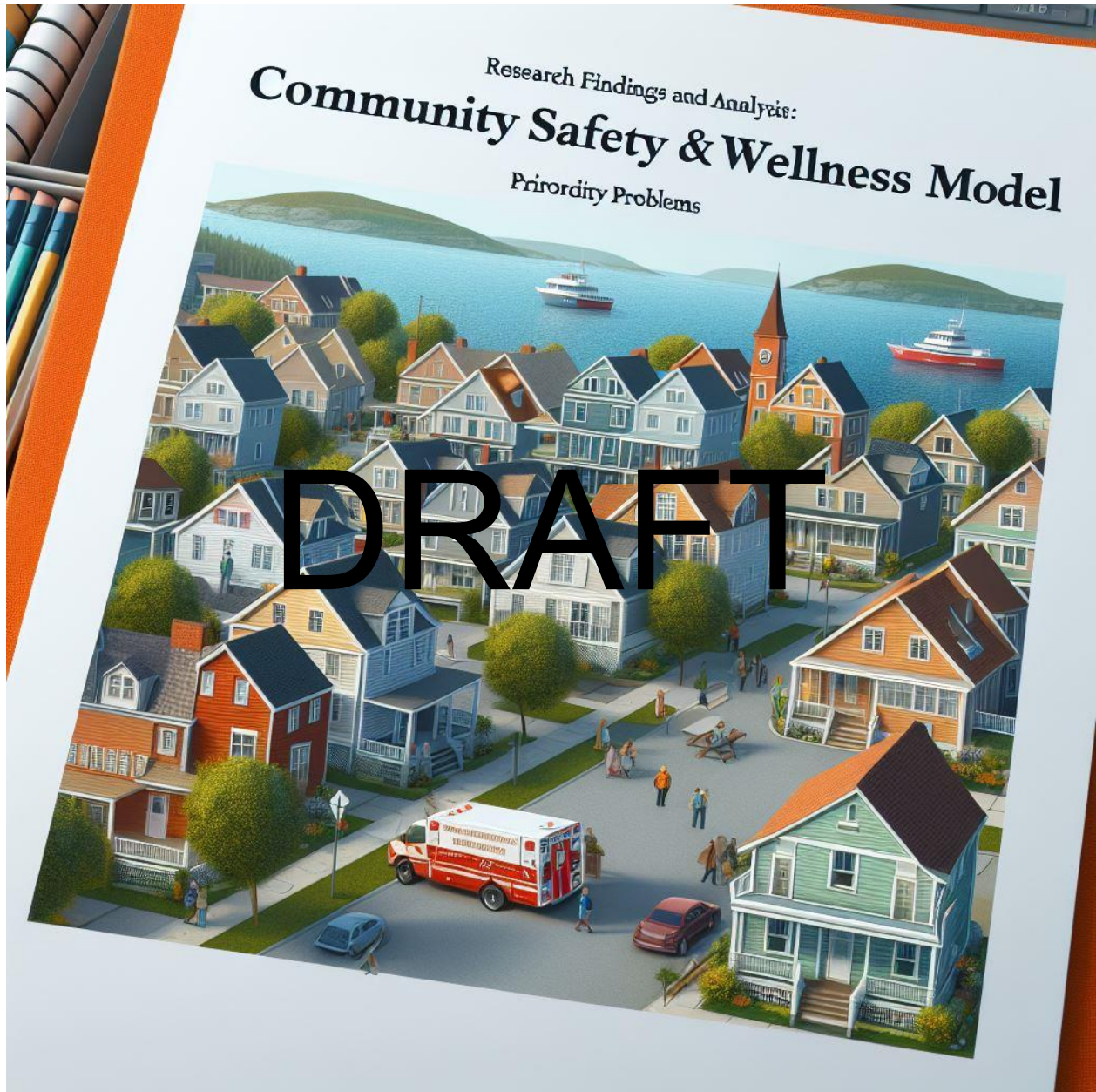
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devoid of more proactive, preventative, problem-oriented initiatives that address root causes, social determinants, and risk factors. Resources and power are concentrated at the provincial level, restricting the ability of local communities to address their unique challenges. The provincial systems and institutions responsible for criminal justice, mental health care, housing, public education, social welfare, and child welfare are overwhelmed, strained, and even broken. These voids, shortcomings and challenges illuminate the need to rethink how local social problems are addressed, with more resources and powers being shifted to community-based, collaborative, proactive initiatives.

Despite these shortcomings, there has been progress in integrating evidence-based approaches into community problem-solving in Wolfville, as detailed throughout this report. This includes using multi-stakeholder committees to anticipate and control high-risk off-campus events. Acadia has been embarking on a more holistic approach to supporting students' mental health and overall well-being. It has dedicated resources in place to address sexualized violence. It also relies more on approaches that seek to avoid the onset of student conduct problems or violence through education, awareness-raising, events, and restorative justice methods.

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RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS: COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS ISSUES IN WOLFFVILLE



This section summarizes the research findings regarding Wolfville's community safety and wellness concerns. This study's findings highlight the need to prioritize the following community issues when implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

- 1) Mental health and addictions.
- 2) Gender-based violence (violence against women and girls, sexualized violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sex trafficking).
- 3) Alcohol-related problems.
- 4) Off-campus student conduct issues (noise by-law infractions, public drinking, vandalism, and other nuisance and disorder problems).
- 5) Challenges (risk factors) facing Acadia students and other young people (mental health, COVID-19, affordability issues, climate change crisis, personal technology time, lack of integration of students into the broader Wolfville "community").

Other community safety and wellness concerns that emerged during the research that also warrant attention include:

- 6) Affordable housing and homelessness.

- 7) Drugs and drug trafficking.
- 8) Pedestrian traffic safety issues.
- 9) Intolerance and discrimination.
- 10) Seniors' safety.
- 11) Property crime.
- 12) Cyber-victimization.

These issues were prioritized based on multiple criteria: scope and prevalence, severity (impact on victims and community wellbeing), community perception and fear, trends (whether the problem is increasing in scope and severity) and the influence the issue has on contributing to or exacerbating other problems (whether it is a risk factor for other problems). This list includes issues that directly affect personal and community safety (violence against women, nuisance problems, drug trafficking, property crime, and cyber crime). It also includes local issues that constitute risk factors for crime, criminality and victimization, in particular mental health problems, substance abuse, challenges facing young people, intolerance and discrimination, and homelessness.

The remainder of this section discusses the first five issues that should be prioritized in applying a community safety and wellness plan in Wolfville.

THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Mental health illnesses are a serious public health concern globally, nationally, provincially, and locally. Statistics and research expose the rising rates of mental health and substance abuse disorders, especially among young people. Addressing the "mental health crisis" (Centre for

Addiction and Mental Health, 2024) must be a priority at the national, provincial, and local levels. The mental health crisis is the most pressing community safety and wellness issue in Wolfville for various reasons.

Governmental and intergovernmental agencies and organizations have acknowledged the gravity of the mental health epidemic and emphasized the need for urgent action (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023b; United Nations, 2022; World Health Organization, 2022c).

Research and statistics reveal a mental health crisis across Canada and Nova Scotia; high rates of anxiety, depression, mood disorders, substance use disorders, and other conditions impact people of all ages, backgrounds and regions. Because of the COVID-19 epidemic and additional stressors such as toxic social media, the number of people suffering from anxiety and depression has mushroomed in recent years (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2022; Research Nova Scotia, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2022a).

This increase has stretched mental health services in the province to capacity. Many Canadians do not have access to primary care. There are long wait times for most mental health care treatment, from school counsellors and registered psychologists to outpatient clinics, psychiatric hospital beds, and addiction treatment (MacIvor, 2021; Stephenson, 2023).

Multiple sources for this study attested to the widespread scope and impact of mental health problems in Wolfville and across Kings County. Mental health was the most common topic that emerged during interviews, not only as one of the most pressing issues facing Wolfville but as an underlying cause or exacerbating factor in other social problems (e.g., homelessness, student binge-drinking, substance abuse) or because of traumatic experience (domestic violence, sexual assault, poverty, ongoing

disruptive nuisance issues). Interviews with Acadia officials from across the university identified mental health as one of the most significant challenges facing students.

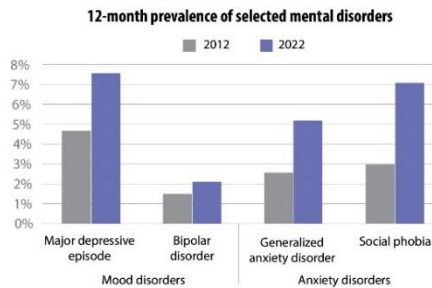
There has been an increased level of mental health disorders among post-secondary students and young people in general (American College Health Association, 2019; Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, 2022). Compared to other age groups, young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are more prone to mental illness and substance use disorders. In 2019, Canada saw 39,801 hospitalizations of children and youth for mental health disorders, alongside 146,845 additional cases requiring attention (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2024). The ongoing struggle of Canadian teens and young adults with mental health highlights the urgency of more proactive, early interventions delivered to children.

Mental health and substance abuse disorders can have a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities. Studies and statistics show the causal linkages between suicide deaths and underlying mental health issues like depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and past trauma (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2024; Moitra et al., 2021; Statistics Canada, 2023). A large body of research shows how mental health disorders represent risk factors for other community safety and wellness problems, such as interpersonal violence, substance abuse, communicable diseases, family breakup, poverty, and homelessness (Groenman, Janssen, & Oosterlaan, 2017; Hossain et al., 2020; Silver, Felson, & Vaneseltine, 2008; Whiting, Lichtenstein, & Fazel, 2021).

MENTAL DISORDERS

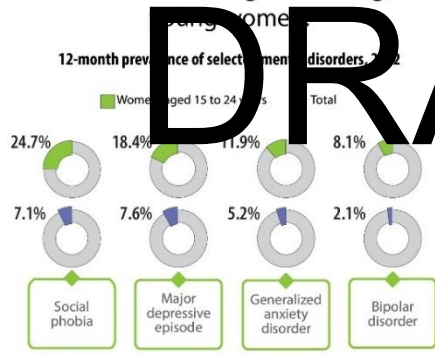
in Canada, 2022

The prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders in Canada increased from 2012 to 2022.



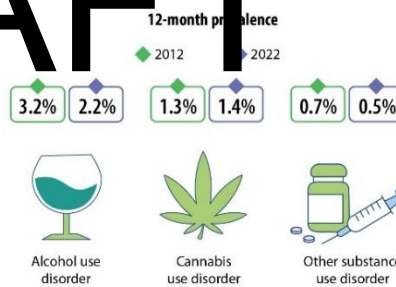
Note: The comparison on the prevalence of social phobia was based on data from 2002 and 2022.

The prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders was highest among young women.

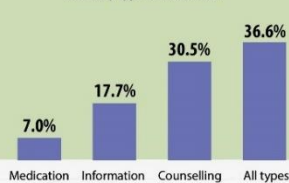


According to data from 2022, over 5 million Canadians (18%) aged 15 and older met the diagnostic criteria for a mood, anxiety, or substance use disorder in the previous 12 months.

Despite recent rises in substance-related deaths, the prevalence of substance use disorders did not increase from 2012 to 2022.



Percentage with partially or fully unmet needs, by type of need, 2022



More than 1 in 3 (36.6%) of those with a mood, anxiety, or substance use disorder reported unmet or partially met health and mental health care needs.



1. The category "women" includes women (and/or girls), as well as some non-binary persons. Source: Stephenson, E., 2023, "Mental disorders and access to mental health care," *Insights on Canadian Society*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

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Figure 2 - Mental Health Disorders in Canada, Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023053-eng.htm>

A disproportionate amount of police resources is expended to respond to mental health calls for service. Kings District RCMP data shows that calls under the *Mental Health Act* exceed any other type of emergency service call. Local RCMP officials interviewed for this study agreed that mental health calls for service consume a significant amount of their time and resources. This is especially true when RCMP members accompany an individual to a hospital. The time spent on mental health calls for service detracts police from other local crime and violence priorities.

People with mental diseases and addictions are disproportionately involved in the criminal justice system, which has led to the “criminalization” of mental health disorders. Between 26 and 40 percent of male prisoners and upwards of 70 percent of female prisoners have been diagnosed with a mental illness. These rates are much higher than the prevalence among the general public (Brown, Barker, & McMillan, 2018; Kouyoumdjian, Schuler, Matheson, & Hwang, 2016).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that mental health well-being be considered a priority when implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

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This recommendation is based on evidence attesting to the widespread scope and increased prevalence of mental health issues, the elevated risk and complexity of mental health and addiction problems locally given the large student population, the amount of policing resources that are being allocated to mental health calls for services, and the contribution that mental health and substance abuse disorders make to other social problems. The lack of proactive resources to prevent mental health disorders, combined with an almost exclusive reliance on police to respond to calls for service, demands alternative, multi-stakeholder, community-based initiatives. This includes population-level public health approaches, such as early intervention programs for at-risk children, combined with an integrated risk-based rapid response model for individualized care that minimizes a police presence.

Prioritizing mental health well-being in the Wolfville CSWM can lower the potential of other community safety and wellness problems, including crime, violence, substance abuse, and homelessness.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) permeates societies throughout the world, manifesting in a spectrum of behaviours and actions that reflect and reinforce gender inequities. VAWG has been conceptualized in various ways, each of which covers a different form of violence and the relationship context. This includes domestic (family) violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, sexualized violence, stalking and harassment, and human (sex) trafficking.

According to the World Health Organization, approximately one in three women globally have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime (World Health Organization, 2022).

The Mass Casualty Commission (2023) concluded that VAWG in Canada and Nova Scotia has reached “epidemic” levels that necessitate urgent action. VAWG is widespread, affecting women and girls across all age groups, regions, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Statistics Canada data show that in 2019, women were violently victimized at a rate nearly double that of men (106 incidents per 1,000 women versus 59 incidents per 1,000 men), while women were five times more likely than men to be victims of sexual assault (50 versus 9 per 1,000) (Cotter, 2021). In 2022, 184 women and girls were killed in Canada, primarily by men (Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 2023). In 2021, the rate of gender-related homicide was 0.54 victims per 100,000 women and girls, marking the highest documented rate since 2017. Victims

disproportionately come from vulnerable or marginalized populations, primarily Indigenous women or children (Sutton, 2023).

A 2019 report by the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women found the most common forms of violence against women were sexual assault, physical assault, and psychological abuse (Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 2022). The report also noted the cyclical nature of intimate partner violence, with many women experiencing multiple incidents.

The rate of gender-related homicide in rural areas of Canada is more than 2.5 times greater than in urban areas (1.13 versus 0.44 per 100,000 women and girls) (Sutton, 2021). This is complicated by the challenges faced by women in rural areas, including isolation and limited resources in preventing VAWG and supporting survivors (Status of Women Canada, 2010).

Kings District RCMP officials indicated that domestic violence is one of the most serious and persistent issues in their jurisdiction. The problem generates so many calls for service and criminal complaints that the RCMP has a dedicated domestic violence coordinator position and is involved in an integrated domestic violence task force. In 2017, it was announced that Chrysalis House, which provides shelter and outreach services for women and children in Kings, Annapolis and West Hants counties, would receive over \$1 million from provincial and federal governments to expand its capacity (Government of Nova Scotia, 2017).

Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia

December 2022

Women continue to be the predominant victims of domestic violence in Nova Scotia.

79% women
2,434

21% men
643

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is deliberate and purposeful violence, abuse, and intimidation by one person against another in an intimate relationship. It may be a single act or a series of acts forming a pattern of abuse. Domestic violence can occur in any relationship, however, women are primarily the victims and men are primarily the perpetrators. Children and young people experience harm by being exposed to violence in adult relationships, being the direct victims of violence, or a combination of the two.

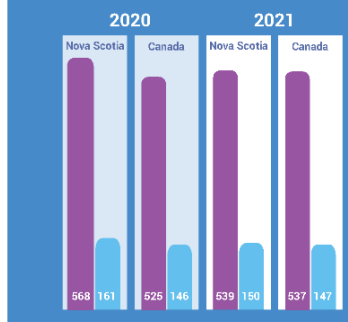
What is reported?

In 2021, the rate of police-reported incidents of domestic violence against females (539 per 100,000) was over 3 times higher than the rate of police-reported instances of domestic violence against males (150 per 100,000) in Nova Scotia.

3x

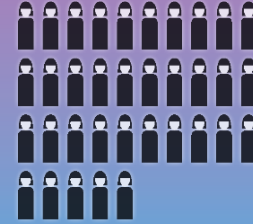
From 2020 to 2021, rates of police-reported domestic violence against females decreased by 5% in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia rates of police-reported domestic violence remain higher than the national rate.

Rates of police-reported domestic violence incidents in 2020 and 2021 (per 100,000).

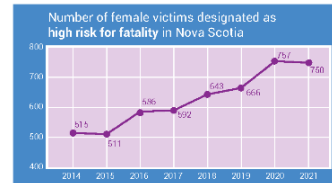


How many fatalities?

35 women were murdered by their intimate partner in Nova Scotia between 2002-2021



In 2021, 86% (750) of domestic violence files designated as high risk for fatality involved female victims compared to 90% (757) in 2020.



The **Jacqueline Campbell Danger Assessment (JCDA)** is used by Victim Services Officers in Nova Scotia to designate domestic violence files as high risk.

Figure 3 - Domestic Violence in Nova Scotia, 2021. Source: Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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While domestic violence is the most significant form of VAWG in Kings District, RCMP officials contend that the large student population and easy access to alcohol mean that sexualized violence is more prevalent in Wolfville. According to a Government of Nova Scotia webpage, 82 percent of sexual assault victims are female, and 97 percent of the suspects are male. The province acknowledges that sexual assault is “significantly under-reported,” with approximately 9 in 10 incidents not being reported to the police (Nova Scotia, 2012). Gender-based violence among post-secondary students encompasses a range of behaviours, including sexual violence, intimate partner and dating violence, as well as stalking and other forms of harassment. A significant proportion of college women experience

some form of violence during their time as students. These risks are heightened, given that young women in their college-aged years (between ages 18 and 24) experience some of the highest rates of gender-based violence (Sutton, 2023). The risk of sexual assault is also higher among university students due to access to drugs and alcohol (Ruiz, 2015).

Specific statistics for Acadia University were not available. However, it has developed a sexualized violence policy and a sexualized violence protocol (as per provincial guidelines). It has also established a Sexualized Violence Prevention and Education Office (which is not mandated by the province) (Government of Nova Scotia & Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents, 2019). Since the Coordinator’s position was created at Acadia in 2021, the

office has been busy, given the high volume and complexity of student inquiries. The office receives disclosures from between 40 and 50 students each academic year. Acadia officials acknowledge that a high caseload is a sign that sexual violence is a widespread problem but also that victims

are more apt to seek help and report a problem. Young women in Nova Scotia are also at risk of human trafficking, given that the province has the highest rate of police-reported human trafficking in the country (Heidinger, 2023).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that violence against women and girls, and sexualized violence against young women in particular, be established as one priority in implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

This recommendation is based on evidence attesting to its widespread scope locally, the factors that elevate risk in Wolfville (the presence of Acadia University, large cohort of women that are at increased risk, easy access to alcohol), and the relative lack of proactive resources dedicated to preventing VAGW on and off campus. A preventative approach to VAWG by addressing root causes and limiting the opportunities for violence to occur in a particular time and place is critical given the low reporting rate, the destructive physical and emotional trauma inflicted on survivors, the limitations of law enforcement, and the shortage of support and treatment for survivors.

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ALCOHOL-RELATED PROBLEMS

Alcohol consumption and abuse is a complex public health issue that has widespread implications for community safety and wellness. The adverse health effects of excessive alcohol use are well-documented and multifaceted. Heavy drinking can damage the heart, leading to problems such as cardiomyopathy, arrhythmias, stroke, high blood pressure, liver failure and certain types of cancer (Mosel, 2024). Besides these physical health issues, alcohol overconsumption can

also lead to mental health problems and increase the risk of suicide, especially in individuals who have depression or anxiety (World Health Organization, 2022a).

Beyond individual health risks, alcohol overconsumption creates and exacerbates other social problems. Research has shown that alcohol use is a major factor in many incidents of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other forms of interpersonal violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023a). There is also a

correlation between alcohol overconsumption and an increase in crime rates (Fitterer & Nelson, 2015). A review of the literature by Horvath et al. (2014) found alcohol to be a factor in approximately 50 percent of crimes in the UK and one-third in the U.S. (Horvath & LeBoutillier, 2014). Public drunkenness, noise complaints, and vandalism are often associated with excessive alcohol use. These behaviours create a disturbance for community members and place a burden on law enforcement and other social services. Research consistently shows that the local availability of alcohol can lead to an increase in crime, violence, and nuisance problems. This relationship is especially strong for violent crimes, with high alcohol outlet density being a significant predictor (Scribner, Mason, Simonsen, Theall, & Chotalia, 2010; Toomey et al., 2012; Wheeler, 2019).

Impaired driving, whether because of alcohol or drugs, continues to be a serious risk to road safety in Canada. Between one-third and one-half of all motor vehicle crash fatalities involve a driver who has consumed alcohol, drugs, or both (Fitterer & Nelson, 2015; Horvath & LeBoutillier, 2014).

Underage drinking is a significant public health concern, given alcohol is the most commonly used substance among American and Canadian youth, the increased risks it poses for youth development and its association with other various adverse community safety outcomes involving intoxicated youth, such as traffic fatalities and violence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023c; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2024). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that in the U.S., excessive drinking is responsible for

over 3,900 deaths and 225,000 years of potential life lost annually among individuals under age 21 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023c).

Like any other town, Wolfville suffers from various alcohol-related problems. Fights, loud parties, vandalism, trespassing, and heavy foot traffic coming out of bars late at night are examples of disturbances caused by alcohol that disrupt town life and harm nearby residents. Most tragically, in 2011, a first-year Acadia student died following a night of heavy drinking. That same year, a report examining alcohol harms in selected towns in Nova Scotia cited anecdotal RCMP estimates that one-third of their calls in Wolfville were alcohol-related. “Despite the time, effort, and resources Wolfville has devoted to reducing harms, alcohol-related crimes do occur. Problems are most frequently related to common assault, including domestic violence, as well as impaired driving. Other alcohol-related crimes that are not as prevalent, key informants told us, include sexual assault, general unruly behaviour, property damage, noise disturbance and uttering threats” (Municipal Alcohol Report, 2011).

Acadia students are frequently blamed for many of the alcohol-related nuisance problems in town. This is attributed to a culture of binge drinking among students (Municipal Alcohol Report, 2011). Kings District RCMP officials and victims’ advocates interviewed for this study attest that liquor is a significant risk factor for gendered-based violence, including domestic and sexualized violence. Alcohol is readily available in Wolfville throughout various outlets, and the town’s growing economic reliance on alcohol, including the burgeoning wine industry, wine tours, tourism, and its ready availability through a

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local liquor store and licenced establishments, has created a culture of

drinking and accessibility that elevates alcohol as a risk factor locally.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that alcohol abuse and alcohol-related problems be established as a priority in implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

This recommendation is based on evidence attesting to the harmful impact that alcohol abuse has on individuals and its linkages to other local social problems, including sexual assault, violence, mental health and addiction problems, and nuisance issues. The presence of a large post-secondary population and norms among university students and other young people that promote binge drinking heightens the risks of alcohol abuse and associated problems locally. The culture of alcohol consumption that is increasingly embedded in Wolfville's economy and brand and the accessibility of alcohol locally exacerbates abuse, underage drinking, and other local social and health problems.

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STUDENT CONDUCT PROBLEMS

Wolfville's identity as a college town is animated by the academic, economic and cultural vigour of Acadia University. These contributions, however, come with a cost—a paradoxical challenge where the student population is both a boon and a bane to the town. On the one hand, students infuse life into the local economy and cultural scene. On the other, their off-campus activities can contribute to local nuisance problems that disrupt community life. Anti-social student behaviour has been a long-standing thorn in the side of Wolfville and was repeatedly mentioned as a significant community safety concern in this research.

These nuisance issues range from loud and raucous parties and public drunkenness to

vandalism and trespassing. Late-night disturbances, often resulting from students transitioning from bars to residential areas, are a common occurrence. More concerning is intimidating and harassing behaviour fuelled by excessive drinking. These disturbances and behaviours are not only a breach of civic peace but have catalyzed more serious criminal incidents. These disturbances are concentrated in the central part of the town, the downtown area, and along the natural transit routes from bars to student residences on and off campus.

The impact and repercussions of conduct problems are far-reaching. Residents, especially those living in the central part of town, report an intense sense of annoyance

and intimidation, leading to fear, victimization, and insecurity. The quality of life of these residents is significantly affected, with some complaining about disrupted sleep and deteriorating mental health. The potential for trespassing, assault, vandalism, and theft raises concerns about the safety and security of residents. These issues also strain Wolfville's overall health, harmony, and local social cohesion, causing significant rifts between students and other residents.

The causes of the student conduct concerns are multifaceted. Their lack of commitment or sense of belonging to the local community is a potential factor. This can be attributed to the transient nature of students, many of whom view Wolfville as only a temporary home. The town and the university have made recent efforts to socialize them into the community and host more (non-alcoholic) events on and off campus. However, this research also revealed complaints by students, their representatives, and other research participants that there needs to be more effort by the town, businesses, and community residents and groups to integrate students and create a more welcoming environment for them.

The deplorable conditions of some rental housing and feelings of alienation among students living on campus may also contribute to student conduct problems, as does an increase in mental health issues among students who resort to self-medication through alcohol and drugs. The demographic profile of the student population, specifically young males still developing executive functioning skills, also compounds the off-campus conduct problems.

As discussed, the role of alcohol in contributing to student conduct problems (and sexualized violence) is linked to a culture of drinking in Wolfville. Another contributing factor is the absence of alternative facilities and events provided by Acadia and the Town, especially non-alcoholic ones. The lack of coordinated partnerships among key stakeholders, including Acadia, the Town, licensed facilities, landlords, and healthcare providers, hinders effective problem-solving.

The issues faced by Wolfville are common in many college towns and cities that host large student populations; they mirror challenges faced by other university towns in Nova Scotia, such as Antigonish and cities like Halifax, home to Dalhousie University. In 2021, almost 100 people faced tickets or charges after Dalhousie student street parties in the South End of Halifax (Fairclough, 2023b). During these gatherings, property damage and public urination have raised significant concerns about student conduct in urban university settings (Fairclough, 2023a). The phenomenon extends beyond Nova Scotia. In Ontario, police have been summoned to manage large, unruly university street parties (MacDonald & Deschamps, 2021).

While these disturbances are often considered an inevitable byproduct of vibrant student life, they require a concerted resolution. The literature shows that community-based approaches that involve all stakeholders—the university, students, residents, businesses, and local authorities—can offer sustainable solutions to balance the dynamism of the post-secondary student population with the tranquillity of town life.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that off-campus student conduct issues be prioritized in implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

This recommendation is based on the long-standing nature of this problem, its prevalence in terms of people affected, and the impacts that nuisance problems have on the quality of life of those affected. It is also significant because it undermines community harmony and cohesion by pitting students against other town residents.

CHALLENGES FACING ACADIA STUDENTS AND OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

While students and other young people in Wolfville are blamed for many local nuisance problems, they also face significant challenges and risk factors that cannot be ignored.

Post-secondary students—and the Millennial and Z generations in general—have had to endure an unprecedented barrage of adversities during their young lives that have seriously affected their mental health and well-being: the COVID-19 pandemic, stagnant wages, a lower standard of living, affordability issues, (including food insecurity and a lack of affordable housing), the detrimental effects of personal technology (excessive screen time, cell phone addictions, cyber-victimization, toxic social media), the synthetic drug epidemic, and the climate

change crisis. These issues have taken a toll, creating a dystopian vision of their future and contributing to a mental health epidemic among young people (Abrams, 2023; Statistics Canada, 2022b; World Health Organization, 2022b).

Students and other young people living in Wolfville are not immune from these burdens; there has been a notable increase in Acadia students reporting mental health problems. Moreover, financial struggles and food insecurities plague many students in Wolfville, adding to the complex web of challenges they are forced to navigate. That so many students live in substandard accommodations speaks to broader issues of housing affordability and student marginalization.



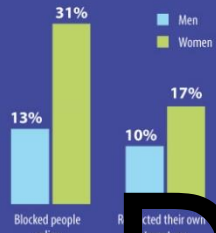
CYBERVICTIMIZATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN CANADA

The risk of being cybervictimized was higher among...

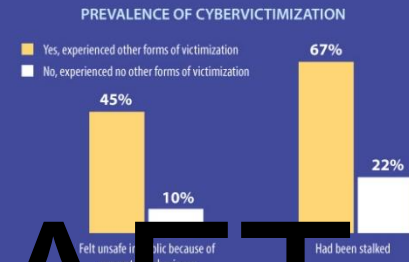
- those aged 18 to 21 (31%)
- women (32%)
- the LGBTQ2 population (49%)
- people with a disability (39%)



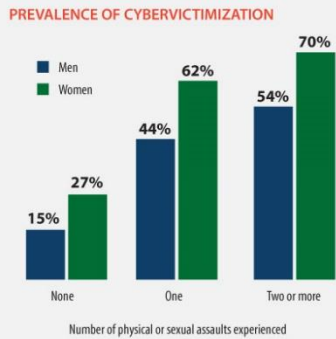
Use of online protective measures was more common among women victims



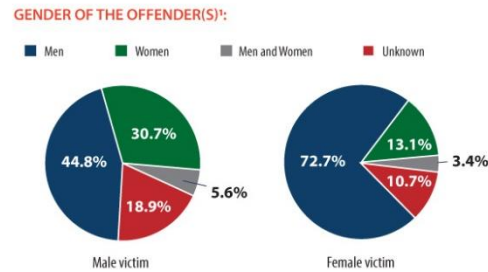
Cybervictimization was more prevalent among those who experienced other forms of victimization



Cybervictimization and being a victim of physical and sexual assault were closely related, especially among women



Women were more likely to be perpetrators of inappropriate online sexual behaviours



In the most serious incident of inappropriate online sexual behaviour, more than half (55%) of victims reported that they knew the offender or offenders.

1. Information on non-binary offenders was not collected. Note: Due to sample size limitations, data on non-binary individuals who experienced cybervictimization cannot be published.

Source: D. Hango, 2023, "Online harms faced by youth and young adults: The prevalence and nature of cybervictimization," *Insights on Canadian Society*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

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Figure 4 - Cyber-Victimization Among Young Adults in Canada; Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023023-eng.htm>

Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, Two-Spirit or another non-binary gender minority or sexual identity are especially at risk. LGBTQ2+ individuals face widespread violence and systemic discrimination because of societal stigma and rights denial, making them one of the most marginalized groups globally. There has also been an uptick in hate crimes against LGBTQ2+ individuals in Canada, with warnings about potential extreme violence from anti-gender movements. LGBTQ2+ people in Canada also tend to have lower incomes and higher rates of poverty, potentially due to workplace discrimination. A disproportionate number of LGBTQ2+ youth in Canada are homeless, often stemming from family violence and prejudice (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2022; Women

and Gender Equality Canada, 2022). Societal stigma and discrimination contribute to higher rates of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and suicide. Research participants in this study from various fields (policing, justice, mental health counselling, gendered-based violence) all attested to the increased risks that members of the LGBTQ2+ community face based on their gender or sexual orientation.

There is an urgent need to provide greater support for young people given the unprecedented challenges they face, not only because of their immediate adverse effects on their health, safety and overall well-being but because they represent significant risk factors for future maladaptive behaviours and negative health outcomes.

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RECOMMENDATION

In implementing the CSWM in Wolfville, attention must be paid to the unprecedented challenges and risk factors faced by children, adolescents, and young adults.

The importance of this issue is due not only to the immediate effects that many of these issues have on the mental health and well-being of young people. These adversities also put youth at a much higher risk of future problems as adults, including criminal and violent behaviour, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, and mental health and substance abuse disorders. It also must be a priority, given the large student population in Wolfville. Focusing on the challenges young people face is part of a broader proactive, social developmental, social problem-solving approach that addresses social environmental and personal risk factors among children, youth and young adults before they manifest themselves into maladaptive behaviours and negative health outcomes.

BULLYING

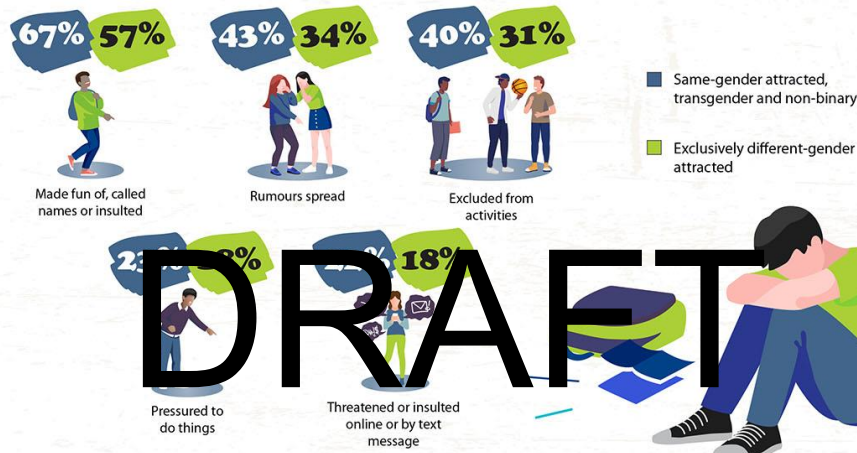
among sexually and gender diverse youth¹ in Canada



Same-gender attracted, transgender and non-binary youth were more likely to have experienced bullying in the past year (**77%**) than youth exclusively attracted to a different gender (**69%**).

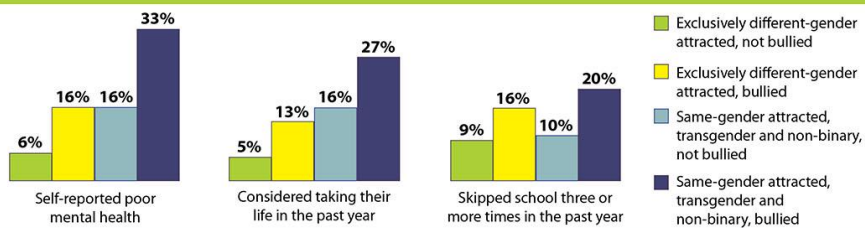
Being insulted was the most common form of bullying among all youth

Top 5 types of bullying experienced by all youth in the past year



Sexually and gender diverse youth were significantly more likely to experience multiple forms of bullying (at least six types) (**16%**) than youth attracted exclusively to a different gender (**10%**).

Poor mental health was more commonly reported by bullied sexually and gender diverse youth



1. In this study, sexually and gender diverse youth refers to persons aged 15 to 17 years who are same-gender attracted, transgender and non-binary.
Source: Prokopenko, E. and D. Hango. 2022. "Bullying victimization among sexually and gender diverse youth in Canada." *Insights on Canadian Society*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 75-006-X.

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Figure 5 - Bullying among Sexually and Gender Diverse Youth in Canada. Source: Statistics Canada, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2022065-eng.htm>

CONCLUSION

Despite its idyllic setting and prosperous visage, Wolfville has its share of issues that undermine local safety and well-being. Some problems discussed, such as the mental health crisis, violence against women and girls, alcohol-related issues, and challenges facing young people, are not unique to Wolfville. They are problematic and even epidemic at the provincial, national, and international levels. Small towns are not exempt from these global problems, and any community safety and development plan must incorporate an understanding of how global trends affect the local level.

Other issues, such as student conduct problems, are ongoing challenges that every community with a sizeable post-secondary population must deal with. Indeed, a large cohort of students significantly influences all the major issues facing Wolfville as a college town and community. The high prevalence of mental health disorders, the culture of binge drinking and alcohol accessibility, the prevalence of sexualized violence, and other maladaptive behaviours among post-

secondary students all contribute to the complex and multifaceted trials faced by the community.

The results of this study indicate a complex web of local intersecting problems that have wide-ranging consequences for the town. These problems are not mutually exclusive but interconnected in correlational and causal ways, exacerbating the challenges individuals, families, and the community face.

The complex interconnectivity of these problems is evident in the way mental health issues can lead to substance abuse disorders, which contribute to homelessness, interpersonal violence and criminal behaviour. The role that alcohol abuse plays in domestic and public violence, sexual assault, and nuisance problems highlights the far-reaching impact of common social determinants in various other social problems. Figure 7 demonstrates the interconnectedness of identified problems in the study, highlighting mental health problems and alcohol abuse as common factors in other social problems.

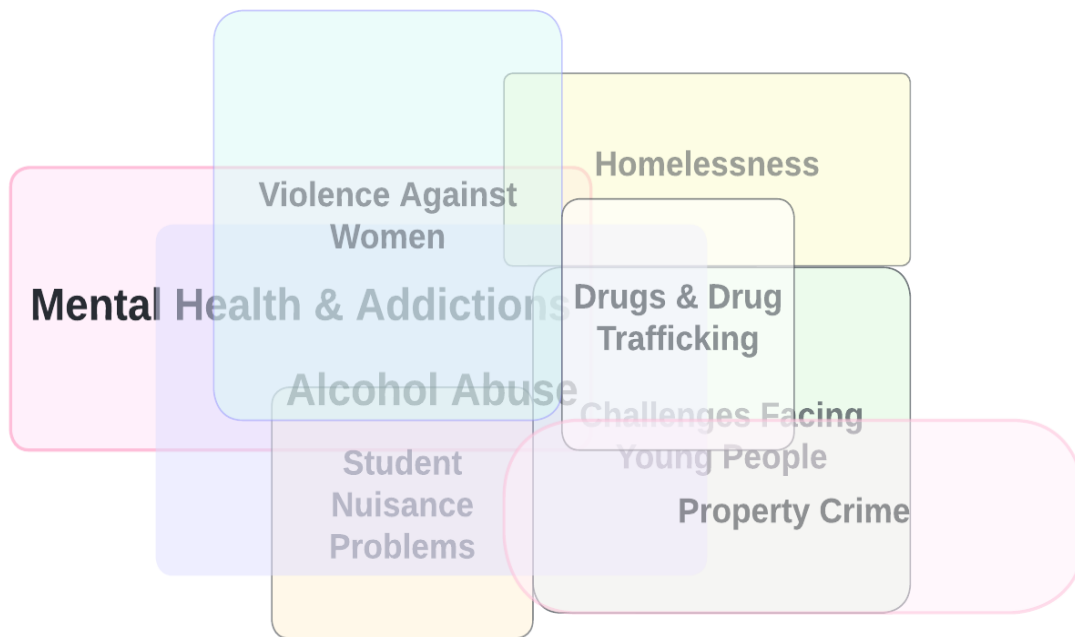


Figure 6 - Wolfville's Prioritized Problems and their Inter-Connections

Efforts to mitigate these social concerns must be delivered through a comprehensive problem-solving framework to encompass how they are interconnected in a correlational and causal fashion. Further, the intersection of these issues underlines the importance of focusing on common social determinants, root causes and risk factors. The multi-faceted risk factors faced by young people today underscore the urgency of addressing them within a holistic, systematic, problem-oriented, community-

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based framework. Prioritizing mental health, homelessness, violence prevention, alcohol abuse interventions, and support for young people are crucial components of a holistic approach to fostering greater community safety and well-being in Wolfville.

The need for proactive, multi-stakeholder initiatives that address root causes and provide support and resources to vulnerable populations, in particular young people and LGBTQ2+ individuals, is paramount.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS MODEL



This section outlines the theory behind the Community and Safety Wellness Model (CSWM).

This first part explains the five main principles that make up the CSWM and guide the study's recommendations: (i) prevention (proactive early interventions targeting risk factors), (ii) problem-oriented (overcoming root causes through the most appropriate solutions), (iii) collaboration (among multiple stakeholders), (iv) community-based (resolutions developed and implemented at the local level), and (v) comprehensive (tackling multiple, intersecting problems through complementary resources and systematic strategies).

The second part describes the three main conceptual models influencing the CSWM: public health, crime prevention, and social ecology.¹

The discussion of the concepts in each section is structured as follows: (i) an overview of the concept, its underlying theory and research evidence establishing its effectiveness; (ii) application to local problem-solving and community safety; (iii) research findings from this study critically analyzing the extent to which it is currently applied in Wolfville and (iv) recommendations for the application of this principle to the CSWM in Wolfville.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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PREVENTION

Prevention science is a field that applies systematic methods to stop or control human and social dysfunctions before they occur. It entails evidence-based strategies to understand and overcome the determinants of societal, community, and individual-level problems while promoting protective factors to improve the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. This field draws from and informs such diverse disciplines as epidemiology, sociology, social work, criminology, psychology, neurobiology, and

public health. One goal of prevention science is to provide empirically-based guidance and resources to facilitate the integration of best practices into public policies and actions (Bettiol, 2020; Coie et al., 1993; National Prevention Science Coalition, 2019; World Health Organization, 2018).

In terms of local problem-solving, "prevention" refers to proactive strategies and measures that are put in place to mitigate the development and avert the

¹ Other disciplines and conceptual models that influence the CSWM include: community development, social development, restorative justice, social justice, transformative justice, trauma-informed approaches, evidence-based policies and

practices, as well as community policing and problem-oriented policing. The extensive list of disciplines and guiding principles attests to the model's multifaceted complexion, which is necessary considering the intricate, interconnected, and deeply rooted nature of the issues being addressed

occurrence of problems before they arise and escalate (identifying and dealing with risk factors and threats before they result in actual harms).

The benefits of a preventative approach embody the adage that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” for humanitarian reasons (by mitigating harm and suffering) and the more utilitarian metrics of efficiency and cost-effectiveness (early interventions that prevent health problems or criminal behaviour are far less costly than treatment or sanctions). While reactive measures will always be necessary, a shift towards a proactive, preventative philosophy in government policies and practices or community-based initiatives can significantly reduce the prevalence and severity of social welfare, crime and health problems and is a cost-effective investment that reduces healthcare, social welfare, and criminal justice spending (Genuis, 2007; Njuguna et al., 2020; Teusch, 2001; Wolf, 2008).

Application to Wolfville: Research Findings and Analysis

Research for this study revealed an absence of proactive, preventative approaches to community safety and other local issues in Wolfville. Services and other interventions targeting specific problems, whether implemented by government agencies, non-government agencies, or community groups, are primarily reactive.

Like public policing generally, the Kings District RCMP’s response to crime is mainly reactive, following a traditional law enforcement sanctions framework. The same can be said for the work of the Town’s by-law compliance department. Similarly, Acadia’s Coordinator of Student Conduct and Community Support mainly responds to

students who have breached the university’s code of conduct policies (albeit using a restorative approach). Most regional and local agencies and resources dedicated to mental health illness are treatment-based and lack strong proactive preventative elements. It is the aftermath of domestic and sexualized violence that is the primary preoccupation of police, Acadia University and local shelters. Public schools in the Annapolis Valley have a shortage of counsellors, which are critical to the early intervention and treatment of cognitive and behavioural deficits among students.

All of this means that most interventions to address crime, violence or mental health problems are made once risk factors become manifested as maladaptive behaviours, social problems, emergency calls for services, victimization and other harms.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, there are local examples of more preventive approaches to specific issues, most of which are implemented at Acadia University. It is embarking on a more holistic approach to supporting students' mental health and overall well-being that transcends academics. The Campus Health Promotion Coordinator, in tandem with other units on campus, relies partially on a public health approach, including educational campaigns and events, to raise awareness and educate students about how to safeguard their mental health. Various services and resources, such as mental health counselling, are available on campus. The university is also striving to offer more entertainment and social events on campus to minimize off-campus nuisance concerns. Other student-centred units, such as Residence and Student Life, are also becoming more proactive by training

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Residence Assistants to better support and navigate students toward the non-academic resources they need for their well-being. The M.Ed. in Counselling program is increasingly orientated toward mitigating the social environmental causes of mental health and addiction problems.

Off campus, a multi-stakeholder “Town and Gown” committee composed of Acadia, the town, and the RCMP meets regularly to anticipate and control high-risk off-campus events. The Town’s compliance department is also taking steps to work with multi-residential owners to prevent loud parties and other by-law infractions. The Town of Wolfville, along with grassroots initiatives such as the Good Neighbours Group, have

reached out to students to integrate them into the community, in part to reduce anti-social behaviour in residential neighbourhoods.

In sum, a reactive approach to crime and other local problems perpetuates a cycle that addresses the aftermath rather than preventing the onset of the problem. While a reactive approach still predominates in local approaches to crime and other community safety issues, there is an increased recognition of the need for more proactive interventions that target risk factors to prevent them from becoming harms. This creates a robust foundation for employing a preventative orientation for the issues prioritized in this research.

Recommendations

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In addressing local community safety and wellness problems, a fundamental shift must be made towards a more proactive orientation that ensures risk factors do not escalate into problem behaviours and situations. This means applying the primary and secondary preventative principles of public health along with the risk-based early intervention techniques associated with the crime prevention field.

A risk-based approach in crime prevention means prioritizing individuals who are most at risk of (future) criminality, violence or other maladaptive behaviours. A risk-based, problem-oriented, proactive approach targets social environmental risk factors (e.g., poverty, domestic violence, negative role models) and personal risk factors (e.g., social and life skills deficits, conduct disorders, aggressive behaviour, psychological problems). Early intervention programs that promote resilience should also be implemented for at-risk children, such as enriched pre-primary and after-school recreational programs that provide tutoring, mentoring, and social and life skills development. This social problem-solving approach delivered through early intervention programs can address factors that put children and youth at risk of various interconnected maladaptive behaviours (e.g., criminality, violence, mental health, addictions) that may emerge later in life.

Community safety initiatives should also incorporate situational crime prevention measures that reduce the opportunity for crime, violence, and other community safety problems to occur at a particular time and place. This includes modifying the physical environment through targeting hardening, access control, and safe design principles or mobilizing residents to organize through programs like Neighbourhood Watch.

As detailed in the recommendations, a Community Navigator position and rapid response units would also assume a preventive approach by providing personalized care to individuals exhibiting high-risk behaviours or in high-risk environments to prevent such risk factors from escalating into maladaptive behaviours, criminal events or other serious harms.

PROBLEM-ORIENTED

In the fields of crime prevention and policing, the term “problem-oriented” refers to a process that ensures solutions to crime or disorder problems are focused on (oriented towards) the root causes and use the most appropriate interventions to minimize risk factors. In this context, the process encompasses two broad phases:

First, it entails an analytical process whereby a (potential) crime problem or criminal behaviour is predicted and assessed by gathering and analyzing relevant information (which includes identifying and separating the causes of the problem from symptoms and aggravating factors).

Second, interventions are crafted that are highly individualized to a particular situation or at-risk individual. They ought to be commensurate with the scope and nature of the risk factors to ensure a criminal act or behaviour does not materialize, persist, or get worse. These interventions typically fall outside the realm of the criminal justice system (Schneider, 2014, pp. 13-15).

The problem-oriented approach was initially developed and applied to policing in the late 1970s by the University of Wisconsin law professor Herman Goldstein. The precipitous rise in the crime rate in the U.S. throughout the 1960s and 1970s revealed a “crisis” in the effectiveness of modern policing. There was a fixation on efficiency, which often meant police only addressed symptoms rather than the causes of crime and criminal behaviour (Goldstein, 1979). The traditional incident-driven, rapid response, randomized patrol car and the arrest, prosecution, and punishment of offenders were not affecting rising crime rates and solving crime problems. In short, the problem-oriented approach to crime originally arose from the inability of police to fulfill their fundamental mission: “preventing and controlling crime” (Sherman, L. W. & Eck, 2006, p. 299).

Sampson and Scott (2000, p. 30) emphasize that “a proactive, problem-solving approach is markedly different from the traditional approach to addressing crime and fear in our communities. It involves

tailoring solutions to unique neighbourhood problems based on thoughtful, in-depth analysis. It involves moving away from generic crime-control models or off-the-shelf solutions because each community's crime problems are unique." According to Clare et al. (2010, p. 7), the basic tenets of a problem-oriented approach are: "(a) being more specific about the nature of individual problems, involving research, analysis, and interpretation of current and previous responses, (b) assess the adequacy and effectiveness of these approaches within the context, (c) undertake a comprehensive exploration for novel, alternative responses to existing problems, and (d) select the most suitable response(s) and implement them." Like crime prevention, problem-oriented policing is concerned with long-lasting solutions to crime and criminality by identifying and addressing the root causes of crime.

Application to Wolfville Research Findings and Analysis

Some of the most significant shortcomings in municipal policing in Nova Scotia stem from the absence of a problem-solving orientation. Police continue to rely overwhelmingly on a traditional criminal justice process of "arresting its way out of crime problems," an ineffective long-term solution to addressing crime problems because it does little to address the root causes of crime or prevent future criminal activity. The further implication is that police and the criminal justice system continue to react to crime problems instead of preventing them.

The MCC conclusions on policing and the criminal justice approach to violence against women, as well as the government-sanctioned Standing Together plan on

domestic violence, both share the view that too much emphasis is placed on transactional criminalization responses and not enough on problem-oriented analytical methods to better understand and prevent cycles of violence (Crocker & Dufour, 2024; Mass Casualty Commission, 2023).

Interviews with RCMP officials in Kings District reveal a larger truth about modern policing: they are often so overwhelmed with calls for service—including responding to various matters that should not be the purview of police enforcement—that they do not have the resources required for a more intensive problem-oriented policing. This is especially clear regarding mental health calls for service in which the RCMP members rely on a typically narrow range of options: laying charges, hospitalization, or leaving the individual on their recognizance.

The same can be said of the measures implemented to deal with persistent nuisance problems in Wolfville (noise complaints, public drunkenness, vandalism, etc.). In general, they are mostly reactive, punitive, and piecemeal, with insufficient use of an analytical procedure that seeks to understand the causes of a particular problem and systematically apply an individualized problem-solving solution. Installing CCTV cameras is one example of a response meant to capture by-law infractions rather than solving the underlying issues (Hoffman, 2022a).

Despite these shortcomings, there has been some momentum towards adopting a more problem-oriented approach by police in Nova Scotia and Kings District specifically. One of the guiding principles of the *Policing Transformation Study Recommendation Report* submitted to Halifax Regional Council is "a problem-solving and solutions-

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focused approach to community safety” (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2022)

The MCC recommended that “mandatory arrest and charging policies and protocols for offences arising from intimate partner violence should be abolished and replaced by a new women-centred framework that focuses on violence prevention rather than a carceral response” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 168).

While this recommendation is still largely unmet in Nova Scotia, a multi-agency rapid response domestic violence task force that includes the Kings District RCMP incorporates some problem-oriented principles through social service agencies that address the cause of the violence or at least prevent it from reoccurring in high-risk situations. Implicit in the integrated “situation table” rapid response unit is the application of the SARA model: identifying individuals or families at acutely elevated risk of domestic violence, intervening before incidents escalate into criminal events or crises, assessing the underlying issues contributing to a domestic violence case, tailoring non-criminal justice responses to individual cases based on their specific characteristics, and assessing the effectiveness of interventions by monitoring and tracking their outcomes while holding

parties accountable for their roles in the response.

The Town and Gown committee involving the Acadia and the RCMP, the Town of Wolfville, has adopted an informal, problem-oriented approach to student drinking and conduct issues. This includes anticipating and assessing problems associated with high-profile, high-risk student events, such as orientation week or homecoming, and developing strategies to pre-empt potential problems. Efforts to integrate Acadia students into the community by the Town of Wolfville and the Good Neighbours Group also entail a problem-oriented process that identifies and assesses a particular cause of student conduct problems (e.g., inadequate assimilation into the community) and then applies tailored solutions that fall outside traditional punitive sanctions (i.e., community engagement initiatives specific to students).

The Kentville Wellness Court is also inherently problem-oriented, focused on helping “address the issues contributing to the individual coming into conflict with the law.” The M.Ed. Counselling Program at Acadia is moving towards a model that is more engaged with assessing and addressing the social determinants of mental health issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The application of the CSWM to addressing crime, violence, and other community safety issues in Wolfville must involve a problem-oriented philosophy that entails crafting individualized solutions to address root causes and minimize risk factors.

Applying the CSWM to Wolfville's crime, violence, and other community safety and wellness issues means moving away from traditional reactive, piecemeal, and transactional

enforcement processes and interventions. Instead, it advocates a problem-oriented philosophy. This entails employing a systematic and analytical process that begins with environmental scanning to anticipate problem situations and behaviours, assessing their scope, nature, impact, symptoms, causes, and risk factors, and crafting individualized solutions to minimize risk factors outside of enforcement and sanctions.

A problem-oriented approach should combine the methodologies inherent in public health, crime prevention, and problem-oriented policing. As Shaw (2005) notes, problem-oriented crime prevention and policing mimics the methods used in public health by “defining the problem, its incidence and trends through extensive data collection, identifying the causes and associated risk and protective factors, designing and implementing interventions targeting those causes, evaluating their effectiveness, and disseminating the results of successful practice to educate the public” (Shaw, 2005, p. 6).

A problem-oriented approach should be applied to all the prioritized problems in Wolfville. For off-campus student conduct problems, it can build upon the work of the Town and Gown Committee’s anticipatory approach to high-risk events. The problem-oriented rapid response model to high-risk cases assumed by the Domestic Violence Situation Table in Kings County could potentially be used for sexualized violence cases in Wolfville. This would be combined with a community-wide public health primary prevention approach that addresses such determinants as misogyny, toxic masculinity, gender inequality, and the feminization of poverty. Academics, students, and Wolfville residents who have come into contact with the criminal justice system because of mental health or addiction issues should be referred to the Kentville Wellness Court. The RCMP can also employ more problem-oriented approaches with other key stakeholders through a designated Community Engagement liaison position in Wolfville.

This problem-oriented approach is central to the recommendations made later in this report, including community-wide public health and crime prevention strategies employed by the multi-stakeholder working groups and the work of the Community Navigator when responding to individual cases.

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COLLABORATION (MULTI-STAKEHOLDER, GOVERNANCE APPROACH)

A collaborative, multi-stakeholder, team approach to local problem-solving unites independent actors in a specific locality, all of whom have a vested interest or stake in an issue, to work together toward its resolution. It entails an interactive

deliberative process structured to share information, responsibilities, and decision-making, plan initiatives, and take coordinated actions. While each partner in this mutual endeavour is independent of one another, their involvement in a

collective effort makes them united and interdependent upon one another in addressing local issues. This collective approach recognizes that no single entity or individual can tackle complex social problems alone and that a coordinated, inclusive effort is necessary to bring about sustainable and impactful change (Eikelenboom & Long, 2023).

A collaborative approach to local problem-solving involving government and private actors is the hallmark of a “governance” model. According to Zhao (2022), “government” and “governance” have distinct meanings:

Government is the formal and organized institutions and systems which structure our society. It consists of those we elect and work in the system, including politicians and civil servants. Government works from a top-down approach, with the aforementioned elected officials heading the system and the governed body below. Governance is a process of decision-making that happens in spaces beyond formalized institutions and systems—it can happen anywhere and distributes power away from a governing body and towards the people that make up a community. It is about community self-determination and community control and is deeply entrenched in relationship-building.

Ricciardelli (2017, p. 2919) stresses that “the most powerful force propelling the governance paradigm is citizen

participation.” Empowering community members, particularly neighbourhood residents, to help address local issues through shared decision-making processes democratizes problem-solving and ensures that solutions are culturally appropriate and equitable and have the broad support of those affected.

Compared to unilateral actions by individual organizations, a collaborative governance model benefits from greater resources and more diverse knowledge, expertise, skills, experiences, and perspectives. This can lead to multifaceted, comprehensive strategies, the coordination and integration of services, reduced duplication, and greater accountability among all key partners in executing coordinated strategies (Butterfoss, 2006; Kreuter, Lezin, & Young, 2000; Mattessich & Monsey, 1992).

A multi-agency approach to program and service delivery is necessary, given that those most at-risk suffer from a co-morbidity of mental health and addiction disorders, which are often aggravated by other complications such as poverty, social isolation, and homelessness. Children and youth with emotional and behavioural disabilities frequently have multiple needs that require the simultaneous involvement of several service agencies (e.g., social work, education, mental health, criminal justice). A multi-agency, collaborative, problem-oriented approach that targets multiple risk factors through multiple “protective factors” is referred to as a “system of care” model (Anderson, 2000). Similarly, a “wraparound” approach holistically responds to children and youth with serious mental health or behavioural challenges. As the name suggests, this process involves “wrapping” a comprehensive array of individualized services and supports “around” young

people in need. Through a team of professionals and natural support networks, the goal is to mitigate fragmentation and service gaps commonly experienced by high-risk youth and their families (National Wraparound Initiative, 2023; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2018b).

When applied to crime prevention and community safety, multi-stakeholder collaboration is expressed through the term “co-production of public safety” and the fields of community crime prevention, community policing, and transformative justice, all of which are premised on the limitations of a unilateral approach to public safety by police. Public safety should not be the sole responsibility of the police; instead, it must be shared among multiple stakeholders, including other state agencies and private actors within local communities impacted by crime and other safety issues (Layne, 1989; Loeffler, 2018).

In its recommendations to combat gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence, the Mass Casualty Commission calls for a “whole-of-society” response (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 121). A 2008 study on policing capacity from the Institute for Strategic International Studies (ISIS), commissioned by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, recognizes that multi-stakeholder collaborations are essential for addressing the complex landscape of public safety and community well-being. To address the multifaceted nature of safety and crime prevention, these partnerships should involve various sectors, including health, education, social services, and other community stakeholders. The report also advocates for engaging with non-traditional partners, like businesses and non-profit

organizations, to leverage resources and expertise not typically found within policing. To address community safety and crime prevention effectively, partnerships must take a holistic approach, integrating various strategies from different sectors to create a cohesive plan.

In a 2018 research report on transforming Canada’s criminal justice system by the federal Department of Justice, consultations with provincial and territorial governments exposed a strong desire for a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to crime.

Participants nationwide stated that the path to meaningful change in the criminal justice system needs collaboration and integration across social support systems. They called for various levels of government, local practitioners, and communities to share their efforts, knowledge, and information. They also say collaborative approaches were necessary to address the root causes of crime and create effective and targeted responses ... Participants pointed out that, by nature, staff in justice, health and social services work in “silos.” That is, the services do not share information with others. Participants said this has been an obstacle to effective responses and change. They said collaborative approaches can keep people out of the criminal justice system by referring them to services before their situation leads them to crime, but staff from the various sectors would need to work

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together (Department of Justice, 2018, p. 170).

Application to Wolfville: Research Findings and Analysis

There are local examples of a collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders. Acadia University, the Town of Wolfville, and the Acadia Students' Union have an MOU to support the development of a unified university-town model. The MOU represents “the development of a model unparalleled in Canada” by transcending “the traditional town and gown framework to create a unified university-town model to support their collective goal of becoming an integrated community in which to live, work, and study” while embracing principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. The MOU outlines the joint responsibility of the signatories to ensure a high standard of community livability for all residents and addresses challenges such as food insecurity and inadequate housing. The MOU calls for appointing delegates from each party to the Wolfville and Acadia Town and Gown Committee. The Committee also includes a “representative resident” to serve a two-year term after receiving applications from interested individuals (Town of Wolfville, Acadia University, & Acadia Students' Union, 2023). According to the Town of Wolfville website, the committee addresses issues of common concern, such as neighbourhood relations, housing, the environment, economic activities, recreational and cultural events, health and safety issues, and academic outreach (Town of Wolfville, 2024). The parties commit to “promote community harmony by, among other things, implementing a comprehensive community alcohol strategy, exploring ways to serve better students living off-campus

including an off-campus RA model, developing a Student Code of Conduct that will address on and off campus behaviour, and undertaking a pilot effort to establish a community liaison position that will address questions and concerns about neighbourhood livability” (Acadia University, 2023b; Town of Wolfville, Acadia University, & Acadia Student Union, 2023).

As discussed, one area of focus for this collaboration is off-campus student conduct problems. In this context, the committee includes representatives from the Town’s by-law compliance officers, Acadia University (Student Conduct and Community Support office and the Safety and Security Department) and the RCMP to strategize and coordinate efforts, especially concerning high-risk events that prompt large student gatherings involving alcohol. This proactive initiative augments the traditional enforcement approach of responding to by-law complaints and sanctioning offenders.

For this study, all those interviewed from the town, the RCMP, and Acadia attested to a productive and amicable working relationship. The student conduct office at Acadia and the Town’s compliance department have augmented and even replaced the RCMP in responding to nuisance problems. It has “helped take a little bit of weight off that from the RCMP,” according to one research participant. Compliance officers can readily turn to RCMP members directly if they believe their safety is in jeopardy (i.e., they do not have to call 911 in potentially unsafe situations).

The RCMP and Acadia University’s Safety and Security Department appear to have a productive relationship. They are in contact frequently to discuss ongoing safety and

security issues and incidents. The Town's compliance officers also work closely with the University's security officials. As one Acadia official stated, the two sides commonly "discuss any "crossover" incidents. The compliance officers "will bring issues to our attention as well regarding residence addresses off campus that have been problematic to them," and then the University will work with them "try to mitigate any further issues that have been ongoing."

Despite the MOUs, the town-and-gown committee, information sharing and other joint efforts, there continues to be voids, limitations and obstacles to a more comprehensive collaborative multi-stakeholder approach in Wolfville. Current community safety efforts are carried out almost exclusively by the RCMP and the Town's by-law compliance personnel. Other vital players—in particular, agencies, community groups, and neighborhoods—residents that can be mobilized to implement alternatives to enforcement—are absent from the town-and-gown safety and security committee. There is also a dearth of multi-stakeholder initiatives to address other pressing local safety concerns, leading to fragmented efforts. There are no community-based multi-stakeholder initiatives that address such serious local problems as sexualized violence, homelessness, and mental health and addictions.

Some interviewed blamed the provincial government for inhibiting more community-based multi-stakeholder initiatives by centralizing resources and power and through a lack of policies and funding. Another obstacle is that prospective stakeholders in Wolfville are not sufficiently organized to be represented in formal problem-solving committees.

Existing committees can benefit from a broader mandate that applies a more comprehensive range of interventions. The security-minded town and gown committee, for example, has the potential to develop and deliver a broader range of situational measures that can prevent a wider range of community safety problems, such as property crime, business retail crime, nuisance problems, senior safety, and pedestrian safety. To fulfill this goal, the committee should have a broader membership to expand its repertoire of proactive, problem-solving interventions. For example, the town's planning, engineering, and public works departments can take the lead in applying safe design principles to public spaces, decreasing the opportunity for crime, violence, and nuisance problems to occur. Some interviewed for this study expressed frustration that owners of multi-residential housing were not adequately represented on committees addressing off-campus student conduct problems or that representatives of licensed establishments have not actively participated in developing a local alcohol strategy.

Research for this study also revealed that existing committees and initiatives have not been productive or sustained. Some of those interviewed attribute this to the need for more time or commitment (or both) by representatives of the different stakeholder groups. As one research participant from Acadia University put it,

... how do we start to work on some of these bigger issues ... I think that's where a lot of this gets lost because we will meet with the town, and we will have a whole bunch of people around the table will talk about some of

these great ideas. But everybody's there, off the corner of their desk. It's part of a corner of a desk conversation, and that's where it goes when we leave that meeting. And so not a lot gets done or doesn't progress at a pace that would give confidence to the community that we're taking it seriously.

This interviewee noted there were “several discussions about a party registration process. We've had discussions for ten years on that. There have been several iterations of how it could happen. But when it came to selecting, developing and implementing an option, it went nowhere.”

Another research participant on a multi-stakeholder committee complained they were not producing tangible results, especially in terms of productive strategizing, because they were too busy “putting out fires.”

A local alcohol strategy seems to have met the same fate. The Town initiated the plan to focus on the harms associated with the misuse of alcohol. Town officials developed the basic pillars of a community alcohol strategy, including education, access limitation, and community engagement. Still,

they struggled to get input from or reach a consensus with other key stakeholders on the most appropriate messaging.

Despite these problems, representatives of local stakeholder groups interviewed for this project expressed support for a collaborative approach to local problem-solving. RCMP officials in Kings District voiced support for a multi-stakeholder collaborative orientation. They were also receptive to working with community-based (civilian) “crime prevention coordinators,” with the potential for an informal division of labour in which the coordinators assume a proactive, problem-oriented role, freeing police to focus more on law enforcement.

In short, the governance model is not sufficiently applied in Wolfville to address community safety and other local issues. However, there is a strong foundation for a formal multi-stakeholder governance pilot program. Representatives of key stakeholders interviewed for this study expressed a willingness to participate in a pilot. The challenge in fostering more collaborative initiatives is not necessarily bringing key partners together but finding the most appropriate structures and processes to ensure the partnerships are productive, effective, and sustainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the implementation of the CSWM be accompanied by a multi-stakeholder governance structure that maximizes the participation of key actors and prioritizes community residents' engagement.

A multi-stakeholder governance structure is essential to the CSWM and should guide future local problem-solving initiatives in Wolfville. This means building upon current collaborative

initiatives (i.e., those targeting student conduct issues) to address other prioritized issues, including mental health, violence against women and girls, and the challenges facing young people. This includes reinvigorating and expanding the alcohol strategy committee. It also means maximizing the number of stakeholders taking part in current and prospective committees and following a governance model that prizes community residents' direct engagement, including those impacted by the issues being addressed. Given the provincial government's jurisdiction over social, health, and criminal justice issues, some initial team-building must involve relevant provincial agencies.

The main stakeholders are joined by many other potential partners who can contribute to one or more of the key issues that need to be addressed in implementing the CSWM locally. Indeed, a collaborative approach to addressing crime, violence, and their root causes must go beyond the usual actors—government agencies, law enforcement, and educational institutions—and include less traditional partners such as local businesses, non-profit organizations, health care facilities, community groups, and marginalized community members.

Collaborative initiatives should also be guided by proactive, problem-oriented principles and strategies, whether formal or informal.

All of the above come together in one of the main recommendations for this report: establishing collaborative working groups that maximize the number of stakeholders to address pressing local issues. Each working group is led by a full-time coordinator and follows a systematic, proactive, problem-oriented approach to preventing local problems from emerging or escalating through early interventions that mitigate risk factors. These working groups and their coordinators would be responsible for implementing community-level public health and crime prevention initiatives. The recommended working groups are described in more detail later in this report.

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COMMUNITY-BASED

A community-based approach to problem-solving has three connotations.

First, the interventions are directed at local problems (or the local manifestation of broader problems).

Second, interventions are developed and implemented within the community, relying on local organizations and institutions,

including municipal governments, police, healthcare facilities, schools, community organizations, local private businesses, and faith-based groups.

Last but certainly not least, a community-based approach actively engages and empowers community members in the problem-solving process, including neighbourhood residents and those affected

by the problem (or problems) being addressed. Community members are not merely passive recipients of local initiatives; they must assume an active role in developing and implementing solutions. This approach recognizes community members' valuable knowledge, insights, and resources and seeks to harness their expertise.

The “community” can be defined in geospatial terms (as a neighbourhood, collection of neighbourhoods, a town, or city) or in sociological terms (a group of people characterized by enduring personal ties and networks, a high level of social interaction and cohesion, and shared norms, values, and goals). Either way, community-based solutions to social problems offer a bottom-up approach that harnesses the strengths and resources of those within the community. By building on an intimate understanding of local strengths, assets, and resources, community members and groups are best positioned to understand their unique challenges and to customize interventions to their particular needs and context (Kennedy, V., 2020a; Merrill, Smith, Cumming, & Daunic, 2017). A community-based approach fosters a sense of ownership, accountability, collaboration, inclusion and collective decision-making, which can lead to more sustainable and long-lasting solutions. (Altman, 1995; van Empel, 2008; Wandersman & Florin, 2003).

In short, a community-based approach to local social problem-solving is characterized by a bottom-up process emphasizing a significant role by community members and other private non-state actors, who join together to use their local experiences and knowledge to inform, develop and implement solutions mobilization of local resources. The collective mobilization of

local actors also bolsters the essential prerequisites and outcomes of the problem-solving process: social cohesion and

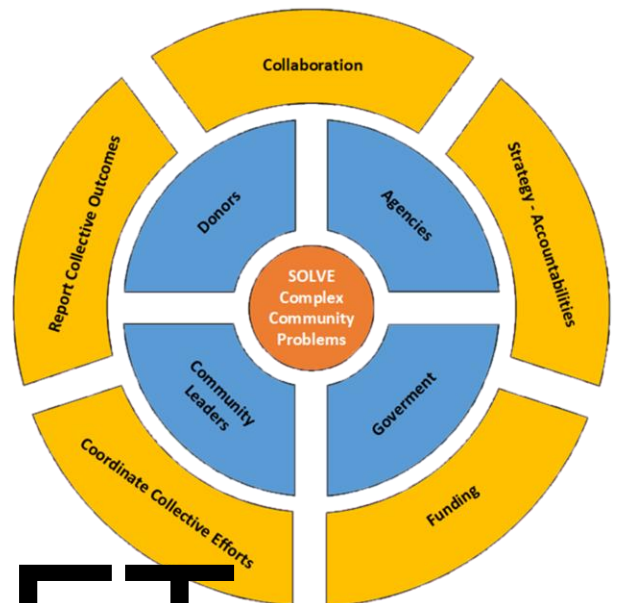


Figure 7 - Community Problem-Solving Impact Model; Source: United Way, <https://shorturl.at/fhzTY>

informal social control.

Research Findings and Analysis: Application to Wolfville

Being a small town in a mostly rural setting would typically pose challenges to tackling serious social and health problems. However, Wolfville is uniquely blessed with several local assets that provide a solid foundation to implement community-based solutions to complex local problems and risk factors.

The presence of a well-educated population suggests that the community is open to innovative, progressive, evidence-based solutions and collaborative efforts in tackling local challenges. This mindset can foster an environment where evidence-based

strategies are embraced and where there is active civic engagement in problem-solving processes.

The presence of vibrant community groups within Wolfville further strengthens its capacity to tackle social and health issues. These groups, representing an array of sectors and interests, provide valuable expertise, network connectivity, and a platform for collaboration. The town boasts the necessary infrastructure for community-based problem-solving initiatives, including schools, a public library, a healthcare facility, other care facilities for seniors and those with special needs, and an RCMP detachment. A strong and diverse economy with a vibrant business community can be a source of funding and other resources. The presence of two bank branches and other financial service providers presents an opportunity to support families and individuals grappling with poverty and financial insecurity.

The presence of Acadia University is also a significant boon to community-based problem-solving. With its faculty, students, and various academic programs—such as community development, counselling, sociology, education and clinical psychology—the university can serve as a hub of expertise that provides opportunities for research, innovation, and guidance to help develop community-based and evidence-based solutions.

Wolfville benefits from its proximity to agricultural areas, which increases access to fresh and healthy food. It also has numerous opportunities for leisure and recreational activities, including many offered through Acadia. These are essential to a healthy community and serve as a basis for social developmental and wellness

programs for at-risk youth, Acadia students, and other young people.

A rich and diverse local culture that includes art, music, theatre, university sports and annual festivals can contribute to community cohesion and provide a rich backdrop against which to enact social and health interventions. Cultural events and local traditions can serve as platforms for community engagement, education, and cultural enrichment for young people.

Finally, Wolfville benefits from a well-functioning municipal government that provides stable leadership and the capacity to support community-based initiatives and help mobilize residents, organizations, and private businesses. The town also has a community engagement platform called Wolfville Blooms, where residents can share their ideas and feedback on various topics.

By capitalizing on its unique assets, Wolfville is well-positioned to implement community-based solutions tailored to its needs. These assets offset some of rural communities' challenges and provide a solid foundation for building robust, sustainable community safety and wellness solutions.

Research for this study recorded widespread support for more community-based efforts that mobilize residents, groups, Acadia staff, students, and faculty in a collaborative approach to addressing local issues.

Some research participants expressed skepticism over the primacy of a community-based approach to addressing complex local problems, given that most of these issues fall within provincial jurisdiction. This is a valid concern, although, as previously mentioned, many research participants also supported a more

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governance approach in which other key stakeholders augment (limited) municipal government resources. The CSWM is not meant to replace or override the role of provincial authorities. Instead, it is to complement existing resources and fill gaps in programs and services by leveraging collaboration at the local level that situates community members and groups as active participants and leaders. The limitations in local resources and capacity can also be augmented by regional social welfare and healthcare resources, including those centralized in Kentville.

A significant obstacle to the collective mobilization of local communities around local problem-solving is a lack of social cohesion (Bertotti et al., 2009; Wickes, 2010). A transient population is one factor that undermines social cohesion and

contributes to local instability (Schneider, 2007b; Shaw & McKay, 2006). While Wolfville has a robust socio-economic base that typically correlates with an engaged community, it suffers from a lack of social cohesion due in part to a highly transient student population and the conflicts that have ensued between the student population and other demographic groups in town.

While there are several local community groups, Wolfville does not necessarily have a strong history of community activism around local social and health problems. Much of the community-based activism in Wolfville and public participation in the local governance process has been centred around addressing off-campus student issues (Town of Wolfville, 2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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A multi-stakeholder governance approach is needed to create a safe, prosperous, healthy community. All local stakeholders should be engaged to contribute to grassroots problem-solving efforts. Particular emphasis must be placed on mobilizing community residents and Acadia students in particular.

As part of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance approach to fostering a safe, prosperous, and healthy community, a concerted effort must be made to reach out and mobilize community members, including those most affected by the problems being addressed.

The four main local stakeholders must all play a role, taking stock of and then leveraging their unique resources and perspectives in a complementary fashion.

Acadia University must contribute more to the community's problem-solving efforts by mobilizing its relevant assets (staff, faculty, students, research, expertise, and student support units). The university's expertise and experience in applying evidence-based student support methods, services, and programs, such as public health (used by the Campus Health Promotion Coordinator), restorative justice (employed by the Student

Conduct Office), or the M.Ed. counselling program's focus on social environmental risk factors, among others.

The Town can help mobilize local community members and groups using its community development resources, while the RCMP can place a greater emphasis on applying community policing practices. Both can also work together in developing and implementing programs that are expressly based on community engagement and collective problem-solving, such as Neighbourhood Watch.

A continual process of capacity-building must be pursued with emphasis on building local social cohesion, given its importance as a foundation for addressing local social problems and engaging residents and neighbourhoods in collective problem-solving initiatives. The main community development focus is integrating the transient Acadia students into the broader Wolfville community. Involving students in local problem-solving initiatives (through research, co-op programs, course credit, or volunteer) can satisfy both the means (nurturing social cohesion) and the ends (the mitigation of pressing local problems) of the community development process. In short, a particular focus of any community mobilization process must be Acadia students, which should seek opportunities for students to meet local social and community developmental needs (such as tutoring and mentoring at-risk children) while also meeting their off-campus needs (adequate and affordable housing, food security, health and wellness, recreational, entertainment and leisure activities).

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The recommendations made in this report are built on the importance of a community-based approach to local problem-solving. The working groups are made up of local stakeholders, and there is a strong emphasis on engaging and maximizing community members, neighbourhood residents, and those most affected by the problems being addressed. Despite engaging provincial government agencies and resources, these groups are mandated to develop solutions that leverage and combine local assets.

COMPREHENSIVE

A comprehensive approach to local problem-solving addresses multiple issues, using various complementary strategies in a systematic and coordinated fashion while maximizing the participation of various stakeholders across many sectors of society. Mitigating local problems necessitates a comprehensive approach because many of those addressed—crime,

violence, poverty, addictions, homelessness, marginalization, intolerance and inequity—are connected in a correlational or causal manner. This means multiple issues must be addressed in an integrated, simultaneous fashion, including understanding and addressing their complex interconnections (ultimately addressing common causes) (Ingram, 2022;

Kennedy, 2020b; McKinsey & Company, 2024).

A public health approach is holistic and systematic in its methods (research, public education campaigns, program and service development and delivery, community engagement, public policy advocacy) and proactive interventions (primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention). An all-inclusive crime prevention strategy encompasses opportunity-reduction, social problem-solving, community mobilization, community policing, environmental design, and restorative justice strategies.

A holistic approach to local problem-solving targets the root causes, risk factors, facilitating factors and symptoms. It entails proactive (prevention, mitigation, early intervention) and reactive (treatment, enforcement, etc.) interventions. A comprehensive approach to public health and crime prevention seeks to eliminate both social environmental risk factors (poverty, poor parenting, lack of affordable housing, gender inequity) and personal risk factors (mental health disorders, conduct disorders, social and life skills deficits).

The active involvement of a wide range of public and private actors across multiple sectors of a community and broader society also characterizes a holistic approach to local social problem-solving. An inclusive multi-stakeholder approach involves government agencies, non-governmental organizations, professionals and experts, neighbourhood residents, community groups, those directly affected by the issue, non-government organizations, and local institutions like schools and faith-based groups. The prescriptive elements of the social-ecological model provide a framework to understand how action can be taken at various levels of society:



Figure 8. A Comprehensive Approach to Safe and Healthy Communities; Source: Cree Nation Government, <https://shorturl.at/xMX3>

government, community, organizational, interpersonal, and by individuals.

A comprehensive approach recognizes the complexity of many local social problems regarding their causes, constitution, scope, and impact and, thus, the need for a complex, multifaceted response. By targeting multiple problems, incorporating a diverse range of strategies and techniques, and mobilizing actors across multiple sectors, a comprehensive approach leads to a more holistic understanding of the problem at hand and more effective solutions.

Research Findings and Analysis: Application to Wolfville

An analysis of local efforts to mitigate crime and other local social problems exposes the

absence of a holistic and systemic framework in Wolfville:

- the prioritized problems are not being recognized and addressed as interrelated, overlapping issues with correlational and causal relationships,
- the strategies in place are often *ad hoc* and piecemeal and are not methodically and systematically developed and implemented comprehensively,
- there is a dearth of multi-stakeholder collaborative initiatives that leverage and mobilize all the potential key actors and resources,
- community safety strategies implemented in Wolfville mostly follow a traditional law enforcement sanctions

framework and lack complementary proactive strategies,

- the local crime prevention strategies are not comprehensive (they fail to combine social developmental, situational, community crime prevention, community policing, and restorative justice),
- there is an absence of a holistic plan in which strategies are implemented at both the population level and individual level,
- there is a wide range of community-based crime prevention, public health, community development, and social development strategies that have not been implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Going forward, it is crucial to ensure a comprehensive approach to local problem-solving endeavours.

This process should begin by having the four main local stakeholders take stock of all the resources they can contribute. From there, a comprehensive local problem-solving strategy in Wolfville would be realized through the CSWM that:

- recognizes local problems are interrelated with correlational and causal relationships,
- ensures all strategies are developed and implemented systematically (guided by a strategic plan),
- works to reduce the opportunity for crime and other problems to occur in a particular time and place while also employing social problem-solving techniques to address root causes,
- implements the public health model that includes multiple strategies (data collection, strategic planning, public education, program and service delivery, community engagement, public policy advocacy) and primary, secondary and tertiary prevention techniques,

- includes social problem-solving strategies that address social environmental risk factors (e.g., poverty alleviation) while also delivering programs and services directly to at-risk individuals (e.g., tutoring and mentoring programs for at-risk children and youth),
- establishes two working groups that together apply complementary crime prevention strategies (social problem-solving, situational, community crime prevention, community policing, restorative justice, etc.),
- ensures the working groups involve all stakeholders (including residents) that collaborate in an integrated manner and
- uses population-level (community-wide) strategies and personalized support for individuals with elevated risk factors.

CONCEPTUAL MODELS

This section will address three applied models central to the CSU's public health, crime prevention, and social ecology. There is a significant overlap between these three conceptual models in mitigating local problems. They all espouse proactive strategies that aim to prevent risk factors from becoming harms. They all encompass a systematic and comprehensive approach

that recognizes solutions must be implemented at various levels of society, from a population-level approach that benefits the most people possible to delivering care directly to individuals with elevated risk factors. All three also follow a problem-oriented framework and target social environmental and personal risk factors.

PUBLIC HEALTH MODEL

The public health model is concerned with protecting and improving the health and well-being of entire populations rather than focusing solely on individual patient care. Also known as the “population health approach,” it aims to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. Its goals are to safeguard and enhance the health status of people, keeping them healthy, preventing disease, injuries and premature death, enhancing the quality of life, extending life expectancy, reducing morbidity and mortality rates, and creating

environments that support health and wellness for all community members.

As part of the broader discipline of “preventative medicine,” public health is characterized by its proactive orientation. It is based on the principle that preventing illness and injury is better than treating illnesses and injuries. With a focus on minimizing risk factors through primary, secondary, and tertiary techniques (see below), the public health model has been described as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and

promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals” (Winslow, 1920).

A public health approach plans and executes programs, policies, and interventions along the entire spectrum of health action. This includes health promotion (encouraging and facilitating healthier lifestyles and behaviours through education, community programs, and policies that promote physical activity, nutritious diets, and mental well-being), health protection (ensuring safe water, controlling the spread of infectious diseases, pollution and occupational hazards) disease and injury prevention (through vaccination programs, health education campaigns, epidemiological research, controlling environmental hazards), health equity (decreasing disparities by addressing social determinants of health and ensuring all people have access to quality health care), surveillance and monitoring (keeping track of disease patterns and health risk factors), and responding to public health emergencies.

Public Health Approach to Preventing Crime and Violence

The public health model has influenced crime and violence prevention. A public health-informed community safety model is concerned with protecting and improving the safety and well-being of entire populations rather than focusing solely on individual offenders through criminal justice approaches. It aims to provide the maximum safety and security benefits for the largest number of people. At the core of a public health approach to community

safety are interventions that address the root causes or minimize criminal and violent behaviours after they have emerged.

Brantingham and Faust (1976) created one of the first typologies of crime prevention by adapting the public health trilogy of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Within the public health model, primary prevention involves measures to avoid the onset of a disease or injury. It focuses on reducing the incidence of new cases and minimizing the risk of diseases or injuries. This is done by promoting healthy behaviours, vaccinations, preventing exposures to hazards that cause disease or injury, and increasing resistance to disease or injury should exposure occur. Examples of specific primary prevention interventions are health education and promotion to raise awareness and encourage healthy behaviours, immunization programs to protect against infectious diseases, legislation and policies to promote health and safety (e.g., seat belt laws, smoking bans), and environmental interventions to create healthier living conditions (e.g., sewage treatment, mosquito extermination).

Primary crime prevention involves measures that attempt to avoid the onset of criminal behaviour by modifying social environmental risk factors that contribute to the onset of criminal behaviour, especially among children and youth (e.g., poor parenting, negative role models, poverty, neighbourhood disadvantage) or changing aspects of the physical environment that may provide opportunities for crime to occur in a particular time and place.

Secondary prevention within the public health field is geared toward the early detection and treatment of disease to

prevent any progression. It is directed toward groups or individuals who exhibit early symptoms. Secondary health prevention strategies include screening programs for early detection (e.g., mammograms, cholesterol checks), regular medical check-ups and health assessments, prompt treatment and management of identified health conditions to prevent complications, and counselling and support services for individuals at risk of specific health issues.

Secondary crime prevention includes social developmental measures that address the root causes of criminal behaviour through interventions delivered directly to individuals at risk of future criminal behaviour. In contrast to primary prevention, which targets social environmental criminogenic risk factors, secondary crime prevention targets personal risk factors (e.g., physiological, psychological, behavioural, or cognitive problems) or delivers programs and services directly to the individual to offset negative social environmental risk factors. These interventions are delivered to children and youth living in high-risk environments and exhibiting personal risk factors. Secondary crime prevention includes enriched early education programs, academic tutoring, mentoring, psychological, behavioural, and learning disorders treatment, cognitive-behavioural therapy, social and life skills development, and after-school programs.

Finally, tertiary prevention within the public health model aims to treat and reduce the impact and complications of established diseases or injuries by providing medical help for people who have already contracted a disease or have become injured. The goal is to overcome the disease and/or prevent its reoccurrence by

minimizing a disability, promoting rehabilitation, and preventing the further deterioration of health. Tertiary prevention strategies include chronic disease management and ongoing medical care, such as surgery, drugs, therapy, rehabilitation, support groups and counselling for individuals living with chronic conditions and palliative care for those with terminal illnesses.

Tertiary approaches to crime focus on individuals who have already committed offences to stop re-offending. Otherwise known as “recidivism prevention,” this can be achieved through deterrence, treatment, or incarceration. Community-based recidivism prevention programs may include counselling, therapy, job training, employment placement, and early parole for community and social reintegration (Brauningham & Faust, 1976; Graham, 1994; Katz, 2023).

The U.S. Surgeon General and the World Health Organization stress the need to treat youth violence as a public health crisis and to apply a public health approach to diagnosing and treating this social problem on a population- or community-wide scale. “The designation of youth violence as a public health concern invites an approach that focuses more on prevention than on rehabilitation, which means identifying behavioural, environmental, and biological risk factors associated with violence” and then taking steps “to educate individuals and communities about and protect them from, these risks” (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001, p. 2)

The MCC also touts that “Community safety can be improved through community-wide public health approaches. Such approaches include (1) intervening to support and

redirect those at risk of perpetrating mass violence and (2) addressing the root causes of violence” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 159). By extension, the Commission recommends that local violence prevention strategies “should adopt public health approaches that are complex, nuanced, and community-wide ...” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 160).

Public Health Methods and Strategies

A public health approach also involves systematic processes and various methods for understanding and preventing local health, safety, and wellness problems at the community level. At its most basic, the public health approach encompasses four recursive phases, emphasizing research to identify risk factors and interventions that deliver protective factors. Figure 8 outlines these phases as applied to violence.

Public Health Approach



Figure 9 - Public Health Approach Applied to Violence

Besides these four basic phases, a public health approach integrates other tactics that make up a systematic, comprehensive approach to local problem-solving. This includes strategic planning, public education and awareness-raising, community engagement, capacity building, and public policy and advocacy. The following outlines

how the public health model can be applied to local community problem-solving.

Conduct Research to Define and Monitor the Problem and Assess Local Needs

A public health approach requires rigorous and ongoing epidemiological research to identify pressing community problems and

understand their nature, scope, causes, risk factors, impacts (harms), and trends. This research and analysis phase identifies and addresses root causes and risk factors, allowing for the development of targeted protective factors. The information-gathering stage is also tasked with identifying and assessing current resources and initiatives, their limitations and shortcomings, and any other voids that need to be filled to address the identified problem. Epidemiology is the foundation of public health research and is defined “as the study of the distribution and determinants of diseases or disorders within groups of people, and the development of knowledge on how to prevent and control them” (Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, 2020).

Strategic Planning

Based on the results of the research and analysis phase, a strategic plan is developed to guide the implementation of local interventions. This involves setting clear, measurable goals and objectives addressing the identified issues or problems. It should outline the specific actions and interventions that will be implemented to achieve these goals. It should also establish a timeline, allocate resources, and determine the responsibilities and roles of stakeholders involved in the implementation process. The strategic plan should ultimately be geared towards a proactive approach that targets the determinants of the issue being addressed. This includes a risk-based approach to ensure protective factors are commensurate with each identified risk factor.

Program and Service Development and Implementation

Developing evidence-based protective factors is central to any strategic public health plan. At the expense of repetition, a public health approach emphasizes a problem-solving, preventative approach that addresses root causes and risk factors. Strategies should first be tested on a limited basis and then implemented on a broader scale if effective. According to the U.S. Surgeon General (2001, 2), this stage entails designing, developing, and evaluating “the effectiveness and generalizability of interventions and then disseminating “successful models as part of a coordinated effort to educate and reach out to the public.”

Public Education and Awareness Raising

Increasing public understanding and knowledge about specific local issues is central to public health population-level prevention and mitigation strategies. Through public education and awareness-raising campaigns, information can be disseminated to a broad audience with the goal of changing risky and harmful behaviours and attitudes. The goals and strategies of a public education campaign are threefold: (i) educating the public about the scope, nature, causes, impact, and trends regarding the issue, (ii) changing norms, values and attitudes towards the issue being addressed (e.g., challenging norms about binge drinking), and (iii) promoting action, whether at the individual level (e.g., stop binge drinking) or at the collective action (e.g., mobilizing community members). Various channels and platforms can spread the word, including media advertising, educational workshops, social

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media campaigns, news media articles, and public signage.

Community Engagement

Public health initiatives encourage community involvement in addressing local issues. This helps ensure interventions are culturally sensitive and promote collective responsibility and ownership. Multiple and

complementary mediums, such as community meetings, town hall forums, online public consultation methods, and other events, can engage community members to discuss the issue, share ideas, and solicit feedback. Community engagement should begin during the research phase and involve community members in collecting and analyzing data to help develop solutions.

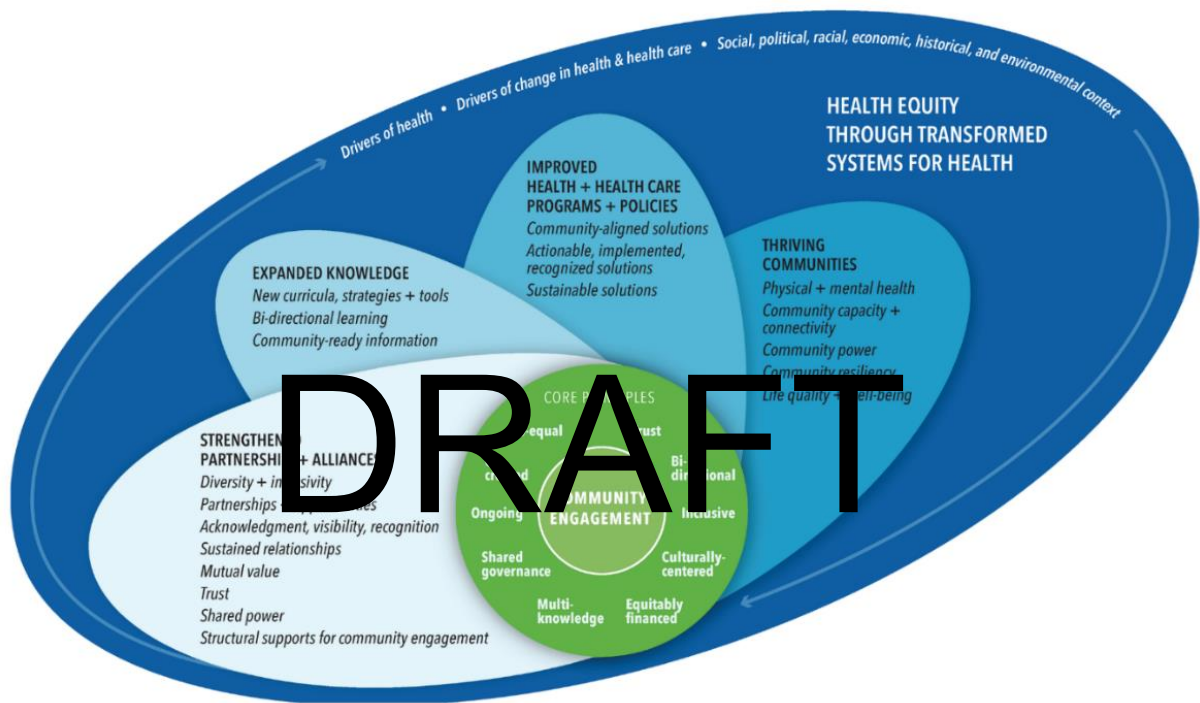


Figure 10 - Assessing Meaningful Community Engagement: A Conceptual Model to Advance Health Equity through Transformed Systems for Health. Source: National Academy of Medicine, <https://shorturl.at/bmBFZ>

Multi-sectoral Collaboration and Integrated Service Provision

A public health approach understands the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders. A collaborative approach recognizes that local health, welfare, safety and security problems are influenced by multiple factors such as social, economic, and environmental determinants and, therefore, require a coordinated effort from

different sectors to achieve sustainable health outcomes (Thigpen, White, & Blanchard, 2022).

Capacity Building

Strengthening the abilities, expertise, resources, and capacities of individuals, organizations, and the community is essential to preventing and controlling local

problems. This includes ongoing training and education for all key stakeholders.

Public Policy Advocacy

Public policy advocacy refers to actions that drive social or organizational changes through government policies, programs, and funding. It involves efforts to gain government commitment to particular goals or programs, reaching out to decision-makers, policymakers, and program managers who can influence actions that help further community-based problem-solving. Advocacy strategies include lobbying elected representatives through

petitions or meetings, building relationships with policymakers, submitting policy briefs and budget recommendations, engaging in public awareness campaigns, collaborating with other organizations to amplify the advocacy message, and encouraging community residents to contact their elected officials. Advocates can also use research and data to demonstrate the need for policy change and the potential impact of proposed policies. Primary prevention advocates can highlight the long-term benefits and cost-effectiveness of preventative measures (Dodd & Boyd, 2000).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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In implementing the Community Safety and Wellness Model in Wolfville, it is recommended that it be guided by a public health approach.

The implications of adapting the public health approach to the CSWM are threefold. First, it should be applied in its original form to address the mental health crisis and adapted to community safety. Second, there is an emphasis on risk-based primary and secondary preventative measures. This means proactive actions must be taken to prevent risk factors from becoming harms and maladaptive behaviours (including mental illnesses and criminality). Third, when addressing the prioritized problems, the systematic public health methods should be applied. This involves assessing the problem, designing and implementing interventions, and continuously evaluating and adjusting strategies to ensure effectiveness. These methods also include public education and awareness-raising campaigns, multi-sectoral collaboration and the integrated delivery of services and programs, community engagement, capacity building and public policy advocacy.

CRIME PREVENTION

Crime prevention is a well-established subfield of criminology and has become an essential component of community safety

initiatives. Rather than relying on criminal justice actors to respond to crime problems, community-based crime prevention

strategies assume a proactive approach to preventing the onset of criminal and violent behaviour or the occurrence of a criminal act in a particular time and place. A preventative approach circumvents the harms of criminal and violent acts, helps at-risk individuals avoid anti-social behaviour and has proven to be more effective and cost-efficient in controlling crime and violence compared to policing and criminal justice sanctions (Chiesa, Rydell, Model, & Greenwood, 1998; Lab, 2023; Schneider, 2014; Welsh, Brandon & Farrington, 2012).

Crime prevention can be broadly defined as any pre-emptive intervention intended to block or reduce the risk of a criminal act in a particular time and place or the onset of criminal behaviour (Schneider, 2022, p. 73). This expansive definition is purposeful, reflecting the breadth of crime prevention in theoretical and applied terms.

The contemporary theory and practice of crime prevention arose as a critique of and an alternative to the criminal justice system. The “cops, courts, and corrections” cannot control or deter acts that threaten public safety. The criminal justice system cannot cope with the actual quantity of crime, cannot identify most criminal offenders, let alone bring them to justice, and does a poor job rehabilitating offenders who have been sanctioned. The criminal justice system also fails to address the root causes of crime and criminality (Parliament of Canada, Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1993, p. 1).

In theory, crime prevention contrasts with the criminal justice system in many ways.

- It is inherently proactive.
- It is based on rigorous scholarship into crime causation, using evidence-based best practices to guide applied strategies.
- It relies on a risk-based approach that targets individuals, families, communities, and places most susceptible to victimization or the onset of criminogenic conditions.
- It uses a problem-oriented approach that assesses the causes of a crime problem (or potential problem) and applies individualized solutions outside the criminal justice system.
- It places greater responsibility for safer communities in the hands of private (non-state) actors, neighbourhood residents, community groups, the private sector) while promoting partnerships between state and non-state actors.
- Greater emphasis is placed on “informal” social control (carried out by private actors) as opposed to “formal” social control (exercised by the state).
- It focuses mainly on potential offenders (at-risk individuals) and potential victims rather than those who have already committed a crime.
- It targets not just crime but fear, disorder, nuisance, and public incivility problems.

Figure 10 summarizes the differences between crime prevention and the criminal justice system.

	Crime prevention	Criminal justice system
Timing	Proactive	Reactive
Approach	Predict, assess, and intervene	Intervene (no real prediction)
Response	Problem-oriented (wide range of appropriate solutions)	Narrow range of solutions
Lead responsibility	Citizenry	State
Partnerships and collaboration	Partnerships and collaboration fundamental and extensive	Limited partnerships between criminal justice agencies and non-state actors
Organizations providing services	Community groups, NGOs, schools, public health, social welfare agencies	Police, public prosecutors, correctional facilities, parole boards, legislative branches
Control	Informal social control	Formal social control
Scope	Criminal act, criminality (causes), disorder, incivilities, fear	Criminal act
Targets	Victim (and offender)	Offender
Setting	Natural: Home, school, community	Artificial: State institution
Primary goal	Improved functioning	Control of individuals

Figure 11 – Contrasting Crime Prevention and the Criminal Justice System

According to Gill et al. (2017, p. 419), “There is strong evidence of the crime prevention effectiveness of programs, policies, and practices across a wide variety of criminal justice interventions.” Indeed, there is growing recognition that lasting solutions to the complex challenges of community safety, crime, and violence must emphasize prevention, focusing on the root causes of crime and criminal behaviour (Ceccato & Nalla, 2020; Lab, 2023; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2015). Despite being seen as an “alternative approach to the more traditional responses to crime.” Welsh and Farrington (2012, p. 3) contend that crime prevention should be “considered the

fourth pillar of crime reduction, alongside the institutions of police, courts, and corrections.” Kennedy (2016, p. 94) goes even further, concluding that community crime prevention is the primary producer “of public safety and that the criminal justice system makes an additional important but marginal (in the economic sense of the term) contribution.”

Crime prevention strategies can be divided into five categories: (i) crime prevention through social development, (ii) situational crime prevention, (iii) crime prevention through environmental design, (iv) community crime prevention, and (v) community and problem-oriented policing.

Crime Prevention through Social Development

Crime prevention through social development (CPSD) encompasses interventions that target the root causes of criminal behaviour (which is why it is also referred to as “criminality prevention”). Research shows that many chronic offenders come from some type of negative social environment during their childhood and adolescence, which can include poverty, parental neglect and abuse, exposure to violence, poverty, an inadequate education, or exposure to negative role models. Children and youth may also suffer from personal criminogenic risk factors such as hyperactivity, impulsivity, anger management problems, learning disabilities, or psychological disorders (Farrington, 2007; Tanner-Smith, Wilson, & Lipsey, 2015) (Farrington, 2007; Tanner-Smith et al., 2015).

The underlying premise of CPSD is that risk-focused interventions implemented during childhood and the teen years can ease factors that may lead to future delinquent, criminal, and anti-social behaviours. The basic idea behind risk-focused criminality prevention is to “Identify the key risk factors for offending and implement prevention methods designed to counteract them. There is often a related attempt to identify key protective factors against offending and to implement prevention methods designed to enhance them” (Welsh, B. C. & Farrington, 2010, p. 9)

As such, CPSD relies on targeted problem-solving strategies (ideally during childhood) to reduce, eliminate, or offset these criminogenic risk factors. CPSD interventions are directed toward one of two (complementary) targets: an at-risk child's deleterious social environment (e.g., by

promoting more effective parenting) or their personal risk factors (e.g., through tutoring, mentoring, life skills training, mentoring, cognitive-behavioural therapy). The protective factors delivered through CPSD interventions can benefit the child indirectly (by nurturing a positive social environment) or directly (by nurturing the child's resilience). Comprehensive, wraparound CPSD interventions for at-risk children and youth address social, environmental, and individual risk factors while being sufficiently individualized to each child's unique circumstances.

Greenwood and Zimring (2006, pp. 12-13) distinguish between the ultimate goals of the criminal justice system and a social problem-solving approach. The main role of the former in helping to produce a civil and orderly society is the “control of individuals.” CPSD is ultimately geared toward the improved functioning of the individual.

Situational Crime Prevention

Situational crime prevention (SCP) involves managing, designing, or manipulating the immediate physical and human environment to remove or reduce opportunities for specific crimes to occur in a particular time and place (Clarke & Smith, 2012; Eck & Guerette, 2012). Because SCP strategies intervene directly in the opportunistic portion of the criminal process, they are restricted to variables that can be manipulated in the relationship between people and their physical environment. SCP approaches to reducing criminal opportunities have been grouped into five categories:

- 1) increasing the effort needed by the offender to commit a crime by making the targets of crime harder to get at or otherwise hindering the commission of a crime,

- 2) increasing the risks to the offender, whether real or perceived, of detection and apprehension,
- 3) reducing the rewards to the offender, which in some cases may involve removing the targets of crime altogether,
- 4) removing people's excuses to commit crimes, and
- 5) reducing provocations, such as minimizing frustration and stress, avoiding disputes, reducing emotional arousal, and neutralizing peer pressure (Clarke, 1997; Clarke & Smith, 2012; Cornish & Clarke, 2003; Eck & Guerette, 2012)

In short, a key element of SCP is reducing opportunities for crime by making it “riskier, less rewarding, more difficult, less excusable, or less likely to be provoked” (Welsh, Brandon & Farrington, 2012, p. 35).

Ceccato et al. (2020, p. 3) state, “The international research on environmental criminology and place-based crime prevention has long demonstrated how important the particular situational conditions of public places are to crime and citizens' perceived safety.” In their review of studies assessing SCP interventions, Bowers and Johnson (2016, p. 133) conclude the results “tend to indicate significant, albeit modest reductions in levels of crime or victimization as a consequence of this type of activity” This review examined such common SCP strategies as street lighting, closed-circuit television cameras, and public area surveillance.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) advocates for the proper design and use of physical space and the

built environment (houses, buildings, landscapes, streets, parks, and entire neighbourhoods) to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur. CPTED incorporates opportunity-reduction strategies that are both direct (modifying the built environment to prevent crime) and indirect (modifying the environment to stimulate residents to assume greater responsibility for their neighbourhood). A safe residential area design should promote the accountability and vigilance of legitimate users of that space. It includes increasing residents' ability to see their surroundings so that they can detect suspicious people (e.g., through large windows and front porches on homes) and fostering their integration into and commitment to the neighbourhood (e.g., by building attractive public spaces such as parks or playgrounds), among other measures (Atles, 2013; Colquhoun, 2004; Saville, 2018).

There is a body of research showing how one or more physical design characteristics of houses, neighbourhoods, streets, and other public spaces (“First-Generation CPTED”) can reduce both crime and fear of crime (Ceccato & Nalla, 2020). Faced with criticisms that CPTED was too focused on physical design, a “Second Generation” CPTED emerged that includes social and community development measures and greater public participation in designing safer, more sociable public spaces, especially by those who are vulnerable in public spaces, such as women, seniors, people experiencing homelessness, and those with disabilities (Saville, 2018). Mihinjac and Saville (2019) have also articulated a “Third-Generation” CPTED that balances safe design principles with public health and environmental sustainability issues.

Community Crime Prevention

Community Crime Prevention (CCP) strategies can be divided into the “community defence” and “community development” models. Both share essential elements of CCP: the mobilization of private actors, particularly neighbourhood residents, who join together to prevent and control crime and disorder problems (Hope, 1995; Schneider, 2007; Welsh, B. C. & Hoshi, 2006).

The community defence model aims to prevent criminal opportunities by organizing residents and other legitimate users to watch for suspicious activities or individuals. Its underlying is that implementing community safety programs will mobilize residents around a shared control over private and public spaces. Neighbourhood Watch is a crime prevention program that has become universally associated with the community defence model.

The community development model promotes a neighbourhood's physical, social, and socio-economic development and includes economic development, beautification projects, and other types of physical development. A community development approach is said to help prevent crime in several ways:

- by addressing physical dilapidation, graffiti, garbage, and other unsightly problems that can contribute to a downward spiral of communities and may invite more serious crime problems,
- by nurturing local social cohesion (community building), which is an essential prerequisite for mobilizing communities around local social problems successfully and fostering informal systems of local control, and

- through social and economic development that addresses local socio-economic criminogenic risk factors (making CPSD an essential part of a community development approach to crime prevention).

Systematic reviews of the different CCP initiatives have also produced mixed results regarding preventing and controlling crime (Gill, C., 2016; Rosenbaum & Schuck, 2012; Welsh, B. C. & Hoshi, 2006). Studies exploring Neighborhood Watch programs found that about half of the evaluated schemes effectively reduced crime, with some outcome variations (Bennett, Holloway, & Farrington, 2006; Bennett, Holloway, & Farrington, 2008). While Neighborhood Watch can be effective, its success depends on community engagement and specific crime prevention strategies (Azman, Zainol, Ali, & Rashid, 2018). Research indicates that many local community safety programs often fail to mobilize high-crime, marginalized neighbourhoods (Schneider, 2007).

Community and Problem-Oriented Policing

The theory of community policing has several profound implications for the delivery of policing services. Its goal is much more than simply enforcing laws: community policing is about contributing to a community's broader safety, security, and health. It advocates that police forge a strong partnership with local communities, empowering residents to help prevent crime in part by fostering informal social control (Bayerl, Karlovic, Akhgar, & Markarian, 2017; Leventakis & Haberfeld, 2018; McGuire, Evans, & Kane, 2021). Community policing recognizes that the police cannot impose a lasting order on a community from

the outside; instead, they are one of many resources to which a community can turn to help solve local problems. A police service must be seen as a part of, not separate and isolated from, the public and must be accountable to the communities they serve.

In theory, community policing bestows greater responsibility, autonomy, and discretion on front-line constables (Skolnick & Bayley, 1988). The composition of a police agency committed to community policing should also better reflect the demographic and social makeup of the communities it serves (Leighton, 1991, p. 10).

While the two are conceptually distinct, community policing encompasses a problem-oriented approach that encourages police, in partnership with residents and other partners, to address the causes and facilitators of local crime problems to prevent such issues from emerging, continuing, or worsening. As Sherman and Eck (2006, p. 209) put it, “Where the core concept of community policing was community involvement for its own sake, the core concept for problem-oriented policing was results: the effect of police activity on public safety, including (but not limited to) crime prevention.” The philosophy of problem-oriented policing has been operationalized in practice by the SARA model. Weisburd et al. (2010, p. 141) articulate the four phases of the SARA model within the context of a problem-oriented strategic planning process by police:

“Scanning” is the first step and involves the police identifying and prioritizing potential problems in their jurisdiction. After the potential problems

have been identified, the next step is “analysis” which involves the police thoroughly analyzing the identified problem(s) using several data sources so that appropriate responses can be developed. The third step, “response,” has the police developing and implementing interventions designed to solve the problem(s). Finally, once the response has been administered, the final step is “assessment” which involves evaluating the impact of the response (Weisburd et al., 2010, p. 141).

In reviewing studies into problem-oriented policing that use the SARA model, Weisburd et al. (2008, p. 5) conclude that problem-oriented policing is effective in reducing crime and disorder, although the effect is “fairly modest.” A meta-analysis of studies into problem-oriented policing “provides strong and consistent evidence that problem-oriented policing is an effective strategy for reducing crime and disorder”(Hinkle, Weisburd, Telep, & Petersen, 2020). When police officers are embedded within and work closely with the communities they serve, it can lead to lower crime rates and higher public trust in law enforcement (Ekici, Akdogan, Kelly, & Gultekin, 2022). Gill et al. (2017) found that community-oriented policing strategies positively affect citizen satisfaction with police but have limited effects on crime and fear of crime.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Model should be guided by crime prevention theory and strategies. This includes adapting and tailoring the full complement of crime prevention techniques—criminality prevention, situational crime prevention, community crime prevention, and community policing—for each prioritized community safety issue.

Developing and applying a comprehensive crime prevention plan for each problem area begins with applying situational and CPTED strategies that work to prevent the opportunity for crime, violence and nuisance problems to occur in a particular time and place.

Community crime prevention programs, such as Neighbourhood Watch, should be implemented to organize and empower community residents. Mobilizing community members collectively can help foster such community safety prerequisites as social interaction, social cohesion and informal social control. Together, these opportunity-reduction crime prevention functions directly respond to the Town of Wolfville's request to find evidence-based alternatives to the RCMP and law enforcement while complementing traditional reactive policing. The RCMP must commit to community- and problem-oriented policing to integrate it into a comprehensive crime prevention approach.

Social problem-solving approaches should also be pursued that address the root causes of criminal, violent, and other anti-social or maladaptive behaviour by targeting criminogenic risk factors. Adapting CPSD to Wolfville should pay particular attention to children, adolescents, and young adults (including Acadia students) experiencing high-risk environments (e.g., dysfunctional settings, poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, negative peer networks) and/or exhibiting personal risk factors (conduct disorders, aggression, mental health disorders, substance abuse disorders). CPSD approaches should work to change high-risk environments (e.g., poverty alleviation) while delivering programs and services directly to high-risk individuals (e.g., coping skills, social and life skills development, tutoring, mentoring, enriched pre-primary programs, and after-school programs). Together, CPSD and the primary and secondary preventative strategies of public health can work not only to address root causes of criminal and violent behaviour but also to address local health and wellbeing issues like mental health challenges, poverty, and inequality, among others.

SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL

The Mass Casualty Commission emphasizes the need for “a whole of society response” that reflects the “interconnected nature of the recommendations” it made regarding the underlying causes of violence and serious crime in Nova Scotia. This comprehensive multi-sectorial response recognizes “the range of actors that have roles and responsibilities” in addressing such intransigent issues as violence against women and the mental health crisis. This holistic multi-sectoral approach includes “federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments; the health sector and the justice system; the non-governmental and community-based social services sector; businesses, and workplaces; media; schools and educational institutions; communities and individuals, including survivors and perpetrators.” A whole-of-society response also respects and values the expertise and experience of those with lived experiences, such as those with mental health disorders or survivors of gender-based violence (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 173).

The social-ecological model is one framework that conceptualizes and operationalizes this whole-of-society approach to addressing serious problems. It does so by:

- fostering an understanding of how problems manifest themselves at different levels of society,
- the complex interplay between individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors,

- how this complex interaction of risk factors across various sectors of society impacts people and communities,
- the role that each societal level can play in addressing problems, and
- the interactions between these different levels that are necessary to realize a holistic multi-sectoral problem-solving approach.

By considering these multiple levels of influence, interventions can be designed to address identified problems comprehensively. This model helps to understand the intricate interaction between individuals and their environments, highlighting the importance of considering broader social contexts when promoting the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

To explain the interaction between people and their environments, social-ecological theories and models have been applied to understand the social-environmental causes of personal and community safety, health, and wellness problems and to improve environments to help foster positive welfare at the individual, community, and broad societal levels.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control uses a four-level social-ecological model to understand violence and the effect of potential prevention strategies. By considering the complex interplay between individual, interpersonal, community, and societal factors, the model furthers an understanding of the range of factors “that put people at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating

violence.” The model implies that simultaneous action at several levels of the model is required to avert violence. The

overlapping rings in Figure 11 illustrate how factors at one level intersect and influence factors at another.



Figure 12 - Social-Ecological Model Applied to Violence. Source: Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

The biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a violent victim or attacker are identified at the “individual” level. Among these factors are age, income, education, socio-economic status, and history of substance usage. Based on an understanding of risk factors specific to an individual, tailored preventative programs and services can be delivered directly at the individual level that promotes beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that can deter future violence, such as conflict resolution and life skills training, substance abuse treatment, healthy relationship programs, and social-emotional learning.

Given that peers, partners, and family members influence a person's behaviour and experiences, the second level is concerned with interpersonal relationships, particularly intimate bonds, which may contribute to an individual's susceptibility to becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence. Strategies aimed at preventing domestic and intimate partner violence at the interpersonal relationship level may

involve couples therapy to address communication issues and strengthen relationships, parenting or family-focused programs to promote healthy relationships, and enhancing parent-child communication skills to foster a supportive and nurturing environment.

The third level of this social-ecological model considers the environments in which violence occurs, such as households, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and schools. It seeks features in these settings that are linked to either becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence. At this level, prevention strategies concentrate on enhancing the social and physical environments in these settings (e.g., by establishing safe spaces where people work, learn, live, and play) as well as addressing other social environmental issues that contribute to community violence (e.g., neighbourhood poverty and instability, high density of alcohol outlets).

The broad societal elements that encourage or inhibit violence are at the fourth level.

Among these are socio-cultural norms and values that condone and perpetuate the use of violence. At this level, public education

campaigns can challenge norms and values that perpetuate violence, such as toxic masculinity or gender inequity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The social-ecological framework should be applied in Wolfville as part of the CSWM to:

- analyze how the prioritized problems, their causes, and their risk factors manifest themselves at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels,
- understand the interplay of each societal level in shaping these problems,
- understand the actors that should be involved in preventative efforts at each societal level and
- put forward appropriate preventative interventions at each level (in a complementary and coordinated fashion to ensure a comprehensive multi-sectoral reach).

The framework should be adapted to the unique circumstances of each prioritized problem (while also recognizing the complex interplay between these different problems). The ultimate aim of applying the social-ecological framework to the Wolfville CSWM is to craft a comprehensive approach to addressing each prioritized problem by ensuring that complementary and coordinated interventions are adopted at various societal levels.

Integrating the social-ecological framework into Wolfville's CSWM acknowledges the complex interplay between various societal levels and actors in shaping local safety, health, and wellness outcomes. Local problem-solving is emphasized, given that most change agents within the reach of the CSWM are in Wolfville. It is beyond the scope of the Wolfville CSWM to change broad societal norms or national crime trends. Still, a community-centric approach can address the localization of broader risk factors (e.g., how broad societal forces and developments are manifested locally). Below is a summary of a social-ecological framework as applied broadly to community safety in Wolfville:

Societal Level

- Challenge and change social and cultural norms that promote criminal, violent and other anti-social behaviours through public education campaigns, educational and training workshops, etc.

Community Level

- Reduce and prevent local social environment risk factors undermining community safety, such as poverty, inequity, and gender inequality.
- Target physical environmental risk factors (poor lighting, entrapment areas, etc.) that can contribute to crime, violence, nuisance issues and other community safety problems.
- Target human environmental risk factors (inadequate guardianship at high-risk places, absence of policies or training at high-risk events or locales).
- Mobilize stakeholder groups, institutions, and residents for coordinated efforts.
- Enhance social cohesion and informal social control.

Interpersonal Relationships

- Develop strategies to solve issues rooted in interpersonal relations and conflicts.
- Implement family therapy and bullying prevention programs and promote positive peer networks.
- Use public education to encourage positive relationships and consent.
- Leverage social networks for collective action and community monitoring.
- Apply restorative approaches to repair the aftermath of interpersonal harm.

Individual

- Target individuals exhibiting or at risk of problematic behaviours.
- Design wraparound programs for children and youth with multiple risk factors.
- Provide child-focused programs like mentoring, tutoring, counselling, and after-school activities to build resilience.

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This section adapts the Community Safety and Wellness Model to Wolfville. It begins by discussing the *structural* aspects of the Wolfville CSWM—how the collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance model can be applied locally. The structural recommendations include incorporating a non-profit charitable society, establishing multi-stakeholder working groups, staffing coordinator and community navigator

positions, and the longer-term options of rapid response units and a storefront office. The second part focuses on the *functional* features of the Wolfville CSWM—the main functions, responsibilities, and strategies to be carried out by the working groups and the proposed staff. These recommendations are being proposed as a pilot project that would be phased over five years.

COLLABORATIVE, MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONFIGURATION

In exploring the structural aspects of the CSWM, this section discusses the following:

- the roles of the five main CSWM stakeholders: the Town of Wolfville, Acadia University, the ASU, the RCMP, and the provincial government,
- the suggested governance form for the CSWM in Wolfville: a non-profit charitable society,
- operationalizing the collaborative, integrated structure of the CSWM through multi-stakeholder working groups,
- personnel and staffing options, and
- other long-term collaborative possibilities, including a mobile mental health unit, integrated risk-based rapid response units, and a storefront office.

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MAIN STAKEHOLDERS

Any discussion of the collaborative structure of the CSWM in Wolfville must begin by acknowledging its five principal

stakeholders: the Town of Wolfville, Acadia University, the ASU, the RCMP, and the provincial government.

Town of Wolfville

Municipal governments are uniquely positioned to address community safety, development, and wellness issues using a proactive problem-oriented approach, given its jurisdiction over local policing and public safety, public schools, parks and recreation, social housing, urban planning, and community development. According to

Homel (2010, p. 118), the community safety role played by municipal governments is influenced by the “prevailing logic” that:

... since most crime of immediate concern to communities are local (i.e. property crime, antisocial

behaviour, vandalism, etc.) then the primary focus for preventive action should also be local. In practice, this has meant that those promoting crime prevention action have generally turned to municipal governments as the principal resource for coordinating the delivery of the local preventive responses. This has been based on the assumption that municipal authorities are best placed to understand and reflect the particular needs and problems of their local community and are therefore also best placed to generate and/or deliver the most appropriate prevention interventions for their local communities.

Of all levels of government, municipal governments are the closest to citizens and civil society and, as such, represent the bridge between neighbourhoods and community groups on the one hand and the federal and provincial/territorial governments on the other. Municipal governments are essential in building capacity and mobilizing their constituents for local problem-solving. This includes providing community groups with funding and other resources and support, ensuring access to local government decision-makers, decentralizing some decision-making powers, and fostering a team approach where community members and organizations can work collaboratively as equal partners with the local government.

Positioning municipal governments as central actors in local problem-solving and developmental initiatives is not meant to

instill more government into the process. Instead, it is about fostering a collaborative, multi-sectoral *governance* approach. Because municipal governments in Canada do not have the same level of resources as the federal or provincial governments to combat crime, they must “rely on implementing partnerships that bring together the police and the justice system, school and health-care administrators, and civil society organizations” (Sansfaçon, 2004, p. 4).

The mission of the Town of Wolfville reflects the principles of governance, collaboration, and citizen participation—to “provide leadership and collaborative governance for the responsive and responsible allocation of public resources for the greater good of Wolfville” (Town of Wolfville, 2023b, p. 4).

For this study, various research participants, including those representing the Town (councillors and staff) and other stakeholders, viewed the Town of Wolfville as a central coordinating actor for a multi-stakeholder approach.

Notwithstanding budgetary restrictions, the town has various units and functions that can contribute to collaborative community safety and wellness initiatives and which serve the proposed working groups. These include:

- Compliance Department (by-law enforcement),
- Planning and Economic Development (including housing specialists),
- Parks and Recreation,
- Engineering and Public Works, and
- the public library

The Town also runs various committees or participates in inter-municipal boards that offer opportunities to address some of the prioritized problems. These include:

- RCMP Advisory Board
- Policing Review Committee
- Wolfville Business Development Corporation
- Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee (REMAC)
- Annapolis Valley Regional Library Board
- EKM Health Centre Liaison Team
- Diversity Kings County

Some research participants interviewed for this study expressed reservations about the Town assuming a central (coordinating) role. First, some questioned the Town's role in local problem-solving, given that most of the issues being addressed fall within provincial jurisdiction. Second, some expressed skepticism about the town's ability to make a serious dent in community problems given their lack of resources (i.e., a limited tax base from which to finance initiatives). Third, some interviewed cautioned that political considerations might influence the decision-making process of municipal government officials, leading to decisions that are more aligned with political agendas rather than the actual needs of the community and other stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION

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The Town of Wolfville should commit to playing a central role in the multi-stakeholder governance approach to local problem-solving.

The Town government must be central to and champion a collaborative stakeholder governance approach to community safety and wellness. This includes active participation in the recommended working groups, sharing responsibility and decision-making powers, and helping to ensure inclusivity, equality, and active participation of other key stakeholders and community residents.

The Town also needs to take the lead in organizing and mobilizing community members to ensure they are sufficiently represented in the working groups and are empowered to make meaningful contributions to local problem-solving. This includes helping organize key constituents into block associations, tenant associations and Neighbourhood Watch programs while organizing representatives from key sectors such as multi-residential property owners and licenced establishments. The lead responsibility should be invested in the Town's Community Development department.

The Town must also champion and adopt other important local problem-solving principles and best practices on its own and as part of the multi-stakeholder model. This includes adopting the public health model and its methodologies and applying more systematic, comprehensive, problem-oriented approaches to understanding and solving local problems.

The Town is also key to promoting and undertaking a more proactive approach to community safety issues and local problems. It must begin by building capacity within and across their departments and agencies to employ more proactive, problem-oriented strategies. For example, the engineering and public works department can help conduct safety audits and ensure safe design principles are integrated into public spaces. A more proactive role for the town's compliance officers is also envisioned, such as organizing community residents, overseeing the Neighbourhood Watch program, and helping residents and businesses apply situational crime prevention measures. Community centres, recreational facilities, and public libraries can deliver services and programs specifically for at-risk children and youth. Along with the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education, an enriched pre-primary program can be explored for implementation at Wolfville School for at-risk children.

The town should also take the lead in public policy advocacy, whether lobbying the provincial government to encourage their participation in the Wolfville CSWM or consulting with other municipal governments in Kings County to expand this collaborative model to the county as a whole.

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Acadia University

As a place of higher learning and research, Acadia must play a leading role in a collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance approach to local problem-solving and community development. While much of this effort should be concerned with supporting students off-campus, the university also must use its many resources to benefit other community members. Its ability to contribute through administrative units, academic programs, students, and faculty is diverse. The university is committed to best practices in preventative approaches to local problem-solving, including public health and restorative methods. However, Acadia's ample resources have been underutilized in town.

A greater role in local problem-solving for Acadia begins by extending its student support services and other resources off campus. These would be integrated with the services and resources of the other stakeholders for a more collaborative, comprehensive approach to addressing the prioritized problems. The Mental Health and Counselling Centre supports students' mental health through education, counselling, and referrals. The centre also includes a "health promotion" position that includes implementing primary preventative public health initiatives. The Centre can lead collaborative efforts to develop early intervention programs for children to prevent the onset of mental health and addiction problems while also developing community-

based public education campaigns for students and other community members that challenge norms and values that perpetuate violence.

The Sexualized Violence Response and Education Coordinator can help develop violence prevention strategies that can be implemented off campus for students and other community members. This includes public education campaigns to change norms and values perpetuating violence, early intervention programs for children, workshops on consent education or bystander intervention, ensuring there are safe spaces to report violence to police, and helping high-risk licenced establishments implement policies to detect and prevent predatory behaviour.

The Equity Office and the Vice Provost Equity Diversity and Inclusion can model community-wide initiatives to support equity, diversity, and inclusion to help stem racism, harassment, xenophobia, hate crimes and gendered-based violence. The Code of Conduct and Community Affairs office can contribute to more proactive approaches to preventing off-campus student conduct problems. It can also help implement restorative justice and conflict mediation initiatives in the community, especially those that involve students.

Acadia's academic programs can make a substantial difference in tackling local problems and fostering greater community wellness. The most relevant are sociology, environmental science, psychology, counselling, music therapy, women and gender studies, community development, public administration, and education. Students from these programs can apply their knowledge through field placement,

practicums, service-learning components, and thesis research. Through their academic programs or volunteering, students from all faculties can make a difference through mentoring and tutoring at-risk children, helping with after-school recreational programs, taking part in community events, or researching local issues and solutions as part of their coursework.

Students in the M.Ed. Counselling and Clinical Psychology programs are in a position to help develop and carry out mental health wellness initiatives locally, including early intervention and resilience-based cognitive-behavioural curricula for children and youth. They can also train other students to work with at-risk children. The Clinical Psychology program can contribute to community mental health initiatives through research and clinical services. Graduate students can undertake assessments, treatment, and consultation. Graduate students and faculty in the counselling and psychology programs could figure prominently in supporting the proposed community navigator position in mental health calls for service or a mobile mental health team.

Faculty and staff in the Community Development program can impact local problem-solving efforts by helping build community capacity that empowers and engages neighbourhood residents and developing recreational programs for at-risk children, youth, and students. Education and Music Therapy students can help develop and administer tutoring and therapeutic programs for at-risk children.

Acadia faculty members can gain valuable insights and evidence-based solutions to

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local problem-solving by leveraging their expertise, research, and teaching. Faculty members can explore and analyze local issues through research and guide students in their applied research and coursework. Faculty members in counselling, psychology, education, community development, and sociology departments can apply their valuable insights into human behaviour, social dynamics, educational systems, and community engagement.

According to its website, the University is committed to playing “an increasingly important role in the economic, social and cultural development of our region, our province and our country,” which will be realized in part through “new partnerships and collaboration to drive regional development and educational opportunities” (Acadia University, 2023a). Below is a list of the Acadia units that could take part in the envisioned working groups.

Administration

- Office of the President (Government Relations)
- Department of Safety and Security

- Mental Health and Counselling
- Campus Health and Wellness Coordinator
- Equity and Human Rights (Vice Provost Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)
- Coordinator, Sexualized Violence Response and Education
- Acadia Women's Centre
- Acadia International
- Coordinator, Student Conduct and Community Support
- Residence and Student Life

Academic programs

- Counselling (ME.d. program, Red Spruce Counselling Centre)
- Community Development Education
- Music Therapy
- Psychology (Graduate Program in Clinical Psychology)
- Sociology
- Women and Gender Studies

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RECOMMENDATION

Acadia University should commit to a leadership role in the multi-stakeholder governance approach to local problem-solving in Wolfville

It is recommended that Acadia University assume a leadership role in and champion the multi-stakeholder governance approach to community safety and wellness in Wolfville. Its participation in the proposed working groups should harness the University's expertise, experience and resources in addressing such pressing issues as the mental health epidemic, substance abuse, sexualized violence, and student conduct issues while also leveraging its proficiency and resources in public health, restorative approaches, safety and security, psycho-educational assessments, counselling, therapy, and community development.

Among the four local stakeholders, Acadia University should take the lead in initiatives that assume a social and community development approach. Academic programs such as counselling, clinical psychology, education, community development, and sociology are sources of faculty, students, research, and expertise to understand better and craft solutions to social environmental and personal risk factors.

Acadia Students' Union

During the academic year, more than 3,000 postsecondary students reside in Wolfville, exerting a significant impact on the community. On the one hand, students bring a palpable vibrancy to the town, invigorating the local economy and cultural scene. On the other hand, many of the prioritized problems identified in this study centre around Acadia students. Students are at a higher risk of mental health and addiction disorders, sexualized violence, drug use, and binge drinking. Many towns and cities with large student populations have grappled with student conduct issues that can escalate into crime and violence problems. At the same time, post-secondary students and other young people are facing unprecedented adversities like COVID-19, stagnant wages, a low standard of living, food insecurity, a lack of affordable housing, toxic social media, and climate change. These issues have fuelled a mental health epidemic and a dystopian vision of the future among young people, highlighting the urgent need for support and intervention.

Acadia students can also make a significant contribution to addressing the prioritized issues. This includes greater self-care and peer support for the problems that besiege students themselves. Students can also play a vital preventative role, especially by working with at-risk children and youth through mentoring, tutoring, and assisting with after-school programs. Those in the M.Ed. Counselling and graduate Clinical Psychology programs can contribute to mental health initiatives, early intervention programs, and cognitive-behavioural curricula for children and youth.

The role of the ASU as a key stakeholder in the Community Safety and Wellness Model (CSWM) in Wolfville is crucial. Its involvement can affect the initiative's success, given the influence Acadia students have on local concerns and solutions in the town. In implementing the CSWM, the role of the ASU would be threefold.

Supporting Off-Campus Initiatives: The ASU can collaborate with local authorities and community organizations to ensure that initiatives aimed at supporting the well-being of Acadia students are effectively implemented off campus. Particular emphasis should be placed on mental health wellness, affordable housing, financial security, and food security. Supporting students off campus also means helping to minimize their marginalization by helping to integrate them more into the community, which can help foster a sense of belonging and connection, ultimately enhancing community safety and wellness for all residents.

Promoting Responsible Behaviour: Recognizing the impact that Acadia students can have on local safety and wellness issues, the ASU plays a crucial role in promoting responsible behaviour among students. By raising awareness, providing education, and addressing any problematic behaviours that may arise, the ASU can help mitigate potential risks and contribute to a safer and healthier community environment.

Engaging Acadia Students in Local Problem-Solving: Leveraging the energy and enthusiasm of Acadia students, the ASU can actively involve them in implementing the CSWM. By engaging

students in meaningful ways, such as volunteering, advocacy, or community projects, the ASU can harness their potential to contribute positively to the initiative's overall success. This benefits the community and empowers students to take an active role in shaping a safer and more supportive environment for themselves and others.

The ASU is already playing an important part in advancing these three strategies. As with the other key partners, implementing the CSWM enlarges these efforts through a more formal, systematic, and comprehensive approach. The CSWM advocates for an expanded role of Acadia students in local social problem-solving, more intensive efforts to support the needs of students off-campus and to integrate them into the local community, and a significant increase in mobilizing students to address the determinants of local problems, whether it is through peer support or working with at-risk children.

By actively involving the ASU as a key stakeholder in the CSWM, Wolfville can tap into the potential of Acadia students to drive positive change, foster a sense of community responsibility, and enhance overall safety and wellness for town residents.

RECOMMENDATION

The ASU should commit to a leadership role among students in the multi-stakeholder governance approach to local problem-solving in Wolfville,

It is recommended that ASU assume a leadership role in and champion the multi-stakeholder governance approach to community safety and wellness in Wolfville. Its participation in the proposed working groups should prioritize measures that support the off-campus needs of Acadia students, promote responsible behaviour among students, and mobilize students to engage them more in local problem-solving.

RCMP

In Nova Scotia, the RCMP is contracted as the provincial police force, providing policing services to various municipalities across the province, including Wolfville. This contract policing arrangement is governed by police services agreements (PSAs), which detail the RCMP's financial, operational, and administrative responsibilities within the scope of provincial and municipal policing services (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2013).

Overall, the role of the RCMP in contact municipal policing is multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of responsibilities to ensure the safety and security of the communities served. This includes maintaining law and order, preventing and investigating crimes, keeping the peace, ensuring public safety, and enforcing federal, provincial, and municipal statutes. To achieve these goals, RCMP members conduct patrols, whether by car, bike, or on foot, provide emergency response services, and perform traffic enforcement and road safety duties. Services like fingerprinting or criminal records checks are also available to the public. RCMP contact municipal policing also involves community policing and crime prevention initiatives. This may include organizing community events, conducting public awareness campaigns, and collaborating with local stakeholders to

develop strategies for addressing specific crime and safety issues.

The RCMP began its municipal contract with Wolfville in 2000 after the town disbanded its police service (Town of Wolfville, 2023c). In April 2019, the RCMP moved to a district model, consolidating command and operations in the Kings District Office Headquarters in New Minas.

The new building combines administrative and operational units from the Southwest Nova District, New Minas Detachment, Major Crimes Unit, Traffic Services, General Investigation Section, Forensic Identification Services, and Police Dog Services (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2019). The Kings District RCMP district provides frontline policing services for four municipal units in Kings County: the Municipality of the County of Kings Berwick, Middleton, and Wolfville. The Town of Wolfville currently pays for nine RCMP members, including a Sergeant and one detachment assistant (Town of Wolfville, 2023c).

Some have criticized the move to an amalgamated district policing model, arguing it reduces the number of services available to the public at RCMP detachments and may lead to slow response times to emergencies and calls for service. According to the Town of Wolfville's website,

Currently, the Kings RCMP operates under a District Policing Model, which means all officers within the district, including the dedicated Wolfville members, can be deployed within the district based on need and priorities. Wolfville benefits from this on key weekends, where additional RCMP officers from New Minas are brought in to support the Wolfville complement of officers, but Wolfville officers can also be deployed to other areas within Kings if required, which could possibly lead to slower response times on some of the less urgent calls within Town (Town of Wolfville, 2023c).

This accusation contributes to a resolution by the Town Council to begin a local policing review, which “allows the Town to explore all options and determine whether the RCMP is the best fit to meet the community’s needs or if another, alternative service delivery model, would be more effective” (Town of Wolfville, 2023c). A Policing Services Review Committee carried out this mandate with representatives from the Department of Justice, Town Council, Acadia University, community members, and the RCMP Advisory Board. Dissatisfaction with the RCMP, its contract costs, and the quality of its services contributed to the committee’s recommendation to initiate this study into policing alternatives.

Primary research for this study reveals mixed feelings about the quality of policing services provided by the RCMP. Criticism of the amalgamation of community-based

RCMP detachments into a district model feeds into a broader argument that there are insufficient policing resources in Wolfville, which leads to longer wait times for calls for service, a reluctance of the RCMP to become involved in less serious community safety issues (e.g., responding to nuisance complaints), and a reduced visibility of RCMP members in town.

Multiple interviewees criticized RCMP members for insufficient engagement with citizens and complainants outside their law enforcement duties. Compared to the town police, RCMP members were less visible and rarely seen outside their patrol vehicles, with most interactions occurring through service calls. Others complained that the constant rotation of RCMP members through a detachment or district or between duties meant few stayed long enough in town to be known among community members. Others emphasized the need for the RCMP to do more to build rapport with Acadia students and establish strong relationships with female students and marginalized populations to encourage reporting.

The lack of consistent officer presence and engagement with community members and in local activities has contributed to a sense of remoteness between RCMP members and the community. It may hinder establishing trust and effective communication channels between law enforcement and residents.

Another local resident highlighted a broader issue—the lack of RCMP accountability and responsiveness to community needs. The perceived lack of transparency in decision-making processes and inconsistent handling of various situations raised questions about

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the effectiveness of the RCMP in addressing diverse community concerns. This interview subject also emphasized the need for meaningful training in de-escalation and support for vulnerable populations, pointing to potential gaps in law enforcement capabilities.

Some of the most pointed criticisms of the RCMP concerned policing student conduct problems and enforcing municipal by-laws. Some interviewees believed the RCMP minimizes student conduct problems and that its response to such complaints is inconsistent.

The local opprobrium displayed toward the RCMP reflects the findings and conclusions of the Mass Casualty Commission. Beyond its scathing assessments of the RCMP's response to the mass shooting, the report highlighted systemic failures within the force. Concerning contract policing, the MCC writes:

A recurring theme of reviews of the RCMP is the challenge of ensuring that the RCMP's provision of contract policing services is responsive and accountable to the communities it serves. We conclude that the RCMP's tendency not to include contracting partners in its strategic decision-making, documented in past reports, persists, and that the RCMP has failed to adopt a strategic or coordinated approach to contract policing policies and core policing functions (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 135).

The MCC also critiques how rural policing suffers under the RCMP:

The RCMP's career model undervalues rural general duty policing, regarding that work as the first step in a career ladder that will bring members to other policing functions and locations. This approach creates a disconnect between RCMP members and the communities they serve, and it fails to recognize and foster the distinctive skillset that is required for effective rural policing. We identify that maintaining the unique responsibilities of police under the rule of law necessitates that adequate policing services be provided in rural and remote communities (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, 135).

The MCC also concluded that the current RCMP training model and the paramilitary structure of the force were inadequate and uncondusive to the complex demands of modern policing.

The final report of the MCC included 130 recommendations, 75 of which were about the RCMP or policing generally. The Commission recommended a sweeping re-assessment of the role of the police and the criminal justice system in calls for service that do not require law enforcement services, particularly those that involve social welfare and mental health issues (Cooke, 2023; Gorman, 2023)

The MCC proposes a "framework for improving community safety by making

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police agencies more democratically accountable, more attentive to evidence about good practice, and better oriented to articulating and serving the common good rather than particular interests” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, pp. 129-130). The ideal police force is

...democratically accountable, attuned to good evidence about effective practice, and oriented to articulating and serving the common good. They should combine law enforcement with collaborative work to prevent harm and promote and maintain community safety. They should listen to the demands of all citizens while directing resources toward meeting the needs of the most marginalized members of our communities. They should be subject to strong forms of government and citizen oversight and accountability (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 239).

The report also recommended that the RCMP and all Canadian police forces make a greater commitment to the principles and practices of community policing.

Despite these criticisms, some of those interviewed acknowledged the professionalism of the RCMP compared to the old town police, with others commending the new leadership of the Kings District RCMP, hopeful that the change can lead to improved policing and more positive perceptions of the force.

The RCMP's challenges in Wolfville are not unique. Similar issues have been reported

in other parts of Canada, where great scrutiny has been applied to RCMP municipal and provincial policing in terms of crisis response, relationships with marginalized communities, officer training, diversity and inclusion, use of force, response times, recruitment and retention, community engagement, its paramilitary structure and culture, a toxic work environment, lack of accountability, resistance to change, and how its broad mandate and volume of work across federal, provincial and municipal policing has affected the quality of its services (Bradbury, 2023; Gerster, 2021; Maher, 2020; Palango, 1998).

Much of the criticism directed at the RCMP and modern policing has negated or downplayed the fact that policing responsibilities have increasingly extended beyond traditional law enforcement. Police are now expected to attend to various social and health issues. This shift reflects a trend in which police play a much more significant role in addressing mental health crises, substance abuse issues, domestic disputes, homelessness, and nuisance problems. While police are expected to contribute to community safety and wellness beyond their law enforcement responsibilities, these non-law enforcement duties have been thrust upon police because of the failings of social welfare and healthcare systems.

Kings District RCMP officials interviewed for this study acknowledge the criticisms directed their way from community members. One official also noted that staffing shortages have contributed to delays in calls for service response times and in conducting more community policing.

Research and statistics reveal the significant personnel recruitment and staffing challenges experienced by police throughout North America. The RCMP is falling short of baseline staffing levels across the country, with various provinces and territories experiencing high vacancy rates, possibly putting public safety at risk. The National Police Federation, which represents RCMP members, cites a decline in applications to the RCMP (influenced by anti-police sentiments and the impact of COVID-19) and an increase in attrition rates among current members (National Police Federation, 2022). RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme says widespread staffing shortages have left the RCMP at a “crossroads” in which the RCMP must consider whether it can continue with contract policing (Tunney, 2023).

A Kings District RCMP official states that the lack of personnel and many other factors have contributed to strains on the mental health and wellness of RCMP members, which can exacerbate staffing

problems. Interestingly, this RCMP official views the staffing shortages in policing (as well as the numerous criticisms directed at the RCMP) as an opportunity to have more conversations on how to redefine modern policing, what it means to be a police officer, and how to address issues that are not traditionally seen as police matters.

The RCMP official acknowledged the desire of town officials and Wolfville residents for more community policing. He stated that there has been a move towards having their police officers be more visible and engaging with community residents more frequently, which means taking them out of the patrol cars and having them “walk the beat.” (This researcher has noticed an increase in police visibility on the sidewalks of Wolfville in recent months). The Kings District RCMP officials stressed that community policing remains a core part of the local policing model and are looking to establish a dedicated community policing position for each detachment in the district.

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RECOMMENDATION

The RCMP should continue to move towards a community policing model in Wolfville. The delivery of policing services should be envisioned as part of a more extensive collaborative, holistic governance approach to community safety and wellness. The implication is that police relinquish their role as primary responders to calls for service that demand health care or social welfare services.

Given the challenges facing the RCMP in terms of personnel shortages and the expansion of policing beyond traditional law enforcement duties, the mission and operational plans of the Kings District RCMP must be structured so that policing services are delivered as part of

a broader collaborative, multi-stakeholder model, which aligns with the principles and strategies of community and problem-oriented policing. This model would follow an informal division of labour in social service, education, and health care providers would be responsible for a more proactive approach to preventing community safety and wellness problems, allowing police to focus on traditional criminal law enforcement. Engagement with this multi-stakeholder approach would be realized through the RCMP's participation in the proposed working groups. Other recommendations that have emerged from the research findings are summarized below.

Community Liaison Position: A dedicated RCMP community engagement position for Wolfville should be filled as soon as possible. This member would represent the RCMP on the proposed Community Safety and Crime Prevention working group, contributing to its proactive and preventative actions by applying community- and problem-oriented policing principles and strategies. In the absence of this position, the RCMP should assign two constables to undertake community- and problem-oriented policing duties locally on a part-time basis.

More emphasis on community policing: While creating a position dedicated to community policing is important, this philosophy must permeate all aspects of municipal policing. This includes more and better communications with constituents, commitment to community empowerment and enhancing informal social control, community input and participation in problem-solving, increased police accountability to the community, police as peace officers (not simply law enforcement) and multi-agency cooperation.

Improved communication: The RCMP should be more engaged in communicating with community residents outside of calls for service. Clear protocols for informing victims and residents about criminal proceedings and outcomes should be enacted and followed.

Increase Visibility: RCMP members should be more visible through foot patrols, attending community events, and providing crime prevention advice to community members.

Enhance Response Times: The RCMP should review and adjust deployment strategies to ensure timely responses to emergency calls.

Consistent Officer Deployment: As much as possible, the RCMP should minimize rotation and turnover of members and aim for consistency in officer detachment assignments to allow for greater relationship-building with residents.

By leveraging community- and problem-oriented principles and embedding policing services within a more holistic multi-stakeholder proactive approach to local problem-solving, the RCMP can strengthen its relationship with neighbourhood residents and other key partners while enhancing its effectiveness as a municipal police force.

Provincial Government

The rationale for provincial involvement in a community-based collaborative approach to problem-solving is grounded in its constitutional jurisdiction over policy areas integral to community safety and wellness: social welfare, child welfare, education, health care, housing, the regulation and sale of alcohol, and the administration of justice. Through its policy and legislative powers, ministries, agencies, personnel, and resources (including funding), the provincial government would be an influential partner in the multi-stakeholder collaborative working groups through which it could make a more meaningful contribution to local problem-solving. The active participation of government ministries, agencies, and personnel would help ensure that community-based initiatives are aligned with provincial policy objectives.

Some of the provincial departments and agencies that should be represented in the various working groups include:

- Department of Justice (Public Prosecutions)
- Department of Community Services (Child, Youth and Family Supports)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- Department of Advanced Education
- Provincial Housing Agency
- Manager, Supported Housing
- Department of Health and Wellness (Office of Mental Health and Addictions, Valley Regional Hospital, Beacon House)

- Office of the Status of Women
- Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation.

Ways that provincial government agencies can contribute to a community-based, multi-stakeholder, proactive approach to the local problems identified in this study are summarized below.

Mental Health Wellness: The Office of Mental Health and Addictions (Department of Health and Wellness) can help develop and implement public health strategies to address mental health problems locally. It can also collaborate on more proactive approaches that prevent the onset of mental health and substance abuse disorders, such as early intervention programs that promote resilience among at-risk children and youth.

Women's Safety and Security: The Office of the Status of Women can contribute to a local public health strategy and develop local services and programs that address the root causes of gender-based violence and gender inequity.

Alcohol-Related Problems: The involvement of the Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation and the local liquor store can aid in developing responsible alcohol consumption campaigns. The regulatory arm of the NSLC can ensure licenced establishments have policies and programs in place to minimize alcohol overconsumption and prevent high-risk incidents such as violence, sex trafficking recruitment, and other predatory behaviours.

Community Crime Prevention: The Department of Justice can provide insights into effective crime prevention strategies

that can be adapted to Wolfville's context. The Office of Public Prosecutions can play a role in diverting local offenders away from the criminal justice system towards the Kentville Wellness Court or a restorative justice process.

Social Development (Social Problem-Solving): Ministries responsible for social welfare, child development, and education (e.g., Department of Community Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) can contribute to efforts to address common social environmental risk factors such as poverty (through trusteeship programs). They can also collaborate on community-based early interventions for at-risk families, such as home visitation programs for parents and school-based enriched pre-primary programs for children from disadvantaged circumstances.

Off-Campus Student Navigation and Wellness: The Department of Advanced Education can support local initiatives to promote the health, well-being, and safety of Acadia students, including emergency financial assistance, integration of students into the local community, mental health wellness support, and policies and programs that address binge drinking or sexualized violence among students.

Provincial governments also play a pivotal role in providing funding and other resources to support community-based problem-solving initiatives through their budgetary allocations and grant programs. The provincial government can leverage its networks and partnerships to connect local stakeholders with external resources and expertise, further enhancing the capacity for effective community problem-solving.

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RECOMMENDATION

Through its ministries, agencies, and staff, the provincial government should commit to becoming a key partner in the collaborative multi-stakeholder governance approach to addressing crime and other community safety and wellness issues in Wolfville.

Provincial departments and agencies could employ the CSWM on a trial basis to explore how policies, programs, and resources can be oriented towards a community-based, collaborative approach to local issues that emphasizes proactive, problem-oriented solutions.

The Nova Scotia government should consult with other provinces, such as British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Ontario, on the initiatives they have undertaken to support more collaborative, community-based, problem-solving initiatives. Learning from the experiences

of other provinces will help Nova Scotia adopt successful strategies and stay current with the latest developments and advancements in Canada.

Other Local Stakeholders

Many other local groups have an interest in and can contribute to the Wolfville CSWM. Among them are three particularly important stakeholders: (i) licenced establishments, (ii) the owners and managers of multi-residential properties, and (iii) community residents.

The groups have at least three things in common in local problem-solving. First, they have a stake in addressing multiple community issues, including the prioritized ones. Second, they are well-situated to contribute to proactive, preventive measures. Third, they may not be sufficiently organized to formally represent their constituents in the proposed working groups or a collaborative problem-solving approach generally.

Private licenced establishments serving liquor, including pubs, taverns, and restaurants, must play a leading role in addressing alcohol overconsumption and student binge drinking. These efforts can also minimize the role that liquor plays in other local problems, such as violence against women, public violence, vandalism, noise complaints and student conduct problems. Licenced establishments, especially bars and taverns that cater to Acadia students and other young adults, are also high-risk venues for violence against and predatory behaviour towards women, including sex trafficking recruitment.

Representatives of these establishments can work with other stakeholders to develop policies and programs that can be adopted by individual businesses to identify and intervene in high-risk and predatory behaviours.

The owners and managers of multi-residential properties are key stakeholders in helping students and other low-income individuals and families find affordable and suitable housing. As partners in situational crime prevention, they help ensure their properties are safe, secure, and free from illegal drugs and address local nuisance issues, such as bad parties.

The third major stakeholder group is neighbourhood residents. These community members possess unique perspectives and knowledge of their local environment, which can be very helpful in formulating workable solutions to local problems. Mobilizing and empowering community residents also fosters the critical prerequisites of local safety and well-being: social interaction, cohesion and informal social control. While local groups have formed around specific issues in Wolfville, mainly student conduct problems, no local groups, such as neighbourhood or tenant associations, exist to speak on behalf of residents.

RECOMMENDATION

The proposed working groups and coordinators must help organize multi-residential property owners, licenced establishments, and residents so they can be formally represented in the proposed working groups.

Formal representation of licensed establishments, multi-residential property owners, and neighbourhood residents on the suggested working groups is recommended.

In conjunction with the proposed working group coordinators, the four main local stakeholders should actively engage and help organize licenced establishments and multi-residential property owners so they can be formally represented in the working groups.

As importantly, a priority of the working groups and coordinators would be to organize community residents so they and their interests are actively represented in the working groups. The organization of neighbourhood residents would be the most challenging given the diversity of the local population and varied interests. Consideration should be given to organizing community members around specific issues (women's safety and security, mental health wellness, community crime prevention, etc.). One vehicle for mobilizing neighbourhood residents around community safety is Neighbourhood Watch. This program facilitates grassroots organizing by mobilizing and engaging residents at a block or apartment building level. It can then be used as a stepping stone for other collective problem-solving and community-building initiatives.

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE WOLFFVILLE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS MODEL

The proposed governance structure for the Wolfville CSWM is a non-profit, charitable society: the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society. A non-profit organization is being suggested for various reasons.

First, establishing a non-profit society offers a formal authority for developing, implementing, and managing the Wolfville CSWM. A public charitable structure can help ensure that decisions are made

transparently, with accountability to and in the community's best interest.

Through the process of incorporation as a non-profit, the society will be able to involve representatives from the key stakeholders who will assume positions on its board of directors. This inclusive structure would ensure that all the main stakeholders have a say in governing the CSWM. The multi-stakeholder board of directors would

embody the spirit of the collaborative principles of this model while setting a precedent for its operational aspects—the working groups.

By extension, a multi-stakeholder non-profit society can provide a platform for community engagement and participation in implementing the CSWM. The active participation of residents in the governance process is crucial for adapting the model to the distinct needs and priorities of the Wolfville community. In addition, a non-profit society can actively engage in building partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, government agencies, and funders.

A multi-stakeholder board would also ensure the CSWM operates at arm's length from the participating agencies and is not aligned too closely with or biased by a particular interest. This independence is vital in preserving the integrity and impartiality of the society's work.

Charitable status allows the organization to engage in fundraising activities by soliciting donations from individuals, businesses, and other organizations. With charitable status, the society is also eligible to apply for grants from government agencies, foundations, and other funding sources. Charitable status often comes with tax benefits for donors, which can incentivize individuals and businesses to contribute towards the organization's initiatives. This can help sustain and expand the programs and services under the CSWM.

Being a registered charity enhances the organization's credibility and trustworthiness in the eyes of donors, supporters, and the community at large. This can help build

partnerships and collaborations and garner support for the CSWM efforts in Wolfville.

In short, a non-profit society for the Community Safety and Wellness Model in Wolfville can provide a governance structure, promote community engagement, facilitate partnerships, and establish a financial foundation to implement the model.

At a minimum, the Board of Directors of this society should comprise a representative from the following:

- the Town of Wolfville
- Acadia University
- the Acadia Students' Union
- the RCMP
- the Provincial Government
- the Wolfville Business Development Corporation (representing local businesses)
- the landlord's association (representing multi-residential property owners)
- licenced establishments association (representing bars, pubs, taverns and restaurants) and
- residents (including youth representatives).

To maximize the community basis for the CSWM and its governance, there should be at least three designated spots on the Board for residents (who are not affiliated with the aforementioned stakeholder groups). The Board's chairperson should be one of these independent residents, and the other seat should be reserved for a youth (13 to 18 years of age). The responsibilities of the board can be summarized as such:

- governance and leadership
- strategic planning (development of a comprehensive community safety and wellness plan)
- program and service advisory and oversight
- financial oversight
- fundraising (including grant applications) and resource development
- hiring and management of personnel
- monitoring and evaluation
- communications and public relations
- government liaison and public policy advocacy
- legal and regulatory compliance
- risk management
- ethical and legal standards
- conflict of interest management.

RECOMMENDATION

Incorporate a non-profit society.

It is recommended that the governing body for the Wolfville CSWM be established as a non-profit charitable organization known as the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society. The board of directors would represent key stakeholder groups and community residents.

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MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUPS

The collaborative governance approach to local problem-solving emphasized by the CSWM would be realized in Wolfville through a multi-stakeholder working group (committee) format.

Guided by the fields of public health and crime prevention, the working groups would adopt a strategic, “population-level” approach to safeguarding and enhancing the health, safety, and well-being of the entire community. Members of the working group could also collaborate to offer a multi-agency, “system of care” approach for

complex, high-risk individual cases that the Community Navigator has referred to them.

The effectiveness of a multi-stakeholder working group format for local problem-solving is optimized when a group has a specific focus. Typically, the focal point is a particular issue (e.g., violence against women, mental health wellness, property crimes). In this circumstance, the working group would comprise agencies, organizations, and individuals with a vested interest in addressing a particular issue. The composition of the working group includes agencies and professionals who possess

expertise in the subject matter and can contribute to developing and implementing strategic, community-based, population-level initiatives. Ideally, representatives from organizations would deliver relevant services and programs, which could be leveraged for high-risk, complex individual cases requiring a comprehensive “systems-of-care” approach.

Alternatively, community-based working groups can form around a particular problem-solving methodological framework or discipline that could be applied to a range of issues, such as public health, social development, community development, situational crime prevention, etc.

Regardless of the orientation of the working groups, community members, including neighbourhood residents and those who are most impacted by the issue, must be involved.

These two working group configurations are not mutually exclusive but compatible; they can be implemented simultaneously to ensure subject-matter expertise, relevant services and programs, and proficiency in applicable disciplines and methods. When these two configurations are applied to the problems prioritized for Wolfville, the suggested working groups would resemble the following:

- Mental Health Wellness
- Women’s Safety and Security
- Alcohol Strategy
- Off-Campus Student Navigation and Wellness
- Affordable Housing and Homelessness

- Social Development (focusing on at-risk families and children as well as marginalized groups) and
- Crime Prevention (situational approaches targeting property crimes, retail business crimes, by-law infractions and other nuisance problems, seniors’ safety, and pedestrian safety).

The mandate of each working group would be to develop and implement a comprehensive, proactive, problem-oriented approach guided by public health, crime prevention, and the social-ecological model. Collectively, the working groups would implement short-term situational measures (to prevent the occurrence of a problem in a particular time and place) and more long-term problem-solving solutions (to prevent the onset of the problem by addressing root causes and risk factors). The working groups’ proactive, problem-oriented, preventative focus augments the participating agencies’ largely reactive work. The collaborative multi-agency composition of the working groups, combined with the strategic implementation of a comprehensive slate of solutions, overcomes the compartmentalized work of the individual stakeholders.

While the idea of multiple working groups may have merit in theory, practical considerations in a small-town setting like Wolfville suggest that a more streamlined and collaborative approach may be more feasible and effective in implementing the Community Safety and Wellness Model. Instead of dispersing efforts across several working groups, a more practical approach would be to merge them into a smaller number of groups.

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As such, it is recommended that for the pilot project, the seven proposed working groups be consolidated into two: (i) Community Safety and Crime Prevention and (ii) Social Development and Wellness. Together, these two groups are oriented toward a comprehensive approach to community safety and wellness problems. That is, the working groups would encompass subject-matter expertise, program and service delivery, and proficiency in the applicable process-oriented, problem-solving methods and disciplines (public health, crime prevention, community development, social development, etc.).

The Community Safety and Crime Prevention working group would employ strategies and techniques primarily focused on reducing the opportunity for local crime, violence, and nuisance problems through situational crime prevention, CPTED, community crime prevention, community policing, and traditional law enforcement tactics. This working group directly satisfies the original mandate of this study: implementing community safety and crime prevention alternatives to the RCMP and

policing and law enforcement more generally.

The Social Development and Wellness Working Group would be mandated to pursue a social problem-solving approach to prevent the onset of criminality, violence, and other maladaptive behaviours by addressing root causes through development and wellness strategies. Particular attention would be paid to addressing the social determinants of criminal, violent, and other maladaptive behaviours by targeting community-based social environmental risk factors and personal risk factors. Thus, a social problem-solving approach to crime prevention and community safety would also address other locally prioritized social wellness and health concerns such as mental health disorders, poverty, gender inequality, intolerance, a lack of affordable housing, and homelessness, among others. A particular focus of a proactive, preventative approach to local social problem-solving would be at-risk children, youth, and young adults (including Acadia students)

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that multi-stakeholder working groups be established as the primary vehicles for the collaborative governance approach to local problem-solving in Wolfville. It is further suggested that the pilot project be limited to two working groups: (i) Community Safety and Crime Prevention and (ii) Social Development and Wellness.

The feasibility of establishing specialized working groups, such as those dedicated to mental health wellness and women's safety and security, should be explored to address the more pressing local concerns. This includes investigating their implementation across the

county in cooperation with other municipal governments. Collaborating with other municipal governments in the county to implement similar working groups can enhance the overall impact and effectiveness of the CSWM. By sharing resources, best practices, and strategies, a coordinated approach to community safety and wellness can be achieved across the region. This regional approach would also be more conducive to the involvement of provincial ministries and agencies.

PERSONNEL AND STAFFING OPTIONS

There are different options for staffing positions that are needed to implement the strategies and meet the goals of the Wolfville CSWM. Determining which staffing positions are most appropriate is influenced by several factors. Foremost, the position or positions must adhere to the basic principles of the CSWM while maximizing the model's effectiveness and productivity in Wolfville. This means that personnel must be able to ensure a community-based, proactive, problem-oriented, risk-based approach. The staffing positions must also contribute to systematic, strategic, holistic, population-level strategies that include implementing public health, crime prevention, and social-ecological models. Personnel must also leverage and manage the collaborative, multi-stakeholder governance structural foundation of the CSWM—most importantly, coordinating and harnessing the capacity of the working groups. Any staffing positions created must also be cognizant of local fiscal matters: the limited resources of the stakeholders to finance paid positions. This means ensuring that the position or positions are cost-effective in maximizing the effectiveness of the CSWM strategies and the productivity of the working groups with only minimal additional resources on top of what the stakeholders bring.

Working Group Coordinator Positions

The coordinator's role is to organize, guide, and support the working groups. Given this broad job description and Wolfville's unique circumstances, different options should be considered.

The first option would be to assign one coordinator to multiple groups. This position would not require substantive expertise in the issues addressed by the working groups. Instead, the primary qualification would be strong organizational skills, including an adeptness at managing multi-stakeholder committees. One benefit of this position is that it would harness and maximize the working groups' utility. A drawback is that managing multiple working groups may be too complex, and the coordinator may be limited in supporting the strategies of the working group in the absence of any expertise in the problem being addressed or methods used.

A second option is the creation of coordinator positions for each working group. The qualifications for this position would also demand strong organizational skills but would require some level of expertise in the issue being addressed by the working group. One advantage of this option is that the coordinator would be more

capable of guiding and implementing the substantive work of the group. However, the drawback to this option is that one coordinator would have to be hired for each issue-specific working group, which would be prohibitively expensive. Having one coordinator oversee multiple issue-specific working groups may be unfeasible due to the need for broad knowledge and expertise in local concerns.

A third option would be to hire staff with expertise and experience in the process-oriented methods emphasized by the CSWM: public health, crime prevention, community development, etc. The possible downside is that a coordinator with limited expertise in the substantive issues being addressed may not understand their complexity or be able to implement the working group's directives sufficiently.

Community Navigator

Beyond the coordinator positions, another staffing option common in community-based local problem-solving provides referral and navigation services to community members. These “community navigators” help link individuals with healthcare or social services to reduce barriers and facilitate effective and efficient care (Teggart, Neil-Sztramko, Nadarajah, Wang, & Moore, 2023). This position would entail three functions: referring those in need to the most appropriate resources, helping individuals navigate complex (government) systems, and advocating for and supporting the client throughout the process.

The navigator position is oriented towards a proactive preventative approach in that the focus is addressing risk factors before they become more serious behaviours or situations. Thus, the navigator triages

clients, prioritizing those with the most elevated risk factors.

The navigator may work closely with police in responding to calls for service, especially those concerning mental health or social welfare issues. In some calls, a navigator may replace police when security and law enforcement are not issues. Indeed, community navigator positions have been implemented in numerous jurisdictions to avoid having police respond to certain calls for service expressly. Besides police, cases can be directed to the navigator from various sources. These may include concerned parents who may not know who to turn to regarding their child's behavioural problems, schools that suspect students are being neglected at home, businesses and public libraries that are affected by the homeless, victims of crime who may require help navigating the criminal justice system, and criminal justice actors such as law enforcement or probation officers working with an individual in need of additional resources.

Studies have explored the effectiveness of community crisis navigators in addressing various needs. Menendez et al. (2022) and Sandhu (2021) highlight the value of health navigators in connecting at-risk clients to community resources. Menendez et al. (2022) found that navigators who focus on low-income populations can improve their access to services and resources for mental health and substance use concerns.

A Community Navigator can bring several benefits and efficiencies in personalized help to those in need, and by doing so, it complements the population-level, community-wide strategies of the working groups. It should be noted that community

navigators do not provide health care or social welfare services directly to clients; their job is to refer clients to the most approach resource. The problem is that the agencies and resources to which these clients are referred may be overwhelmed and unable to serve them, individuals, in a timely manner. As such, through referrals of at-risk individuals, the community navigator may contribute to the overload experienced by health care and social service agencies. Another limitation of this position is that it does not address the systemic social determinants that put individual clients at risk. This is why a community navigator position should be implemented as part of a more comprehensive problem-solving

strategy that includes resources targeting root causes.

Staffing for a Community Safety and Wellness Storefront Office

Another employment consideration is the personnel necessary to staff a storefront office. Besides the coordinator and navigator positions, this may involve other staff members, like a director and office manager. This option, explored in more detail later in the report, would deliver the greatest benefits in applying the community safety and wellness model, but it would also be the costliest.

RECOMMENDATION

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It is recommended that three personnel positions be created and funded for the pilot project: (i) Crime Prevention and Community Safety Coordinator, (ii) Social Development and Wellness Coordinator and (iii) Community Navigator.

Creating and funding three personnel positions for the pilot project is a significant step toward implementing the CSWM in Wolfville. These positions will play crucial roles in coordinating and overseeing the various aspects of the model.

The Crime Prevention and Community Safety Coordinator would manage the working group of the same name, helping develop and implement situational crime prevention initiatives, coordinating with law enforcement agencies, and engaging with community members to address safety concerns.

The Social Development and Wellness Coordinator would manage the working group of the same name and promote overall community health and wellness. This includes implementing programs and services developed by the working group that support social development, community development, child and youth development, mental health awareness, and addiction prevention. Inherent in this role is a social problem-solving approach that delivers protective factors to overcome risk factors that contribute to

maladaptive behaviours, including mental illness, substance abuse, criminality, and interpersonal violence.

The Community Navigator will serve as a liaison between community members and service providers, helping individuals access resources and support services. The community navigator will also work on building relationships with youth, Acadia students and marginalized populations to address their specific needs.

Together, these three personnel positions will be instrumental in implementing the CSWM in Wolfville. The two coordinator positions will ensure the working groups are productive and sustainable. By having dedicated staff focus on crime prevention, social development, and community navigation, the pilot project will be served by a comprehensive range of initiatives and interventions. Population-level, community-wide strategies would be complemented by the Community Navigator's personalized care for high-risk individuals. At the same time, social problem-solving initiatives that address root causes will be joined by situational prevention measures that reduce the opportunity for problems and problem behaviours to occur in a particular time and place.

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PILOT PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS: WORKING GROUPS AND STAFFING

Based on the options above, this section details the recommendations to be implemented over a five-year pilot project: creating two working groups and staffing two coordinator positions and one community navigator position.

Together, these recommended working groups and personnel positions will increase Wolfville's capacity to respond to the community safety and wellness priorities documented in the research findings. They are also meant to embody the evidence-based best practices in local problem-solving and the CSWM principles adapted to Wolfville's unique circumstances.

Guided by the fields of public health and crime prevention, the working groups and coordinators assume a strategic, "population-level" approach to protecting and improving the health, safety, and well-being of the entire community rather than focusing solely on the care and well-being of any one individual. This is complemented by the navigator position, whose services cater primarily to the care and well-being of individuals with elevated risk factors. Together, members of the working group have the potential to offer a "system of care" approach for complex cases referred by Community Navigator. The working groups complement one another as part of a

comprehensive approach to local problem-solving by implementing situational (opportunity-reduction) and social

developmental (social problem-solving) measures.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

The mandate of this working group and coordinator position would be to implement strategies to reduce the opportunity for local crime, violence, and nuisance problems to occur using situational crime prevention, CPTED, community crime prevention, community policing, and traditional law enforcement tactics.

Guided by public health and crime prevention, this working group would adopt a strategic, “population-level” approach to safeguarding the community's safety and security. This includes implementing opportunity-reduction initiatives that reach the greatest number of community members possible and organizing community residents at the block level through Neighbourhood Watch.

Among the crime and community safety issues to be addressed by the working group and coordinator are the following:

- violence against women and girls
- alcohol-related problems
- by-law infractions (nuisance issues, noise complaints, etc.
- property crimes
- retail business crimes
- drug trafficking
- pedestrian safety
- senior safety, and
- cyber-victimization

This working group would replace and expand the current “Town and Gown” committee, composed of the RCMP, the Town’s Compliance Officers, as well as Acadia's Safety and Security Department and the Student Conduct and Community Support Coordinator. This expanded working group could also potentially absorb the RCMP Advisory Board, given the board’s mandate to provide “advice to Town Council concerning the enforcement of law, the maintenance of law and order and the prevention of crime in Wolfville” (Town of Wolfville, 2023a).

The constituted working group would comprise the following partners:

- Town of Wolfville (By-Law Compliance Officers, Planning, Engineering and Public Works)
- Acadia University (Department of Safety and Security, Student Conduct and Community Support, Sexualized Violence Response and Education Coordinator)
- RCMP (Community Engagement Officer)
- Provincial Government (Department of Justice, Public Safety Division)
- Wolfville Business Development Corporation (crimes against businesses)
- Representative of licenced establishments (focusing on alcohol-

related problems, violence and predatory behaviour at high-risk venues)

- Representative of multi-residential property owners (prevent crime and nuisance problems in part through the proposed Multi-Residential Safety and Wellness Program),
- Acadia University Sexualized Violence Office (to help address violence against women off campus)
- Acadia Students' Union (to represent the student population and help address student conduct problems)
- Community members (Neighbourhood Watch representatives)

Specific functions and responsibilities of the working group and coordinator would include:

General

- Apply public health and crime prevention frameworks for strategic guidance.

Situational Crime Prevention and CPTED

- Conduct safety audits.
- Help ensure the safe design of public spaces.
- Advise residents, multi-residential property owners, and businesses on crime prevention and personal safety measures (through workshops, seminars, site visits, etc.
- Apply situational crime prevention techniques (e.g., target hardening, surveillance, access and egress control, etc.
- Monitor CCTV cameras.

- Develop and coordinate the alcohol strategy.

Community Crime Prevention

- Administer community safety programs (Neighbourhood Watch and the Crime Free Multi-Housing Program).
- Organize and mobilize community residents around specific issues (e.g., violence against women, property crime, nuisance problems.
- Organize and mobilize community residents to promote social cohesion and informal social control.

Community Policing

- Work with RCMP (via the Community Engagement Liaison) to promote more community and problem-oriented policing.

The working group would repurpose some of the members of the working group. In particular, the town compliance officers would assume more proactive responsibilities, such as undertaking safety audits, recommending and implementing opportunity-reduction measures, and administering the Neighbourhood Watch program.

This working group would also integrate the RCMP into a proactive preventative approach to crime and other community safety issues by employing more community and problem-oriented policing principles and strategies. Ideally, the RCMP would be represented by a member whose position entails community policing and who would serve as an intermediary between the working group and the Kings District RCMP.

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To summarize, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention working group and coordinator would implement strategies aimed at reducing local crime, violence, and nuisance problems. These would include situational crime prevention, CPTED, community crime prevention, community policing, and traditional law enforcement tactics, all working in concert to ensure a holistic approach. The aim is to create a safe environment for community members

by minimizing opportunities for community safety problems to occur. Compared to the existing town and gown committee, the reconstituted working group would (i) employ a more strategic, systematic, comprehensive, preventative, risk-based, problem-oriented approach, (ii) expand the number of stakeholders involved, and (iii) increase the number of community safety problems addressed.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELLNESS

The Social Development and Wellness working group would be tasked with adopting a social problem-solving approach aimed at preventing the emergence of criminal, violent, and other harmful behaviours by addressing their social determinants, root causes, and risk factors. By doing so, it would tackle such pressing issues in the community as mental health illness, addictions and substance abuse, poverty, at-risk youth and Acadia students, gender-based inequities, intolerance, a lack of affordable housing, and homelessness.

This working group would be guided by a strategic “population-level” approach to fostering local social development and the overall well-being of the entire community. Assuming a risk-based approach, it would also focus on applying social problem-solving strategies for those most at risk of maladaptive behaviours (children and youth from high-risk social environments, Acadia students) and those most at risk of victimization (college-aged women, those who identify as LGBTQ2+, people of colour, and international students).

One of the first responsibilities of the working group and coordinator would be to prioritize issues that undermine the local community's safety, health, and wellness that can be eased through a social problem-solving approach. The following lists the local priorities amenable to a social problem-solving approach:

- violence against women and girls
- at-risk families and children
- mental health and addictions
- poverty, financial and food insecurity
- affordable housing and homelessness
- at-risk Acadia students / Acadia students' off-campus needs, and
- intolerance towards marginalized groups, including women, racialized peoples, gay, lesbian, trans, and gender-fluid communities, migrant workers, and international students.

Potential participants in this working group include:

- Town of Wolfville (Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Library)
- Acadia University (M.Ed. Counselling program, Red Spruce Centre, Clinical Psychology program, Community Development program, Women and Gender Studies program, Acadia International, Mental Health and Counselling Centre, Human Rights and Equity Office)
- Acadia Students' Union
- Provincial Government (Department of Community Services, Child, Youth and Family Supports, Mental Health and Addictions, Provincial Housing Agency; Manager, Supported Housing, Office of the Status of Women)
- Kings County Family Resource Centre
- Wolfville School, Schools Plus, and the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education
- Wolfville Children's Centre
- Kids Action Program
- Big Brother / Big Sisters
- The Portal Youth Outreach Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Project Hope)
- Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia
- Wolfville Business Development Corporation
- Chrysalis House
- banks and other financial service providers
- community members and those with lived experiences (including young people)

Assisting at-risk families, individuals, and marginalized groups, providing a supportive and healthy environment, and promoting the positive social development of children and young people represent some of the most effective ways to overcome the social determinants of crime, violence, and other local problems and maladaptive behaviours.

A particular focus of this working group would be children and youth who are at risk of future maladaptive behaviours, especially those living in poverty or dysfunctional and traumatic environments. This working group would work to offset the many challenges and risk factors facing children, adolescents, and young adults that detrimentally affect their emotional, physical, and financial security and well-being. This includes the lasting impact of the COVID pandemic, affordability issues, homelessness, the climate change crisis, social media, cyber-victimization, and the mental health crisis. The working group and coordinator would develop strategies specific to each of these risk factors to foster resilience and support the well-being of young people in the community.

This working group would also provide services and programs specific to supporting the off-campus needs of Acadia students, especially those students who are experiencing elevated and multiple risk factors for mental health illness, substance abuse and addiction, financial, food and housing insecurities, as well as those at risk of or who have survived sexualized violence.

In short, a priority of this working group is to address the unique challenges facing children, adolescents and young adults. By targeting root causes and risk factors—through initiatives that change negative

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social environments and direct program and service delivery to at-risk groups and individuals—the working group aims to intervene early and provide support and resources to children and young people before they can develop anti-social behaviours or experience adverse health outcomes. By implementing these risk-based targeted strategies and involving young people in the decision-making process, the goal is to create a supportive and resilient community where young people can thrive.

In this context, some of the specific responsibilities of this working group are as follows:

Develop and implement programs and services for at-risk families, children and youth

- Parenting programs (e.g., home visits, home visitations) to help improve family dynamics, enhance parenting skills, strengthen the parent-child relationship, and create a loving and supportive environment for children.
- Enriched pre-primary program for children from disadvantaged environments to give them a head start in their cognitive, social, and emotional development.
- After-school programs for young people to engage them in constructive activities (learning, skill-building, recreation, socialization) during the unsupervised after-school hours.
- Tutoring and mentoring programs that promote academic success while providing positive role models for young people facing challenges in their personal or academic lives.

Develop and implement programs, services and safe spaces for women and girls

- Educational programs and workshops aimed at preventing violence against women and girls, addressing such topics as inter-personal violence, healthy relationships, consent, gender equality, and bystander intervention
- Age-appropriate early intervention educational programs and workshops for children
- Self-defence classes for women and girls.
- Programs and services that empower women and girls to advocate for their rights and safety.

• Safe spaces in the community where women and girls can seek refuge, access resources and speak confidentially with trained staff.

- Trauma-informed counselling services, support groups, and crisis intervention for women and girls who have experienced violence.

Develop and implement programs and services to prevent mental health and addiction problems (working with children and youth)

- Psycho-educational assessment services for children.
- Early intervention programs to promote resilience in children and youth who may be at risk of developing mental health issues or substance abuse problems later in life.

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- Recreational activities, art therapy sessions, mindfulness workshops, and other therapeutic programs to promote mental wellness among children and youth.
- Safe spaces where young individuals can openly discuss their mental health concerns and receive peer support.
- Programs and services for parents and caregivers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support their children's emotional well-being.

Case Conferencing

- Case conferencing for clients with elevated risk levels and complex needs using a “system of care” or wraparound framework.
- Coordinate services and supports across various systems, such as mental health, social services, education, and law enforcement, to provide comprehensive and integrated care for clients.

The formation, operation, and interventions of the Social Developmental and Wellness working group would be more complex and

challenging than those of the Community Safety and Crime Prevention group. The issues addressed by the latter group are ingrained and multifaceted, demanding complex, integrated social-problem-solving approaches. However, it is essential to recognize that complex problems require equally complex solutions. Hence, this working group must assume a rigorous and systematic approach to identifying the most pressing social issues that undermine the pro-social development of young people and precipitate maladaptive behaviours and negative health outcomes (e.g., criminality, mental health illness, substance abuse, poverty). Based on rigorous research and strategic planning, a systematic approach must be undertaken to develop a comprehensive range of problem-oriented solutions that can address the social determinants of local problems while promoting the well-being of community members (especially children, adolescents and young adults). When delivered in a coordinated, holistic, and systems-based approach, the programs and services of the different agencies represented in this working group would be much more impactful than if delivered unilaterally by a single partner.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COORDINATORS

This section details the roles and responsibilities of the two coordinator positions. This begins by outlining the core functions of both coordinator positions: (i) chairing, coordinating, and facilitating the working groups, (ii) helping implement the public health model, and (iii) supporting

navigation (referral) services. This is followed by describing the functions specific to the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator and the Social Development and Wellness Coordinator.

ASSEMBLE, CHAIR, COORDINATE, AND FACILITATE WORKING GROUP

Finding and engaging key stakeholders in the working group would be among the initial responsibilities of the coordinator in tandem with the Society's board of directors.

Once the working group is assembled, the over-arching role of the coordinator would be to lead, manage, guide, and assist the working group in its responsibilities and functions. This would include arranging and chairing meetings and implementing the strategies, initiatives, services, and programs developed by the working group.

Group Leadership, Vision, and Cohesion

Foster a shared vision: Work with stakeholders to develop a mission, vision, and goals for the working group.

Provide direction and guidance: Ensure the committee functions effectively, is productive, and achieves its goals within its terms of reference.

Set the tone and promote collaboration: Foster a respectful, safe and constructive environment where all members feel comfortable contributing. Ensure all stakeholders understand their roles and contributions to the working group.

Mentor and support members: Help new members integrate, develop their skills, and contribute effectively.

Resolve conflicts: Mediate disagreements constructively and find solutions acceptable to all involved.

Secure Resource: Assist the board of directors in fundraising, grant applications, and other means to secure resources for the working group.

Meeting Management

Pre- and post-meeting management: Prepare and distribute meeting agendas, seek input from group members, ensure materials are accessible, disseminate minutes, and follow up on actionable items.

Preside over meetings: Chair meetings, facilitate discussion, keep time, take minutes, delegate actionable tasks, enforce rules and procedures, and call votes as needed.

Facilitate collaborative decision-making: Encourage collaboration and consensus building among stakeholders to reach agreements on key decisions and actions.

Maximize meeting outputs and outcomes: Ensure meetings are productive. Monitor and follow up on actionable items from meetings.

Apply technology: Establish, coordinate, and facilitate (virtual) communications during and between meetings. Facilitate the use of technology, including artificial intelligence (for meetings, communication, research, strategic planning, service and program development, etc.)

Productivity

Build capacity: Foster the working group's ability to achieve its mandate, including professional development opportunities for

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individual members (especially those specific to the principles and disciplines of the CSWM, such as prevention, problem-solving, public health, and social ecology).

Strategize and plan: Guide the working group in strategic planning. Help draft an annual strategic plan for the working group and specific issues. Prioritize tasks and secure funding to carry out tasks.

Evidence-based strategies: Ensure the working group follows evidence-based strategies, which include implementing the public health model, crime prevention strategies, etc.

Monitor and evaluate: Establish mechanisms for monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, and making necessary adjustments. Regularly review the effectiveness of interventions and strategies.

Implementation

Implement working group decisions: Supervise the implementation of the working group's strategies, services, and programs.

Perform basic functions: Implement day-to-day tasks, such as conducting safety audits, advising community members, helping businesses develop and implement crime prevention and safety programs, etc.

Manage programs and services: Oversee programs and services such as after-school programs or tutoring for at-risk children, Neighbourhood Watch, and the Multi-Residential Safety and Wellness program.

Case conferencing: Lead the working group in case conferencing ("systems-of-care") for clients with elevated risk levels and complex needs.

Information Collection, Communication and Reporting

Data collection: Coordinate the research and analysis necessary to help the working group make informed decisions and develop evidence-based strategies.

Communication: Share information with committee members, other coordinators and working groups, external stakeholders, and relevant authorities.

Prepare and present reports: Report on progress, decisions, and recommendations to the working group.

Liaise with the Board of Directors: Communicate regularly with the Board of Directors and provide regular updates and reports.

Liaise with external bodies: Represent the committee in interactions with other groups or organizations.

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IMPLEMENT PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIES

The coordinator would oversee the development and implementation of a rigorous and systematic public health plan for their working group (and for each of the

prioritized problem areas) and ensure that the plan is effectively implemented and monitored.

Information Collection and Analysis

One function of the coordinator would be to manage the research necessary to understand the local problems being addressed, analyze existing initiatives and resources to identify gaps that need to be filled and develop initiatives based on solid empirical data. The coordinator would not necessarily carry out data collection personally but would delegate certain research tasks to working group members or specialists (Acadia University faculty and students or consultants). The coordinator would also serve as a clearinghouse for information by acting as a repository for shared data, knowledge, strategies, and resources, all of which can contribute to the ability of the working group to make informed and evidence-based decisions.

Strategic Planning

The coordinator would assist the working group in developing strategic plans, ensuring its core elements (vision, mission, goals, strategies, tactics, resources, work plan, and monitoring) are in place. The coordinator would also ensure the plan reflects the principles of the CSWM. Ideally, a strategic plan would be dedicated to each prioritized problem (considering how the different problems overlap and must be addressed simultaneously). The plans for each problem could then be combined to form an overall strategic plan for the working group. The plans produced by each working group would also be amalgamated into a comprehensive strategic plan for the Wolfville CSWM as a whole (through the collaborative efforts of the working group coordinators).

Program and Service Development and Delivery

The coordinator would guide and facilitate the working group in deliberating, developing and implementing appropriate programs and services. The coordinator's role is to ensure that the initiatives developed by the working group are effectively executed, which would include ensuring they:

- satisfy the goals laid out in the strategic plan and are effective, realistic, measurable, and sustainable,
- are data-driven and evidence-based; that they correspond to the research findings, fill voids identified in the gap analysis, leverage local resources, and follow best practices,
- are guided by the CSWM principles (prevention, problem-oriented, community-based comprehensive, collaborative) and
- are informed by relevant disciplines and conceptual models (e.g., public health, crime prevention, community development, child development, trauma-informed).

Public Education Campaigns

The coordinator would oversee the development and implementation of public education campaigns. This includes assisting working group members in developing goals and strategies, the most appropriate messages, translating the desired messaging into tangible campaigns, selecting the most appropriate mediums to be used, establishing a budget, finding funds for the campaign, putting that campaign into motion, and then monitoring it.

Community Engagement, Organizing, and Capacity-Building

The coordinator would identify and recruit community members to sit on a working group, striving to ensure that diverse perspectives and knowledge are represented. A particularly important function of this position would be to mobilize community members around collective actions and programs. This involves raising awareness about the initiatives and fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among community members. The Coordinator would build capacity within

the local community (and specific groups affected by a particular problem) to foster grassroots organizing, social cohesion, and informal social control.

Public Policy Advocacy

In tandem with the board of directors, the coordinator would pursue such advocacy work as lobbying elected representatives, working with policymakers, submitting policy briefs, building local advocacy coalitions, or organizing local petitions to show public support for a particular policy change.

ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION COORDINATOR POSITIONS

In addition to these generic functions, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator and the Social Development and Wellness Coordinator have specific responsibilities.

Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator

The following lists the functions, roles, and responsibilities specific to this working group and coordinator:

Situational Crime Prevention and CPTED

- Conduct safety audits,
- Oversee implementation of all situational crime prevention and CPTED measures,
- Advise and train community members: residents, multi-residential property owners, businesses and community groups,

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the safe design of public spaces (apply CPTED principles),

- Monitor CCTV cameras,
- Oversee the development and implementation of an alcohol strategy.

Community Crime Prevention

- Mobilize community members,
- Build capacity, promote social cohesion, and informal social control,
- Oversee implementation of specific community-based programs: Neighbourhood Watch & Multi-Residential Safety and Wellness Program,

Liaise with RCMP / Community Policing

- Align the RCMP towards more preventative measures,

- Work closely with the RCMP to promote community and problem-oriented policing,
- Refer cases to the RCMP for criminal enforcement,
- Assist the RCMP in diverting low-risk offenders from the criminal justice system.

Social Development and Wellness Coordinator

Some responsibilities of the coordinator that are specific to the social development and community wellness part of the CSWM include:

Social developmental programs for at-risk families, children and youth

- Oversee the development and implementation of programs
- Reach out to parents and others who are eligible for these programs and services,
- Work with Wolfville School and the AVRCE to establish enriched pre-primary program,
- Work with the Town recreation department, Acadia Community Development program, and other stakeholders to develop after-school programs and services for at-risk children and youth,
- Work with Acadia University and the ASU to develop a tutoring and mentoring program and recruit students to serve as tutors and mentors,

Programs, services and safe spaces for women and girls

- Find safe spaces and trained counsellors and other professionals,
- Oversee the establishment of support groups, educational programs, and workshops,
- Help guide the development and implementation of early intervention educational programs for children

Mental Health Wellness programs for children, adolescents, and young adults

- Ensure after-school programs include curriculum and other activities to promote coping and other life skills to foster resilience,
- Find safe spaces for young people to engage in discussions and peer support,
- Reach out to parents and caregivers to involve their children in programming,
- Organized recreational events, art therapy workshops, mindfulness sessions, etc., for children and young individuals,

Liaise with Canadian Mental Health Association (Project Hope)

- Help community members find affordable and appropriate housing using the Coordinated Access System,
- Help community members access trusteeship services (financial support)

Provide off-campus support for Acadia students

- Help students find suitable off-campus accommodations, connecting with

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landlords, and offering lease agreement guidance,

- Work with local food banks and organizations to address food insecurity by providing affordable or free meals,
- Organize off-campus events: Plan free non-alcoholic activities like movie nights, sports tournaments, or cultural celebrations,

Support the Community Navigator and case conferencing by working group

- Identify individuals or clients who would benefit from the Community Navigator's

referral, navigation, and advocacy services,

- Help the Navigator find appropriate services and programs for clients,
- Act as an intermediary between the Community Navigator and the working group (for referrals to participating agencies),
- Find appropriate resources to support the working group in “system of care” case conferencing for clients with elevated risk levels and complex needs.

COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR

Another important function associated with the Wolfville CSWM is the provision of referral, navigation, and advocacy services for community members (on both an emergency and non-emergency basis). In this context, “referrals” means directing community members to the most appropriate services and resources. The “navigation” function involves assisting clients in maneuvering through complex systems, such as health care, criminal justice, or social welfare systems. When necessary, a Community Navigator will also advocate on behalf of clients to ensure their needs are being addressed and to help them overcome any impediments to accessing necessary resources.

The Navigator function would be risk-based, meaning that it is inherently proactive, preventative, and problem-oriented because it is meant to mitigate risk factors before they escalate into crises.

The role and responsibilities of the Navigator position under the Wolfville CSWM are an amalgamation of the findings of this study, including interviews and regional case studies. Officials from the Town and Acadia pointed to cases in other jurisdictions in which navigator positions were created as part of “town and gown” agreements to support the off-campus needs of students. This position is also modelled after the Community Crisis Navigator with the Kentville Police Service and the Community Programs Officer with the Annapolis County RCMP, both civilian positions. The proposed Community Navigator position is an amalgamation of all three. It would encompass off-campus support for Acadia students, risk-based rapid response services for community members with elevated risk levels, and population-level outreach to children and youth that delivers universal prevention services (through school presentations and workshops, after-school programs, youth

groups, sports teams, etc.). This position is also informed by research that shows the utility of a community navigator in serving the needs of individuals with elevated risk factors (Menendez, Barragan, Kuo, & Morrison, 2022; Sandhu, Xu, Blanchard, Eisenson, & Crowder, 2021).

The Navigator would work closely with the RCMP in responding to calls for service, prioritizing those with elevated mental health risk factors. In collaboration with the Navigator, the RCMP Community Engagement officer in Wolfville would determine which calls would include a joint RCMP-Navigator response or a response by the Navigator alone. One goal of the Navigator position is to minimize or replace police as primary responders for calls best served through health care or social services. The navigator function could be performed by a civilian member of the RCMP and funded through the EPSA with the Town of Wolfville (replacing one full-time constable). With this goal in mind, this position satisfies one of the key objectives of the CSWM: to find effective and cost-effective alternatives to the RCMP to community safety issues.

Given the lack of off-campus student referral services and the influx of newcomers, a navigator position is well suited to Wolfville. It is also an important cog in the overall CSWM by providing personalized help for individuals and families at high risk of mental health and addiction disorders, criminal offending or victimization, becoming homeless, poverty, and food insecurity. A community navigator can help individuals struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues by connecting them with local or virtual mental health services. This position would also

support women in reporting violence to police and helping them to leave abusive relationships by providing them with information about local shelters and support programs. As part of the Wolfville CSWM, the Navigator could also refer to the Social Developmental and Wellness working group for those clients with elevated risk levels and complex needs that can best be addressed through a collective, multi-agency “system of care” framework. The personalized service provided by the Community Navigator would complement the strategic, population-level, and community-wide initiatives to be undertaken by the working groups and the coordinators.

Below is a partial list of referral, navigation, and advocacy services the Wolfville Community Navigator position would provide.

Services not requiring a risk assessment

Referral

- Connecting individuals with local non-emergency health care.
- Connecting families with childcare resources and educational support.
- Providing information on local job training and employment services.
- Referring individuals to financial planning and assistance programs.
- Guiding community members to recreational and social programs.
- Referring individuals to legal advice and legal aid programs.
- Helping clients access the Coordinated Access System for housing needs.

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Navigation

- Assisting with the application process for government benefits and services.
- Helping individuals understand and access healthcare services.
- Guiding Acadia (international) students through local municipal, provincial and federal government systems, services and resources.
- Navigating housing programs and services for rent support or home ownership.

Advocacy

- Supporting individuals in interactions with government agencies to ensure fair treatment.
- Advocating for the rental rights of tenants and property owners.
- Ensuring individuals' concerns are heard and addressed by service providers.
- Helping resolve disputes with service providers or agencies.

Risk-Based Services

Referral

- Triage individuals with urgent mental health or addiction risk factors.
- Rapidly connecting individuals to emergency health care (i.e., Valley Regional Hospital) or crisis intervention services, including virtual national and provincial “hotline” services.
- Refer at-risk youth to immediate support and intervention programs.

- Directing victims of domestic violence or abuse to shelters, police, and legal assistance.
- Referrals to emergency food services for those facing acute food insecurity.
- Assist in emergency housing placement.

Navigation services

- Help clients navigate emergency systems (e.g., police, fire, or medical services).
- Guide individuals through the process of obtaining protective orders or emergency custody.

Advocacy services

- Acting swiftly to advocate for individuals in high-risk situations to receive immediate care and support.
- Working with law enforcement and social services in cases of imminent danger or harm.
- Ensuring that emergency response services are accessible and responsive to high-risk individuals.
- Addressing barriers that could hinder emergency assistance.

Given the expected workload of this position in Wolfville, it is also recommended that this position be supported by trained volunteers (who could handle the non-emergency duties). Qualified Acadia students (such as graduate students in the Counselling and Psychology programs) could aid in helping those with more complex needs. Sandhu et al. (2021) describe the successful development and implementation of a community-based model that uses student volunteer community resource navigators to

help patients connect with local resources to address unmet social needs.

LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

Besides the working groups and personnel positions recommended for the pilot project, other options can be considered over a longer timeframe. These long-term options are mobile mental health units, risk-driven rapid response teams, a community safety and wellness storefront office, an increase in issue-specific working groups, and county-wide implementation of the CSWM. These options build upon the initial recommendations and are more ambitious regarding the intricacies of the collaborative vehicles, the number of agencies involved, the personnel required, and the geographic area to be covered.

It is advisable to consider expanding the CSWM in any of the following circumstances. First, the Wolfville pilot project did not reach its goals because the scope and nature of the working groups and personnel were not proportional to the scope and complexity of the problems being addressed.

Scaling up the CSWM should be considered against the backdrop of the expected population growth for Wolfville. As the town's population increases, there may be a corresponding rise in crime rates and social welfare issues. Factors such as increased

demands on social services, strain on infrastructure, and changes in demographics should also be taken into account. Incorporating population growth projections into the planning and implementation of the CSWM will ensure that the model remains effective and responsive to the evolving dynamics of Wolfville. By proactively planning for this growth and incorporating it into the CSWM framework, the town can better address the evolving needs of its community.

Consideration should also be given to expanding the CSWM to all of the Annapolis Valley, the RCMP Kings District, or Kings County, which would involve other municipal governments, stakeholders, and service providers to increase its reach and achieve greater economies of scale. This expansion would foster greater levels of collaboration while further breaking down silos. By consolidating resources and efforts, the model can achieve cost efficiencies and optimize the allocation of funds. This will enable the CSWM to deliver a more comprehensive range of services, such as prevention programs, intervention strategies, and support mechanisms, without straining limited budgets.

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MOBILE MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

The high volume of mental health-related calls for service that police must respond to,

combined with a growing resistance to police as primary responders, has prompted

various rapid response alternatives. Most of these alternatives take the form of multi-agency collaborations that reduce the use of police officers as unilateral first responders to mental health calls for service and complaints.

An integrated mental health rapid response team combines specially-trained police officers with mental health specialists for those individuals with elevated risk factors or experiencing a mental health emergency. This collaborative approach means professionals, such as psychiatric nurses or social workers, would take the lead in responding to mental health calls for service, with police playing a backup role (maintaining order and ensuring the safety of all involved while possessing the authority to apprehend). This integrated team transforms “police roles and organizational priorities from an exclusively traditional law enforcement model that reluctantly dealt with people with mental illnesses to a more service-oriented model that responds to mental illness as a community safety and public health concern” (Watson, Morabito, Draine, & Ottati, 2008).

Mobile unit members respond in plain clothes and unmarked cars to limit the potential for client intimidation. This is also done to protect client confidentiality, letting the individual know the teams are more service-oriented than legalistic or authoritarian, something previous models were lacking (Rhodes, 2012). The main goals of the mobile teams are to de-escalate situations, provide care, and connect individuals with the resources for further support and treatment. One aim of the integrated mobile units is to avoid processing the individual through the criminal justice system.

Mental health professionals on the integrated team can make immediate on-site clinical assessments of an individual, work to reduce symptoms, minimize any risks to the public or the individual (with help from police if necessary), arrange appropriate mental health treatment through referrals, and transport the person to emergency hospital care if required (Lamanna et al., 2018; Shapiro et al., 2015). Unlike unilateral police responses, mental health professionals can access a client’s medical history through a centralized database. Mental health professionals go beyond the role of a paramedic by providing referrals, providing follow-up services by telephone or home visits to clients, and helping clients navigate health care and other government systems (Scott, 2000). The teams are often available around the clock with uninterrupted service. Some mobile models feature a 24-hour helpline in addition to a dispatching unit. Dispatchers can lend the unit for a mobile visit or provide telephone support (Kisely et al., 2010).

Examples of mobile mental health units in Canada include Car 87, a joint venture of the Vancouver Police Department and the Vancouver Coastal Health/Mental Health Emergency Service, the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team in Kingston, Ontario, which combines police with staff from the local Addiction and Mental Health Service Agency, and the Halifax Regional Mobile Mental Health Unit which partners psychiatric social workers and nurses with specially trained police officers. This initiative is a partnership among Halifax Regional Police, Nova Scotia Health, Emergency Mental Health Services and the IWK Children’s Hospital.

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RECOMMENDATION

Consider implementing an integrated Mobile Mental Health Mobile Team in Wolfville or Kings County.

Consideration should be given to an integrated mobile mental health team. This multi-agency team would be necessary if the Wolfville Community Navigator does not meet the scope and complexity of the cases or if an integrated rapid response model is being considered for Kings District or Kings County. Different options regarding this model's geospatial jurisdiction should be explored, including implementation in Wolfville only, RCMP Kings District, or Kings County as a whole.

The integrated unit would replace or supplement the one Navigator position with a multi-agency collaborative approach with mental health professionals and specially trained police. Potential partners in the development and implementation of this integrated unit would include Kings District RCMP, Valley Regional Hospital, Beacon House, the Office of Mental Health and Addictions, the Annapolis Valley of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Wolfville Community Safety and Well-being Society, and Acadia University (Mental Health and Counselling, M.Ed. program in counselling, Red Spruce Centre, and the Clinical Psychology Program). Primary responders include RCMP members, the Community Navigator, nurses, social workers, and Acadia Counselling and Clinical Psychology students and faculty.

This integrated team would be unique to Nova Scotia because it would be the first one implemented in RCMP jurisdiction and rural areas.

COLLABORATIVE RISK-DRIVEN RAPID-RESPONSE TEAMS

To maximize the effectiveness of this Community Navigator position in responding to risk-based situations involving individuals with complex needs, it could be enacted with or even replaced by an integrated multi-agency rapid response team. Nilson (2014) calls this the "Collaborative Risk-Driven Intervention Model."

Collaborative risk-driven intervention is the process of risk detection, which leads to disciplined and limited information sharing, followed by a mobilization of multiple human service providers to intervene and mitigate risk before harm

occurs ... The core manifestation of this process in Canada is the Hub Model. In short, the Hub is an evidence-based collaborative problem-solving approach that draws on the combined expertise of relevant community agencies to address complex human and social problems before they become a policing problem (Nilson, 2016, p. 77).

Beauchamp (2017, p. 19) clarifies that “the HUB goes beyond primary crime prevention, where issues are addressed abstractly, and provides secondary prevention for existing risk factors and tertiary prevention for currently existing harm.” The HUB model is “not a service delivery mechanism, nor is it designed to perform case management. Instead, its primary mandate is to mitigate and/or elevated risk within 24 to 48 hours and connect individuals or families to services, meaning “case management remains with the appropriate HUB participating agency.” The collaborative risk-driven rapid response model differs from the mobile mental health units in that the latter typically involves police and health care professionals from one agency, while the former entails a much larger group of service providers that can also follow up on cases outside of the HUB model. The multi-agency rapid response units also address other emergencies beyond those related to mental health.

The precedent for this model is the Saskatchewan-based Community Mobilization Prince Albert (CMPA). Founded in 2011, the CMPA brings together service providers across sectors to address situations of high risk before they become crises. The CMPA, spearheaded by the

Prince Albert Police Service, aims to rapidly connect at-risk individuals and families with essential services through a coordinated multi-agency effort. The multi-agency task force serves as a vehicle for stakeholders from law enforcement, education, health, and social services to collaborate on interventions for at-risk individuals and emergent crisis situations. When a partner agency brings a situation to the CMPA, the partners share information and engage in a discussion that may lead to a collaborative intervention to connect services and offer support where they were not in place before. The CMPA pledges to deliver services within 24 to 48 hours of the situation being brought to their attention. Ongoing case management and follow-up are handled by individual agencies, with a dedicated “Centre of Responsibility” team providing strategic planning support (Lamontagne, 2015).

While the CMPA and other hub models in Canada are effective and are considered best practices in collaborative risk-based rapid responses, they are typically suited to larger towns and cities. A town the (current) size of Wolfville may not require this elaborate model. In their report entitled multi-sector community safety initiatives in Ontario, Russell and Taylor (2015) contend that collaborative, risk-driven community safety and well-being initiatives face unique challenges in remote, rural and small urban communities. Remote and rural areas may face more significant difficulties in achieving multi-agency collaboration because of geographical challenges and a smaller pool of resources. However, they also suggest that these communities are just as capable of success with these initiatives as larger urban areas when the initiatives are well-suited to their specific environment. While

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there are distinct challenges in smaller communities, with the proper support, understanding, and tailored approaches,

these initiatives can be just as effective as those in larger urban centres.

RECOMMENDATION

Explore the need for a “Collaborative Risk-Driven Intervention” model in Wolfville or Kings County.

As part of the monitoring and assessment of the CSWM and the Community Navigator position specifically, it should be determined whether a multi-agency risk-driven intervention team would deliver greater benefits. Different options regarding this model's geospatial scope and jurisdiction should also be explored, including implementation in Wolfville only, RCMP Kings District, or Kings County as a whole (integrated with the Kentville Police Service). One option would be to expand the current Domestic Violence Situation Table in Kings County to encompass other high-risk situations (e.g., in particular, mental health calls for service and sexualized violence).

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COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLNESS STOREFRONT OFFICE

A storefront office is a brick-and-mortar facility that is open to and accessible by the public. It provides services and support directly to community members for their personal safety, security, health, and welfare. It also promotes and supports collective responses implemented at the neighbourhood or community level. A storefront office can have different roles, responsibilities, and services depending on the community's needs and resources, but some standard features are summarized below.

- It offers walk-in services to the public.
- It serves as a central point of contact for the public to access information,

referrals, resources and help related to community safety and wellness that go beyond crime.

- It receives non-emergency complaints from community members.
- It offers a secure space with specially trained civilian staff to receive criminal complaints and to serve as an intermediary with police for those hesitant to deal directly with the police.
- It offers and coordinates community safety and wellness services and programs, such as workshops, seminars, safety audits, Neighbourhood

Watch, property marking, and restorative justice.

- It facilitates community engagement and participation by providing a meeting space for dialogue, consultation, feedback, education, and awareness of local issues and initiatives.
- It may include a multi-agency team of professionals from various sectors, such as police, health, social services, education, justice and community organizations, who work collaboratively to address complex situations and provide coordinated and integrated responses.

A Wolfville Community Safety Office would encompass five paid positions. These positions would include the three previously mentioned ones (Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator, Social Development and Wellness Coordinator, and Community Navigator), a director, and an office manager.

The Community Safety Office is a team of five paid professionals dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of the community. The team comprises the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator, Social Development and Wellness Coordinator, Community Navigator, director, and office manager.

The director of the Community Safety Office oversees the overall quality of the office's programs and services to ensure it meets the community's needs. Additionally, the director supervises the other four positions, ensuring their work aligns with the office's mission.

As a liaison between the office and the board of directors, the director is responsible for communicating the office's needs and progress to the board. The director would also assist in coordinating the working groups and co-chair the meetings when necessary. The direct work with the board and coordinators ensures that the office's budget is allocated effectively and that fundraising goals are met.

This position would report to the Society's board and supervise the other office staff, including the working group coordinators and community navigator.

The responsibilities of the Office Manager would include:

- managing the day-to-day operations of the storefront facility
- providing administrative support for the director, the three staff members, and the working groups
- communications and social media.
- resource management and record-keeping
- ensuring safety protocols.
- managing technology and computer systems support
- volunteer coordination (including Acadia student placements)
- manage and administer storefront services.

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RECOMMENDATIONS SPECIFIC TO PRIORITIZED PROBLEM AREAS

This section outlines recommendations for adapting the CSWM model to each of the prioritized problem areas: the mental health crisis, violence against women and girls, alcohol-related issues, off-campus student conduct issues, and challenges facing students and young people.

The recommendations for each follow the CSWM principles: a comprehensive, community-based, collaborative approach that emphasizes proactive, problem-oriented strategies to prevent risk factors from becoming actual harms and negative health outcomes.

The recommendations for each problem first consider structure: how to organize the stakeholders collaboratively. For most of the identified problems, this is realized through a multi-stakeholder working group. The functional aspects of the recommendations

are then presented using the public health model as a template to implement a proactive, problem-oriented primary and secondary prevention framework. Specific strategies from the field of crime prevention are also applied.

The recommended preventative strategies are comprehensive, including social problem-solving (social developmental) and situational (opportunity-reduction) initiatives. The social problem-solving recommendations include those that target social environmental risk factors and early intervention programs that can be delivered to at-risk children, youth, and young adults. A comprehensive approach combines a strategic population-level approach (via working groups), with a rapid response individualized care model that provides referral, navigation and advocacy services to individuals with elevated risk levels.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

A comprehensive, problem-oriented approach to mental health and addiction problems attempts to mitigate root causes and social determinants by addressing social environmental risk factors and delivering early intervention programs that can be delivered to at-risk children, youth, and young adults to enhance their resilience. This holistic approach to mental health wellness also intertwines population-level (community-wide) public health strategies with a rapid response model, ensuring tailored care is promptly delivered to individuals exhibiting elevated levels of

risk for severe mental health and addiction problems.

The Social Development and Wellness Committee would be responsible for developing and implementing population-level strategies for the pilot project. Given the scope and complexity of mental health and addiction problems locally and regionally, a more comprehensive option would be a dedicated Mental Health Wellness working group. The key partners in this multi-agency consortium might include:

- Valley Regional Hospital (Inpatient Mental Health Services, Adult Community Mental Health and Addictions Services, Adolescents Outreach Services,
- Beacon House,
- Annapolis Valley Public Health,
- Canadian Mental Health Association,
- Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia,
- Acadia University (Mental Health and Counselling, M.E.D. Counselling Program, Red Spruce Centre, Clinical Psychology program,
- Wolfville School (Counsellors, Schools Plus officials,
- Town of Wolfville,
- RCMP,
- Kentville Wellness Court, and
- Community members (including those with applicable life experiences).

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mental health addictions a public health emergency. The campaign should then deliver messages that help community members recognize the importance of mental health self-care and seek help when needed. The campaign can provide information on coping mechanisms, stress management techniques, and resources available for mental health support. In addition, public education campaigns can help reduce the stigmas associated with mental health issues and encourage individuals to seek help when needed, leading to early intervention and improved mental health outcomes. Ostensibly, the public education campaign is about creating a supportive environment where individuals feel empowered to prioritize their mental well-being, intervene early when risk factors appear, and seek help when needed.

Community outreach and capacity building to engage and mobilize community residents and to strengthen local preventative problem-oriented skills, resources, and infrastructure to address complex issues such as mental health and substance abuse. A particular focus on community outreach would be engaging those who have been diagnosed with or are at risk of mental health and substance abuse issues.

Regardless of the working group, the public health strategies to be implemented are summarized below.

- Data collection is used to assess and monitor the scope, nature, impact, trends, causes of, and risk factors for mental health and substance abuse disorders, and a needs assessment that identifies gaps in current mental health wellness resources and initiatives.
- Public education and awareness-raising campaigns that begin by declaring
- Public policy advocacy that would include lobbying the provincial government for policies and programs that promote primary prevention initiatives while also providing greater support and resources at the local level to address the root causes of mental health and substance abuse disorders.

- The development and delivery of proactive, preventative initiatives, emphasizing early intervention programs for children that promote resilience to overcome social environmental and personal risk factors. One recommendation is a comprehensive after-school program for at-risk children and youth that provides positive role models and mentors, academic tutoring, leisure and physical activity and social and life skills development. This program would rely on trained Acadia students as mentors and tutors. It could also engage graduate students and faculty from counselling and clinical psychology to help with development, implementation, and psycho-education assessments. This program would include an evidence-based cognitive-

behavioural curriculum, such as Inter-Cognitive Problem Solving (Shure, 2024), Friends Resilience (Friends Resilience Hub, 2019), or Life Skills for Kids (Ballantyne & Ferguson, 2019). Programs, services, and curricula that address mental health and additional risk factors can also be developed and delivered to Acadia students and young adults.

A comprehensive mental health and wellness approach would encompass individualized referral, navigation, advocacy, and care rendered to high-risk individuals via the Community Navigator, Mobile Mental Health Wellness Team, or Integrated Risk-Driven Intervention Unit to enhance these community-wide and group-based initiatives.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Another priority of the Wolfville CSWM is to prevent violence against women and girls in all its forms but with particular emphasis on sexualized violence against young women and girls. A comprehensive, proactive strategic plan would be built on a problem-oriented approach that targets root causes and social determinants, including norms and values that perpetuate violence and gender inequality, initiatives that empower women, and early intervention programs for girls and boys. It would also include opportunity-reduction approaches that aim to prevent such violence in a particular time and place, including environmental design (CPTED) measures, workshops on consent education and bystander intervention, and implementing policies and programs for venues which are at high risk for violence and predatory behaviour. A holistic

approach to women and girls' safety and security combines population-level public health strategies with an integrated rapid response model for calls for services involving violence against women and girls.

The Social Development and Wellness working group would develop and implement the public health population-level strategies for the pilot project. At the same time, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention group would be responsible for opportunity-reduction initiatives. Given the scope and elevated risks of sexualized violence against young women in Wolfville, consideration should be given to a dedicated Women and Girls Safety and Security working group, which could be implemented in Wolfville or on a county-

wide basis. The key partners in this multi-stakeholder group could potentially include:

- Acadia University
 - Sexualized Violence Coordinator
 - ASU
 - Acadia Women's Centre
 - M.Ed.. Counselling Program
- Town of Wolfville
- RCMP
- Provincial Government
 - Department of Community Services
 - Office of the Status of Women
- Department of Justice (Public Prosecutions)
- Chrysalis House
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Project Hope)
- Community members & violence survivors

In its final report, the MCJ recommended that the province fund a “community safety and well-being leadership council” mandated to address social issues and VAWG, as well as a funding shift towards prevention, including addressing gaps in rural, remote areas and for marginalized communities. The Wolfville CSWM and this leadership council share strategies when it comes to the safety and security of women and girls: “social development, prevention, [and] early intervention,” “collaboration, and communication between the community, groups, agencies, and service providers” and “community engagement, beginning with the development of comprehensive community safety needs assessments, followed by information sharing, awareness raising, and involvement in specific actions and strategies under the plan” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, p. 197).

Regardless of the working group, Wolfville's proposed public health initiatives are summarized below.

- Data collection to assess and monitor the scope, nature, impact, trends, causes and risk factors for violence and to conduct a needs assessment that identifies gaps in and shortcomings of current resources and initiatives to protect women and girls and others at risk of gendered-based violence.
- Public education and awareness-raising campaigns that
 - begin by proclaiming gender-based, intimate partner, and family violence an “epidemic” and a “public health emergency” (Mass Casualty Commission, 2023, 163) and
 - deliver messages challenging attitudes and cultural norms that perpetuate violence and abuse against women (gender stereotypes, gender inequality, sexism, misogyny, toxic masculinity, racism) while promoting norms and values that emphasize gender parity, respect, and safe and healthy relationships built on consent, equality, and a respect for each other's boundaries.
- Community outreach and capacity building to engage and mobilize community members around greater safety, security, and equality for women and girls, including those (potentially) affected by violence and those at risk of perpetrating such violence.

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- Public policy advocacy, including lobbying the provincial government for programs, funds, and resources that encourage greater primary prevention initiatives to address the underlying causes of violence and gender inequity.
- The development and delivery of primary prevention programs and services:
 - social developmental initiatives that include alleviating the feminization of poverty and women's lack of economic autonomy, which increases the risk of victimization,
 - social empowerment interventions with women and girls that combine awareness-raising with skill-building,
 - parenting programs for parents at risk of abusing or neglecting their children,
 - school-based interventions aim to prevent violence in schools but also use schools as a primary point for preventing violence against women, dating violence and sexual abuse.
- The development and delivery of situational violence prevention measures that seek to avert the occurrence of violence in a particular time and place through education and training (on consent education, bystander intervention, self-defence), controlling violence facilitators (such as alcohol consumption and access to weapons), applying safe design principles to private and public spaces (e.g., increased lighting and the removal of entrapment areas), and ensuring high-risk licenced establishments have policies and training in place for staff.

To complement these community-wide initiatives, a comprehensive approach to women's safety and security in Wolfville would entail individualized referral, navigation, advocacy and care services for women and girls delivered through the Community Navigator or an Integrated Rapid-Response Risk-Driven Intervention Teams. This may include adapting the integrated "Highest Risk Domestic Violence Table" in the Annapolis Valley to include sexualized violence.

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ALCOHOL-RELATED PROBLEMS

A further priority of the Wolfville CSWM would be to address alcohol abuse, not only to prevent adverse health effects of overconsumption. Prevention strategies also need to be applied due to how they contribute to other social problems, such as violence, drunk driving, underage drinking, nuisance problems (noise complaints, property damage), family break-ups, and homelessness.

A comprehensive, proactive strategic plan would be built on a problem-oriented

approach that targets students and young people. A holistic preventative strategy would address the social determinants of alcohol abuse, including social environmental norms and values that promote binge drinking and more personal risk factors such as a family history of alcohol abuse. A broad proactive plan would also apply situational measures that would reduce the opportunities for abuse to occur and prevent alcohol-related problems from occurring in a particular time and place. An individualized care model joins this

population-level approach to reducing alcohol abuse and resulting social problems via the Community Navigator, which can refer individuals who suffer from or are at risk of alcohol abuse.

A comprehensive, proactive strategic plan to address alcohol abuse would target the social determinants and situational measures to reduce opportunities for abuse. The community navigator would provide personalized care, referring individuals at risk of alcohol abuse for help.

For the pilot project, the public health population-level strategies to address alcohol abuse would be developed and implemented by the Social Development and Wellness Committee. The Community Safety and Crime Prevention group would implement situational initiatives that aim to reduce overconsumption and the crime, violence, nuisance and community safety issues that may result.

Given the prevalence of alcohol abuse in furthering other community safety problems, combined with a culture of drinking promoted as part of Wolfville's economy and brand, consideration should be given to reinvigorating the alcohol strategy working group by expanding its membership and employing a more systematic, comprehensive, problem-oriented preventative strategy. The proposed composition of this expanded working group is as follows:

- Town of Wolfville
- Acadia University
- Acadia Students' Union
- Representatives of local licenced establishments

- Provincial Government (NSLC, Liquor Store, Office of Mental Health and Addictions)
- Wine Growers Association of Nova Scotia
- Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- Annapolis Valley Public Health
- community members (including young people to help develop initiatives and craft effective peer messaging)

A comprehensive, evidence-based, public health strategy to minimize alcohol overconsumption and resulting social problems would include:

- Data collection to assess and monitor the scope, nature, impact, trends and causes of alcohol (over-consumption) and resulting health, social welfare, and community safety problems. The research should also include a gap analysis that identifies the shortcomings of current resources and initiatives to address the availability and abuse of alcohol and to prevent local social problems such as crime, violence and nuisance problems.
- Public education campaigns and outreach programs would raise awareness about the dangers of excessive and underage alcohol consumption, challenging and replacing attitudes and (campus) cultural norms that support binge drinking. A public education campaign should promote responsible consumption while also linking alcohol abuse to antisocial behaviour and other community safety issues, in particular, violence against women. This campaign should

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complement the public health campaigns undertaken on campus while learning from past campaigns on alcohol consumption and abuse launched throughout Canada.

- Community residents and local groups and businesses would be mobilized and organized to support and take part in community-based interventions that promote responsible alcohol consumption and deter abuse. Those local businesses that market alcohol (including the NSLC and licenced establishments) should be represented on the working groups, contribute to the public education campaigns (including funding) and implement policies and programs to address alcohol abuse and resulting problems.
- Public policy advocates would include lobbying the provincial government for resources to support public health, primary prevention, and harm reduction initiatives. Efforts should also be undertaken to ensure provincial and municipal liquor laws are in place, including regulations that control the availability and marketing of alcohol.
- The development of a comprehensive, proactive, problem-oriented strategic plan would address the social determinants of alcohol abuse among students and other young adults. It would also address more personal risk factors, such as a family history of alcohol abuse. This plan could involve initiatives such as community education programs on the risks of alcohol abuse, providing resources for mental health and addiction support, promoting healthy coping mechanisms, and creating safe and positive social

environments. By addressing personal risk factors like a family history of alcohol abuse through targeted interventions and support services, the community can work towards prevention and early intervention strategies.

- Primary prevention educational programs and services would be delivered to children, adolescents, Acadia students and other young adults to raise awareness of the health and social impacts of drinking and over-consumption. These programs typically involve a combination of strategies that
 - are delivered directly to young people using age-appropriate curricula that focus on the dangers of alcohol consumption and teach coping skills for peer pressure, stress management, and decision-making to help young people choose not to drink and
 - are delivered to parents to help them communicate effectively with their children about alcohol, using youth groups, clubs, and sports teams to discuss the dangers of alcohol.
- A situational preventative approach to alcohol-related problems includes the strategy of “controlling disinhibitors” – limiting people’s access to things that reduce their ability to think and behave inappropriately. Controlling alcohol as a disinhibitor centres around restricting access by enforcing laws and policies to make alcohol more expensive and less available. Policy interventions include taxing alcohol, restricting alcohol sales, enforcing the legal drinking age,

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regulating alcohol advertising, and regulating alcohol outlet density (reducing the number and concentration of places that sell alcohol can help reduce excessive alcohol use). To minimize alcohol-related problems in licensed premises, they need to implement responsible beverage service

policies, such as requiring staff to refuse to serve intoxicated customers. Programs that promote and reward sobriety and designated drivers at licensed events, such as free (non-alcoholic) drinks and food, have shown to be effective.

STUDENT CONDUCT ISSUES

A multi-stakeholder approach to student conduct problems would engage the Acadia Students' Union, Acadia University administration (office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement), the Town of Wolfville (community planning, recreation, public works and engineering, by-law compliance unit), representatives of licensed establishments and multi-residential property owners, the RCMP and community residents (including but not limited to those most affected by noise and other nuisance issues).

The strategies presented in this section overlap with and build upon those concerned with preventing alcohol-related problems in town. As such, the recommendations summarized below do not include those to be implemented through the alcohol strategy.

A proactive, problem-oriented, public health approach to student conduct problems can be demarcated into three broad categories: (i) challenging and replacing norms and values that promote raucous, disruptive, anti-social behaviour off-campus, (ii) social and community development services and programs catering directly to Acadia students, other young adults and teenagers that promote greater integration into the

community and (iii) situational measures that can prevent the opportunity for nuisance problems to occur in a particular time and place.

- Research and data collection should assess and monitor the scope, nature, impact, trends and causes of student conduct problems and their repercussions. This includes conducting safety audits, victimization surveys, and research with students themselves. Research would also require a gap analysis that reveals the shortcomings of current resources and initiatives.
- Public education campaigns and outreach programs targeting Acadia students and other young people should increase awareness of the adverse effects of disruptive and antisocial behaviour in residential areas, especially to challenge norms supporting such behaviour and promote good citizenship and respect for other residents. This campaign should complement the public education campaigns and other initiatives undertaken on campus that raise awareness about the student code of conduct.
- Community engagement strategies would reach out to three separate

groups: (i) Acadia students and other young people, (ii) community residents who are impacted by the nuisance problems and (iii) other community members who can play a role in preventing student contact problems, in particular the owners and management of multi-residential properties and licenced establishments.

- Student engagement and education initiatives should be part of off-campus orientation events for new students organized by the Community Safety and Wellness Society (and delivered by the Community Navigator and working group coordinators) to reinforce the messages delivered on campus.
- Social and community development initiatives would strive to integrate students into the local community by
 - providing referral, navigation, and advocacy services for students and other young people at elevated risk of binge-drinking and anti-social behaviour and
 - organizing free community events for students, like game nights, pot-luck dinners, movie screenings, sports, or recreational activities (ensuring food and non-alcoholic beverages are served).
- Community residents, including those most impacted by student conduct problems, should be engaged to help develop and

implement appropriate mitigation strategies. This includes social and community development measures that seek to integrate and socialize new students through local tours and other orientations, mentoring, billeting international and out-of-province students, organizing and participating in educational workshops and community events along with students, and holding regular community meetings where residents can voice their concerns and suggestions.

- Local businesses (organized through the WBDC) should also be involved in community socialization efforts, such as providing welcome baskets to all new students (including gift cards), student discounts, job opportunities, sponsoring non-alcoholic events, and support awareness campaigns.
- Opportunity reduction measures should also be implemented to prevent the occurrence of anti-social behaviour in a particular time and place and include:
 - ensuring off-campus party and event environments are safe and controlled (designated party zones, event registration),
 - enhancing law enforcement (increased presence of police and compliance personnel targeting hot spots and peak party times, weekends, and high-risk student events; fines and penalties for repeated violations),

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- strengthening and enforcing noise ordinances and promoting awareness of noise regulations to students through signage and community outreach,
- strengthening alcohol regulations (stricter enforcement of legal drinking age laws, responsible alcohol sales practices, and penalties for underage drinking),
- implementing situational crime prevention measures (target hardening, access control, controlling disinhibitors, surveillance, facilitating compliance, increasing guardians, etc.) and CPTED (applying design principles in hot spots that discourage or increase monitoring of anti-social behaviour) and
- implementing community crime prevention initiatives (Neighbourhood and Apartment Watch programs).

CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE

Post-secondary students—and the Millennial and Z generations in general—have had to face a plethora of unprecedented challenges in their young lives that have created a bleak outlook on their future while also contributing to the mental health crisis among young people. Adolescents and young adults have always been susceptible to several heightened risk factors, including peer pressure, bullying, less parental control and adult supervision, academic failure, increased access to weapons, and greater opportunities to consume alcohol and drugs. On top of these omnipresent risk factors, they have had to live through COVID-19, the climate crisis, the dysregulated aspects of personal technology (cell phone addiction, excessive screen time, toxic social media), cyber-victimization, and exposure to violent and sexual images on the internet).

The urgency to address these risk factors and support the mental health and overall well-being of young people has never been greater.

In order to put forward social problem-solving and development-based approaches to supporting young people, it is important to understand youth development.

According to Schuck et al. (2013, p. 2), three broad conditions are crucial to healthy adolescent development: “(1) the presence of a parent or parent figure who is involved with the adolescent and concerned about his or her successful development, (2) inclusion in a peer group that values and models prosocial behaviour and academic success, and (3) activities that contribute to autonomous decision making and critical thinking...”

Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (1995, p. 15) offers the following list of “what young people need to lead crime-free lives”:

- Young people need opportunities and responsibilities to go along with rights.
- They need a good education.
- Young people need to feel they are useful, appreciated, and of value.

- Young people need meaningful things to do.
- They need fair, clear, consistent, and meaningful consequences for their actions.
- Young people need a life free from abuse.
- They need both physical and emotional support.
- Youth need freedom from other types of harm.
- Young people need accurate, complete information.

- They need positive role models.
- Youth need a voice in what happens to them.
- Young people need a chance to be part of the solution.

The Search Institute (2011) provides an even more comprehensive catalogue of the “building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.” These 40 developmental assets are summarized below.

SEARCH INSTITUTE’S 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR ADOLESCENTS (AGES 12–18)

External Assets	Internal Assets
<i>Support</i>	<i>Commitment to Learning</i>
1. Family support	21. Achievement motivation
2. Positive family communication	22. School engagement
3. Other adult relationships	23. Homework
4. Caring neighborhood	24. Bonding to school
5. Caring school climate	25. Reading for pleasure
6. Parent involvement in schooling	<i>Positive Values</i>
<i>Empowerment</i>	26. Caring
7. Community values youth	27. Equality and social justice
8. Youth as resources	28. Integrity
9. Service to others	29. Honesty
10. Safety	30. Responsibility
<i>Boundaries and Expectations</i>	31. Restraint
11. Family boundaries	<i>Social Competencies</i>
12. School boundaries	32. Planning and decision making
13. Neighborhood boundaries	33. Interpersonal competence
14. Adult role models	34. Cultural competence
15. Positive peer influence	35. Resistance skills
16. High expectations	36. Peaceful conflict resolution
<i>Constructive Use of Time</i>	<i>Positive Identity</i>
17. Creative activities	37. Personal power
18. Youth programs	38. Self-esteem
19. Religious community	39. Sense of purpose
20. Time at home	40. Positive view of personal future

Figure 13 - Search Institutes’ 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents; Source: <https://searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/developmental-assets-framework>

Numerous local initiatives can be integrated into Wolfville's CSWM that help support young people and foster their resilience and pro-social development. These recommendations aim to foster a supportive environment that addresses immediate needs and mitigates long-term risks

Community-Based Input and Advisory

Youth Engagement on Working Groups: Acadia students (through the ASU) and other young people should be represented on the Society's Board of Directors and all working groups. Consideration should be given to a stand-alone Wolfville Youth Advisory Council (modelled after the Municipality of Kings Youth Council) (Municipality of the County of Kings, 2024) or established as an extension of the Kings-Hants Constituency Youth Council (2021).

Community Forums and Advisory Panels: Facilitate regular meetings where young people can voice their concerns and take part in decision-making processes regarding community development.

Action Groups: Encourage youth participation in local activism that addresses what they consider to be the most pressing issues facing their generation (climate change, affordability issues, social justice, etc.)

Data Collection, Monitoring and Evaluation

Data Collection: Implement a system for ongoing data collection to measure the scope, nature, causes, and trends associated with the challenges faced by young people in Wolfville. Data should also be collected to assess current systems and

associated with the challenges young people in Wolfville face. These strategies must be implemented with the active participation of the youth they aim to serve, ensuring that their voices are central to the development and execution of the CSWM.

monitor the impact of the CSWM initiatives for youth, ensuring they meet their evolving needs.

Continuous Feedback Loop: Establish mechanisms for regular feedback from young people to adapt strategies effectively.

Public Education

Public Education Campaigns: Launch campaigns that acknowledge the many challenges young people face, promote self-care and advertise the services and supports available in the community.

Workshops: Offer workshops in schools and after-school programs focusing on resilience, self-care, financial literacy, technology use management, and climate change adaptation. Similar workshops should be offered to parents and other community members to ensure they are supportive of young people.

Population-level Social Development Programs and Services

Employment: Work with local businesses to provide jobs for young people. Establish a local "job Corps" program to help young people with elevated risk factors improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training aimed at gainful employment and career pathways.

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Mentoring: Connect young people with adults or peers who can provide mentorship and guidance.

Tutoring: Provide free tutoring services and other academic support for students struggling in school

Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs: Create local centres in Wolfville where young people can access free mental health support and other health and dental services, engage in community-building activities, and receive guidance on various issues, including housing and employment.

Safe Spaces for Marginalized Populations: Create designated safe spaces and support groups for young women and other LGBTQ2+ or racialized youth and young adults to gather, share experiences, and access specialized support services.

Affordable Housing: Partner with local government, non-profits, and private entities to develop affordable housing projects for students and young adults, ensuring safe and quality living conditions. This includes

applying the Coordinated Access System, which matches housing to renters' specific needs.

Food Security Programs: Implement community gardens, food co-ops, and partnerships with local businesses to provide affordable, nutritious food options for students facing food insecurity.

Individualized Care

Community Navigator: Ensure the proposed Navigator position pays particular attention to supporting and advocating for at-risk youth, guiding them to available services, and acting as an intermediary for various support systems. This aspect of the job can be based on the Annapolis County RCMP Community Programs Officer.

Tailored Support Plans: Develop personalized care plans for youth, Acadia students and other young adults with elevated risk levels, incorporating mental health services, counselling, tutoring, mentoring and other social support.

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FUNDING, BUDGETING, AND OTHER FISCAL MATTERS



In general, funding, in-kind donations, and other resources to implement the CSWM recommendations would come from two sources: (i) stakeholders represented on the Board and working groups and (ii) external funding (fundraising, support from the local business community, grant applications to government and private foundations).

The stakeholders would be responsible for capital and personnel costs. Resources from stakeholder agencies could include seconded personnel, in-kind donations (e.g., office space, equipment and technology) and, if necessary, budgetary contributions (the payment of salaries of staff hired to implement the CSWM).

External funding would pay for services and programming. Potential provincial funding sources include the Civil Forfeiture Fund (Government of Nova Scotia, 2021) and the Sexual Violence Prevention Innovation Grants (Government of Nova Scotia, 2022).

Salaries for the three proposed personnel positions could potentially be covered by renegotiating the current Provincial Policing

Service Agreement (PPSA) between the RCMP and the Town of Wolfville to cut two RCMP constable positions. The savings to the Town could then fund the two coordinator positions and the community navigator position. If renegotiating the PPSA is not possible, Wolfville could enter into a new Municipal Policing Service Agreement (MPSA) with the RCMP.

To help offset personnel expenses and maximize the effectiveness and reach of the interventions, the Wolfville CSWM would also rely upon volunteers. Sustained efforts should be undertaken to attract community residents as volunteers, whether this is to serve on working groups, to undertake ongoing labour-intensive projects such as research and safety audits, to take part in community programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, to help integrate students into the community, and to assist the Coordinators and Navigator in their jobs. Particular attention would also be given to enlisting students from Acadia University, whether through volunteering, research or service-learning courses, field placements, and co-op programs.

COSTS OF RECOMMENDED PERSONNEL POSITIONS

COORDINATOR POSITIONS

The estimated annual cost of the coordinator positions would include the salary, a standard benefits package, and other related expenses, such as professional development and training. A breakdown of the annual costs based on the 35-hour work week is as follows:

Salary: A salary of \$60,000 will be used; however, this amount can vary depending

on the level of experience and the specific responsibilities of the role.

Benefits: While specific data on benefits for this role is not readily available, benefits typically add 20 to 30 percent to the base salary. This includes health insurance, retirement contributions, and other perks. At 25 percent, the annual costs of the benefits would be approximately \$15,000.

Professional development and training: The costs for professional development and training (workshops, conferences, courses, certifications) can vary widely depending on the specific needs of the position and the individual. A rule of thumb is to budget between one and five percent of the employee's salary. Given the specialized nature of this role and the importance of ongoing training, the maximum will be used, which would be \$3,000.

Estimated Annual Cost of the Coordinator Position:

Salary: \$60,000

Benefits: \$15,000

Other Related Costs: \$2,000

Total Estimated Annual Cost:
\$77,500 (\$155,000 for both positions)

NAVIGATOR POSITION

An estimate of the annual cost of the Community Navigator position will consider the salary, benefits, and other related costs based on the job responsibilities and qualifications described.

Total Estimated Annual Cost of the Community Navigator Position

Salary: \$65,000

Benefits: \$16,250

Salary: Given the qualifications and responsibilities, the salary for this position is comparable to that of social workers or similar community service roles. In Nova Scotia, the average annual wage for such positions may range from \$60,000 to \$70,000. A median value for this estimate would be \$65,00.

Other Related Costs: \$3,250

Total: \$84,500

Given the above, the total estimated annual costs of these three paid positions would be \$239,500.

Benefits: Benefits typically include health insurance, dental, vision, life insurance, retirement plans, etc. The cost of benefits is usually 20 to 30 percent of the base salary. At 25 percent, the annual cost of the benefits would be \$16,250.

Note that these are rough estimates, and the actual costs can vary based on various factors, including the specific responsibilities of the role, the candidate's level of experience, and the organization's policies and resources. It is also important to consider that if these positions require additional certifications or have a higher level of responsibility than average, these costs could be higher.

Professional development and training: Five percent of the employee's salary for professional development, training, and other costs would be \$3,250.

OPTIONS

There are three options for covering the costs of these personnel positions.

First, these positions would be negotiated as part of a Municipal Policing Service Agreement with the RCMP. This would entail replacing two RCMP constable positions under the agreement. This option would satisfy the over-arching goal of this project: to find alternatives to the RCMP (and traditional policing generally). It would also be the most cost-effective choice, given it would not cost the town any additional money outside of what is negotiated in the MPSA.

The other option would be for the local stakeholders to pay the staffing costs (or seconding a current staff member). The Town of Wolfville would cover the costs of the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator, the rationale being that this position directly addresses the town's request to implement community safety alternatives to the RCMP.

The RCMP would pay the costs of the Community Navigator position. The rationale is that the Navigator would work closely with the RCMP in responding to calls for service. Local precedents for this recommendation can be found in the Kentville Police Force Community Crisis Navigator and the Annapolis County RCMP Community Programs Officer.

Acadia University would pay for the costs of the Social Development and Wellness Coordinator position. The university would be an appropriate funding source, given this position would focus on students' off-campus needs.

The third option would be for the staffing positions to be paid for by the Society through fundraising and grants. The society's board would also be responsible for funding programming, services, and material resources. One of the board's initial priorities should be to apply for program funding from the provincial and federal governments.

The ASU should not be expected to contribute financially to implementing the CSWM. Instead, its role in providing resources should be focused on engaging Acadia students.

FIVE-YEAR PILOT PROJECT WORK PLAN



It is recommended that a five-year pilot project be undertaken to develop, implement and test the main components of the Community Safety and Wellness Model: incorporating the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society, creating two working groups (Community Safety and Crime Prevention and Social Development and Wellness), hiring two coordinators to manage these groups, and creating a Community Navigator position.

The CSWM would be phased in over the five-year life of the pilot project. This gradual implementation will help ensure the project is not rushed and allow for a prudent and deliberative approach. By phasing in the CSWM over five years, the project can be carefully monitored, and adjustments can be made as necessary. This will minimize the risk of unforeseen challenges and ensure that the implementation is smooth and efficient. A gradual implementation will provide time for stakeholders to adapt to the changes the CSWM brings. It will allow for thorough training and education programs, ensuring that all relevant parties are well-equipped to use the new system effectively. A phased implementation will allow for the gradual build-up of resources, partnerships, and community buy-in, which is essential for the long-term sustainability and success of the CSWM in Wolfville. Additionally, a phased approach will enable the project team to gather valuable feedback from users and stakeholders throughout each implementation stage. This feedback can then be used to make necessary adjustments and enhancements, ensuring that it meets its goals and is tailored to the stakeholders and the community's specific needs and context. To this end, it is recommended that funding be allocated to a project evaluation and that ongoing

monitoring and evaluation findings be used to make any necessary mid-course corrections during the pilot project and to determine future actions following the end of the pilot. Overall, the phased implementation of the CSWM pilot project is a strategic decision aimed at maximizing its success. It allows for careful planning, thorough training, and continuous improvement, all crucial elements in successfully executing such a complex initiative.

The CSWM pilot project would consist of five phases:

Phase 1: Create and fund the Community Navigator position

Phase 2: Organizational planning and structural development

Phase 3: Community safety and crime prevention initiative

Phase 4: Social development and wellness initiative

Phase 5: Assess and modify; explore future options

Following the conclusion of each phase, the ongoing results of the independent project monitoring and evaluation will be compiled, and any necessary modifications will be made.

Phase 1: Create and Fund a Community Navigator Position within the Kings District RCMP

The first phase encompasses the creation of the Community Navigator position. The rationale for staffing this position as the first phase is that it fills an immediate and significant local void: providing individualized care to those with elevated

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risk levels for mental health disorders, substance abuse, sexualized violence, homelessness, criminal offending, and violent behaviour.

The position is also prioritized because it does not require the same level of planning and resourcing as is apparent with other components of the Wolfville CSWM (establishing a non-profit society, setting up the working groups, creating and funding the coordinator positions, applying for program funding, etc.). The Community Navigator could provide much-needed services while the more complicated aspects of the CSWM implementation are being worked out and funded.

Since this position is based on established evidence-based cases and precedents (including the Kentville Police Community Crisis Navigator and the Annapolis County RCMP's Community Programs Manager) there would be no need to start on scratch. These precedents would greatly facilitate the development and adaptation of this position to Wolfville and help to reduce the learning curve of the person hired for the position. On-the-job training could include job shadowing with the Kentville Police Service and the Annapolis County RCMP.

Creating this position will also facilitate the subsequent phases and components of the pilot project; it will help connect with key stakeholders (via referrals from the Navigator), and it can identify priorities and strategies for subsequent phases (based on the calls for service and other help requested by community members).

Phase 2: Organizational Planning and Structural Development

The second phase would occur once the Community Navigator position is in place and involves establishing the legal framework and governance structure of the Wolfville CSWM. This includes incorporating a charitable society and a board of directors to oversee the operations, decision-making processes, and financing. This phase would consist of various stages.

1. Create a Steering Committee: The committee, comprised of key stakeholders and other community members, would provide initial guidance and oversight in implementing the CSWM and establishing priorities. This would include reviewing and adapting this report's recommendations. A terms of reference document outlining the committee's purpose, goals, composition, roles, responsibilities, decision-making processes, and reporting mechanisms should be developed. The steering committee should also be tasked with contacting potential stakeholders to gauge their commitment to participating in the pilot project.

2. Charter a non-profit charitable society with a Board of Directors: The next stage would be establishing a non-profit charitable society: the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society. The steering committee would transition into the society's Board of Directors, establishing the governance processes, accountability mechanisms, and long-term strategic planning responsibilities.

3. Develop a provisional strategic plan: The board would be responsible for developing a provisional strategic plan outlining the mission, goals, objectives, and action steps for implementing the CSWM in Wolfville.

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The plan should address the identified priority issues, strategies for prevention and intervention, resource allocation, and evaluation mechanisms. This plan would be based on this report's recommendations and the steering committee's recommendations. It should be flexible enough to be modified once the working groups and Coordinator positions are in place.

4. Advocate for provincial participation and support: Both the steering committee and the board should make it a priority to engage with provincial government agencies, policymakers, and funders. This outreach aims to advocate for the support and participation of provincial ministries, agencies, and personnel in the CSWM in Wolfville. This would include representation on the society's board of directors and the proposed working groups.

5. Initial Funding: Another important responsibility of the board during the first phase would be to begin securing resources for the society and implementing the CSWM. This should be guided by a systematic funding action plan (which should be part of the provisional strategic plan). The first step would be to determine what resources and in-kind donations can be provided by the stakeholders. The next priority would be to submit grant applications to the provincial and federal governments and private foundations. Any funding plans should also include local fundraising to solicit donations.

Phase 3: Community Safety and Crime Prevention Initiative

The third phase of the Wolfville CSWM work plan would be to plan, develop, and launch the Community Safety and Crime

Prevention component. This would begin by hiring a Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator, followed by establishing a working group and developing a strategic plan specific to that group and its mission.

1. Develop, create, and fund the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Coordinator position. This individual will then work with the board to assemble a working group.

2. Assemble the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Working Group: A working group of key stakeholders will be formed.

3. Implement initial phases of the public health model: The working group's initial steps would be to understand the scope and nature of the community safety issues that can be addressed through an opportunity-reduction framework, establish priorities, and then write a strategic plan. Thus, the first step would be to collect and analyze data on local community safety issues, assess the gaps in current initiatives, and identify areas that require immediate attention. This would form the basis of a strategic plan specific to that working group.

4. Implement subsequent phases of the public health model: Once the strategic plan is completed, the working group would turn to developing and implementing the subsequent public health elements: public education campaigns, community-wide programs and services, community engagement, and public policy advocacy.

Phase 4: Social Development and Wellness Initiative

The fourth phase of the Wolfville CSWM work plan would consist of hiring a Social Development and Wellness Coordinator,

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establishing a working group, and implementing the public health model, including developing and implementing specific initiatives.

Phase 5: Assess and Modify the Pilot Project; Explore Future Options

Based on ongoing project monitoring and evaluations, this phase would involve assessing the effectiveness of the CSWM model as implemented in Wolfville thus far. This assessment will help identify any

necessary modifications to improve the implementation of the model. Based on the project evaluation, this phase would consider alternative courses of action. As discussed, this would include exploring the need for issue-specific working groups (e.g., working groups dedicated to mental health wellness or women and girls safety and security), an integrated mobile mental health team, a multi-agency high-risk rapid response unit, a storefront office, and expanding the CSWM or facsimile beyond Wolfville to Kings County.

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CONCLUSION



The proposed working groups and staffing positions for the pilot project are significant milestones in implementing an evidence-based community safety model. These recommendations also align closely with the principles of the CSWM: an alternative to the existing RCMP presence in Wolfville that is community-based, proactive, collaborative, problem-oriented, and comprehensive. These CSWM aims to bolster local safety while its development-based underpinnings foster the community's health, resilience and well-being, especially those who experience or are at risk of marginalization, disadvantage, maladaptive behaviours, and negative health outcomes.

The two working groups, the coordinator positions and the navigator position, are designed to work in tandem, ensuring a holistic and multi-faceted approach to local problem-solving. Drawing from the fields of public health and crime prevention, initiatives are implemented on a population-level (community-wide) scale to protect and enhance the community's health, safety, and well-being. The working groups and coordinators are tasked with implementing situational (opportunity-reduction) and social developmental (social problem-solving) strategies. The Community Navigator complements the community-level public health and crime prevention strategies by providing personalized support to individuals with elevated risk factors. By working collaboratively with the working groups, the navigator can ensure a seamless and integrated approach to addressing complex individual cases, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the community safety initiatives.

The CSWM is designed to produce short, medium, and long-term outcomes. Short-term results are realized through the

Community Navigator, who provides clients with immediate help through referrals, navigation, and advocacy. Using the multi-agency “wraparound” model, the Social Development and Wellness working group can provide direct care to individuals with complex needs. Early intervention programs for children, such as enriched pre-primary or tutoring and mentoring by Acadia students, can deliver positive outcomes over the medium term (e.g., impulse control, anger management, coping skills) and the long term (greater resilience, mental health wellness and pro-social behaviours). After-school programs for at-risk teenagers can produce immediate results (by taking them “off the street” and providing supervised activities) while also having long-lasting effects (through interventions that overcome risk factors through protective factors).

Situational prevention measures can decrease crime opportunities in the short, intermediate, and long term.

The incremental rollout of the pilot CSWM prioritizes a measured process, affording ample time for necessary planning and adjustments. By rolling out the CSWM in stages, stakeholders can monitor progress, gather feedback, and refine it to optimize its success and sustainability.

The successive implementation of the three paid positions and two collaborative working groups—the Navigator, the Community Safety and Crime Prevention initiative, and the Social Development and Wellness initiative—is deliberate and purposeful. The Community Navigator position is the most straightforward of the three staffing positions. Planning and initial implementation can benefit from the experience and tutelage of similar positions in the Kentville Police and the Annapolis County RCMP. When this position is put

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into action, it meets a real demand by delivering customized care to those in need, taking into account their risk levels. The Community Safety and Crime Prevention initiative, with its population-level strategic approach to crime, violence, nuisance and other local safety and security issues, builds upon, learns from, and complements the Navigator. The most complex of the three phases—the Social Development and Wellness Initiative—is left to last to allow time to plan, form, and learn from the previous two phases.

By considering the specific needs and dynamics of Wolfville, this approach ensures the thoughtful and strategic introduction of the community safety and wellness model. All the issues prioritized in this study—the mental health crisis, sexualized violence, alcohol-related problems, student conduct issues, and challenges facing young people—are greatly influenced by the presence of 3,000+ post-secondary students. At the same time, the CSWM harnesses the vast array of resources available at Acadia to address these issues, including the invaluable contribution of its students. The phased-in and flexible nature of the CSWM allows it to grow and adapt to Wolfville’s expected population increase and the benefits and challenges accompanying this growth. The intentional sequencing of the pilot project showcases a comprehensive and strategic effort that considers the town’s unique characteristics, specific challenges, abundant assets, and the ambitious nature of the CSWM.

Because the CSWM is built upon best practices; it can achieve the same results as documented in the literature and reflected in the many real-life cases that have informed the proposed strategies. The CSWM and

the pilot project recommendations are also meant to be cost-effective and not require extensive investments from the main stakeholders' budgets. The three proposed staffing positions can replace RCMP constables, while the working groups are meant to mobilize existing resources efficiently. The creation of the charitable, non-profit society allows it to fundraise and apply for grants, which helps to ensure the stakeholders' limited resources are not over-extended.

The sustainability of the Wolfville CSWM would be fortified through the ongoing commitment and resources of the main stakeholders (including the provincial government), the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society (and a dedicated and active board of directors), a robust funding and fundraising strategy, and the full-time staff positions.

All the main local stakeholders—the Town of Wolfville (including elected officials and staff), Acadia University (administration, student support units, faculty and academic program heads), the RCMP (at both the District level and senior division levels), and the Acadia Students’ Union—have indicated support for a collaborative, community-based, problem-solving model. Various other potential stakeholders have communicated similar support. This includes officials from various provincial agencies representing the mental health, housing, social welfare, and criminal justice sectors.

It should be noted that the receptivity of the potential stakeholder groups to the pilot project is based on their understanding of a partially developed conceptual model. Moreover, this study could not contact and seek input from all potential partners in the

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collaborative pilot project. Consequently, the proposed steering committee should reach out to other potential stakeholders for further input on their participation in the pilot project. In short, those who expressed

support for the community-based, collaborative, problem-oriented model only did so in principle; subsequent efforts are needed to determine their commitment to the pilot proposed in this document.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Some potential challenges that confront the implementation of this CSWM in Wolfville are anticipated and factored into the model and the pilot project.

Small Size of Wolfville: To address the concern about whether the town's small size can support the model, working groups, and proposed staffing, a gradual phase-in approach is recommended. This would allow for a smoother transition and adaptation of the model to the town's specific needs. Additionally, exploring the possibility of implementing the model on a broader scale in Kings County could leverage resources and support from a larger community.

Collaborative Multi-Stakeholder Committee-Style Approach: Engaging busy professionals and multiple agencies in a collaborative setting can be challenging. To address this, dedicated working group coordinators with strong leadership skills can help hold committees together and

ensure productivity. All stakeholders need to have input and understand the value of their participation in the CSWM.

Provincial Government's Commitment and Participation: Given the historical context of limited innovations and funding for community-based approaches by successive Nova Scotia governments, advocacy efforts by the Wolfville Community Safety and Wellness Society, board members, the three main local stakeholders, and working group members are crucial. They should highlight the benefits of the CSWM, showcase successful case studies from other provinces, and advocate for decentralization of power and resources to the community level to secure government support and participation. By addressing these challenges proactively and strategically, implementing the CSWM in Wolfville can be more successful and sustainable in addressing community safety and wellness issues.

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DRAFT

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: Wolfville International Student Support Program
Date: 2024-02-04
Department: Office of the CAO



SUMMARY

Wolfville International Student Support Program

In early 2023, an engagement cycle focused on equity, diversity and inclusion identified a need to provide additional supports to international students attending Acadia University. There was also a desire expressed by members of the Wolfville community to learn about different cultures and to foster meaningful relationships with students, and to break down some of the real and perceived barriers that exist within our Town and Gown community.

A Host Family program was in place for many years, operated by the Wong Centre, with support from local families who would be partnered with international students to help build supportive relationships. This program was mentioned often during community consultation and as a result, a feasibility study focused on revitalizing the program became part of Wolfville's Year 1 Inclusion work plan.

Acadia international student, Aditi Sharma, was hired on a ten-week contract as a program development assistant. She worked to understand the shuttered program, speaking to program facilitators, host families and Acadia alumni who had participated in the program.

Focus groups were held with current international students and numerous interviews were held with those connected to the Wong Centre and also with folks who provide in-home accommodation-based programs in the Town.

At the end of the contract period, there is evidence of interest in the program, and evidence of need. With a new program format, it seems feasible to launch a new version with the Town as the anchor of the **Wolfville International Student Support Program, (WISSP)**.

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: Wolfville International Student Support Program
Date: 2024-02-04
Department: Office of the CAO



1) CAO COMMENTS

For information purposes only. No decision is required from Council at this time.

2) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- RFD 041-2023 An EDI Approach

3) DISCUSSION

When Council declined an invitation to participate in a diversity program with the Municipality of the County of Kings we were granted an opportunity to develop an approach as unique as our Town. Our community engagement and consultation identified unique challenges that international students face. With an intentional, programmatic approach, we can address some of these challenges and increase feelings of inclusion and belonging for this group of diverse individuals.

After a ten-week review of the former program as well as engagement with current international students, there is a demonstrated desire from international students to experience this kind of relationship-based support and cultural exchange through a re-build of the program. The exploration of this program also attracted several local folks who indicated their interest in supporting this program and its students.

Some of the biggest changes being proposed include creating groups of two first-year international students, who will then be partnered with one local buddy. These groups will build relationships through shared activities, outings, meals, events, and conversation. Reciprocal support and cultural exchange will happen, benefiting participants and our community. The program, if re-launched, will also be run through the Town.

4) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding is included in the year 2 inclusion work plan. The budget will provide for an international student to work six-hours a week with staff to bring this program to life.

5) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

- Economic Prosperity
- Social Equity
- Community Wellness

6) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

The program details will be presented to Acadia as well as to the Wong Centre in hopes of building additional support for this initiative.

The program will be communicated through Town channels, with both an emphasis on reaching potential local buddies, reaching potential student participants and, communications will focus on community awareness.

INFORMATION REPORT

Title: Wolfville International Student Support Program

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



7) FUTURE COUNCIL INVOLVEMENT

Council may wish to provide additional resources to grow this program in the years to come. The program will initially launch as a pilot program in the Fall of 2024.

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 017-2024

Title: Public Input Policy #110-010 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



SUMMARY

PUBLIC INPUT POLICY #110-010 AMENDMENTS

The Council Policy Review Task Force reviewed the Public Participation Policy #110-010 as part of their workplan. The first change discussed was the title to Public Input as it is more descriptive of what the process is.

Members of the Task Force want to encourage public input at meetings and felt that the current time allowed at Council and Committee meetings may be restrictive. To encourage public input, the recommendations in this RFD are the removal of the 30-minute restriction for public input and increase time per person from 3 minutes to 5 minutes and from 1 minute return (COW only) to 5 minutes.

Further information has been included in the policy around how to request an accommodation.

DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve the amendments to Public Input Policy #110-010 as outlined in RFD 017-2024.

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 017-2024

Title: Public Input Policy #110-010 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act 1998 (Section 23)

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend Council approve the amendments to the Public Input Policy #110-010 as described in this RFD.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Policy 110-010 Public Input Policy

5) DISCUSSION

The Council Policy Review Task Force reviewed the Public Participation Policy #110-010 as part of their workplan. This policy describes the practice of members of the public addressing Council during Committee of the Whole, Town Council and Committee meetings.

Members of the Task Force felt that the title of the policy was not a good indication of the process. While members of the public can provide feedback and submit questions, it is not a conversational dialogue session with Council. This section of the agenda is for the public to provide Input.

While understanding the importance of time keeping in an agenda, it was felt a 30-minute session may not be enough to allow everyone who wants to speak the time to do so without feeling rushed. Similarly, 3 minutes per person with a 1 minute return at COW could be insufficient time to allow a member of the public to provide their input without feeling pressured or rushed. Public speaking can be a daunting task for many, removing the 30-minute time barrier and increasing 3 minutes to 5 minutes and 1 minute return to 5 minutes at COW may help alleviate some of that anxiety and encourage more people to offer their input at meetings. Other ways discussed which may encourage members of the public to attend meetings whether to provide input or to observe in the public gallery, is to provide accommodations, including attending virtually. Guidelines around how members of the public can attend virtually or to ask for other accommodations have been included in the policy.

Direction is given within the policy around inappropriate behaviour at public input such as shouting out from the gallery, applause or jeers and inappropriate subject matter. The Chair, in consultation with other members of Council, CAO and staff if required will decide on whether questions raised can be responded to sufficiently or whether further action is required after the meeting.

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 017-2024

Title: Public Input Policy #110-010 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



It is recommended that Council approve the amendments made to this policy.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

- Social Equity

8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

This policy will be posted to the website if approved.

9) ALTERNATIVES

Council do not approve any or all amendments and may offer additional recommendations.



POLICY

Public Input at Council and Committee Meetings	
Policy Number: 110-010	Supersedes Policy Number:
Effective Date 2019-07-16	Approved By Council (Motion Number): 2019-07-17

1.0 Purpose

The Town of Wolfville is committed to supporting its citizens to become more engaged and better informed on Town matters. This policy provides for the effective management of public input sessions during Council and Committee meetings.

2.0 Scope

This Policy is applicable to all Town Council and Committee of Council Meetings.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Public **Input Session** a period of time during public meetings when members of the public can offer their comments and ask questions of Council.

3.2 Chair Mayor or designated Chair of a Committee of Council.

4.0 Policy

4.1 Members of the public will have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions during two public **input** sessions at Committee of the Whole meetings. Public **input** sessions will be scheduled at the beginning of each meeting after the adoption of the minutes of previous meetings, and towards the end of the meeting before any in-camera session.

4.2 Members of the public will have the opportunity to make comments and ask questions during one public **input** session at Council meetings and all Advisory Committees of Council meetings. A public **input** session will be scheduled at the beginning of each meeting after the adoption of the minutes of previous meetings.



POLICY

- 4.3** Individual members of the public can speak for a maximum of **five (5)** minutes during the public **input** session and may return to speak once, for **five (5)** minutes, **after** all other members of the public who wish to speak have had a chance to do so.
- 4.4** Members of the public will address the Chair directly with questions and comments.
- 4.5** Comments and questions that relate to personnel, current or potential litigation issues, or planning issues for which a public hearing has already occurred will not be answered.
- 4.6** The Chair, in consultation with **members of Council**, the CAO and/or staff designate, will determine if a question posed can be immediately answered or if it needs to be referred to staff for further follow-up. Any responses not immediately provided will be provided either in writing directly to the member of the public with a copy to Council, or in a subsequent CAO Report to Committee of the Whole.
- 4.7** Members of the public participating in public **input** sessions will conduct themselves in a respectful manner. Should this not occur, the Chair will advise them to end their questions and/or comments immediately.
- 4.8** In order to ensure that no member of the public feels discouraged, intimidated or otherwise prevented from delivering their comments or questions, **no shouting from the public gallery**, applause or other expressions of emotion will be permitted during public participation sessions.
- 4.9** **No audience participation is allowed.**
- 4.10** **Any persons wishing to attend the meeting virtually must advise the Town Clerk with at least 24 hours' notice to provide for technical set up as per Council & Committees of Council Virtual Meeting Policy 110-014 (section 5.2.3).**
- 4.11** **Any persons requiring accommodation are asked to contact staff at Town Hall.**



POLICY

4.12 Members of the public are reminded that Policy Number 120-010 Routine Access Policy clarifies which Town records are available routinely upon request.

5.0 Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed every four years from the effective/amended date.

CAO

Date

DRAFT

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 018-2024

Title: Presentation to Council Policy #110-015

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



SUMMARY

PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL POLICY #110-015

This policy provides guidelines to those wishing to present to Council and a process on how to manage those requests received.

Currently, there is no formal procedure around how requests to present to Council are received and managed. This lack of process has in the past resulted in inappropriate presentations making their way onto the COW agenda.

This policy explains how these requests will be managed going forward, including what specific categories presentations should fall into to be considered, what information is required of the presenters before a decision is made to add them to an agenda and how that information is shared with the Mayor and Council.

This policy is administrative in nature and provides clear guidelines on the process going forward.

DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve Policy #110-015, Presentations to Council Policy, as outlined in RFD 018-2024.

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 018-2024

Title: Presentation to Council Policy #110-015

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act 1998 (Section 23)

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend Council approve the Presentation to Council Policy #110-015 as described in this RFD.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Presentation to Council Policy #110-015

5) DISCUSSION

Requests to present to Council at Committee of the Whole meetings currently come through a variety of channels such as through the Office of the CAO, through various members of staff or Council members directly. There are no guidelines currently to manage these requests.

This policy has been created to provide a process for tracking the requests coming in, agenda management and information sharing with Council through the Mayor as well as provide guidelines for those wishing to present to Council.

Every request to present to Council will be received by the Office of the CAO. Staff or Council members receiving requests shall forward them to the Town Clerk in the first instance. Information shall be requested of the person or group making the request regarding who they are, the purpose of the presentation and what, if any requests are being made of Council. This information will be shared with the Mayor at the weekly Mayor/CAO/Town Clerk meetings. A decision will be made on the appropriateness of a presentation to COW and timing of the presentation.

One of the Mayor/CAO or Town Clerk shall advise Council of the request and provide background information as needed.

The Town Clerk will communicate with the presenter including timelines, requirements and time slot.

This policy will assist procedurally with the agenda management process as well as improve information sharing with Council. It is therefore recommended that Council approve this policy.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 018-2024

Title: Presentation to Council Policy #110-015

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



N/A

7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

This policy is administrative in nature.

8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

This policy will be posted to the website if approved.

9) ALTERNATIVES

Council do not approve this policy and continue as is.



POLICY

Presentations to Council	
Policy Number: 110-015	Supersedes Policy Number: N/A
Effective Date XXX	Approved By Council (Motion Number): XXX

1.0 Purpose

To establish guidelines for the effective management of presentations at the Town's Committee of the Whole meetings.

2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all groups or organizations including all local community organizations, stakeholders, not-for-profit organizations, delegations, federal or provincial government agencies and partners and others which may arise at the discretion of Council who wish to publicly present to Council at a Committee of the Whole Meeting.

For individual public input see policy #110-010 Public Input at Council Meetings Policy.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Town is the Town of Wolfville

4.0 Policy

4.1 Presentations are made at Committee of the Whole meetings.

4.2 For the purpose of this policy, presentations have been categorized into three groups:

4.2.1 Presentations from the Community includes:

- i. updating Council on local community initiatives, projects, budgets or operations.
- ii. raising Council's awareness of new community initiatives or projects.



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- iii. Celebrating successes and achievements of volunteer based or not-for-profit organizations which have a social, cultural, economic or environmental well-being in their mandate.

These groups shall be allotted fifteen (15) minutes total (*10 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions*).

4.2.2 Funding requests

Requests for funding shall be allotted fifteen (15) minutes total (*10 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions*).

4.2.3 Presentations made at the request of Council or Staff

These requests may be allotted more time on a case-by-case basis.

- 5 Committee of the Whole will refer presentations to staff for a report if they involve an expenditure of funds, grant applications, or other action on the part of the Town.
- 6 Any persons wishing to present by virtual means must advise the Town Clerk with at least 24 hours' notice to provide for technical set up as per Council & Committees of Council Virtual Meeting Policy 110-014.
- 7 Any persons requiring accommodation are asked to contact staff at Town Hall.

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Council will:

- i. Identify and approve any changes to Presentations to Council Policy in collaboration with the CAO or designate.

5.2 The CAO/Town Clerk will:

- i. Receive each presentation request.
- ii. In collaboration with the mayor, decide the appropriateness of the subject matter and at which Committee of the Whole meeting a presentation will be made.
- iii. Ensure Council members are informed of the details of the request.



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- iv. Update the agenda packages accordingly including any presentations/reports for pre-circulation.

6.0 Presentation Requirements

6.1 The request to present must include:

- i. a summary of the information of the organization being represented,
- ii. a summary of purpose of presentation, and
- iii. information on any requests being made of the Town.

6.2 Requests to present must be received with at least 14 days' notice of the Committee of the Whole meeting the request is for.

6.3 Presentation slides or material to be handed out to Council must be provided to the Town Clerk at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

7.0 Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed every four years from the effective/amended date.

CAO or Town Clerk

Date

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 019-2024

Title: Flag Flying Policy #120-006 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



SUMMARY

FLAG FLYING POLICY #120-006 AMENDMENTS

This policy had not been reviewed since 2017 and was included in the Council Policy Review Task Force workplan.

Procedural updates are recommended to improve understanding around the process when requests to fly a flag on the Town flag poles are received. Council approve/deny all requests. Clarity has been provided on when a request may be denied, i.e. if the flag is associated with a contentious issue or organization.

Communication improvements ensure Council are making those decisions and not staff.

It is recommended that Council approve the amendments as described.

DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve the amendments to Flag Flying Policy #120-006 as outlined in RFD 019-2024.

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 019-2024

Title: Flag Flying Policy #120-006 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act 1998 (Section 23)

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend Council approve the amendments to the Flag Flying Policy #120-006 as described in this RFD.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Flag Flying Policy #120-006

5) DISCUSSION

This policy had not been reviewed since 2017 and was added to the Council Policy Review Task Force workplan.

Amendments made are:

- i. defining the flag poles that belong to the Town and their location.
- ii. defining language included around what could be classed as contentious with regard to organizations making requests.
- iii. clarity around approvals i.e. Council not staff make the decision.
- iv. improved communications to ensure Council members know when requests are received.
- v. Description of when flags will be half-masted.

Amendments to this policy improve the understanding of the processes for members of the public, Council and staff around flag flying requests and it is recommended Council approve them as described.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

This policy is administrative in nature.

8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

REQUEST FOR DECISION RFD 019-2024

Title: Flag Flying Policy #120-006 Amendments

Date: 2024-04-02

Department: Council Policy Review Task Force



This policy will be posted to the website if approved.

9) ALTERNATIVES

Council do not approve the amendments to this policy and/or offer alternative amendments.



POLICY

FLAG FLYING

Policy Number: 120-006	Supersedes Policy Number: Not Applicable
Effective Date: 2009-02-16 Amended 2012-11-19 Amended 2017-06-20	Approval By Council Motion Number: 08-02-09 04-11-12 28-06-17

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the occasions for flying flags in the Town of Wolfville.

2.0 Scope

This Policy is applicable to Town staff responsible for flying Flags on the Town's flagpoles located at Willow Ave, Waterfront Park, and the Town Hall. The flagpole located at the Fire Hall is for service personnel.

3.0 References

None

4.0 Definitions

4.1 CAO means the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town.

4.2 Town means the Town of Wolfville.

5.0 Policy

5.1 It is the policy of the Town that no flag, other than a Federal Flag, a Provincial Flag, a Municipal Flag, and/or a First Nations Flag be flown from a municipal-owned flagpole with the exception of the fourth flagpole located at the Town's waterfront property. This flagpole will be designated for groups and organizations who request that their event flag be flown from a Town flagpole.

5.2 Notwithstanding the above policy, the Town will fly the appropriate flag on the occasion of a visiting dignitary for the duration of their visit to the Town.



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5.3 Additionally, the Town undertakes to provide consistent circumstances when flags on Town property will be flown at half-mast.

5.4 Specific Objectives

Through the Flag Flying Policy, the Town undertakes to:

- i. Provide a consistent response.
- ii. Provide fair and equitable opportunities; and
- iii. Provide a designated area for groups or organizations to fly their event flag from a Town flagpole.

5.5 Requests for Flag Flying

5.5.1 Flag flying requests will be in writing and directed to the office of the CAO and should include the start and end date of the request.

5.5.2 Flag flying requests are approved on a first come, first served basis.

5.5.3 Flags will only be placed on Town property in support of specific community events or activities in or around the Town at the request of the organizing group.

5.5.4 Council approval is required.

5.5.5 No requests perceived as contentious, i.e. political, religious or for any group or organization that supports social or racial intolerance, violence or hatred, shall be approved.

5.6 Responsibilities

5.6.1 The CAO will:

- i. determine if the request for half-masting conforms to the criteria of the policy.
- ii. arrange for the half-masting of the flag.
- iii. advise the Mayor, Council, **Manager of Communications** and staff of the Town's Administrative offices, **of the date the flags will be at half mast**, name of the individual, the individual's qualification for recognition under this policy and the date of the funeral or memorial service for the individual.
- iv. **ensure through the Manager of Communications that all events concerning changes made to the flags are shared with all Members of Council.**



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5.6.2 The Town Council may:

- i. at the request of the CAO, consider for approval the request submitted to Council.
- ii. at the request of the group or organization, attend the flag raising ceremony.

5.6.3 The Fire Department Operator/Mechanic shall:

- i. be responsible for changing the event flag at the request of the CAO.
- ii. be responsible for lowering the flag or flags to half-mast at the request of the CAO.

5.7 Half-Masting the Canadian Flag

5.7.1 The flag will be flown at half-mast to mark the passing of any of the prominent public figures listed below, for a period beginning when the Town is notified of the individual's death until and including the date of the funeral or memorial service, or at the discretion of the CAO:

i. Across Canada and abroad on the death of:

- The Sovereign, or a member of the Royal Family related in the first degree to the Sovereign (spouse, son or daughter, father, mother, brother or sister).
- The Governor General or a former Governor General of Canada.
- The Prime Minister or former Prime Minister of Canada

ii. Within the Province on the death of:

- The Lieutenant Governor or former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia.
- The Premier or former Premier of Nova Scotia.

iii. Within the Town of Wolfville on the death of:

- The Mayor or former Mayor of the Town of Wolfville.
- A Councillor or former Councillor of the Town of Wolfville.
- A Federal Cabinet Member or former Cabinet Member who represented a constituency that included the Town of Wolfville.
- A current or former employee of the Town of Wolfville.
- A Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) or a former MLA who represented a constituency that included the Town of Wolfville.
- A Member of the Canadian Military whose life was lost while on active duty.

iv. In recognition of individuals from the Town, whose duties can be described as "Protective Services", including but not limited to police, fire, emergency health services, Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officer and Fisheries Officers.

5.7.1 All flags will be lowered to half-mast during the Remembrance Day Ceremony



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on November 11.

5.7.2 The flag will be flown at half-mast to mourn lives lost in traffic, **in significant local, regional, national** and international events. In such cases the decision to lower the flag and the period during which it remains at half-mast will generally mirror the practice of the Province of Nova Scotia but will be at the discretion of the CAO.

5.8 Other individuals and events may be recognized by lowering the flag at the discretion **of members of Council**.

6.0 Policy Review

The Policy will be reviewed every four years from the effective/amended date.

CAO/Town Clerk

Date

REQUEST FOR DECISION 020-2024

Title: Repeal of Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy #120-012

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



SUMMARY

REPEAL OF WOLFVILLE_ACADIA TOWN & GOWN POLICY #120-012

In June 2023 the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Acadia was reviewed and revised in collaboration with all partners; the Town, Acadia and the ASU (Acadia Students Union). This MOU includes the contents and more of the policy that was in place. The MOU will be reviewed every four years to ensure the shared goals and key principles are still relevant.

The policy is therefore outdated, obsolete and a regurgitation of old information that was contained in a previous MOU. It is therefore recommended that the Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy#120-012 be repealed.

DRAFT MOTION:

That Council approve the repeal of Policy #120-012, Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy.

REQUEST FOR DECISION 020-2024

Title: Repeal of Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy #120-012

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act 1998

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Council approve the repeal of Policy #120-012, Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. Policy #120-012, Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy.
2. Memorandum of Understanding between Town of Wolfville_Acadia_ASU 2023

5) DISCUSSION

A formal review of the MOU was undertaken in 2022-23. Feedback was sought from all three parties on what has worked well and what improvements were needed to ensure the MOU is effective.

Taking the feedback from all three Parties, a revised MOU was drafted and presented to the Town and Gown Committee. On March 29, 2023 the Town and Gown met to approve the final version and recommended forwarding it to all three Parties for approval. The subsequent version has been signed and approved by all three parties and is in effect.

This MOU addresses and expands on the content of the Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy #120-012 including composition, administration, key principles, shared goals and clarification the meetings are open to the public.

It is therefore recommended that the Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy #120-012 be repealed.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

N/A

REQUEST FOR DECISION 020-2024

Title: Repeal of Wolfville_Acadia Town & Gown Policy #120-012

Date: 2024-02-04

Department: Office of the CAO



8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

The Town's records will be updated to reflect the repealed policy.

9) ALTERNATIVES

Council could choose not to approve the repeal of this policy and/or offer amendments.



POLICY

Wolfville-Acadia Town & Gown Committee	
Policy No. 120-012	Supersedes Policy No. (Not Applicable)
Effective Date 2013-04-02 2013-05-21 amended 2014-12-16 2017-02-20	Approved By Council Resolution No. 08-04-13 Amending No. 08-05b-13 03-12b-14 27-02-18

1.0 Purpose

The primary purpose of the Wolfville & Acadia Town and Gown Committee is to develop and enhance relationships, communications and policies among Acadia students, community, residents, police and Town. This objective would be achieved by addressing issues of common concern and may include neighbourhood relations, housing, the environment, economic activities, recreational and cultural events, health and safety issues and academic outreach.

2.0 Scope

This Policy covers activities of the Town of Wolfville's Town & Gown Committee and those individuals appointed as members of the Committee.

3.0 References

- 3.1 [Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act](#)
- 3.2 [Policy 110-001, Committees Policy](#)

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **Committee.** A group of people appointed for a specific function, typically consisting of members of a larger group.

5.0 Policy

5.1 Composition:

- 5.1.1 The Town & Gown Committee will consist of 8 members:
 - The Mayor
 - CAO
 - 1 Councillor - Chair
 - Acadia Director Safety and Security
 - Acadia Student Union President



POLICY

- Acadia Senior Director of Student Affairs
- RCMP Sergeant
- ASU Community Relations

5.2 Appointments

- 5.2.1 Council will select a Chair at the December meeting for the next year and the Council member will serve as Chair
- 5.2.2 All Committee members serve without pay. Council member will serve 2 year terms. All other representatives are connected to a position.
- 5.2.3 The CAO will serve as a member to the Committee.

5.3 Duties and Responsibilities

- 5.2.1 Generate ideas to continue to improve the relationship between the university, the community, the Town and the police;
- 5.2.2 Specifically make recommendations to Council on strategies to lessen the negative impact on neighbourhoods resulting from the large percentage of university students living in town;
- 5.2.3 Develop communication strategies to celebrate the successes and work of the students and other citizens to enhance community relations;
- 5.2.4 Promote the positive attributes of living in a campus community and support activities to ensure a safe and healthy community; and
- 5.2.5 Provide an open forum for discussion of issues and concerns among the partners in the community.

5.4 Administration

- 5.3.1 The meeting of the Committee will be held bi-monthly and the Chair will communicate the meeting schedule annually; and
- 5.3.2 Meetings will be held in the Council Chambers of Town Hall or at an alternate location with agreement of the Committee.



POLICY

5.5 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year from effective/amended date.



CAO or Town Clerk

2018-02-20

Date

DRAFT

Memorandum
of
Understanding

June 16, 2023



Town of Wolfville



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

Acadia University



Acadia Students' Union

Memorandum *of* Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding is executed this 16th day of June, 2023,
by the undersigned, acting on behalf of their respective parties.



Town of Wolfville



ACADIA
UNIVERSITY

Acadia University



Acadia Students' Union

Signed on the 16th day of June, 2023
in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Donovan', written over a horizontal line.

Wendy Donovan
Mayor
Town of Wolfville

Signed on the 16th day of June, 2023
in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Peter Ricketts', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Peter Ricketts
President and Vice-Chancellor
Acadia University

Signed on the 16th day of June, 2023
in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadie McAlear', written over a horizontal line.

for Sadie McAlear
President
Acadia Students' Union

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

TOWN OF WOLFVILLE

hereinafter referred to as The Town

and

ACADIA UNIVERSITY

hereinafter referred to as Acadia

and

ACADIA STUDENTS' UNION

hereinafter referred to as the ASU

REVISED on 29 March 2023, this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made and entered into by and between The Town, Acadia, and the ASU. The entities listed above may collectively be referred to as the Parties to this MOU.

I. PURPOSE:

Recognizing that we are stronger together than if working in isolation, the Town, Acadia, and the ASU wish to transcend the traditional Town and Gown framework to create the most unified university-town model possible to support our collective goal of becoming an integrated community in which we live, work, and study. This MOU describes a framework that mobilizes our efforts to ensure we best meet the needs of the comprehensive community and our respective institutions.

II. KEY PRINCIPLES:

The Parties are guided by the following key principles:

1. We acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We embrace the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and sustainability in our collaborative work.
2. Wolfville is only Wolfville with Acadia, and Acadia is only Acadia with Wolfville. The Town, Acadia, and ASU recognize that our organizations are intrinsically intertwined, each living up to its full potential of success only with the support and partnership of the other. The Parties actively invite one another to optimize the academic, research, cultural, athletic, recreational, business, economic, and entertainment opportunities provided through their various offices and departments.
3. We willingly invest in each other through dedicated resources, funding, and collaborative partnerships. The Town, ASU, and Acadia believe that greater benefit will be achieved if each invests in the other's success.

4. We share a joint responsibility to commit to a high standard of community livability for all residents of Wolfville. Residents deserve to live in a town that is attractive, safe, healthy, and affordable where neighbours appreciate, support, and respect one another. Challenges posed by food insecurity, poor or inadequate housing, or behaviours that are incompatible with the objectives of community well-being are addressed promptly, through collaboration and with sensitivity to all parties.
5. We have a duty to ensure the success of all Acadia students. Acadia students gain experience and knowledge not only through Acadia's academic programs and on-campus experiences, but by integrating as proud citizens of the Town of Wolfville. Their involvement as residents of Wolfville should be enriching and contribute to an overall positive experience for visitors and permanent residents alike.
6. We will proactively consult and collaborate frequently with each other, with students of Acadia, residents of the Town, and other key stakeholders on matters of mutual concern before decisions are made by any one Party that would impact another.

II. SHARED GOALS:

1. Economic Development

The Parties, through engagement with entities including, but not limited to, Events Acadia, Acadia's Office of Industry and Community Engagement, the Wolfville Farmers Market, Valley Regional Enterprise Network, Kentville Research and Development Centre, and Wolfville Business Development Corporation, pursue and leverage joint research and economic development opportunities that provide benefit to the Town, University, and ASU.

2. Facilities, Infrastructure, and Environment

Though consultative and collaborative strategic planning the Parties manage and promote facilities and infrastructure, including parks and open spaces in addition to physical infrastructure, in an environmentally sustainable manner such as to optimize their mutual benefit to all residents and visitors to Acadia and Wolfville.

3. Community Well-Being

The Parties work together to create and sustain a healthy, safe, supportive, affordable, and respectful community for all residents and visitors by:

- a. encouraging the engagement and interaction of all members of the community
- b. seeking affordable and safe housing options for all residents, including students and future students
- c. developing community-based solutions to enhancing food security
- d. committing to compliance of all federal and provincial statutes and regulations, Town bylaws and policies including but not limited to the Noise Bylaw & Nuisance Party Bylaw, and Acadia's Non-Academic Judicial Student Code of Conduct

IV. IMPLEMENTATION:

1. The Parties will provide representatives to the Wolfville and Acadia Town and Gown Committee as follows:
 - President and Vice-Chancellor of Acadia University
 - 1 member of the Board of Governors or Senate (2-year term)
 - President of the Acadia Student Union
 - One member of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), usually the Community Relations Representative
 - Mayor of the Town of Wolfville
 - 1 member of the Town Council (2-year term)
 - 1 resident of the Wolfville community. Both the Town and Acadia will cause notice of this position and its subsequent vacancy to be advertised publicly. The member so chosen shall be selected by the other 6 Committee members (2-year term, renewable for 1 additional term subject to Committee approval)
2. The Committee will be chaired by the Mayor of the Town of Wolfville and the President and Vice-Chancellor of Acadia University on an alternating annual basis.
3. The mandate of the Committee is to serve as stewards of this Memorandum of Understanding and to promote its shared goals.
4. The Committee meets quarterly throughout the calendar year, usually in January, April, September, and November, or as required.
5. Each partner will appoint an administrative lead to support the Committee and champion the deliverables of the shared goals.
6. A joint annual workplan is proposed by the administrative leads to the Town and Gown Committee for endorsement, usually at the November meeting.
 - a. The workplan is developed by the administrative leads with input from employees and other contributors as required. The administrative leads may from time-to-time establish working groups or ad-hoc committees to inform or execute the annual workplan.
 - b. Once endorsed by the Committee, the joint annual workplan is forwarded to the Parties.
 - c. The administrative leads will provide workplan progress reports at Committee meetings and a year-in-review summary of accomplishments, usually at the June meeting.
7. The Committee meetings will be held in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual)
8. The meetings are open to the public

V. LENGTH OF AGREEMENT

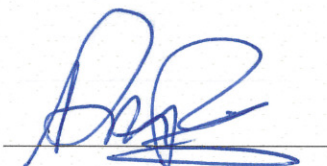
1. Subject to paragraph V.3 below, the Parties anticipate that this MOU will remain in effect indefinitely.
2. An informal review of effectiveness of this MOU will be held every two years. A formal review will be conducted every 4 years to ensure that the shared goals and key principles remain relevant and current. Any changes as a result of these reviews may require an amending agreement by the Parties.
3. Any Party may withdraw from this MOU with one year written notice. This MOU will cease to be in effect upon the withdrawal of any Party.

In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the last date written below:

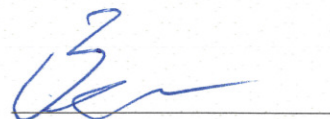
The initial official designates are:



Wendy Donovan
Mayor, Town of Wolfville



Peter Ricketts
President, Acadia University



for Sadie McAlear
President, Acadia Students' Union

June 16/23
Date

16th June, 2023
Date

16-6-2023
Date

REQUEST FOR DECISION 009-2023

Title: 2024 Spring Debenture Pre-Approval

Date: 2024-03-26

Department: Finance



SUMMARY

2024 Spring Debenture Issue Pre-Approval

Each fiscal period, municipalities are provided two opportunities to participate in debenture issues to meet long-term debt funding requirements. In past years this process was carried out by the NS Municipal Finance Corporation, which has since been amalgamated with the provincial Department of Finance who now manages the annual debenture process.

The two debenture opportunities are in the spring and fall debenture. The dollar amounts leveraged through the combined debt requirements of Provincial municipalities allow individual municipal participants to obtain borrowing rates that may otherwise not be available to a municipality if engaging in a similar debenture issue on its own.

The Town of Wolfville typically participates in the spring debenture issue to obtain long-term debt funding for capital projects completed in the previous fiscal year or completed in the current fiscal year if completed prior to a debenture offer deadline. The 2024 spring debenture can be applied for by structuring the spring debenture application with completed 2023/24 capital projects.

The purpose of this report is to complete the process for long-term borrowing approved by Council in the 2023/24 Capital Budget. **This is the last formal step required** to participate in the 2024 Spring Debenture Issue.

The pre-approval process sets the maximum that can be borrowed for the upcoming debenture issue. Any incomplete projects do not meet the eligibility requirement for maximum project borrowing and will not be incurred in the RFD.

DRAFT MOTION:

THAT COUNCIL APPROVE THE ATTACHED RESOLUTION FOR PRE-APPROVAL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SPRING DEBENTURE ISSUE WITH THE FOLLOWING MAXIMUM FINANCIAL PARAMETERS:

FAIRFIELD STREET REBUILD AND EAST END MAIN CULVERT	\$735,000	30-year amortization *
WATER UTILITY	<u>\$ 39,900</u>	30-year amortization *
TOTAL BORROWING AMOUNT	<u>\$774,900</u>	

*** MAXIMUM AVERAGE INTEREST RATE IS TO BE SET AT 6.5%.**

REQUEST FOR DECISION 009-2023

Title: 2024 Spring Debenture Pre-Approval

Date: 2024-03-26

Department: Finance



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act Section 66 - Power to Borrow Money
- Municipal Government Act Section 88 (1), (2), and (3) - Ministerial Approval

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend that Council approve the amounts for the 2024 Spring Debenture Issue relating to projects and funding already approved by Council in the 2023/24 Budget Document in the amount of \$774,900.

REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

- Provincial Pre-Approval Resolution Wording (attached)
- Borrowing Certificate CR 08-2023-0029 (Town TBR #23/24-01) in amount of \$2,552,900 (attached)
- Borrowing Certificate CR 08-2023-0030 (Town TBR #23/24-02) in amount of \$399,900 (attached)
- Town Capital Asset Funding Policy
- RFD 032-2023, Temporary Borrowings – 2023/24 Capital Projects
- 2023/24 Capital Budget and related funding requirements

4) DISCUSSION

This is one of the steps required in order to participate in the debenture issues processed by the province. ***This is a housekeeping matter at this stage*** as it relates to the 2023/24 capital projects previously approved by Council.

As in past years, this matter is time sensitive. The MFC has set a deadline of April 25th to submit commitment letters for the spring debenture issue.

Last year Council approved Temporary Borrowing Resolutions (TBR) #23/24-01 and TBR #23/24-02. This covered the capital projects included in the 2023/24 Capital Budget for the Town and the Water Utility.

TBR #23/24-01 (CR 08-2023-0029)

Visitor Information Centre	\$ 600,000
Fairfield Street, complete rebuild, and East End culvert	\$1,250,000
Waste Water Treatment Plant Phase II -design and document process	\$ 167,900
Parking Lots (East End Gateway and Rotary Park)	<u>\$ 535,000</u>
Total TBR	<u>\$2,552,900</u>

REQUEST FOR DECISION 009-2023

Title: 2024 Spring Debenture Pre-Approval

Date: 2024-03-26

Department: Finance



TBR #23/24-02 (CR 08-2023-0030)

Water Utility

Water Transmission Lines University Ave. to Skyway Ave.	\$360,000
Water Distribution System – Fairfield Ave.	<u>\$ 39,900</u>
Total TBR	<u>\$399,900</u>

Normally, previous year capital projects requiring debt financing are completed in the planned fiscal period, and subsequently, included in the spring debenture pre-approval RFD. For 2023/24 not all capital projects included in the 2023 Temporary Borrowing Resolutions (“TBR”) were completed. The projects not meeting completion criterium include the visitor information centre, wastewater treatment plant design and document process, East End Gateway and Rotary Park parking lots, and water transmission lines for University Ave. and Skyway Ave. Those respective projects are not part of the RFD.

As expected, based on funding projections using the Towns Ten Year Capital Investment Plan (CIP), the above noted borrowings can occur without negatively impacting the Town’s Debt Service Ratio, which has been in the 7.5% range according to Provincial Financial Condition Indicators (“FCI”) reported for the most recent reporting years. The Province of Nova Scotia’s Finance Department imposes a maximum debt-service ratio covenant of 15% and identifies when a municipality’s debt-service ratio exceeds the allowed maximum and will deny future borrowing until an acceptable debt-service ratio can be achieved.

As noted during annual capital budget discussions, the Town’s Debt Ratio will continue to increase over the proceeding ten years should borrowing for additional capital projects be required. This relates to Council’s focus to address the existing infrastructure and long-term planning needed to fund major infrastructure projects. Based on the draft 2024/25 capital funding model, the Town will not reach a debt-service ratio greater than 15%.

The noted maximum interest rate in the draft motion is the figure suggested by the province given current market conditions. The “maximum” is simply set to ensure the Town’s ability to participate in the spring debenture issue without having to revise borrowing documentation.

5) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial impact of this year’s debt requirement was considered as part of the 2023/24 budget approval process. No further analysis is provided here.

6) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

Not applicable at this stage. Refer to Council approved Annual Operations Plan 2022-26 and related budget documentation.

REQUEST FOR DECISION 009-2023

Title: 2024 Spring Debenture Pre-Approval

Date: 2024-03-26

Department: Finance



7) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

Staff will communicate, in required format, all information to the Department of Finance, Province of Nova Scotia.

8) ALTERNATIVES

There are no alternatives at this stage in long-term debt borrowing given that the 2023/24 budget plan included debt financing for the items identified above in the RFD.

REQUEST FOR DECISION 024-2024

Title: Welcome Centre Extra Costs for Unsuitable Soils

Date: April 2, 2024

Department: Engineering & Public Works



SUMMARY

Welcome Centre Extra Costs for Unsuitable Soils

The mass excavation of 237 m³ of unsuitable soil from beneath the former Visitor Information Centre building was required to allow for the construction of a stable base for the new building's footings. Due to prior knowledge of potential soil issues in Willow Park, and the findings of the geotechnical investigation carried out by Hatch last year, a contract rate of \$100 per cubic meter was established for excavation, hauling, and replacement with engineered rock fill material. Additionally, following the geotechnical engineer's recommendation, an extra roll of soil reinforcement grid was applied, resulting in a total change order value of \$27,722.45, inclusive of net HST.

DRAFT MOTION (1):

THAT COUNCIL APPROVE AN INCREASE TO THE WELCOME CENTRE PROJECT BUDGET OF \$27,800 TO COVER THE ADDITIONAL COSTS OF REPLACING UNSUITABLE SOILS DURING RECENT FOUNDATION PREPARATION WORK.

REQUEST FOR DECISION 024-2024

Title: Welcome Centre Extra Costs for Unsuitable Soils

Date: April 2, 2024

Department: Engineering & Public Works



1) CAO COMMENTS

The CAO supports the recommendations of staff.

2) LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

- Municipal Government Act (MGA) Section 65 and 65A.

3) STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Proceed with approving the increase to the project budget for extra costs related to replacement of unsuitable soils.

4) REFERENCES AND ATTACHMENTS

1. RFD 015-2024 Welcome Centre Optional Upgrades - Shower and Metal Roof
2. IR 025-2023 Welcome Centre Funding Breakdown and Project Scope
3. RFD 002-2024 Welcome Centre Design-Build Contract Award
4. Council Minutes, January 23, 2024
5. *Others in the above referenced documents.*

5) DISCUSSION

Poor site soil conditions necessitated the mass excavation of 237 m³ of unsuitable soil from underneath the former Visitor Information Centre building to allow for the construction of a sound base under the new building's footings. The contract and design for the new structure relied on the geotechnical investigation carried out by Hatch, in which the possibility of encountering these conditions was identified. Given prior experience with construction in this area, and since unsuitable soils were identified as a possibility during the geotechnical investigation, a "per cubic meter" unit rate for mass excavation and replacement of unsuitable soils was requested in the RFP for design/construction, and a rate of \$100 per cubic meter (inclusive of excavation, hauling, and delivery/placement of replacement engineered rock fill material) was included in the contract.

In addition to the fill material, an extra roll of soil reinforcement grid was applied based on the recommendation from the project's geotechnical engineer during preparation.

6) FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of 237 m³ of unsuitable soil was removed and replaced, at a rate of \$100/m³, plus an additional roll of soil reinforcing geogrid at approximately \$2,900. The total change order value is \$27,722.45 (including net HST).

REQUEST FOR DECISION 024-2024

Title: Welcome Centre Extra Costs for Unsuitable Soils

Date: April 2, 2024

Department: Engineering & Public Works



7) REFERENCES TO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN AND TOWN REPORTS

N/A

8) COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

N/A

9) ALTERNATIVES

N/A

Prepared by: Alexander J. de Sousa, P.Eng., Director of Engineering & Public Works

Date Revised: March 27, 2024

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Title: WBDC
Date: March 2024
Department: Committee of the Whole



Budget discussion continued from last month and subsequently finalized and passed.

New Position was approved – interviews are lined up – and subsequently hired:

Jeremy Strong is the Director of Program Development. Jeremy has started and is jumping right in!

Acadia update :

- NS music week update
- Harlem Globetrotters are coming to Acadia – this was a big win!
- Brett Kissell – tickets still on sale

Devour Update:

- Gave update on the travels and promotions that lead up to November
- Renovations are moving ahead, pictures shown of new deck and it was well received

Discussions on Survey – Results attached. This took up a good portion of the meeting time, as points were discussed. 34 of 162 business responded to the survey

Harvest is celebrating 20 years! Discussion of recognizing the businesses celebrating milestones this year at the AGM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Councillor MacKay

2024 WBDC Member Survey Report



WOLFVILLE
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

The 2024 Wolfville Business Development Corporation Member survey aimed to gather valuable insights and perspectives from entrepreneurs and stakeholders who contribute significantly to our local economy. Participation in this survey has been instrumental in facilitating a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and aspirations prevalent in our business community.

In this report, a comprehensive overview of the survey responses is presented, highlighting key trends, common sentiments, and notable suggestions shared by respondents. From business priorities to concerns, promotional strategies, and perspectives on community initiatives, this summary encapsulates the diverse viewpoints expressed by local entrepreneurs.

To view the full survey responses in greater detail, please visit this link:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GKTRNm6HhHsTKNmFxcddevEqjbmYPwqI9aETUjUkJYo/edit?usp=sharing>

Based on the provided responses regarding the main goals/priorities in businesses over the next 3-6 months, we can identify several trends and popular opinions:

Customer Base Growth:

- Many businesses, especially new ones, prioritize sustainably growing a loyal customer base as their main goal. This underscores the importance of building relationships and retaining customers for long-term success.

Business Expansion:

- Several businesses express goals related to growth and expansion, whether it's through hiring, providing quality programming, bringing on more practitioners, increasing occupancy, or planning for expansion into new areas such as arts centers.

Online Presence and Awareness:

- Building web presence, increasing awareness about services offered, and educating the public about the business and its value proposition are common themes. This reflects a focus on digital marketing and outreach to reach wider audiences.

Maintaining Quality and Service:

- Many businesses emphasize maintaining a high level of service, atmosphere, and quality that reflects their commitment to customers. This highlights the importance of customer satisfaction and retention.

Adapting to Economic Challenges:

- Some businesses express concerns about affordability, staying afloat, and increasing profitability. This suggests a recognition of economic challenges and the need to adapt strategies to ensure financial sustainability.

Tourism and Foot Traffic:

- Businesses in tourism-driven areas like Wolfville express goals related to increasing foot traffic, attracting visitors, and preparing for tourist seasons.

Community Engagement and Education:

- Several businesses aim to engage with the community, promote awareness about their services, and educate the public about their

offerings or initiatives. This reflects a desire to build strong connections with the local community.

Operational Improvements:

- Some businesses focus on operational aspects such as maintaining infrastructure, planning for store expansions, and coordinating grand openings. This indicates a strategic approach to business management and development.

Based on the responses provided, here's a summary of the top concerns expressed by the businesses:

Economic Conditions:

- Concerns about the economy, especially for businesses offering non-essential products that may be affected during tough times.
- Inflation impacting project viability and consumer spending.

Financial Challenges:

- Renting expensive venues for events, which limits financial capacity for business expansion.
- Managing expenses and financial obligations, including pandemic-related expenses and bills.

Human Resources:

- Difficulty finding suitable and skilled employees.
- Hiring staff for key roles and management positions.

Community Recognition and Support:

- Desire for more recognition from the town as important community members.
- Seeking exposure and support to help promote business and community involvement.

Infrastructure and Accessibility:

- Concerns about parking availability and accessibility.
- Issues related to crosswalk safety and public washroom accessibility.

Tourism and Foot Traffic:

- Decrease in tourism and foot traffic, particularly during slow seasons.
- Balancing growth with increased tourism while managing congestion.

Security and Maintenance:

- Security concerns such as vandalism.
- Maintenance of existing infrastructure and facilities.

Operational Challenges:

- Addressing the cost of goods sold.
- Managing hours and maintaining a steady flow of customers.

Real Estate and Space Issues:

- Challenges related to commercial space availability and cost in Wolfville.
- Issues with street parking and the need for additional parking facilities.

Adaptation to Changing Trends:

- Need for businesses to stay up to date and helpful in the evolving market.

Based on the provided responses, here's a summary of how businesses promote themselves in Wolfville:

Social Media:

- Instagram and Facebook are widely used platforms for business promotion.
- Some businesses rely solely on Instagram and Facebook for their promotional activities.
- Others also leverage LinkedIn for professional networking and advertising.

Online Presence:

- Maintaining a website is a common practice among businesses for online visibility.
- Google ads are used by some businesses to enhance online visibility and reach.

Word of Mouth:

- Traditional word-of-mouth marketing remains an essential and effective promotional strategy.
- Longstanding businesses particularly benefit from word-of-mouth referrals.

Multi-channel Marketing:

- Some businesses employ a combination of marketing channels, including digital marketing, radio advertisements, and advertising through Grapevine (presumably a local media outlet or advertising platform).
- Print, digital, and public displays are utilized for broader exposure.

Event Participation:

- Participation in shows, flea markets, and local events helps businesses reach a wider audience and engage with the community.
- Supporting events and nonprofit organizations is also part of some businesses' promotional strategies.

Community Engagement:

- Newsletters, local posters, and quarterly newsletters are used to engage with the local community.
- Businesses also leverage platforms like Airbnb for exposure and outreach.

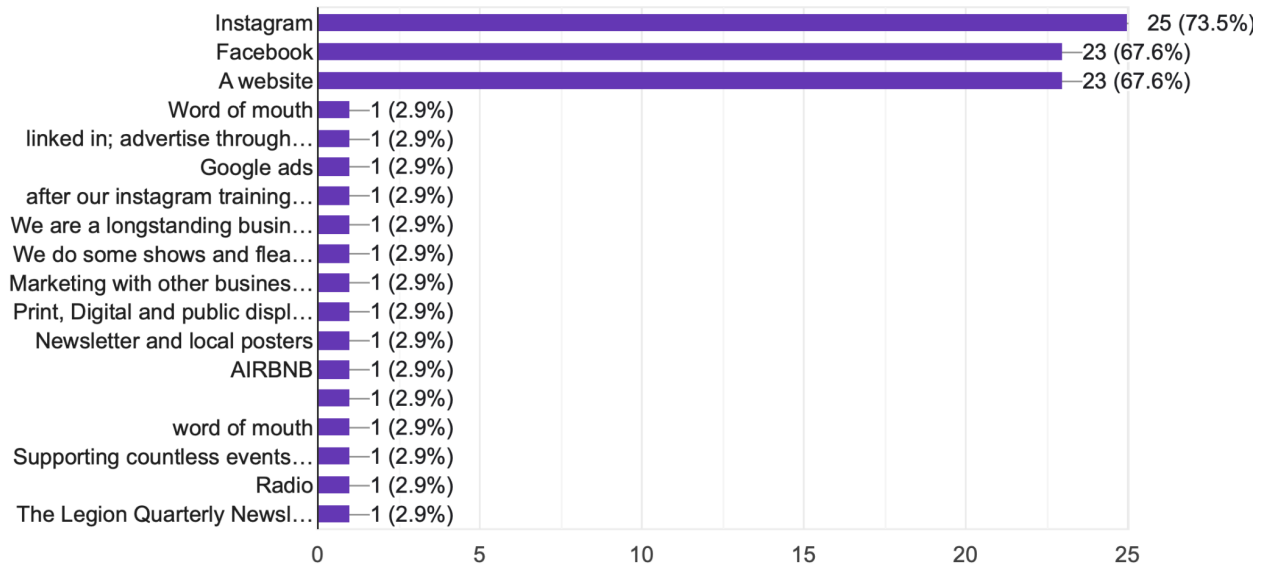
Diverse Strategies:

- The responses indicate a variety of promotional strategies tailored to the specific needs and preferences of each business.
- Some businesses actively engage in ongoing training and discussions to improve their social media marketing strategies.

Please see the following chart for a better breakdown of the responses.

How do you promote your business?

34 responses



Based on the responses regarding initiatives that businesses would like to see offered in Wolfville, several trends and common thoughts emerge:

Desire for Improvement:

- Many respondents express a desire for enhancements or additions to the town's amenities and services, indicating a proactive attitude toward community development.

Infrastructure and Amenities:

- There is a call for improvements in infrastructure, such as street signs for local businesses, more parking spaces, and the installation of amenities like public washrooms and a carbonated water fountain in the clock park.

Community Events and Programs:

- Suggestions include the creation of new community events like a winter market, wellness-based festivals, and a local small business expo to foster community engagement and support local businesses.

Business Support and Networking:

- Some respondents mention the need for financial support programs, such as subsidies for heating/fuel costs for businesses recovering from restrictions.
- Strengthening business-to-business (B2B) networking opportunities is also highlighted as a potential initiative to support local enterprises.

Collaboration and Engagement:

- Collaboration between businesses and the town is emphasized, including initiatives like the Downtown Dollars and/or Dine Around program and hosting annual appreciation town events to foster community spirit and support local businesses.

Awareness and Education:

- There is a desire for increased awareness and education about available initiatives and services, as well as opportunities for new businesses to engage with existing programs.

Specific Requests:

- Specific requests include bringing a Landmark East student to work day, reinstating sidewalk sandwich boards, and promoting bike racks for cyclists.

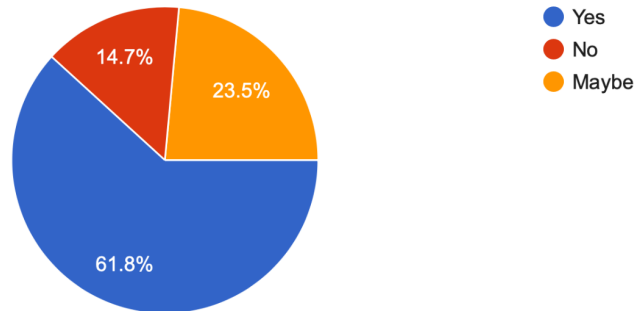
Based on the responses regarding interest in participating in collaborations or giveaways of gift cards/products/services the response was:

- Yes: 21 respondents expressed definite interest in participating.
- Maybe: 8 respondents indicated they might be interested, suggesting some openness but with reservations or conditions.
- No: 5 respondents expressed no interest in participating.

Overall, there is a notable inclination among the respondents to engage in collaborations or giveaways, with the majority showing interest or potential openness to such initiatives.

Would you be interested in participating in collaborations or giveaways of gift cards/products/services etc?

34 responses



From the responses regarding what the business community is missing or what could enhance the customer experience, several key themes and insights emerge:

Infrastructure and Amenities:

- There's a notable desire for places for families to sit, indicating a need for more comfortable and welcoming public spaces.
- Suggestions for amenities like a carbonated water fountain in the clock park and overnight parking highlight a desire for convenience and leisure facilities.
- Addressing traffic flow and parking issues emerges as a common concern, suggesting a need for better infrastructure planning and management.

Community Programs and Initiatives:

- The Town of Wolfville Gift Card program is mentioned repeatedly, reflecting a desire for community-driven economic support and loyalty programs.
- Collaborative projects or partnerships celebrating students and local attractions indicate a desire for community involvement and engagement.

Business Support and Development:

- Incentives for businesses to set up in Wolfville and a focus on B2B marketing highlight the need for fostering a supportive business environment and encouraging entrepreneurship.
- Suggestions for more shopping stores and late-night business hours indicate a desire for a vibrant and diverse business landscape catering to varied needs and schedules.

Marketing and Promotion:

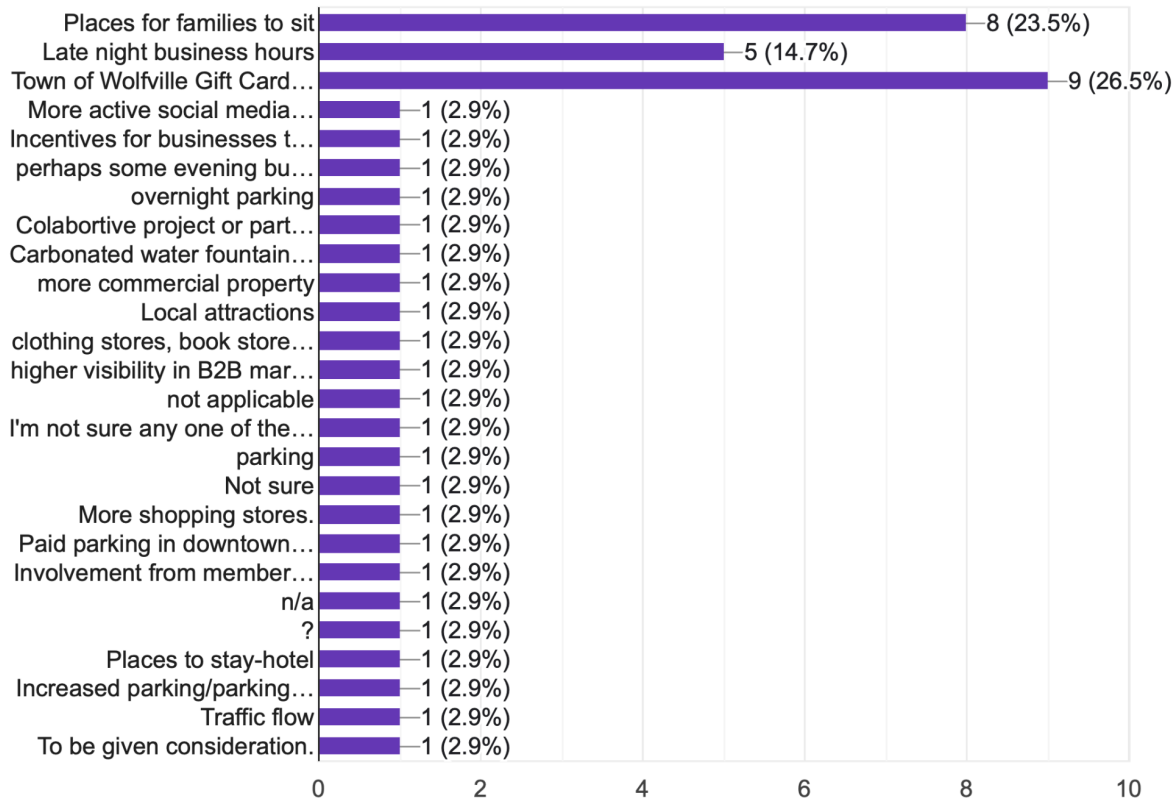
- A healthy marketing plan to promote Wolfville as a winter destination and focus on off-season activities suggests a strategic approach to promoting tourism and sustaining economic activity throughout the year.

Customer Engagement and Experience:

- Themed weeks/months for businesses to participate in and involvement from members on event nights highlight a desire for community engagement and interactive experiences for customers.

What is the business community missing?/What could make your business customers experience better?

34 responses

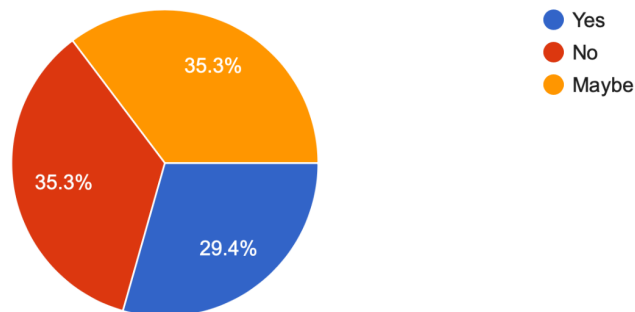


When asked if they would consider staying open later we had the following response;

- Yes: 10 respondents expressed that they would consider it.
- Maybe: 12 respondents indicated they might consider it.
- No: 12 respondents expressed that they would not consider it.

Would you consider staying open later?

34 responses



The responses regarding changes to holiday programming indicate a range of sentiments and suggestions:

Satisfaction and Appreciation:

- Some respondents express satisfaction with the current holiday programming and appreciate the festive atmosphere created in downtown Wolfville during the season.

Lack of Specific Requests:

- Many respondents indicate that they do not have specific changes they would like to see or are unsure about suggesting alterations.

Feedback on Current Practices:

- One respondent notes frustration about being left off the list for greenery due to staffing changes, indicating a desire for better communication and inclusion.
- Another mentions a preference for past practices that involved promotions like draws to bring people into businesses, suggesting that current promotions might not align with their business model.

Suggested Enhancements:

- Suggestions for enhancements include introducing outdoor fire pits, hosting a holiday night market or Christmas market, featuring businesses more prominently, and extending promotions and prizes.

Desire for Communication:

- Some respondents express a desire for better communication and information dissemination regarding holiday programming to ensure their participation and engagement.

Overall, while some respondents are content with the current holiday programming, others suggest improvements such as better communication like an overall list of offerings that are happening that goes out prior to the event, more inclusive practices for business that may not have the means to financially sponsor things, and additional festive activities to enhance the holiday experience in Wolfville.

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Title: Diversity Kings County

Date: April 2,2024

Department: Committee of the Whole



Update:

The last meeting of DKC was held in hybrid form on March 4,2024. The next meeting is scheduled for April 3,2024.

The recreation coordinator, Shawn presented to the committee on the current programs offered through the Municipality and wanted input into what gaps are currently missing regarding accessibility and diversity.

Accessibility coordinator, Katie MacArthur gave a presentation on the work currently being done in the County. She discussed employment obstacles and how communication and information on business websites needs to be constantly maintained and updated.

The diversity specialists debriefed African Heritage month, and noted the launch was well attended and the radio campaign was highly successful.

Councillor Mackay and I were able to attend International Women's Day luncheon on March 8, 2024 surrounded by many colleagues and friends. Kesa Munroe-Andreson, from Acadia University was the keynote speaker.

Upcoming events at the County of Kings include a proclamation for International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 28,2024. The Windows and Mirrors book launch for children and youth of African decent will take place on April 11th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Respectively submitted by:

Councillor Jennifer Ingham

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Title: Valley Regional Economic Network

Date: April 2, 2024

Department: Committee of the Whole



UPDATE

The Valley REN has held several virtual sessions for members to provide an update on current activities, the most recent one on March 22nd, 2024. Highlights of that session include:

1. **Announcement of a new CEO – Emily Boucher** – who will join the organization on April 2nd. Emily is joining the VREN from a firm Techsploration “an award-winning, Nova Scotia-based not-for-profit that delivers hands-on, mentor-led programming to young women in Grades 9 through 12. The goal of Techsploration is to increase the number of women working in science, engineering, trades, and technology-related occupations by assisting young women from diverse backgrounds to explore a wide range of career options in fields where women are significantly underrepresented.”
2. **Jennifer Tufts** – will remain with the VREN as its Chief Operating Officer.
3. **10th Anniversary** – This year marks the 10th year since the VREN’s inception.
4. **Site Selector Tool** – the VREN has launched its site selector tool (Land and Asset Database) that can assist companies to find the best spot to set up shop. Information re this tool can be found at www.valleyren.ca/siteselector/
5. **Pathways to Apprenticeship** – on April 5th the VREN will host an event in partnership with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency for employers, apprentices and labourers. The event will be held in Kentville from 1-6 PM at 463 Main Street Kentville.
6. **Regenerative Tourism** – The VREN is now connected to tourism related programs – Voice of the Visitor and the ACTivate Program to have 10 questions pertaining to regenerative tourism added to a visitor survey (Tourism Nova Scotia. Other tourism related initiatives of the VREN include: Funded programs that align with the implementation of the regional tourism strategy - Compelling Tourism Communities Travel Media Program 2023 (Tourism Nova Scotia) Tourism Digital Adoption Program, for website assistance (Tourism Nova Scotia and Digital Nova Scotia), Voice of the Visitor Program). The region was one of five accepted in the ACTivate Program, provided by the Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism and the Coady Institute at St. FX. The asset-based community development training provided through this program aligns with the regenerative focus of the regional tourism strategy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor Donovan

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Title: April 2, 2024

Date: King Regional Recreation Task Force

Department: Committee of the Whole



UPDATE

The King Regional Recreation Task Force (includes Kentville, Wolfville and the Municipality of the District of Kings) met on Tuesday, March 26th to review the progress of this project.

1. Kings staff continue to work on gathering information from preferred site owners and are working to identify operating costs.
2. Wolfville staff continue to consult with Acadia staff to clarify Acadia's future plans for its aquatic facility.
3. The committee agreed to come back in early May with information related to site discussions, as well as governance and operating approaches with some recommendation made at that time that can be communicated with all three Councils no later than late May. The timing of this process is aimed at providing Kentville, Kings and Wolfville councils with sufficient information within this Council term to make a decision on next step of this project.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mayor Donovan