

Township of Hornepayne

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

2024 - 2027



Photograph by Laura Kahara Bayford

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which this plan was drafted is the traditional territory of the Treaty 9, 1905-1906 territory, the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples. To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude to those upon whose territory you reside, and a way of honouring the Indigenous people who have been living and working on the land from time immemorial.

The Township of Hornepayne honours and values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations peoples.

While a land acknowledgment is important, we recognize that it is one small step towards reconciliation. Far more must be done to address the historic truths and ongoing impacts of colonization, including systemic racism. In our journey for collective healing, truth, and reconciliation, may we all work towards respectful relationships and the meaningful interchange of knowledge and skills to support safety and well-being for all.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with Provincial legislation, municipalities are required to develop and adopt a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan.

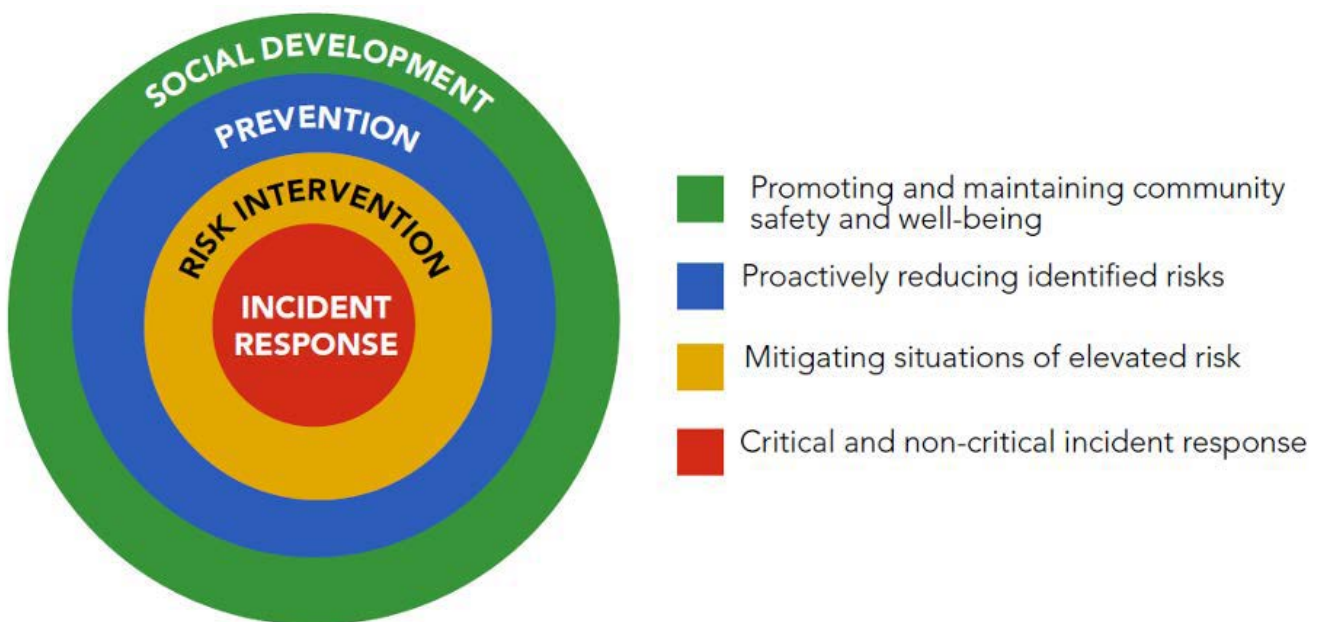
The purpose of a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is to improve the safety and well-being of community members, by defining and addressing priority risks through proactive, integrated system-wide strategies. Community safety and well-being plans support safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues. By working collaboratively at the municipal level to tackle priority risks and needs of the community through a strategic and holistic lens, communities will be better prepared to meet current and future needs of their residents.

The aim of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is to ensure all residents in the Township of Hornepayne feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and can meet their needs for education, healthcare, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Guiding principles used to inform development of the Plan include:

- Collaboration
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Alignment with existing local plans
- Acknowledgment of the global and historical contexts that have a direct impact on belonging, such as climate change, systemic racism, the need for Truth and Reconciliation, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected everyone and disproportionately impacted those who are marginalized.

The Provincial CSWB Planning Framework was released by the Ministry of the Solicitor General and outlines the provincial approach to community safety and well-being. The framework, consisting of four levels of community safety planning intervention (Social Development, Prevention, Risk Intervention and Incident Response), is intended to guide municipalities, First Nations communities and partners in developing local plans.



Social development: Addresses underlying causes of social issues through upstream approaches that promote and maintain individual and community wellness.



Prevention: Applies proactive strategies to known and identified risks that are likely to result in harm to individuals or communities if left unmitigated.



Risk intervention: Identifies and responds to situations of acutely elevated risk and mobilizes immediate interventions before an emergency or crisis-driven response is required.



Incident response: Requires intervention by first responders such as police, paramedics, and other emergency-driven services.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Township of Hornepayne is located at the Geographic Centre of Ontario, in the heart of the boreal forest with clean, fresh air and stunning landscapes featuring beautiful lakes, rivers and trees.

With a population of just under 1,000, the Township is situated on Highway 631, connecting Highways 11 and 17. Hornepayne is also serviced by VIA Rail passenger trains, making it a convenient stop along rail travels.

The Township offers many recreational opportunities, such as sport fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and wildlife watching. Hornepayne is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts and friendly, community-minded families and individuals.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Police Services Act requires that each community appoint an Advisory Committee for the development and implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan.

Multisectoral collaboration is a key factor to successful CSWB planning, as it ensures an integrated approach to identifying and addressing local priorities. Advisory Committee Members provided:

- Knowledge and information about the risks and vulnerable populations in the community;
- Understanding of protective factors needed to address those risks;
- Experience developing effective partnerships in the community;
- Experience with ensuring equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their initiatives;
- Understanding and experience working with individuals with lived experience and or who are part of a vulnerable group in the community;
- A proven track record advocating for the interests of vulnerable populations; and,
- Knowledge and understanding of the other agencies and organizations within the community.

In short, a diverse, knowledgeable, authentic, Advisory Committee was engaged in developing the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

During and in between Advisory Committee meetings, members provided strategic advice and feedback into the CSWB Plan priorities.

The Community Safety and Well-Being Advisory Committee was comprised of members of the following community partners:

- Algoma District Paramedic Services;
- Algoma Public Health
- Chadwic Home;
- Children’s Aid Society;
- Community Living Algoma;
- École Saint Nom de Jésus;
- Hearst, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls Counselling Services;
- Hornepayne Community Hospital;
- Hornepayne EarlyOn Child and Family Centre;
- Hornepayne Elementary and Secondary School;
- Hornepayne Fire Department;
- Hornepayne First Nation;
- Hornepayne Public Library;
- Hornepayne Senior Citizens’ Sunshine Club;
- Holy Name of Jesus School;
- Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services;
- Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services;
- Municipal Council;
- Municipal Staff;
- Ontario Provincial Police;
- Porcupine Health Unit;
- Three Bears Daycare; and,
- Wawa and Area Victim Services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Using a combination of quantitative data (i.e. measurable and numeric data) and qualitative data (i.e. observable or descriptive data) is widely considered to provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of a given topic. By ensuring narratives are used to contextualize numeric data and vice versa, the true impact of social issues on people - their lives, livelihoods and opportunities - is not lost.

Many groups, initiatives, and individuals contributed valuable information, experiences, perspectives, and ideas to the development of this plan. Due to the scope and timeline of the project, there were limitations on the number and types of consultation activities that could be conducted. While there was significant engagement, development of the CSWB Plan also relied on the outcomes of authentic engagement activities from other recent consultations.

A core principle for conducting community consultations is to provide opportunities for all (with a specific focus on those that are marginalized and most at-risk) to participate in a meaningful, safe, and inclusive manner. All engagements with different groups were conducted in partnership with organizations and leaders in the particular groups and population. It is also important to report back to community members and update them on different projects and results.

Priority Areas

The Township of Hornepayne's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan offers a framework for partners working together to promote safety and well-being for all residents. This framework includes the following three local priorities where opportunities for action have been identified:



1. Mental Health and Substance Abuse



2. Housing and Homelessness



3. Isolation and Access to Services

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Mental health and well-being is a state of being in which a person understands their capabilities, can handle life's typical stresses, can function effectively, and can participate in society. According to the World Health Organization, a person's mental health and well-being are influenced by numerous social, psychological, environmental, and biological factors and can fluctuate at different points in time.

Substance abuse occurs when one uses alcohol, prescription medicine, and other legal and illegal substances too much or in the wrong way. The misuse of substances has a severe impact on individuals, families, and communities. The effects are cumulative, significantly contributing to costly social, physical, mental, and public health problems. Some of the adverse outcomes linked with substance misuse can include increased blood-borne and wound infections, trauma, criminal activity, housing challenges, unemployment, and dropping out of school.

Research shows that more than half of people with substance use disorders have also had mental health problems, especially anxiety or depression, sometime in their lifetime. The relationship between substance use and mental health problems is complex. Some people with mental health problems use substances to help themselves feel better, but end up making the situation worse. When people have mental health problems, even limited substance use (e.g., a drink or two) can worsen problems.

Mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and stress are common, affecting individuals, their families and co-workers, and the broader community. In addition, they have a direct impact on workplaces through increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased costs.

Studies also show that the social stigma associated with mental health and substance abuse often prevents people from accessing treatment. People are afraid of facing discrimination at school and work, or being judged by their family and friends, and may not seek the support or help they need before the situation gets worse.

Other barriers to service include:

- Financial challenges.
- Lack of knowledge about services.
- Long distances to travel to access services and lack of public transit.

The Township of Hornepayne will work with key mental health and substance abuse agencies to provide help for residents experiencing such problems, as well as to ensure that mental health and substance abuse problems are recognized early and treated effectively.

Based on community engagement, data analysis, and aligning with the community's priorities, the Plan has established two goals:

1. Enhance Prevention Education

2. Strengthen Harm Reduction

Goal 1: Enhance Prevention Education

Strategies:

- Communicate and educate youth and stakeholders (parents, coaches, mentors, teachers, older siblings, etc.) about the factors associated with adolescent substance misuse, such as social pressures, substance use in the home, life transitions, and deviance. Education should also address the harmful and cumulative social and health effects on a person's life, and on their family/friends.
- Expand and enhance bullying-prevention efforts.
- Explore community education initiatives focused on mental health and how to prevent negative mental health outcomes.
- Explore opportunities for speakers with lived experience to share their stories about the impact of mental health and substance abuse with the community (i.e., school programs, families, businesses, community conversations).

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased public awareness and understanding about mental health and substance abuse.
- Decreased stigma and discrimination associated with mental health and substance abuse disorders.
- Improved mental health and well-being for children, youth, and families.
- Declined rates of youth substance use and abuse.
- Delay/Decline in early use of alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and other substances.
- Decline in episodes of drunkenness or overuse of illicit drugs.

Goal 2: Strengthen Harm Reduction

Strategies:

- Promote existing mental health and substance abuse programs and services, both in-person (such as Hearst, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls Counselling Services) and digitally (such as ConnexOntario).
- Expand overdose prevention, overdose response, Naloxone training, and distribution of harm-reduction supplies, and encourage all local institutions to do the same.
- Explore opportunities for health services and policy services to work in partnership and respond to calls for service related to mental health and substance abuse crises.
- Strengthen coordination efforts among service providers to ensure that people are able to access compassionate, safe, non-judgemental care and support in a timely way.

Expected Outcomes:

- Decreased levels of drug overdose.
- Decrease levels of mental health and/or substance abuse related fatalities.
- Decreased incidents requiring professional assistance related to mental health and substance abuse.
- Increased confidence regarding the administration of Naloxone and other harm-prevention tools.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing has traditionally operated on a continuum. This continuum is a linear progression from homelessness or housing need to homeownership. It is important to note that people do not always move along the continuum in a sequential straight line. Life events and changing housing needs can result in movement in different directions.



Although there is no universal definition, the Provincial Policy Statement and the Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) state that housing is affordable (attainable) when it accounts for no more than 30% of a household's gross income. The premise would be that a household could enter the local housing market before graduating or moving up to successively higher levels of housing. It is contextual to the unique circumstances that make up a community. The inventory of attainable housing would take into consideration a range of housing types and sizes. This would accommodate varying levels of income and changing household needs.

The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Hornepayne has created a Municipal Services Corporation called the Hornepayne Housing Corporation (HHC). The HHC aims to address the various housing needs in Hornepayne along its housing continuum.

There is broad recognition that without access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing, it is very challenging to address overall health and well-being, mental health, and substance use, let alone access to education and employment. Those who are unsheltered or have unstable housing are more likely to experience poverty, food insecurity, severe health outcomes, increased stress, social isolation, and greater risks to safety.

Affordable housing is especially out of reach for those among the most vulnerable. Those most at risk include, but are not limited to:

- Those with tri-morbidity (e.g., physical health issues, mental health and/or substance abuse issues, and significant housing barriers)
- Indigenous Peoples
- People exiting institutions or facilities (hospitals, substance abuse, correctional, child protective sectors, other)
- LGBTQ
- Youth
- Seniors (age 60+)

Homelessness can result from many challenges in life. For example, compounding and/or individual factors such as a mental health, job loss, domestic violence, to name a few.

In smaller communities, such as the Township of Hornepayne, homelessness is less visible, and it is difficult to collect data that tracks homelessness, despite the knowledge that there is a lack of housing supply while the number of individuals and families moving to the community is increasing.

The Plan has identified the following goal:

- **Build Housing Capacity and Awareness**

Goal: Build Housing Capacity

Strategies:

- Explore partnerships, through the Hornepayne Housing Corporation (HHC), with non-profit and private sector, inter-governmental, and community-based organizations, to explore ways to integrate affordable and accessible housing into new and existing developments.
- Maintain a strategic approach to addressing housing needs through the regular review and update of the Housing Needs and Demands Study.
- Continue the implementation of housing-related financial incentives, such as the Housing Sales Discount and Tax Program, as outlined in the Township of Hornepayne's Community Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Increase engagement with community partners and the public to ensure information related to safe and affordable housing and other housing programs is available to those who need it.
- Determine the best process for information sharing, such as the availability of subsidized rent through the Algoma District Services Administration Board (ADSAB).
- Collaborate with healthcare, mental health, and social service organizations to provide access to basic health and safety needs for those experiencing housing related issues.
- Explore opportunities to provide more accessible housing for seniors.

Expected Outcomes:

- An accurate and up-to-date outline of the severity and impact of the housing shortage, as well as strategies to address the shortage.
- Increased availability of appropriate and affordable housing at all levels of economic attainment.
- Increased success for residents in securing and maintaining housing.
- Increased education and awareness regarding homelessness and poverty.

ISOLATION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Social isolation has serious physical, mental and emotional consequences. It was noted that residents who are socially isolated are at a higher risk of developing health problems, experiencing poverty, facing mental health challenges, and having a poorer quality of life. Groups such as seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities, individuals experiencing mental health and addiction issues, and those who are homeless or precariously housed, were identified as more likely to become socially isolated. COVID-19 was said to have intensified the sense of social isolation for some groups (e.g., seniors and single parents).

Social support networks directly affect how residents interact and perceive their environments. The individuals that make up a person's network (e.g., family, friends, caregivers, neighbours, others) play important roles and can lessen the chance of that person feeling lonely or socially isolated.

Often, seniors, as a result of circumstances such as health decline or death of a spouse, find themselves without a natural support network to assist them as they age. This has resulted in them becoming isolated in their residences, where they must age in place, and may lack social connections and supports.

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted those struggling with social isolation, and those facing greater barriers to accessing services, especially seniors; those experiencing homelessness; and those living with mental illness or addictions.

In more rural areas, the delivery of services can be a challenge due to the distances necessary to travel to reach providers, or the limited availability of providers in the area. Additionally, wait times are often long, especially when a resident requires a specialized service.

For vulnerable members of the community, there is often a gap between the challenges they face and the resources they can access when they face those challenges. This vulnerability is by no means a reflection of the characteristics of these individuals, but rather it speaks to a lack of ability to connect with the services and supports they need to feel safe and well.

There are some individuals and groups who are more vulnerable to facing challenges accessing services. These include:

- Low-income individuals and families;
- Individuals who are homeless or precariously housed;
- Individuals experiencing mental health or substance abuse challenges;
- Transitional-aged youth (16-24 years);
- Seniors;
- Children and adults in abusive situations;
- Newcomers (immigrants and refugees);
- Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC);
- Children and adults with disabilities;
- LGBTQ2+ community; and
- Those without strong social networks.

The Plan has identified the following goal:

- **Enhance and Promote Supports Within the Community**

Goal: Enhance and Promote Supports Within the Community

Strategies:

- Promote Ontario 211, which is a service that works to increase resident knowledge and awareness of existing programs, services, and supports.
- Provide safe, welcoming, and inclusive public spaces for use by individuals of all identities, abilities, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Increase inclusion and access to activities and community events for those that face constraints to participation (e.g., youth, people with disabilities, newcomers, BIPOC, LGBTQ2+ persons, and low-income families and individuals).
- Explore ways to increase involvement and opportunity for youth-specific volunteer opportunities, focusing on community interests and causes that are important to youth development and their own passions.
- Advocate for and work towards making the Township of Hornepayne an “age-friendly community”.
- Assess community opportunities for engaging seniors in volunteer service, advocacy, and community decision-making.
- Explore rental or donation systems to get recreational goods into the hands of youth unable to access or retrieve these resources independently.

Expected Outcomes:

- A healthier and more vibrant senior’s population, that is socially connected to others in the community and aware of available resources.
- Lowered healthcare costs associated with the negative physical and mental health implications of isolation.
- An increased sense of belonging and community and strengthened connections within the community.
- Increased use and participation of community services and programming.

CONCLUSION

This is the first Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan for our community. Our planning has involved a great deal of care, consideration, and effort with the goal of making the Township of Hornepayne a healthier, safer, and more vibrant place to live. Ongoing municipal communication and cooperation are needed to ensure the plan's success.

For the CSWB Plan's implementation, progress will be tracked through monitoring and evaluation, data collection, and data sharing. Throughout the four-year term of the plan and in future iterations, the Township of Hornepayne will continue to be responsive to emerging needs in the community and create ongoing opportunities for community engagement and involvement.

The Township of Hornepayne has been, and continues to be, very proactive in lobbying to senior provincial leaders to support and assist in addressing long standing community challenges, as expanded upon in the CSWB Plan. While community buy-in, coordination, and collaboration are important to make gains on the Plan's goals, targeted financial resource commitments from senior levels of government is also necessary to see the Plan's goals to fruition.

