

Canadian Centre for
Safer Communities



Centre canadien pour des
communautés plus sûres

Capital Regional District British Columbia

Regional Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) Planning Research Project

Final Report

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Research Design	3
Results.....	3
Recommendations for the CRD	5
Introduction.....	7
The Canadian Centre for Safer Communities.....	7
Research Design	8
Results	10
Best Practices and Insights into Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Plans.....	10
Local Context and Preferences in the CRD	23
Recommendations for the CRD	37
Overview of Recommendations.....	37
Recommendation 1: Adopt a Flexible, Reflective Regional CSWB Planning Model	38
Recommendation 2: Define the CRD’s Role as a Regional Facilitator and Provide Backbone Support.....	38
Recommendation 3: Establish a Permanent, Action-Oriented CSWB Service Line that Centres Diverse Community Voices	39
Summary of Recommendations	40
References	41
Appendices	46

Executive Summary

In 2024, the Capital Regional District (CRD) engaged the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) to **research the possibilities** for a Regional Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plan. Guided by a Regional Advisory Committee, CCFSC reviewed existing regional CSWB plans and other available literature, conducted a survey with local partners, and interviewed local and cross-Canadian leaders in community safety and wellbeing. This executive summary provides an overview of the research findings, key considerations, and recommendations for an approach to regional CSWB planning.

Research Design

The following research questions were established to guide the direction of this project:

- 1) What are the best practices and underlying justifications generally associated with Community Safety and Well-being Planning in Canada and internationally?
- 2) What Community Safety and Well-being plans and councils (if any) currently exist within the CRD? What other related initiatives, strategies and programs exist?
- 3) What Regional Community Safety and Well-being plans and councils exist across Canada?
- 4) What are the benefits and challenges of approaching CSWB planning from a regional perspective? What models for the governance and implementation of regional plans exist?

Results

Best Practices and Insights of Regional CSWB Plans

The following section outlines key principles and components that contribute to the development and implementation of regional CSWB plans.

Key Principles in Effective CSWB Planning

- **Flexibility in Approach:** Effective CSWB planning requires adaptability to local demographics, geography, legislative frameworks, funding availability, and community support.
- **A Holistic Approach:** CSWB frameworks should encompass environmental, social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual domains, as well as an enforcement and justice lens.
- **Centering Relationships and Multi-Sectoral Collaboration:** A multi-sectoral approach is essential, as no single sector can address the complex contributors to community safety and well-being alone.

Key Components in Development and Implementation

- **Steering Committee:** Effective regional CSWB plans are guided by steering committees that are inclusive, multi-sectoral, and representative of local municipalities.
- **Secondary Committees:** These coordinating bodies are typically housed within regional governments but are sometimes embedded within municipal governments or police services.

- **Data Collection and Community Engagement:** Conducting a thorough community assessment is vital for identifying local safety and well-being issues, available resources, and service gaps.
- **Governance and Implementation:** Effective governance and implementation can include the establishment of dedicated coordination structures, such as city-level boards or public departments.
- **Evaluation and Monitoring:** Integrating evaluation planning early in the process and aligning it with data collection and community engagement strategies is crucial for tracking progress and ensuring accountability.

Funding Considerations

Long-term, sustainable funding is widely recognized as essential for both the development and implementation of effective regional CSWB plans (Mass Casualty Commission, 2020; Waller, 2021). In practice, most plans are developed and implemented using in-kind contributions and existing resources, often requiring staff to take on CSWB responsibilities in addition to their regular roles. While some regions have successfully secured dedicated budgets, limited resources remain a consistent challenge.

Overall Benefits and Challenges of a Regional CSWB Plan Approach

Regional CSWB planning offers several key benefits, including stronger cross-sector collaboration, alignment of goals across municipalities, a more efficient use of resources, and improved data sharing. However, regional planning presents notable challenges. Coordinating across diverse municipalities can be complex, and limited funding or capacity often constrains participation and implementation. Political tensions, resistance to change, and difficulties engaging underrepresented communities can also hinder progress.

Local Context and Preferences in the CRD

This section of results draws on findings from an environmental scan, 34 survey responses, and 10 interviews with partners across the CRD.

While no formal CSWB plans currently exist in the CRD, the City of Victoria is developing one for Council consideration in 2025. The environmental scan identified 22 publicly available documents across the region that align with CSWB priorities, including health strategies (3), housing needs assessments or PIT counts (9), law enforcement plans (1), community profiles or municipal strategies (5), and other relevant reports (4), such as the CRD Board Priorities and Vital Signs report. As the CRD moves forward, these existing strategies could be reviewed and “nested” under a broader regional CSWB framework to promote alignment and continuity.

CSWB Plan Preference in the CRD

- **Regional approach:** two thirds of survey respondents favoured a regional or hybrid approach to CSWB planning in the CRD, citing the need to address cross-jurisdictional issues, prevent siloed responses, promote resource sharing, and provide more equitable access to services across municipalities.

- **Municipal approach:** A smaller number of respondents preferred a municipal or electoral area-based model, citing concerns that regional planning might overlook unique local needs or face resistance from less-engaged municipalities.

Anticipated Benefits of a Regional CSWB Plan in the CRD

Over 90% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a regional CSWB plan would be beneficial as it would support consistent policies across municipalities, allow for resource sharing, improve coordination, strengthen advocacy, increase capacity for smaller communities and be more cost effective. The remaining 10% of respondents raised concerns about the need to maintain local responsiveness and the effectiveness of regional governance.

Anticipated Challenges of a Regional CSWB Plan in the CRD

Respondents raised concerns about regional CSWB planning in terms of conflicting priorities across municipalities, local political will, difficulty coordination across jurisdictions, ability to engage the community, lack of funding and a disproportionate focus on urban needs.

The Role of the CRD

Survey participants largely agreed that the CRD should take on a coordinating role in a regional CSWB plan, rather than act as a top-down lead. The most highly ranked functions included data collection and knowledge sharing, followed by coordination, strategic planning, and resource allocation—highlighting the CRD’s potential to align efforts and enable evidence-informed, collaborative action. Lower-ranked but still relevant roles included training, capacity building, and public engagement. Overall, participants emphasized that the CRD is well-positioned to convene partners and sustain regional efforts, but that leadership should remain community-driven and inclusive.

Recommendations for the CRD

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Flexible, Reflective Regional CSWB Planning Model	To address the inherently cross-jurisdictional challenges facing the region, it is recommended that the CRD adopt a regional approach to CSWB planning. To ensure a responsive approach, a robust evaluation must be established from the very early planning stage.
Recommendation 2: Define the CRD’s Role as a Regional Facilitator and Allocate Resources to Provide Backbone Support	To guide the development of a regional CSWB plan, the CRD should first define its role as a facilitator, convener, and backbone support—coordinating collaboration across the region without exercising centralized control. Key Actions: • Create a dedicated CSWB Planning Coordinator role • Establish a secretariat to support regional planning • Engage external support

Recommendation 3: Establish a Permanent, Action-Oriented Service Line that Centre's Diverse Community Voices	To ensure the long-term success, accountability, and community ownership of the CSWB strategy, the CRD should establish a permanent, action-oriented service line. This structure must prioritize the voices of equity-deserving groups and be rooted in collaborative, responsive governance. Key Actions: • Engage First Nations communities early and respectfully • Conduct a robust community assessment • Build a long-term engagement framework beyond plan development • Establish an inclusive, multi-sectoral steering committee • Create a local alignment advisory committee • Adopt an action-oriented implementation model • Establishing a permanent regional office or coordination hub
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Introduction

In July 2024, the Capital Regional District (CRD) engaged the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) to undertake a research project to inform their understanding of the possibilities for a Regional Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) Plan. For this work, CCFSC proposed a strategically staged approach that included a scoping literature review to compile best practices, as well as a process to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from key players within the CRD, as well as across Canada, regarding how Regional CSWB plans or other similar processes are being developed and implemented. This work was guided by a Regional Advisory Committee, comprised of sector leaders, who provided feedback on data collection tools, assisted with data collection promotion efforts, provided connections to local participants for interviews, and reviewed the findings and recommendations put forward by CCFSC.

This report provides a detailed overview of this project's methodology, findings, limitations, and ultimately, options for consideration and recommendations for best practices in establishing a regional CSWB plan within the CRD.

The Canadian Centre for Safer Communities

CCFSC has significant experience conducting research and writing reports and is well versed in the best practices of community safety and well-being. For the past 20 years, CCFSC has coordinated and supported Canadian municipalities in crime prevention and community safety practice through facilitation of collaboration and partnership development; evidence-informed policy and practice recommendations; technical support in creating and implementing community safety and well-being plans; comprehensive trainings and awareness of crime prevention; and community safety-related research, news, funding opportunities, and conferences.

CCFSC represents over 150 communities and approximately 50% of the Canadian population. The vision of CCFSC is communities where people are safe and feel safe. To achieve this vision, CCFSC supports Canadian communities to foster community safety and well-being through national leadership, collaboration, capacity building, and knowledge exchange. The work of CCFSC is guided by a broad concept of community safety and well-being that includes thorough local assessments and planning processes, a variety of preventative measures, multi-sectoral dialogues, and public engagement. Our work is rooted in the understanding of social determinants of justice and focuses on wellness as a key component of how community safety is established. Therefore, these efforts go beyond criminal legal responses and reduce reliance on enforcement. We understand that communities are best positioned to work with local and regional agencies and partners to identify specific service needs and address the root causes of violence, victimization, and sense of safety.

CCFSC's approach examines the importance of prevention and social development as means of increasing community wellness with an eye towards long-term and sustainable change, rather than

merely reactive responses. Our work follows, contributes to, and adheres to the best practices of community safety and well-being.

Research Design

The following research questions were established to guide the direction of this project:

- 1) What are the best practices and underlying justifications generally associated with Community Safety and Well-being Planning in Canada and internationally?
- 2) What Community Safety and Well-being plans and councils (if any) currently exist within the CRD? What other related initiatives, strategies and programs exist?
- 3) What Regional Community Safety and Well-being plans and councils exist across Canada?
- 4) What are the benefits and challenges of approaching CSWB planning from a regional perspective? What models for the governance and implementation of regional plans exist?

These research questions were designed to collect a broad range of information and experiences pertaining to the development of regional CSWB plans, including an understanding of best practices more broadly, as well as localized knowledge emerging directly from the various municipalities, electoral areas, and First Nation communities within the CRD.

Methodology

This project gathered existing academic and grey literature, relevant documents from within the CRD, as well as primary quantitative and qualitative data through the use of surveys and interviews. The data collection process for each of these phases is detailed below.

Literature Review

CCFSC conducted a scoping literature review to gather relevant literature, including both academic and grey sources, to inform this report. Specifically, the literature review sought information related to best practices for community safety and well-being planning in Canada and internationally, as well as any available information on community safety councils. Grey literature—defined as materials produced outside of traditional academic publishing, such as government reports, policy briefs, organizational documents, and strategy papers—was included given the limited availability of peer-reviewed sources on community safety and well-being planning.

Both Google Scholar and University library websites were utilized in this search.

The below search terms were used to collect relevant literature for each research question:

1. "community safety and well-being" AND "regional" ($n=20$)
2. "community safety and well-being" AND "best practice" ($n=23$)
3. "community safety and well-being planning" ($n=30$)

The search was limited to articles authored between 2016 – present.

In total, the search terms produced 73 results. However, there was a significant amount of duplication in these results. After removing duplicates, articles were screened for the following inclusion criteria:

- Available in English or French
- Relevance to research questions based on initial screening of abstract
- Free/accessible

Screening was an iterative process to continue to remove non-pertinent sources according to the inclusion/exclusion criteria. After screening, 34 articles remained for inclusion within this scoping literature review.

Environmental Scan

This process involved gathering relevant existing materials from within the CRD, as well as across Canada more broadly. A list of these items is provided in Appendices IV and V. The following types of documents were gathered and analyzed for themes, areas of overlap, and to identify existing gaps:

- Examples of Community Safety & Well-Being Councils ($n=8$)
- Existing Community Safety & Well-Being plans from within the CRD (or similar plans, such as gun and gang violence prevention strategies, homelessness strategies, community plans, etc.) ($n=22$)
 - Note: the survey (detailed below) surfaced an additional 3 plans not included in the original scan. The total number of existing strategies/plans after the survey is 25.
- Examples of Regional Community Safety & Well-Being plans from across Canada ($n=19$), which is provided in Appendix V.
 - Note: The regions included vary widely in terms of population size, geography, and governance structure. Some represent large, urbanized areas with multiple municipalities and highly diverse populations, while others are moderately sized or predominantly rural regions that span townships, counties, and in some cases, First Nations communities.

Data collection

Lastly, primary qualitative and quantitative data was collected through a process of surveys and interviews.

- 1) Surveys: The “Identifying Regional Possibilities for Community Safety & Well-Being in the Capital Region District” Survey was hosted by the CRD for 4 weeks between November – December 2024. During this time, 34 submissions were received. This was a targeted survey, narrowly distributed and focused on soliciting feedback from organizations/professional networks across the CRD. The survey was distributed by members of the project team and the advisory committee. Participants represented a wide range of sectors, including public health, housing, policing, post-secondary, mental health, Indigenous-serving organizations, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, disability organizations and the business community, among others. The survey queried topics such as perceived benefits of regional community safety and well-being

planning, potential challenges of a regional planning process, as well as options for governance of a regional plan. The survey is attached as Appendix I.

2) Interviews:

- a. CRD Interviews: Ten interviews were conducted with organizational contacts within the Capital Region District. Participants were identified through the project's advisory committee, the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities' (CCFSC) existing networks, and survey respondents who expressed interest in a follow-up conversation. Interview participants represented a wide range of sectors, and explored similar themes to the survey, including perceived benefits and challenges of a regional planning process, gaps that a CSWB strategy could address, and preferences regarding plan development, implementation, and governance.
- b. Regional Interviews: In addition, five interviews were completed with representatives from regions across Canada that have developed and implemented regional CSWB plans. These interviews focused more specifically on the rationale behind adopting a regional approach, how the planning process was structured, and the challenges and successes encountered throughout development and implementation. Participants also reflected on the impact of their plans to date. To preserve confidentiality, the specific regions represented in the interviews are not disclosed.

Interview guides for both groups are included in Appendices II and III, respectively.

Results

The results of this research are divided into two subsections. First, *Best Practices and Insights of Regional CSWB Plans*, offers foundational knowledge to understand common experiences, best practices and lessons learned from regional CSWB planning. The second subsection, *Local Context and Preferences in the CRD*, explores the specific needs, priorities, and preferences expressed by CRD partners regarding the potential development of a regional CSWB plan.

Best Practices and Insights into Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Plans

The following section outlines key principles and components that contribute to the development and implementation of regional CSWB plans. It draws on a targeted literature review, practitioner experience, interviews with regions that have implemented CSWB plans, and a scan of 19 regional plans from across Canada.

This portion of results addresses three of the guiding research questions:

1. What are the best practices and underlying justifications generally associated with Community Safety and Well-being Planning in Canada and internationally?
3. What Regional Community Safety and Well-being plans and councils exist across Canada?

4. What are the benefits and challenges of approaching CSWB planning from a regional perspective? What models for the governance and implementation of regional plans exist?

Key Principles of Effective CSWB Planning

The following outlines foundational principles that contribute to effective, inclusive, and sustainable CSWB planning in a regional context.

Flexibility in Approach

The literature consistently reinforces that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to community safety and well-being planning, and that blanket approaches will rarely respond to a community’s needs and interests (Michalski *et al.*, 2023). A successful approach must be tailored to local demographics, geography, legislative frameworks, funding availability, and the level of local support. Flexibility is often required throughout the planning process, with adjustments made as new needs and contexts emerge (Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, 2020).

These findings were reinforced by interview participants from regions that have already developed and implemented CSWB plans. Many interviewees cautioned against rigid or “cookie-cutter” approaches, instead emphasizing the importance of designing processes that are grounded in local values, relationships, and community conditions. A flexible, responsive approach was seen as critical to supporting both buy-in and long-term success—particularly in regional contexts where municipalities vary in capacity, resources, and priorities.

A Holistic Approach

Drawing from both practitioner experience and the literature, the framework of community safety and well-being incorporates environmental, social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual domains that contribute to a community’s needs and priorities (Michalski *et al.*, 2023). Often, when people think about community safety, they think of enforcement and justice concerns, which are an important component of CSWB planning. However, community safety is about much more than just enforcement; it is about working towards long-term, collaborative efforts to address the root causes of crime and harm.

The [community safety and well-being planning framework](#), as developed by the Government of Ontario (2021), emphasizes that planning process and local plans should incorporate the domains of social development, prevention, risk intervention, and incident response to ensure that local plans are efficient and effective. This investment in prevention, in addition to response, has been demonstrated as cost effective, and the return on investment of prevention initiatives is well-documented in research. Moreover, prevention-based interventions often garner public support (Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, 2016). Appendix VI provides a variety of tools available on general practices for community safety and well-being.

Centering Relationships and Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

Literature, practitioner knowledge, and interviews all emphasize that community collaboration should be foundational across all phases of CSWB planning.

A multi-sectoral approach is essential, as no single sector can address the complex contributors to safety and well-being alone (World Health Organization, 2020). Benefits of collaboration include broader issue understanding, diverse problem-solving skills, and the ability to close service gaps (Nilson, 2018). Evidence also shows that cities with strong cross-sector coordination have lower rates of youth violence (Smith, 2018).

Several factors strengthen collaboration: a history of working together, clear incentives, knowledge sharing, trust, proximity, and strong communication among members (Boughzala & Briggs, 2012; Broom & Avanzino, 2010; Knobens & Oerlemans, 2006; Nilson, 2018; Weaver, 2017). Literature and resources on community engagement and multi-sectoral collaboration are available for further consideration by the CRD, with examples provided in Appendix VI.

Key Bodies in CWB Planning and Implementation

The following outlines the key components that contribute to the development and implementation of effective regional CSWB plans. Drawing from a review of 19 regional plans across Canada, interviews with regions that have implemented plans, and relevant literature, it highlights the structural, procedural, and relational elements that have supported success in various contexts.

Steering Committee

Steering Committees serve as the primary leadership and decision-making body guiding the development of CSWB plans. In the sample of 19 regional CSWB plans reviewed, the strong majority (16) established a new steering committee or leadership body specifically to guide the development of their plan. One region used an existing body, as they already had a regional leadership structure in place that was deemed capable of meeting the needs of the process. In two cases, it was unclear from the available documentation whether a new or existing committee had been used.

The following considerations emerged as important in shaping the composition and structure of steering committees across regions with existing CSWB plans. For practical examples from existing regional plans that reflect these considerations, see Appendix V2.

- **Multi-Sectoral Representation:** In regions that have implemented a regional CSWB plan, key sectors such as policing, education, health, business and community or social services are consistently represented. Steering committee members typically serve as sector representatives, rather than as delegates of specific organizations. This approach is intended to ensure that decision-making is informed by the broader needs, trends, and challenges within each sector, rather than the interests of individual agencies.
- **Geographic and Municipal Representation:** Most steering committees overseeing regional CSWB plans include representation from local municipalities, cities, and townships. This representation typically takes the form of either senior municipal staff—such as Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) or City Managers—or elected officials, including city mayors and municipal or regional councillors.

- **Representation of Focused Populations:** According to CCFSC’s Practitioner Guide on Community Safety and Well-Being (2020, p. 20), focused populations are “people with increased likelihood to be victimized,” including Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, older adults, persons with disabilities, youth, women and girls, racialized populations, and faith communities. Representation of these groups on CSWB steering committees varied. Some regions prioritized senior leadership from large institutions, while others focused on including organizations serving focused populations.
- **Representation of Indigenous-Serving Organizations and First Nations Communities:** Based on the review of publicly available regional CSWB plans and accompanying interview data, representation from Indigenous-serving organizations on steering committees was identified in fewer than half of the plans. Where included, this often took the form of participation from Indigenous-serving organizations such as Indigenous Friendship Centers or Indigenous Health Access Centers. Direct representation from First Nation communities was rare.
- **Considerations about Police:** The sample of regional CSWB plans reviewed indicates that police services are represented on all steering committees, with several regions designating police leadership as co-chairs. While police involvement is a consistent feature across regional models, the extent of their leadership and influence varies considerably. These findings suggest that although police participation is standard practice, regional approaches differ in how law enforcement is positioned—ranging from an equal partner within a multi-sectoral framework to a more central leadership role.

Secondary Committees

Findings from the regional plan review and interviews indicate that more than half of existing regional CSWB plans include additional committees to support plan development. These committees vary in purpose, with some serving as advisory bodies, data committees, or logistical support teams. Many regions also have a secretariat or coordinating body responsible for day-to-day operations, such as engagement coordination, drafting the plan, and managing collaborative planning tables. While these teams are typically housed within regional governments, some are embedded within municipal governments or police services.

Secondary Committees Example: Peel Region

System Leadership Table (steering committee), is supported by 7 additional committees:

- Extended Leadership Table: community representatives, content experts and elected officials
- Governance and Operations Table: oversees coordination and development
- Data, Monitoring and Evaluation Table: lead in development of indicator framework, and supports with evaluation
- 3 Action Tables [Family Violence, Mental Health and Addictions, Systemic Discrimination]: tasked with setting priorities and identifying key strategies and actions within each focus area
- Secretariat: housed by Region of Peel, provides backbone support for plan development

For additional examples of secondary committees, see Appendix V2.

Data Collection and Community Engagement

Creating a community profile through assessment is vital to identifying safety and well-being issues, available resources, and service gaps. Collecting data grounds plans in evidence (Scottish Police Authority, 2021) and ensures local knowledge and expertise shape decision-making (Michalski et al., 2023). Participatory approaches are especially important in regional planning, where residents often feel excluded from decision-making processes dominated by those with more power and resources (Michalski et al., 2023). Bottom-up participation is critical (Mass Casualty Commission, 2020), with a unique need to prioritize community input in regional settings (Veckalne & Tambovceva, 2022), given the perception that this is ignored in regional decision-making processes.

Interviews and regional plan reviews confirmed that data collection and community engagement are foundational to developing regional CSWB plans. Regions used a mix of existing data—such as police reports, public health trends, census data, service usage, and action plans—and primary data collected through community engagement.

Using both quantitative and qualitative data provides a fuller understanding of risks and protective factors. CCFSC, for example, combines survey data with targeted community engagement to capture underrepresented voices, and uses asset mapping to coordinate local resources. CCFSC's guides on conducting community assessments are available in Appendix VI.

All reviewed CSWB plans emphasized community engagement with governments, service providers, and residents. Methods included surveys, focus groups, sharing circles, interviews, and roundtables. Some regions prioritized institutional voices, while others centered equity-deserving groups, such as 2SLGBTQ+ communities, seniors, people with disabilities, and those with lived experience. Despite targeted efforts, challenges remained in reaching rural and underrepresented populations due to transportation, accessibility, and resource barriers.

Interviewees stressed that meaningful engagement—particularly with Indigenous and equity-deserving groups—requires building trust, using culturally responsive approaches, and establishing ongoing relationships. Effective engagement should prioritize outreach to historically excluded groups, offer multiple engagement formats, use trauma-informed facilitation, work through trusted community organizations, and communicate clearly about how participant input will shape decisions.

Community Engagement Example: Kent County

Employed a multi-tiered engagement strategy to inform plan development, which included:

- **Community Survey:** Open to all residents of Kent County to gather broad input
- **General Consultations:** Hosted in each municipality within the county, organized in partnership with local leaders and community organizations
- **Targeted Consultations:** 13 identified groups, both geographic communities, and identity-based populations, including Indigenous communities, newcomers, immigrants, and youth

For additional examples of data collection and community engagement, see Appendix V2.

Governance and Implementation

Strong governance and implementation models are widely identified in the literature as essential components of effective CSWB planning. While the ability to establish permanent coordination structures varies from community to community, the development of a dedicated body—whether a city-level board or a public department—is recognized as a best practice (Waller, 2021; Eurosocal, 2015). These bodies are ideally supported by a core budget, political leadership, and skilled staff to foster collaboration, mobilize resources, and promote public engagement (Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, 2017). Cities with such offices have reported up to 50% reductions in certain crime types within a few years (Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, 2017).

A regional example is the Halifax Regional Municipality, which created a Centre of Responsibility (CoR) to guide its Public Safety Strategy. The CoR provides training, program development, evaluation, and public engagement support (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2023). Should the CRD pursue a similar model, it can draw from this approach.

Another governance model often supported by CCFSC is [constellation governance](#), which brings together multiple groups around a shared goal (Centre for Social Innovation, 2005). A stewardship team maintains strategic alignment, while action teams—small, flexible, and time-limited—lead specific initiatives (Surman & Surman, 2008).

Interviews and regional plan reviews showed that many regions have adopted similar multi-tiered governance models. Most maintain a central steering committee, often evolving from the original plan development group, to provide oversight and coordinate across action tables or working groups. Implementation work is typically advanced through these smaller groups, which foster cross-sector collaboration and locally grounded responses.

The number and structure of action tables varies: some regions maintain many long-standing tables (up to 15), while others form a few short-term groups focused on priority themes. Existing networks are often leveraged, with flexibility emphasized to tailor strategies to local needs and contexts.

To support coordination, many regions have established Secretariat teams within regional governments. These teams handle logistics, alignment, and progress monitoring. In some cases, dedicated coordinator roles or permanent offices have also been created, reinforcing the backbone supports identified as best practices.

Implementation Example: Dufferin County
• CSWB Integration Table: Transitioned from the original Advisory (Steering) Committee into an implementation-focused role. Responsibilities include: - o Ensuring coordination and balance across focus areas - o Supporting a collaborative response - o Promoting alignment and shared practices across the broader CSWB framework • Lead Tables: 5 Lead Tables designated for each priority area to guide implementation. - o Built on existing partnerships and structures by using existing planning tables already active in the county

For additional examples of governance and implementation, see Appendix V2.

Evaluation and Monitoring

While the adage “What gets measured, gets done” holds true, outcome and impact measurement in the CSWB field remains limited, as it is still an emerging discipline. Early CSWB efforts often focus on building consistency rather than measuring long-term progress. As a result, many evaluations have been formative, with limited outcome measurement. Regional planning offers an opportunity to align measurement efforts across municipalities toward shared CSWB priorities.

Monitoring and evaluation should be integrated with the data collection process, as key performance indicators (City of Kenora, 2025) can guide what baseline data is collected. While the effects of CSWB strategies may take time to emerge, the early impact of collaborative efforts can often be assessed and monitored throughout implementation. Publicly available tools for monitoring and evaluation are provided in Appendix VI.

Findings from interviews and regional plan reviews reinforce these observations. Regions adopted a range of evaluation methods, including dashboard tracking, initiative-specific performance metrics, and action table progress reporting. Larger or more urbanized regions were more likely to use real-time tracking, while others focused on shorter-term outcomes like improved access to housing or mental health supports.

Several regions adopted developmental or learning-based evaluation models, which allow flexibility as community needs evolve. Interviewees emphasized embedding evaluation early in the process, aligning it with initial data collection and engagement strategies. Identifying clear indicators at the outset was seen as crucial for tracking impact and ensuring long-term accountability.

Despite these efforts, evaluation remains a significant challenge. In over half of the CSWB plans reviewed, evaluation frameworks were vague or absent. Regions cited limited time, resources, and capacity as major barriers, and several highlighted the difficulty of measuring collaborative processes and relationship-building—core aspects of CSWB work not easily captured by traditional metrics.

Evaluation Example: Halifax Regional Municipality

Two-part evaluation approach:

1. Milestones established for each strategic action through the annual business planning cycle
2. Research and evaluation efforts focus on four impact areas:
 - Community safety and well-being
 - Harm reduction and prevention
 - Ecosystem development
 - Reduced pressures on the justice system

Evaluation draws on existing data sources, including:

- Police, fire, and emergency services data
- 311 call data

- Resident surveys
- Provincial datasets

Additional data includes service-specific indicators and input from service users via interviews and focus groups

For additional examples of evaluation, see Appendix V2.

Funding Considerations

Long-term, sustainable funding for CSWB processes and implementation is considered a best practice (Mass Casualty Commission, 2020; Waller, 2021). Many CSWB initiatives rely on staff managing efforts alongside other duties, though some communities have funded dedicated positions to support coordination. Municipalities that have seen success often created CSWB-specific funds and/or partnered with community organizations, police, and businesses to share investment. Securing funding can be difficult, making early discussions of available resources—including in-kind contributions—critical.

Plan Development: Across regions reviewed, most CSWB plan development relied on in-kind contributions from regional governments and, in some cases, police services. In the absence of dedicated funding streams, planning work was typically absorbed into existing roles within departments like planning, public health, or social development.

Some regions funded plan development through their regional tax base, allowing for dedicated budgets and, in some cases, full-time coordinator roles. At least one region partnered with a post-secondary institution to support data collection through a student placement. At least seven regions engaged external CSWB experts to assist with plan development, either leading specific components like engagement strategies or co-leading the entire process.

Despite these strategies, resource limitations were a frequent challenge, with staff—especially in social services and equity-focused sectors—often stretched thin.

Plan Implementation: Interviews revealed that funding challenges persist into the implementation phase. Most regions relied heavily on in-kind contributions, with few securing new, dedicated funding streams. Initiatives were often integrated into existing departmental work, requiring reallocation of existing resources. Interviewees emphasized that this constrained the scale, scope, and sustainability of CSWB efforts, with staff again facing increased strain.

Some regions, however, secured targeted funding. For example, Niagara Region (2021, p. 2) extended a temporary CSWB Coordinator role into the implementation phase. [York Region secured \\$7.3 million over four years through the federal Building Safer Communities Fund](#) to support place-based, community-led initiatives addressing youth violence and broader social determinants.

A few regions established permanent Crime Prevention Offices, such as the former [Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council](#) (1995–2022) and [Halifax Regional Municipality’s Public Safety Strategy](#). Based on CCFSC research, the annual crime prevention office in most cities ranges between \$1 to \$2 per citizen, or \$2 per average household, which is an important consideration for the CRD in considering future implementation costs (Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention, 2017). Further resources on Crime Prevention Offices can be found in [Municipal Crime Prevention Offices: Importance, Role, Function, and Models](#) (2017).

Overall Benefits and Challenges of a Regional CSWB Plan Approach

This section explores the key advantages and limitations of regional CSWB planning, drawing on both literature and the experiences of regions with existing plans.

Benefits of Regional CSWB Planning

In the literature, regional planning processes are noted as beneficial to encouraging community collaboration and aligning local plans and policies towards shared regional goals, as well as improving efficiency and enhancing capacity in local government service provision (Tavares, 2018).

These benefits were echoed by interviewees from regions with existing CSWB plans. The most significant advantage identified was the strengthening of cross-sectoral collaboration, with participants emphasizing the value of breaking down silos and fostering partnerships across regions. Regional planning was also seen as an effective way to address shared challenges and align goals, strategies, and initiatives across municipalities. Community involvement emerged as another key strength, with the regional process offering a unique opportunity for broad public input, which helps create a comprehensive and representative approach.

In addition, regional planning facilitated strong data collection efforts by integrating existing datasets from multiple jurisdictions with newly gathered community input. This allowed for a fulsome and interconnected understanding of local priorities. Finally, strong and diverse leadership was highlighted as a critical success factor, with interviewees noting that regional plans benefited from leadership tables that could leverage influence across sectors and municipalities, reinforcing commitment, coordination, and accountability at a larger scale.

Challenges of Regional CSWB Planning

Based on the limited literature available, some key challenges of regional CSWB plans have been identified. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that regional approaches to planning, rather than more localized approaches, are not as well received by the public who may express concern about cross-community cooperation (Steiner & Kaiser, 2016). In practice, however, it is difficult to generalize the impact of regional amalgamations and projects on public perceptions. Some communities create new attachments to a regional approach, while others struggle to achieve the same kind of attachment to a new regional identity (Jakobsen & Kjaer, 2016). In addition, cost savings are not supported as a key outcome as one might assume, as the research notes that while some expenditures are reduced, others are increased (Tavares, 2018).

Other challenges have been identified by interviews with regions with existing CSWB plans. Mentioned by most participants, complexity of regional coordination was a significant challenge, as managing collaboration across multiple municipalities, police services, and health networks, among others, can require substantial effort. Structural and political barriers also presented hurdles to both consensus-building and implementation. Some regions had conflicts between municipal and regional governments, tensions in police leadership, and public impatience with long-term systemic change. Additionally, shifting from a government-driven model of community safety to a collaborative, community-led approach requires a cultural shift, which was not always seamless. Funding constraints were also named as a challenge as most lacked dedicated funding and relied on in-kind contributions from various sectors. This constraint often placed additional strain on teams that were already operating with limited resources.

Ensuring broad and equitable representation proved difficult across all regions interviewed, particularly in rural and geographically dispersed areas where engagement efforts required additional time and resources. Additionally, interviewees noted challenges in engaging diverse communities, as some groups faced barriers to participation, and efforts to include marginalized voices did not always fully capture the breadth of regional diversity. This was particularly true for the involvement and inclusion of Indigenous communities.

Regional Versus Municipal CSWB Planning

The decision to pursue a municipal or regional CSWB planning approach depends on the unique context, conditions, and governance structures of each municipality or region in Canada. As noted earlier, there is no one-size-fits-all model for CSWB planning. Each approach brings distinct opportunities and challenges, and must be tailored to reflect the specific needs, resources, and priorities within a given area.

Rationale for Adopting a Regional Approach

In interviews with the five regions that have existing regional CSWB plans, participants were asked to explain why a regional approach was selected - four primary themes emerged from their responses:

- **Legislative Requirement:** A key driver for some was the legislative requirement in Ontario, which designated upper-tier municipalities (e.g., regions or counties) as the lead entities for CSWB planning when there is more than one lower-tier municipality.
- **Cross-Sectoral Collaboration for Complex Issues:** Participants emphasized the need for a collaborative, cross-sectoral approach to effectively address complex and systemic issues that transcend municipal boundaries.
- **Alignment of Regional Services:** In some regions, key services - such as policing, health care and education - are planned and delivered at the regional level, making a regional framework more appropriate and efficient.
- **Coordinated Continuum of Supports:** Some respondents highlighted a commitment to proactive crime prevention and upstream intervention, noting that a regional approach enables

a broader and more cohesive system of support and care across municipalities with shared challenges.

Benefits and Challenges of Regional vs. Municipal Approach

This research project was designed specifically to explore considerations related to regional community safety and well-being planning, rather than to compare regional and municipal approaches. As such, the research questions and overall scope were centered on understanding regional planning models, identifying best practices, and generating recommendations to inform the Capital Regional District's approach to regional CSWB planning. In alignment with this focus, the data collection process prioritized literature on regional planning from across Canada and engaged individuals with direct experience in regional planning processes, meaning they did not necessarily offer insights related to municipal planning. Therefore, the research findings do not include a comparative analysis between regional and municipal planning. However, the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities has extensive experience supporting municipalities with CSWB planning and is deeply familiar with the relevant research and evidence in that area. Drawing on this organizational expertise, the following section presents a comparison of the benefits and challenges of regional versus municipal planning. While this comparative lens was not a part of the original research objectives, it is included here as an additional tool to help support CRD's decision-making process.

Benefits of Municipal vs. Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Planning		
Aspect	Municipal Planning	Regional Planning
Scope	Focused on a single municipality's needs, priorities, and context.	Encompasses multiple municipalities or jurisdictions for coordinated planning.
Local Relevance	Deep understanding of local issues, demographics, and service needs.	Can identify shared issues across municipalities and address them collectively.
Community Engagement	Easier to engage local residents, organizations, and service providers.	Can engage broader regional service providers and institutions.
Flexibility	More agile in adapting to local changes and tailoring interventions.	Enables regional alignment of services, reducing duplication and enhancing collaboration.
Governance and Accountability	Clear structure tied to municipal leadership and local decision-makers.	Potential for joint governance models and shared accountability across jurisdictions.
Resource Sharing	May be able to focus on available local resources efficiently.	Can pool and share resources across municipalities to address gaps and reduce inefficiencies.
Consistency in Policy	Tailored policies that reflect unique local contexts.	Promotes consistent policies and approaches across the region.

Advocacy and Policy Influence	Stronger voice on hyper-local issues with municipal or provincial reps.	Regional collaboration can amplify advocacy efforts and policy influence with higher levels of government.
Cost Effectiveness	More direct allocation of resources to identified local priorities.	Economies of scale can be realized through shared services and infrastructure.
Crisis Communication and Response	Immediate and localized emergency response strategies.	More coordinated regional response to cross-jurisdictional crises or emergencies.
Equity-Centered Approaches	Actions can be designed to meet the needs of specific local equity-deserving populations.	Opportunity to address inequities at scale and support underserved areas across the region.

Challenges of Municipal vs. Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Planning		
Aspect	Municipal Planning	Regional Planning
Capacity	Smaller municipalities may lack staffing, expertise, or funding for comprehensive planning.	Coordination across jurisdictions is complex and requires dedicated resources.
Alignment of Priorities	Risk of siloed approaches and inconsistency with neighboring municipalities.	May be hard to reconcile differing local priorities, political agendas, and timelines.
Resource Distribution	Local competition for limited funding or services.	Challenges in equitably distributing resources across diverse communities.
Implementation	Local plans may lack leverage over systems managed at regional or provincial levels.	Risk of regional plans lacking specificity or clear actions within individual municipalities.
Political Will	May fluctuate with local leadership, affecting continuity.	Requires sustained buy-in from multiple political entities and elected officials.
Conflicting Priorities	Needs may differ even within a single municipality, creating internal tensions.	Various municipalities (including rural, urban, and Indigenous communities) may have different needs that are hard to balance regionally. Risk that regional plans prioritize urban needs.
Funding	Municipalities may struggle to secure sustainable or adequate funding.	Coordinating shared funding sources and equitable contributions can be politically and logistically difficult.

Research Limitations

The above results section is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. A significant proportion of the regional CSWB plans examined—15 of the 19—were developed in Ontario, where provincial legislation outlines specific requirements for CSWB planning at the regional level. As a result, many of the themes, processes, and implementation models discussed in this report reflect Ontario’s policy and funding context and may not be directly transferable to other provinces or territories with different jurisdictional structures, mandates, and priorities.

More broadly, each region across Canada operates within its own unique context—shaped by factors such as geography, population size, political structure, community priorities, and available resources—making it difficult to draw universal conclusions across all regional models. While common themes and best practices have emerged, the findings should be understood as reflective of the sampled plans and interviews rather than prescriptive across all settings.

Furthermore, the sample of 19 regional plans relied on publicly accessible information. This means that some relevant documents, updates, or materials may not have been captured—particularly if they were distributed across multiple platforms or embedded in other documents (e.g.: meeting minutes). Additionally, there is no standardized format for how regional CSWB plans are shared or maintained online, especially when it comes to implementation updates and evaluation outcomes. These inconsistencies made it challenging to compare plans comprehensively and may have led to the exclusion of more current or detailed material. Furthermore, there is limited published literature specific to regional CSWB plans, which narrowed the scope of academic guidance and grey literature available to support the review.

These limitations do not undermine the value of the findings, but they highlight the importance of considering contextual differences and information gaps when drawing insights from this review.

Summary

In summary, the findings outlined above highlight the key principles, components, benefits, and challenges that shape regional CSWB planning. While there is no one-size-fits-all model, common practices—such as flexible, community-driven processes, strong multi-sectoral collaboration, and inclusive governance—can guide future efforts. These insights offer a foundation for shaping a responsive, equitable, and effective approach to regional CSWB planning in the CRD and directly inform the recommendations that follow.

Local Context and Preferences in the CRD

This subsection of results draws on a combination of environmental scan findings and insights from 34 survey responses and 10 interviews conducted with partners across the Capital Regional District (CRD). The environmental scan focused on identifying existing strategies, plans, and initiatives that align with the goals of CSWB planning, while the engagement questions were designed to explore local perspectives on regional coordination, perceived advantages, and conditions for effective collaboration.

These results respond directly to our second research question: *What Community Safety and Well-Being plans and councils (if any) currently exist within the CRD? What other related initiatives, strategies, and programs exist?* It also partially addresses the fourth research question: *What are the benefits and challenges of approaching CSWB planning from a regional perspective? What models for the governance and implementation of regional plans exist?* Specifically, this section responds to the first part of that question—but only as *anticipated* benefits and challenges—as no formal CSWB plans or councils were identified within the CRD.

What currently exists within the CRD?

This research did not identify any existing Community Safety & Well-Being plans or councils within the CRD. The City of Victoria’s CSWB Plan is currently under development and is scheduled to be delivered to Council for consideration in “early 2025” (City of Victoria, n.d.). However, a number of related strategies, and initiatives, most developed within the last 5 years, emerged in the environmental scan that could be relevant to include in the development of a Regional CSWB plan.

Of the 22 publicly available, existing strategies found:

- 3 were related to health, both physical and mental health,
- 9 were related to housing, including housing needs profiles, Point in Time counts, and needs assessments,
- 1 was related to law enforcement,
- 5 were community profiles or plans established by their respective electoral area or municipality,
- 3 were categorized as “other”.

The list of these documents is included as Appendix IV. It is unlikely that this list is exhaustive; should the CRD proceed with a CSWB plan, the Advisory committee for the project would be helpful in gathering additional strategies and documents for inclusion in a robust community profile.

As noted, almost half of the available documents are related to housing. Several municipalities and electoral districts within the CRD have conducted housing needs assessments, created housing strategies, or conducted PIT counts since 2019. The District of [Saanich](#), Town of [Sidney](#), the [Southern Gulf Islands](#), as well as the CRD more broadly have examined emerging issues of housing affordability, homelessness and trends in urban and rural housing needs.

There is some general alignment on housing specific needs throughout the CRD, with some local variations. For example, Victoria, Saanich, Sidney and the Southern Gulf Islands all have housing needs assessments or related reports from within the last 5 years that identify a greater need for more affordable housing options in their respective areas (Capital Region District, 2022; Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, 2023; District of Saanich, 2020; Urban Matters Ltd., 2019). The Victoria and Saanich reports emphasize the growing needs of those experiencing visible homelessness, and the reports from Sidney and Southern Gulf Islands focus on those who are at risk of homelessness, due to spending more than 30% of their income on their housing costs, particularly in the rental market. There are also regional similarities across the CRD in housing, namely housing affordability, a lack of rental market options, and gaps in Indigenous housing options, as well as supportive housing options. Such similarities and unique local considerations should be accounted for in a regional planning process; a comparative analysis of available strategies and documents across the CRD would be crucial to understand common challenges, strengths, and gaps in services.

There is also a wealth of existing information within the CRD on health – both physical and mental, including local health area profiles through [Island Health](#), which provide a wealth of information on the social determinants of health. Of the 16 unique districts within the CRD, all have publicly available health profiles through Island Health, however, these profiles have not been updated since 2019.

There are also initiatives closely related to CSWB planning in, for example, Sooke and the Westshore, that involve system level collaboration to address issues closely related to community safety and well-being. [The Village Initiative](#), for example, is a multi-sectoral, collaborative project focused on child and youth well-being. It shares a similar purpose, governance structure, decision making approach and representative membership to what is often used in CSWB planning and could be duplicated should a planning process be undertaken.

Only one report specific to law enforcement surfaced in our environmental scan; the current [Strategic Plan for the Saanich Police Department](#) (2023-2026), which incorporated similar practices in its development as a CSWB plan (i.e. community engagement efforts via surveys, focus groups, and interviews). While this data would now be a few years old, some may serve as baseline measurements from which to build off, such as perceptions of safety and security.

“Other” relevant identified documents included the [CRD’s 2023-2026 Board Priorities](#), The Victoria Foundation’s most recent [Vital Signs](#) report, as well as an internal presentation to the CRD Board of Directors (2023) regarding community safety and well-being planning.

While not required, existing strategic plans such as the ones outlined in Appendix IV within a municipality or region can “nest” under a broader community safety and well-being plan to ensure strategic alignment and shared goals. For example, the Saanich Police Department’s current [strategic plan](#) lists a strategic priority of addressing interpersonal violence in the community. The [Alliance to End Homelessness’ Community Plan to End Homelessness in the Capital Region](#) (2019-2024) lists five key community-based outcome areas, including ensuring support services have the

capacity to deliver needed services. Similarly, the [Capital Regional District 2023-2026 Board Priorities](#) could be strategically linked to a regional CSWB plan. If, after a process of development, similar strategic priorities and associated goals emerged in a regional planning process, aligning desired outcomes/impacts, as well as monitoring and evaluation efforts would create continuity with previously developed, related plans.

CSWB Plan Preference in the CRD

Across both interviews and surveys, there is strong support for a regional approach to CSWB planning within the CRD.

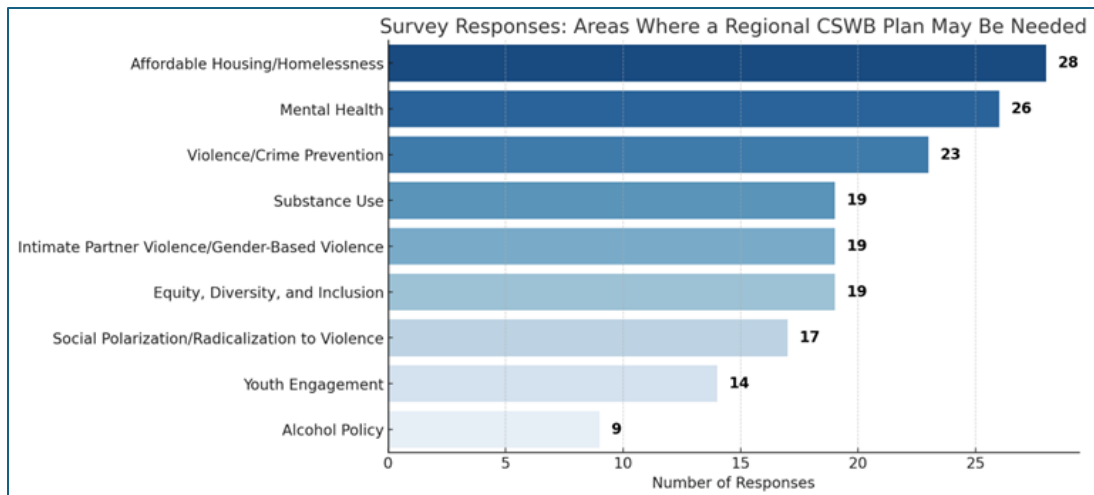
Of the 42 individuals who responded to the question on CSWB plan preference, 28 expressed a clear preference for a regional plan. Two respondents suggested a hybrid model, which still aligns with a regional approach, as it allows for localized implementation and municipal-level planning within a broader regional framework. Meanwhile, 7 were unsure, and 5 favored a municipal or electoral area-based approach.

Those who preferred a regional model highlighted several key benefits: it would prevent siloed planning across municipalities, promote collaboration and coordination, and allow for more efficient use of shared resources. Many emphasized that issues like homelessness, substance use, and crime are regional in nature and cannot be effectively addressed by municipalities acting alone. A regional approach was also seen as a way to ensure more equitable access to services and consistent safety policies across jurisdictions, particularly for residents who move frequently throughout the region. At the same time, most supporters of a regional plan acknowledged the importance of local flexibility—emphasizing that while regional coordination is necessary, implementation must remain responsive to the unique needs and governance structures of each community.

A smaller number of participants expressed a preference for a municipal or hybrid model. Some felt that municipalities are better positioned to address the unique needs of their communities and were concerned that a regional plan might overlook local realities or impose one-size-fits-all solutions. Others voiced skepticism about full regional coordination, suggesting that some local governments may be reluctant to participate or slow to engage. Those who favoured a hybrid approach envisioned a phased or layered model—where regional coordination sets broad priorities, but municipalities retain flexibility to lead implementation based on their own context, capacity, and readiness.

Identified Priorities for Regional CSWB Coordination in the CRD

Survey and interview participants were asked to identify issues that could benefit from a regional CSWB plan or initiative. Their responses point to both core service needs and deeper systemic challenges that a regional CSWB plan may be able to address.



Key Areas Identified:

1) Affordable Housing & Homelessness

This was the most frequently selected issue in the survey (28 responses) and a major theme in interviews. Participants highlighted the severe shortage of affordable housing—especially for low-income individuals, seniors, people with disabilities, and women experiencing domestic violence. Several interviewees noted a visible rise in people living in vehicles or on the street. One survey respondent emphasized that homelessness should be addressed separately from affordable housing, underscoring the complexity of housing insecurity and the need for both emergency and long-term solutions.

2) Mental Health & Substance Use

Mental health (26 responses) and substance use (19 responses) were among the top issues identified in the survey and deeply echoed in interviews. Participants pointed to a lack of accessible mental health services, crisis supports, and treatment options—particularly for people experiencing addiction. Interviewees also described how repeated exposure to trauma impacts frontline workers. A regional approach was seen as a way to strengthen early intervention, expand harm reduction, and reduce pressure on emergency services.

3) Violence & Crime Prevention

This issue was selected by 23 survey respondents and reinforced in interviews, where participants discussed rising crime in downtown areas, the need for crime prevention strategies, and more support for reintegration of individuals leaving correctional facilities. A coordinated regional strategy was seen as necessary to address both the causes and consequences of crime, especially in communities with limited local resources.

4) Youth Engagement & Safety

Though selected by 14 survey respondents, interviews added important context. Participants raised concerns about youth safety on public transit, poor lighting at bus stops, and walking

trails that feel unsafe after dark. There was also concern about youth carrying weapons for protection and a lack of inclusive spaces where youth can gather without stigma. Interviewees stressed that youth are significantly impacted by safety issues but are often excluded from decision-making and planning processes.

5) Equity, Discrimination & Inclusion

Equity, diversity, and inclusion was selected by 19 survey respondents, with interviews further emphasizing the need to address systemic racism, transphobia, colonial governance structures, and performative consultation. Participants called for culturally safe approaches grounded in relationships and trust-building, particularly with Indigenous, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. This theme also intersects with concerns about how safety is defined and for whom.

6) Social Polarization & Radicalization to Violence

Identified by 17 survey respondents, this theme reflects growing concern around community division, extremism, and hate-motivated violence. While not as prominent in interviews, participants did speak about the importance of fostering a greater sense of belonging and community cohesion—particularly in response to rising forms of racism and exclusion.

7) Public Perceptions of Safety vs. Actual Risk

Interviewees highlighted the disconnect between perceived safety and actual threats. Visible drug use, homelessness, and mental health challenges often shape public fears, despite evidence that these populations are more likely to be at risk than to pose a risk. A regional strategy was seen as a tool for shifting narratives through education, community dialogue, and inclusive public messaging.

8) Infrastructure, Transportation & Built Environment

Although not included in the survey list, this was a significant theme in interviews and appeared in the survey's "Other" responses. Concerns included poor sidewalk infrastructure, insufficient street lighting, unsafe crosswalks, and lack of transportation options in rural and suburban areas. Some participants noted that transportation barriers prevent access to healthcare, school, employment, and emergency services. Sidewalk safety and access to businesses were also raised as accessibility concerns, especially for people using mobility aids.

9) Governance, Communication & Service Coordination

Interviewees described decision-making processes as top-down, budget-driven, and disconnected from lived experience. Many called for a shift toward participatory governance, where communities are actively involved in shaping safety priorities. Participants also noted that siloed services often work in isolation, leading to duplication or missed opportunities for early intervention. A regional plan was viewed as a way to streamline collaboration, share resources, and ensure services are more responsive and equitable.

10) Climate, Environment & Emergency Preparedness

While mentioned only once in the survey’s “Other” category, this theme was reinforced through interviews. Participants described concerns such as air quality and the lack of emergency routes in the event of natural disasters or road closures. These environmental and infrastructure-related risks were seen as part of a broader understanding of safety—especially for children, seniors, and people with health conditions.

11) Economic Insecurity & Food Access

Though not a predefined survey category, economic stress was discussed in interviews, particularly the growing reliance on food banks and food programs. Participants pointed to the high cost of living and the difficulty of affording both housing and food. This was often tied to broader conversations about poverty reduction and the need for upstream solutions that support long-term well-being.

Anticipated Benefits of a Regional CSWB Plan in the CRD

Survey and interview participants were asked whether they believed a regional approach to community safety and well-being would be beneficial, and why. The majority expressed strong support, citing opportunities to improve coordination, reduce duplication, and ensure consistent and equitable service delivery across the region. Their responses revealed a shared belief that safety and well-being challenges do not stop at municipal boundaries—and that fragmented local approaches limit the potential for systemic change.

Level of Agreement:

In response to the survey question, *“To what extent do you believe a regional community safety and well-being plan would be beneficial?”*:

- 20 respondents strongly agreed
- 9 agreed
- 2 were neutral
- 1 disagreed
- 0 strong disagreed

Those who strongly agreed emphasized that regional coordination reflects the lived reality of residents who move between municipalities daily for work, school, and recreation. Several respondents cited the inefficiencies and inequities that stem from siloed local responses, noting that “these are issues affecting every municipality” and that “better coordination and collaboration is essential.” Others shared personal experiences with violence, lack of services, or ineffective governance, describing how a regional strategy could reduce duplication, support consistency, and improve emergency and climate-related preparedness. One participant put it simply: “Knock down the silos.”

Survey participants who agreed, but not strongly, often expressed conditional support—recognizing the potential benefits of regional planning, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining localized engagement and responsiveness to specific community needs. The one

respondent who disagreed raised concerns about governance, noting that regional initiatives are often managed ineffectively.

Core Benefits Identified by Survey and Interview Participants

Survey and interview participants identified a wide range of potential benefits that a regional CSWB plan could offer. The themes below are presented in order of how frequently they were selected in the survey, from most to least commonly identified. Interview insights are included to provide additional context and depth. Together, they reflect where participants saw the greatest value in a regional approach, particularly in areas where coordination, consistency, and equity are currently lacking.

1) Consistent Policies and Approaches Across the Region

This benefit was the highest ranked in the survey and one of the most prominent themes in interviews. Participants emphasized the importance of standardized service levels, policies, and protocols across municipalities, especially in areas like policing, emergency response, and social service access. Interviewees highlighted that inconsistent local practices can lead to confusion, unequal treatment, and jurisdictional disputes—especially for residents who move regularly between communities. A regional approach was seen as a way to reduce discrimination, eliminate arbitrary access barriers, and make the system easier to navigate for both residents and service providers.

2) Resource Sharing

Participants from both the survey and interviews strongly supported the idea that regional planning would allow for effective sharing of staff, funding, infrastructure, and facilities. Interviewees described current systems as fragmented and competitive, with different municipalities duplicating efforts or struggling to sustain services independently. A regional approach was seen as a way to pool resources for greater collective impact, especially during emergencies or resource constraints.

3) Improved Coordination Between Municipalities

Improved coordination was widely described as both a need and a major opportunity. Participants noted that municipalities often work in silos, even when addressing shared challenges. Interviewees described “turf wars” and bureaucratic slowdowns that a regional plan could help resolve. They emphasized the value of shared priorities, streamlined communication, and aligned actions to prevent gaps and reduce redundancies.

4) Stronger Advocacy and Policy Influence

Survey respondents and interviewees alike believed that a unified regional voice would have more power in advocating for funding, policy changes, and support from provincial or federal partners. Several participants noted that the fragmentation of 13 municipalities and 3 electoral districts undermines the region’s ability to push forward shared goals. A coordinated strategy would increase political influence and credibility.

5) Increased Capacity for Smaller Municipalities

This benefit had strong support across both data sources. Interviewees highlighted that smaller or rural municipalities often lack the resources, infrastructure, or staff capacity to implement their own CSWB strategies. A regional plan could ensure more equitable access to services, reduce dependence on urban cores (e.g., downtown Victoria), and empower all communities to participate in shared initiatives.

6) Cost Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness was viewed as a practical benefit of regional collaboration. Participants pointed out the financial inefficiencies of disconnected local planning efforts, consultant-driven studies with seemingly limited outcomes, and duplication across municipalities. A regional approach was seen as a way to maximize public dollars by focusing on collective priorities and shared systems.

Additional Benefits Emphasized in Interviews and Open-Ended Survey Responses

While “Other” was the lowest-ranked category in the survey, several of the themes raised through this open-ended option were considered significant—particularly because they closely aligned with insights that emerged during interviews. Although the following anticipated benefits were not included in the survey’s ranked question, they surfaced repeatedly across engagement formats and reflect key areas where a regional approach could offer meaningful impact.

- **Equity-Centered Approaches**

Participants identified equity as one of the most compelling reasons to pursue regional planning. A regional CSWB plan was seen as a vehicle to embed culturally safe, anti-oppressive practices across all municipalities, ensuring that residents experience inclusive, respectful service delivery regardless of where they live. Interviewees emphasized that systemic discrimination—such as racism, transphobia, and colonial governance structures—cannot be meaningfully addressed through fragmented, uneven local efforts.

By coordinating regionally, municipalities could work toward shared equity goals, consistent service standards, and participatory planning processes that reflect the lived experiences of Indigenous, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, and other marginalized communities. Many felt this was essential to avoid reinforcing existing inequities.

- **Proactive, Long-Term Safety Planning**

Participants described regional planning as an opportunity to shift away from reactive, crisis-driven responses and toward preventative, long-term strategies. Issues such as climate change, public health, housing instability, and overdose prevention require foresight and coordination—something that is difficult to achieve through disconnected local efforts.

A regional plan could enable municipalities to pool knowledge and resources, forecast risks, and collaborate on upstream solutions that reduce long-term harms. Participants stressed that this type of long-term thinking is often deprioritized at the local level due to budget pressures and short terms of elected officials.

- **Data-Driven Planning and Collaborative Learning**

Participants identified the potential for a regional CSWB plan to strengthen both evidence-based decision-making and inter-municipal learning. Currently, inconsistent data collection and reporting practices across municipalities limit the ability to track trends, evaluate outcomes, or coordinate responses. A regional plan could establish shared indicators, standardized data systems, and regional dashboards that improve visibility and accountability across the Capital Region.

In addition to strengthening internal planning, participants also emphasized the value of creating intentional learning structures across municipalities. A regional framework could support communities in sharing strategies, adapting what works elsewhere, and avoiding duplication. This was seen as especially important for smaller or under-resourced municipalities that may benefit from lessons learned in other parts of the region

- **Improved Crisis Communication and Response**

A regional CSWB plan was seen as a way to formalize and strengthen communication pathways during emergencies. Participants described how current responses are often fragmented, relying on informal networks or personal relationships to coordinate services across jurisdictions. A shared regional plan could allow for faster, more coordinated crisis responses, improving outcomes for residents and reducing duplication of efforts. This was especially emphasized in the context of extreme weather events, road closures, evacuations, and community-wide safety incidents.

Benefits Regional Planning from Previous Experience

In addition to the findings directly related to CSWB plans, CRD survey participants were asked whether they had previously been involved in developing or implementing a regional strategy, initiative, or program—and, if so, what strengths they observed. Among the seven participants who reported such experience, common advantages included improved collaboration and coordination, greater efficiency in addressing shared concerns, and enhanced community engagement. Participants also emphasized the value of shared resources, noting that pooling funding, expertise, and infrastructure across jurisdictions helped to maximize impact. Finally, they pointed to the benefit of greater consistency across municipalities, with regional planning helping to align policies and services and reduce fragmentation. These reflections reinforce the perceived strengths of regional CSWB planning, highlighting how coordinated approaches can support more effective and sustainable outcomes.

Anticipated Challenges of a Regional CSWB Plan in the CRD

While participants expressed strong support for a regional approach to community safety and well-being, they also identified several potential challenges that could affect the success or effectiveness of a regional approach. These challenges were identified through both a ranked survey question and qualitative interviews, revealing a shared understanding of the complexities involved in coordinating across diverse communities, jurisdictions, and political environments.

The themes below are presented in order of priority based on survey rankings, with additional context and insight drawn from participant interviews. Together, they highlight key concerns that may impact the success of a regional CSWB approach in the CRD.

1. Conflicting Priorities or Needs

Participants saw the diversity of communities within the CRD as both a strength and a potential barrier. Interviewees noted that each municipality has unique safety concerns, populations, and political contexts, which can make it difficult to establish common priorities. Several interviewees raised concerns about a “one-size-fits-all” approach, emphasizing the need for localized flexibility within a regional framework.

Others noted tension between short-term needs and long-term goals. While some organizations focus on immediate crisis response, others prioritize systemic, long-term change. Balancing these different approaches was seen as a potential source of conflict in regional CSWB planning.

2. Limited Political Will

The political dynamics of the region were seen as a major challenge. Interviewees raised concerns that some municipal leaders may resist regional collaboration, especially if they perceive it as threatening their autonomy or local control. There was also skepticism that municipalities would be willing to adopt shared funding models or make decisions that benefit the region as a whole if those decisions did not align with their own immediate priorities.

Several participants noted that regional decision-making is often influenced by political agendas, which may not align with community priorities or result in action that meets real-world needs. Others pointed to the short-term nature of political cycles as a barrier to sustained, long-term change.

3. Difficulty Coordinating Across Municipalities

Participants emphasized the logistical and cultural difficulties of coordinating across 13 municipalities and 3 electoral districts with different governance structures, policies, and service models. Interviewees described current collaboration as limited, with many municipalities and service providers operating in silos. The sheer size and diversity of the region was also flagged as a challenge, especially for rural and suburban areas that feel disconnected from urban centers.

Some worried that smaller municipalities might be overlooked in regional processes, while others expressed concern about creating large planning tables that become too complex or bureaucratic to function effectively.

4. Lack of Engagement

Interviewees stressed that meaningful community engagement—particularly with Indigenous communities—would be essential but also challenging. Participants warned against top-down consultation models that prioritize speed over relationship-building. Others spoke about the time and trust required for genuine engagement, and the need to honour cultural protocols, governance structures, and diverse worldviews.

There was concern that engagement could become tokenistic if it’s treated as a checkbox rather than a foundational part of the process. Several participants also noted that power dynamics at planning tables often exclude community voices in favour of institutional or government partners.

5. Lack of Funding

Funding was seen as both a practical and political barrier. Interviewees questioned whether sufficient resources would be allocated to support regional implementation, especially given the

bureaucratic delays and slow rollout of services often experienced in rural or underserved communities. Some worried that regional strategies would be designed but not resourced—resulting in policy without action.

Concerns were also raised about whether funding would be distributed equitably, with smaller or higher-needs municipalities potentially being left behind if allocations are based solely on population size or political influence.

6. Disproportionate Focus on Urban Needs and Realities

Both survey and interview participants raised concerns about urban-centric planning, particularly the risk that suburban or rural communities would not be well-represented in a regional plan. Conversely, some interviewees pointed out that urban centers like Victoria bear the brunt of social issues (e.g., homelessness, overdose response), while suburban and rural municipalities benefit from regional services but may contribute less.

This tension reflects a broader concern about fairness and shared responsibility across the region—and the need to develop a funding and planning model that reflects actual community needs, not just population counts or political agendas.

Additional Considerations Raised by Participants

Several other concerns were raised by a smaller number of interviewees and in open-ended survey responses. These include:

- Stigmatization of vulnerable populations: including people experiencing homelessness or substance use, and how these narratives can influence safety planning.
- Resistance to community-based solutions: Some local governments may avoid implementing inclusive services out of fear they will “attract” vulnerable populations.
- Data-sharing concerns: Participants raised questions about how information would be collected, stored, and used—especially where government surveillance or privacy are concerned.

Challenges of Regional Planning from Previous Experience

In addition to the anticipated challenges of CSWB plans, CRD survey participants were asked whether they had previously been involved in developing or implementing a regional strategy, initiative, or program—and, if so, what challenges they encountered. Among the seven participants who reported such experience, several common obstacles emerged.

A primary concern was the significant time and capacity required for regional planning, which can place added pressure on staff and leadership. Participants also noted resistance to change and decision-making hurdles, where discomfort among decision-makers, differing values, and unfamiliarity with collaborative governance structures led to challenges in aligning priorities and making regional decisions. Additionally, conflicting priorities between jurisdictions were highlighted as a source of tension, necessitating ongoing efforts to maintain cohesion and shared commitment.

These reflections underscore the complexities inherent in regional coordination, particularly when balancing diverse local priorities and navigating the intricacies of collaborative governance.

Representation in Plan Development and Governance

Across both the survey and interviews, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring broad, inclusive, and diverse representation in both the development and governance of a regional CSWB plan in the CRD. While participants varied in how they envisioned these roles, there was strong alignment around the need for a multi-sectoral, community-informed approach that brings together institutional expertise and community involvement.

The following groups were most frequently identified as critical to include:

- **People with lived experience** — including those who have experienced/are experiencing homelessness, substance use, poverty, mental health challenges, and systemic exclusion. Many stressed the principle of “*nothing about us without us*”, calling for lived experience to be represented in decision-making roles, not just in consultation. This was emphasized as important for both the development of the plan and its implementation.
- **Equity-deserving and marginalized communities** — including Indigenous people, racialized communities, 2SLGBTQ+ people, newcomers, youth, seniors, and folks with disabilities. Participants stressed that their involvement must be meaningful and not tokenistic, and that these voices are essential in both developing and guiding implementation of the plan.
- **Community organizations and frontline workers** — particularly those working in housing, harm reduction, public health, mental health, youth support, and anti-violence. Respondents emphasized the need to include frontline staff, not just executive leadership, to ensure planning and delivery reflect community realities.
- **Municipal, regional, and provincial government representatives** — including municipal staff, elected officials, CRD board members, provincial ministries, and agencies such as public health, school districts, and transit authorities. Representation from across municipalities was seen as essential to ensure the plan reflects the full region.
- **Indigenous inclusion** — Several participants emphasized the need to involve Indigenous communities and organizations in the process, with one interviewee specifically naming local First Nations leadership as essential partners. Others referenced Indigenous voices as part of broader equity-seeking representation, underscoring the need for deeper engagement in future phases of this work.
- **Policing, with mixed views** — While many participants agreed that police should be at the table, there was consistent concern that governance should not be police-led. Their role was generally viewed as supportive and collaborative, rather than directive.
- **Sector experts and institutions** — including researchers, public health experts, and specialists in areas such as trauma-informed practice, aging in place, and built environment safety. Several participants noted the value of academic or technical expertise in ensuring the plan is evidence-based and forward-looking.
- **Local business and economic partners** — such as business owners and chambers of commerce. These groups were identified as key partners in conversations about public space and community development.
- **Community members and neighborhood-level leaders** — Several survey respondents emphasized the need for community-rooted leadership, including people active in local associations, school communities, and grassroots safety efforts.

Participants also offered guidance on how the governance structure should function:

- Many recommended that the same groups involved in plan development should remain involved during implementation, to support continuity, trust, and accountability.
- Others advocated for a smaller core team to oversee implementation, while also emphasizing the need for broader input through localized governance systems or cross-sector collaboration structures that reflect the region's diversity.
- There was strong consensus that no single sector—particularly policing—should dominate the governance structure. Instead, leadership should reflect the interconnected nature of safety, drawing on collaboration between housing, health, education, social services, and community-led organizations.
- Finally, several interviewees emphasized the need for flexible and adaptive governance models that allow for course corrections, feedback loops, and responsive decision-making as the regional plan is implemented.

The Role of the Capital Region District

Survey participants were asked what role the Capital Regional District should play in a regional CSWB plan. While responses varied, there was a clear emphasis on enabling, coordinating, and supporting—not necessarily leading—regional efforts.

The top-ranked role was data collection and knowledge sharing, highlighting the CRD's potential to support evidence-informed decision-making by centralizing information, tracking trends, and facilitating regional learning. Coordination and collaboration followed closely, with participants seeing the CRD as well-positioned to bring municipalities, service providers, and community partners together around shared goals. Strategic planning and policy development and resource allocation and funding were also highly ranked, reflecting a desire for the CRD to help align efforts, leverage regional investments, and advocate for external funding.

Lower on the list were training, capacity building, and public engagement, though several participants still saw value in the CRD supporting regional skill development and facilitating broad-based input.

Only one participant selected "Other" and added a written response, suggesting that the CRD should not lead the initiative, but rather fund and sustain it while enabling cross-sectoral, community-led action. This sentiment reflects a broader theme across the engagement process: that any regional plan should be developed and governed collaboratively, with the CRD acting as a convener and facilitator, rather than a top-down authority.

Research Limitations

While the findings in this section provide valuable insight into partner perspectives across the Capital Regional District, there are important limitations to note. Notably, there was no direct representation from five of the CRD's municipalities: Colwood, Highlands, Metchosin, Oak Bay, and View Royal. Most survey and interview participants were based in Victoria or Sidney, which may have skewed the data toward urban perspectives. While some regional organizations

consulted may operate in or serve the broader CRD, this does not replace the importance of direct engagement with local leaders, service providers, and residents in these areas.

There is also a significant gap in representation from First Nations communities within the CRD. Although Indigenous organizations participated in the engagement process, no direct interviews were conducted with First Nations leadership, and it is unclear whether survey respondents included individuals from reserves. Given that there are 11 First Nations who hold reserve land within the CRD, this lack of clarity and direct inclusion is a significant limitation.

Summary of Findings in the CRD

Taken together, the findings from this research underscore strong interest in a regional approach to community safety and well-being in the CRD - one that is collaborative, equity-driven, and grounded in the realities of people's daily lives. Participants consistently pointed to the limitations of siloed, municipality-specific responses and emphasized that many of the region's most pressing issues - such as homelessness, mental health, and public safety - transcend local boundaries and require collective action. While no formal CSWB plans currently exist within the CRD, several related strategies and initiatives are already in place across the region and could be leveraged to inform a broader regional approach. A regional approach was broadly viewed as an opportunity to coordinate efforts, align resources, and ensure more consistent and equitable access to services across the CRD. While there is clear momentum and shared vision across sectors, participants also emphasized that meaningful progress would depend on sustained commitment, inclusive governance, and a willingness to confront systemic challenges with transparency and care.

Recommendations for the CRD

Based on the research above, three main recommendations emerged for the CRD. Together, they outline a strategic roadmap for the CRD to initiate, develop, and implement a robust and inclusive regional CSWB plan. Each recommendation is supported by best practices detailed throughout this report, which offer more specific guidance on how these steps can be operationalized to support an inclusive, effective, and sustainable CSWB planning process.

These recommendations reflect the current context, priorities, and available information. However, it is important to recognize that community safety and well-being is an evolving field. Emerging issues, changing local conditions, and feedback from communities may require adjustments to this approach over time. As such, these recommendations are intended to serve as a flexible foundation—providing direction while allowing space for adaptation and continued learning throughout the planning and implementation process.

Overview of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Flexible, Reflective Regional CSWB Planning Model	To address the inherently cross-jurisdictional challenges facing the region, it is recommended that the CRD adopt a regional approach to CSWB planning. To ensure a responsive approach, a robust evaluation must be established from the very early planning stage.
Recommendation 2: Define the CRD's Role as a Regional Facilitator and Allocate Resources to Provide Backbone Support	To guide the development of a regional CSWB plan, the CRD should first define its role as a facilitator, convener, and backbone support—coordinating collaboration across the region without exercising centralized control. Key Actions: • Create a dedicated CSWB Planning Coordinator role • Establish a secretariat to support regional planning • Engage external support
Recommendation 3: Establish a Permanent, Action-Oriented Service Line that Centre's Diverse Community Voices	To ensure the long-term success, accountability, and community ownership of the CSWB strategy, the CRD should establish a permanent, action-oriented service line. This structure must prioritize the voices of equity-deserving groups and be rooted in collaborative, responsive governance. Key Actions: • Engage First Nations communities early and respectfully • Conduct a robust community assessment • Build a long-term engagement framework beyond plan development

- Establish an inclusive, multi-sectoral steering committee
- Create a local alignment advisory committee
- Adopt an action-oriented implementation model
- Establishing a permanent regional office or coordination hub

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Flexible, Reflective Regional CSWB Planning Model

To address the inherently cross-jurisdictional challenges facing the region, it is recommended that the CRD adopt a regional approach to CSWB planning. This recommendation reflects strong support from CRD participants, who emphasized that most community safety and well-being issues span municipal boundaries and cannot be effectively addressed in isolation.

In developing the regional CSWB plan, it will be essential to prioritize flexibility within the framework—recognizing the diversity of municipalities and communities across the CRD and allowing for localized variation based on distinct needs and capacities. Embedding flexibility from the outset will help foster greater local buy-in, strengthen implementation efforts, and enable the plan to adapt to emerging challenges over time. To ensure this plan is reflective, a robust monitoring and evaluation framework must be developed from the early planning stages with support from dedicated expertise.

Recommendation 2: Define the CRD’s Role as a Regional Facilitator and Provide Backbone Support

To guide the development of a regional CSWB plan, the CRD should first define its role as a facilitator, convener, and backbone support—coordinating collaboration across the region without exercising centralized control. This role includes bringing municipalities, service providers, and community partners together around shared goals, supporting data collection, knowledge sharing, policy alignment, and funding advocacy.

To fulfill this role effectively, it is recommended that the CRD create a dedicated CSWB Planning Coordinator position, establish a secretariat function, and engage external expertise to support the complexity of regional CSWB planning and capacity-building.

Key Actions:

Create a Dedicated CSWB Planning Coordinator Role: Establish a full-time staff position within the CRD responsible for leading the CSWB planning process. The coordinator would manage logistics, foster cross-sectoral and cross-municipal relationships, oversee engagement and data collection activities, liaise with internal departments and external partners, and maintain consistent progress toward developing the plan.

Establish a Secretariat to Support Regional CSWB Planning: Develop a secretariat function to provide logistical and technical support throughout the planning phase. The secretariat would assist with organizing and scheduling meetings, preparing materials, managing communications,

compiling and analyzing data, supporting community engagement logistics, and maintaining project documentation—all essential for ensuring smooth and coordinated regional CSWB plan.

Engage External Support: Contract external consultants with demonstrated expertise in CSWB planning, inclusive engagement, facilitation, strategic planning, and evaluation framework development. External support can strengthen internal capacity and help embed best practices.

Recommendation 3: Establish a Permanent, Action-Oriented CSWB Service Line that Centres Diverse Community Voices

To ensure the long-term success, accountability, and community ownership of the CSWB strategy, the CRD should establish a permanent, action-oriented service line. This structure must prioritize the voices of equity-deserving groups and be rooted in collaborative, responsive governance.

Key Actions:

Engage First Nations Communities Early and Respectfully: Engage directly with First Nations communities within the CRD as early as possible to determine if, how, and when they would like to be involved in the CSWB planning process. Engagement must be flexible, respectful of Nation-to-Nation relationships, and grounded in Indigenous self-determination principles.

Conduct a Robust Community Assessment: The CSWB planning process should begin with a comprehensive community assessment to ground the plan in both quantitative data and lived experience. Key components include:

- Gather and integrate existing data sources across the region.
- Conduct asset mapping to identify and document existing community strengths, networks, and initiatives that contribute to safety and well-being, ensuring the plan builds on existing infrastructure and efforts.
- Implement region-wide, equity-focused community engagement to collect primary qualitative data.
- Embed an evaluation lens into all data collection efforts by identifying key indicators and outcomes early in the process. Where possible, co-develop indicators with community members and sector partners to ensure future monitoring reflects community priorities and supports long-term accountability.

Build a Long-Term Engagement Framework Beyond Plan Development: Create sustainable structures to continue engagement throughout implementation. This could include recurring community advisory tables, feedback loops to show how engagement influenced decisions, and ongoing opportunities for community members to help guide evolving priorities. A long-term engagement framework will ensure that participation is not limited to the planning phase but becomes an embedded, continuous feature of the CRD's CSWB strategy.

Establish an Inclusive, Multi-Sectoral Steering Committee: Form a diverse Steering Committee composed of representatives from key sectors—such as public health, housing, education, Indigenous-serving organizations, policing, and social services—ensuring equity and lived

experience are central to decision-making. Strategic sector representation should reflect both geographic and demographic diversity across the CRD.

Create a Local Alignment Advisory Committee: To ensure that the regional CSWB plan remains responsive to the distinct needs of communities across the CRD, it is recommended that a Local Alignment Advisory Committee be established as a secondary body to the Steering Committee. This group would be responsible for identifying localized priorities, surfacing implementation considerations, and strengthening alignment between the regional strategy and local needs.

Adopt an Action-Oriented Implementation Model: Implement a governance structure that includes a Stewardship/Implementation Committee and flexible Action Tables organized around priority areas. Action Tables should be co-led by institutional partners and community-based organizations, centering lived experience and promoting cross-sector collaboration throughout implementation.

Consider Establishing a Permanent Regional Office or Coordination Hub: Explore the establishment of a permanent regional office to sustain coordination, monitoring, public engagement, and strategy alignment. This permanent structure would support implementation continuity and provide a backbone for the evolving CSWB plan.

Summary of Recommendations

This report presents a series of interconnected recommendations to guide the CRD in the development of a regional CSWB plan. Together, these recommendations offer a roadmap for the CRD to develop a strong, inclusive, and action-oriented regional CSWB plan. They emphasize the importance of collaborative leadership, meaningful engagement, and sustained resourcing - elements that have been consistently identified as foundational to success in both the literature and across other regional models. While each region's path will be shaped by its unique context and evolving priorities, these recommendations provide a solid starting point for the CRD to lead this work with intention, accountability, and community at the centre. Moving forward, a flexible and iterative approach will be key - ensuring that the plan not only reflects the current realities of the region, but continues to evolve in response to new learning, emerging needs, and ongoing input from those most impacted.

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Appendices

Appendix I - Survey for CRD Contacts

Identifying Regional Possibilities for Community Safety & Well-Being in the Capital Region District

The purpose of this survey is to inform a broader research project being conducted by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) examining the options for the creation of a Regional Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) plan for the CRD.

Community safety & well-being is “the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression” ([Ontario Ministry of Solicitor General, 2024](#)).

This survey seeks to gather information on local experiences and needs that could help to inform a regional planning process.

In addition to this survey, CCFSC is conducting research into best practices and will be conducting interviews with local partners, as well as with representatives from other regions across the country who have already created and implemented regional plans.

This survey will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous, however, you are asked to provide your organization and municipality/Region, which could be identifying. However, survey data will be aggregated into a summary report, and if quotes are used, they will be presented anonymously, without association to your organization/specific location.

1. Organization you work for: (open text)
2. Municipality/Electoral Area you work in: (open text)
3. Are you aware of any strategies/plans related to community safety and well-being that exist in your community (i.e. housing needs assessments, violence prevention strategies, etc.)?
 - Responses: Yes or No.
 - If yes, please describe. Please provide a link if the document is publicly available (open text)
4. Do you see a need for a regional strategy, plan, program or initiative to address any of the following? (check all that apply)
 - Affordable housing/homelessness
 - Violence/crime prevention
 - Youth engagement
 - Mental health
 - Substance use

- o Intimate partner violence/gender-based violence
 - o Social polarization/radicalization to violence
 - o Alcohol policy (outlet density, hours of operation)
 - o Equity, diversity, and inclusion
 - o Other: _____
5. Does your municipality/electoral area currently have a Community Safety & Well-Being Plan (CSWB), or does your Official Community Plan address issues of safety and well-being?
- o Responses: Yes, Under development, or No.
 - o If yes or under development:
 - o please provide any additional information available (i.e. link website concerning plan development) (open text)
 - o What do you think were the important lessons learned from the development of your municipality/electoral area's CSWB plan? (open text)
 - o Is there anything missing you wish had been addressed in your municipality/electoral area's CSWB plan? (open text)
6. Generally speaking, would you prefer a regional approach to planning for community safety and well-being, or a municipal/electoral area approach?
- o Regional
 - o Municipal/electoral area
 - o Unsure
7. To what extent do you believe a regional community safety and well-being plan would be beneficial? (*Likert scale: Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree*)
8. Why did you select your rating above? (open text)
9. What would be the benefits of regional community safety and well-being planning for the Capital Region? (*Multiple choice, rank the following options*)
- o Improved coordination between municipalities
 - o Resource sharing
 - o Consistent policies and approaches across the region
 - o Stronger advocacy and policy influence
 - o Cost-effectiveness
 - o Increased capacity for smaller municipalities
 - o Other (please specify): _____
10. What would be the challenges of regional community safety and well-being planning? (*Multiple choice, rank the following options*)
- o Lack of funding

- o Difficulty coordinating across municipalities
- o Conflicting priorities or needs
- o Limited political will
- o Lack of engagement
- o Disproportionate focus on urban needs and realities
- o Other (please specify)

11. If you selected “other” for either of the two questions above, please elaborate. (open text)

12. Have you been involved in developing or implementing a regional strategy, initiative, or program before?

- o Responses: Yes or No.
- o If yes:
 - o What was it about? (*open text*)
 - o What were the strengths of that process? (*open text*)
 - o What were the challenges of that process? (*open text*)

13. If a regional community safety and well-being plan were to be developed, who do you think should be involved in the plan development process? (open text)

14. Have you participated in a regional council or governance body before?

- o Responses: Yes or No.
- o If yes:
 - o What was it? (*open text*)
 - o What were the strengths of that process? (*open text*)
 - o What were the challenges of that process? (*open text*)

15. If a regional council for community safety and well-being in the Capital Region were established, who do you think should be on the council? (open text)

16. What role should the CRD have in a community safety and well-being plan for the capital region? (*Multiple choice, rank the following options*)

- o Strategic planning and policy development
- o Coordination and collaboration
- o Resource allocation and funding
- o Data collection and knowledge sharing
- o Public engagement
- o Training and capacity building

17. Other: If other roles are missing, please specify: (open text)

Appendix II – Interview Guide for CRD Contact Interviews

Identifying Regional Possibilities for Community Safety & Well-Being in the Capital Region District

The purpose of this interview is to inform a broader research project being conducted by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) examining the options for the creation of a Regional Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) plan in the capital region. Please note, while the CRD may not lead this planning process, they would potentially participate.

Community safety & well-being is “the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression” ([Ontario Ministry of Solicitor General, 2024](#)).

Given your knowledge of and experience in the Capital Region, we are seeking to gather your input on the potential development of a Regional CSWB Plan. The interview consists of seven questions and should take no more than 60 minutes. Interviews will be transcribed using Otter AI and will be thematically analyzed. Your feedback will remain anonymous. The data from the interview will be combined with other qualitative data gathered throughout this research project and provided to the CRD in a report. It may also become publicly available in a topic summary on CCFSC’s website.

Your opinion is your personal information. Please do not include any information which identifies you or others in your response. For security purposes any personal information which identifies you or others will be immediately deleted, once your response is received and processed. Any personal information is collected by the Capital Regional District (CRD) under Section 26 (c) and (e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used to inform our next steps related to community safety and well-being. Should you have questions about the collection of this information, please contact:

Kirsten Mah - Healthy Communities Planner
625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC V8W 1R7
250-360-3174 / Kmah@crd.bc.ca

Questions:

1) What existing community safety and well-being gaps do you think a regional community safety and well-being plan may be able to address?

2) What would be the benefits of a regional approach to community safety and well-being planning in the capital region?

- 3) What do you anticipate being the challenges of regional community safety and well-being planning?
- 4) If a regional community safety and well-being plan were to be developed, who do you think should be involved in the plan development process (i.e. municipal staff, CRD board representatives, police, community organizations, etc.)?
- 5) If a regional community safety and well-being plan were to be developed, who do you think should be involved in the plan implementation/governance (i.e. municipal staff, CRD board representatives, police, community organizations, etc.)?
- 6) Generally speaking, would you prefer a regional approach to community safety and well-being planning, or a municipal/electoral area approach, and why?
- 7) Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Appendix III – Interview Guide for Regional Contact Interviews

Identifying Regional Possibilities for Community Safety & Well-Being in the Capital Region District

The purpose of this interview is to inform a broader research project being conducted by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) examining the options for the creation of a **Regional Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) plan** in the Capital Region District of British Columbia.

Community safety & well-being is “the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate, and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression” ([Ontario Ministry of Solicitor General, 2024](#)).

Given your knowledge of and experience in CSWB planning, we are seeking to gather your input on the potential development of a Regional CSWB Plan. The interview consists of seven questions and should take no more than 60 minutes. Interviews will be transcribed using Otter AI and will be thematically analyzed. Your feedback will remain anonymous. The data from the interview will be combined with other qualitative data gathered throughout this research project and provided to the CRD in a report. It may also become publicly available in a topic summary on CCFSC’s website.

Your opinion is your personal information. Please do not include any information which identifies you or others in your response. For security purposes any personal information which identifies you or others will be immediately deleted, once your response is received and processed. Any personal information is collected by the Capital Regional District (CRD) under Section 26 (c) and (e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used to inform our next steps related to community safety and well-being. Should you have questions about the collection of this information, please contact:

Kirsten Mah
Healthy Communities Planner
625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC V8W 1R7
250-360-3174 Kmah@crd.bc.ca

Questions:

1. Why did your Region develop a Regional CSWB plan? How did your Region determine there was a need for a plan? Please include details on why a regional approach was selected over a municipal approach.
2. How did your Region develop a Regional CSWB plan? Please include details about funding its development, data collection, forming steering/advisory committees, building the project team, and any other key steps.

3. What successes/strengths did you observe during the creation of your Regional CSWB plan? What worked well?
4. What challenges did you experience during the creation of your Regional CSWB plan? What didn't work well/what might you do differently?
5. How was your Regional CSWB plan implemented? What was the governance structure and how did you fund its implementation?
6. What has been the impact of the Regional CSWB plan? How have you evaluated that impact? Please include any details regarding the impact on coordination/integration of overlapping services within your Region.
7. How did you ensure that the creation and implementation of your CSWB plan met the diverse needs of urban, rural, and Indigenous communities within your region?
8. How did you ensure that the creation and implementation of your CSWB plan included equity considerations, including the perspectives of racially/culturally diverse groups, as well as income diversity, ability diversity, etc.?
9. Is there anything you would recommend to other communities undertaking this process?

Appendix IV – List of Related CRD Documents, Strategies, Plans

Municipality/Organization	Plan/Strategy/Initiative	Date
CRD Board of Directors	Board Priorities	2023-2026
Saanich Police	Saanich Police Strategic Plan	2023-2026
BC Community Health	BC Municipality Health Profiles	2019
Island Health	Local Health Area Profiles	2019
CRD	CRD and CRHC Annual Reports	2023
The Village	The Village Initiative Mental Health Action Plan	2022
The Village	The Village Initiative Community Profile	2022
The Village	The Village Initiative 5-year road map and AHS results	
Victoria Foundation	Vital Signs	2023
Alliance to end homelessness in the Capital Region	Alliance to End Homelessness Community Plan	2019-2024
CRD	Point in Time Count and Survey	2023
CRD Hospitals and Housing Committee	Presentation	2023
District of Saanich	Housing Needs Report	2020
CRD	Projections - Housing and Employment	2019-2038
Saanich	Official Community Plan	2024
Langford	Official Community Plan Refresh	2024 - ongoing
Sidney	Housing Needs Assessment	2019
View Royal	Official Community Plan	2019
Southern Gulf Islands	Housing Needs Assessment	2018
CRD	Rural Housing Pilot Project Analysis	2024
Southern Gulf Islands	Housing Strategy	2022
CRD Safety and Well-Being Plan presentation	Presentation	2023
City of Victoria	Official Community Plan	2012; Updated 2023
District of Sooke	Interim Housing Needs Report	2024
City of Victoria	The Victoria Housing Strategy	2016-2025

Appendix V – List of Reviewed Canadian Regional Plans

Region	Province	Plan	Date
Windsor Essex Region	Ontario	Windsor Essex Regional Community Safety and Well-Being Plan	2021
Durham Region	Ontario	Durham Region Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021
Peel Region	Ontario	Peel's Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2020
Waterloo Region	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Framework	2022
Halton Region	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being in Halton	2017
York Region	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2022
Niagara Region	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021
Halifax Regional Municipality	Nova Scotia	Public Safety Strategy	2023
Kent Regional Service Commission	New Brunswick	Community Safety Plan	2022
Cariboo Chilcotin Region	British Columbia	Community Well-Being and Safety Plan	2015
Strathcona Regional District	British Columbia	Community Safety & Well-being Strategy	2021
Townships of Central Frontenac, North Frontenac, South Frontenac and Frontenac Islands	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville and the Town of Prescott	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021
Municipality of Powassan, Callender and Township of Nipissing and Chisolm	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan Regional Report	2021
Central Algoma	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021-2022
District of Muskoka	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021-2025
Haliburton County	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2022-2026
Dufferin County	Ontario	Community Safety & Well-Being Plan	2021-2024
Lanark County and the Town of Smiths Falls	Ontario	Community Plan for Safety and Well-Being	2018

Appendix VI - Resources to Support Regional CSWB Planning

General Practices for Community Safety and Well-Being	• European Forum for Urban Security: Guidebook on Methods and Tools for a Strategic Approach to Urban Security • Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General: Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework • Canadian Centre for Safer Communities: Action Brief on Examples of Proven Crime Prevention Programs.
Relationships and Multi-Sectoral Collaboration	• World Health Organization: Collaboration Multiplier • Tamarack Institute: Collaboration Spectrum • Education Development Center: variety of tools available
Data Collection and Community Engagement	• Canadian Centre for Safer Communities: Practitioner Guide for Community Consultations • Canadian Centre for Safer Communities: Community Safety & Well-Being Survey Tool
Evaluation	• Tamarack Institute: Approaches to Measuring Community Change Indicators • FSG: Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact • Canadian Centre for Safer Communities: Indicators for Crime Prevention and Community Safety & Well-Being Plans

Appendix VII - Regional CSWB Plan Development and Implementation Examples

Steering Committee	<u>Geographic and Municipal Representation</u> • York Region: The Human Services Planning Board was appointed by York Regional Council as the advisory committee for the CSWB Plan, and included three regional councilors and one city mayor. • Municipalities of Powassan and Callander and the Townships of Nipissing and Chisholm: The CSWB Working Group included at least one staff member from each municipality to ensure geographic representation. <u>Representation of Focused Populations:</u> • Region of Waterloo: The CSWB Steering Committee included two members of the Region’s Anti-Racism Advisory Working Group, and two members representing racialized communities. <u>Representation of First Nations Communities:</u> • Townships of Central Frontenac, North Frontenac, South Frontenac, and Frontenac Islands: Shabot Obaadjiwan Algonquin First Nation representation on Advisory Committee • Durham Region: leadership from Mississauga’s of Scugog Island First Nation included in Steering Committee
Secondary Committees	<u>Durham Region:</u> 1. Area Municipal Working Group: Comprised of Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) or their delegates from area municipalities, this group ensured alignment between the regional CSWB plan and local needs and priorities. 2. Internal Working Group and Data Sub-Committee: An internal body within the Region of Durham responsible for data analysis, planning, coordination, and the development of public engagement activities. <u>Region of Waterloo:</u> 1. Advisory Group: Purpose was to identify priorities, actions and metrics. Expanded table of ‘Well-being Waterloo Region Systems Change Champions.’ Includes cross-sector leaders that can commit their organizations to action. 2. Youth Advisory Committee: Youth with diverse perspectives who identified safety and well-being concerns and recommendations.
Community Engagement and	<u>Region of Waterloo:</u> • Prioritized engagement with populations most affected by safety and well-being issues • Engagement occurred in two phases:

Primary Data Collection	- o Phase 1: Building shared understanding of community priorities - o Phase 2: Presenting and gathering feedback on the emerging plan framework • Methods included interactive meetings, small group conversations, co-planning workshops, presentations, and discussions • Engagement involved: Steering, Advisory, and Youth Advisory Committees; Regional and municipal council members; Police Services Board; Broad cross-section of community leaders and members • Groups engaged included: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities; African, Caribbean, and Black communities; Persons with disabilities; Immigrant and newcomer communities; Chinese, Jewish, and Muslim communities; 2SLGBTQ+ communities; Women and children
Governance and Implementation	York Region • Adopted a place-based approach, identifying four geographic focus areas based on data and community consultation • Established Community Action Tables in each focus area, composed of residents, service providers, municipal staff, police, and other local partners • Each Action Table developed its own Community Action Plan tailored to local needs and priorities • Implementation is phased, beginning with early actions and building toward long-term strategies • The Human Services Planning Board (HSPB)—original Steering Committee—continues to provide strategic oversight, coordination, and review alongside York Regional Council Halton Region: • System Leadership Group leads CSWB implementation, providing strategic direction and oversight - responsibilities include identifying priority issues, forming Action Tables, and supporting system-level collaboration - o reports regularly to Halton Regional Council and the Halton Police Services Board on Action Table work and overall CSWB progress • Backbone support for implementation is shared by Halton Region and the Halton Regional Police Service - includes logistics, partner coordination, project management, and community engagement
Evaluation	York Region: Evaluation supports monitoring of both local and regional progress over time by using a results-based approach to track impact, combining: • Quantitative community indicators (to assess overall safety and well-being) • Performance measures (to evaluate specific programs and initiatives)

	• Qualitative feedback from community consultations and surveys Focus areas include: • Mental well-being • Housing stability • Economic stability Community Action Tables identify and refine performance measures as new actions and priorities emerge
Funding and Resourcing	<u>Funded Coordination Roles:</u> • Kent County: a permanent Community Safety Plan Coordinator is housed within the county to lead implementation efforts <u>Funding for Larger Offices:</u> • Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (1995-2022) • Halifax Regional Municipality: created a Centre of Responsibility (CoR) as part of its Public Safety Strategy, serving as a central hub to coordinate strategy implementation, expand training and program development, support evaluation, and embed a public safety perspective across municipal efforts. <u>Implementation-Focused Funding:</u> • Halton Region: \$4.5 million was committed in 2024 through the Community Investment Fund to support non-profit agencies delivering programs aligned with CSWB priorities, strengthening local capacity and improving access to essential supports • Region of Waterloo: Launched the Upstream Fund in 2022, as a community-centered funding model to support CSWB plan implementation