

Building Safer Communities Strategy

Addressing Violence and Crime in the City of St. John's

October 2024



Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, of which the City of St. John's is the capital City, as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk. Today these lands are home to a diverse population of Indigenous, and other peoples. We would also like to acknowledge with respect, the diverse histories and cultures of the Mi'kmaq, Innu, Inuit, and Southern Inuit of this Province.

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Message from the Mayor

I am delighted to announce the City of St. John's Building Safer Communities Strategy to address the causes and conditions of violence and crime in our city. This work is possible thanks to funding from Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund.

This holistic strategy was developed with community partners and collaborators and informed by City residents through public engagement. It represents a significant step forward in our commitment to make the City of St. John's a safe and inclusive place where every resident can live, learn, work, play, and thrive without fear of violence and crime.

The primary focus of this strategy is to address the root causes of violence and crime, particularly for children, youth, young adults, and their families. While the City does not provide direct services or programs related to public safety or crime prevention, it acts as an important facilitator in developing long-term strategic planning and concrete initiatives to improve community safety.

The City of St. John's has a strategic direction to be a connected city, one where people feel a sense of belonging and are actively engaged in community life. The Building Safer Communities Strategy will advance this direction by improving access to programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy, and vibrant communities.

On behalf of our Council, I offer my sincere thanks to the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee, many community partners, residents, and people with lived experience who provided feedback that have come together to inform and develop this Strategy.

By working together in collaboration with the community towards our shared goals, we will continue to enhance safety and well-being for everyone in the city.

Message from the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee

Building safe communities is a shared responsibility. The Building Safer Communities Strategy demonstrates our commitment to work with the City of St. John's and community partners to identify and address emerging issues and trends that impact safety and well-being in our community.

The Steering Committee's mission is to provide informed, solutions-oriented recommendations that will guide the City in facilitating an effective prevention strategy. Members understand the importance of addressing the inequities that influence violence and crime through a collaborative approach. This Strategy will enhance our ability to respond to issues in a coordinated manner and build on many successful efforts that contribute to a strong sense of community safety and well-being.

The Building Safer Communities Steering Committee is pleased to have contributed to the development of the City of St. John's' Building Safer Communities Strategy. This strategy is an important step forward in our shared work to create a safe and inclusive city where all people can live without the fear of violence or crime.

We believe that through collective action and continued collaboration, we can achieve meaningful progress and ensure a safer future for everyone in our city. Together, we can build a safer, more connected, and inclusive City for all people.

1.0 Introduction

City residents, community organizations, and all levels of government have a shared vision of a safe, connected, healthy city where everyone can live, learn, work and play. The City of St. John's is aware of concerns that are threatening this vision, along with an increased need to address the social determinants of violence and crime that are impacting well-being. The root causes of these concerns are complex and require a coordinated, multi-faceted approach, involving all levels of government, the community, businesses, and residents to affect real change.

The Building Safer Communities Strategy helps the City of St. John's communicate our plan going forward for making St. John's a safe and inclusive city for all residents, while sharing the work happening behind the scenes that is not always as visible.

The Strategy's primary focus is to address the root causes of violence and crime, particularly for children, youth, young adults, and their families, including seniors. While the City does not provide direct services or programs related to public safety or crime prevention, it acts as an important facilitator in developing long-term plans and concrete initiatives to improve community safety.

Creating safe and healthy communities is a shared responsibility. The Building Safer Communities Strategy's success relies on collaboration with community partners, residents, and other levels of government. The Strategy will enhance our collective ability to respond to issues in a coordinated manner and builds on many successful efforts that contribute to a strong sense of community safety and well-being in the City of St. John's.

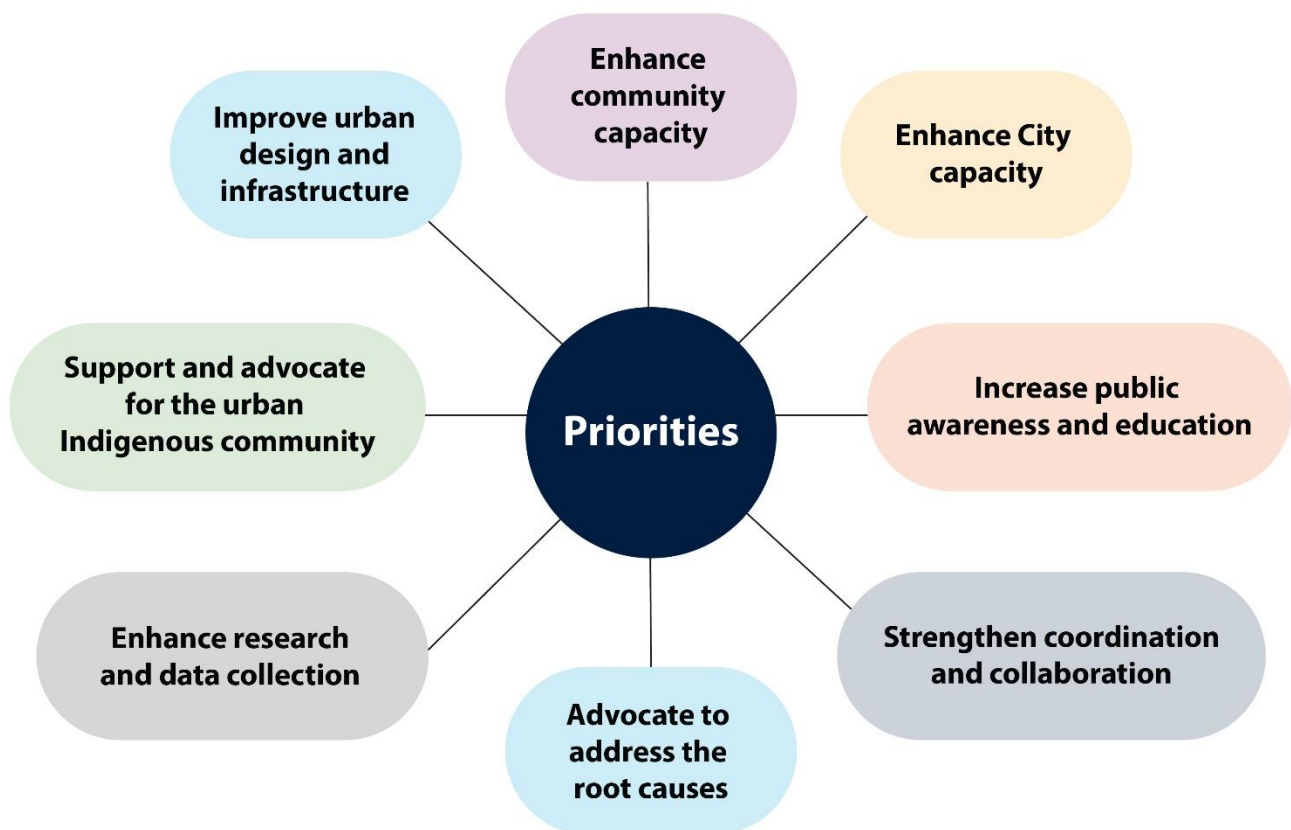
Like many municipalities across Canada, the City of St. John's has been impacted by complex social issues including increased homelessness, a lack of available and affordable housing, poverty, and the toxic drug supply, all of which influence the prevalence of violence and crime.

As areas such as poverty reduction, child protection, health and social services are outside of the City's jurisdiction and authority, the City works

with community partners to advocate for urgent responses to the social and community safety concerns affecting our residents and for tangible measures to address the root causes of violence and crime.

The Strategy contains 50 action items under eight priorities to advance recommendations identified by key partners and collaborators and supported by research and evidence. The scope of the goals was also validated through the public engagement process as detailed within this report.

Priorities to Address Violence and Crime



2.0 Building Safer Communities Fund

The City of St. John's is in receipt of funds through Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) until March 2026.

The City of St. John's, in collaboration with the [Building Safer Communities Steering Committee](#) and community-based service providers, has developed a comprehensive, evidence-based Building Safer Communities Strategy by engaging residents, service providers, people with lived expertise, and other collaborators.

The Strategy takes a preventive approach to violence and crime in the municipality by aiming to address the root causes, particularly for children, youth, young adults, and their families, including seniors.

2.1 Background: Crime Prevention in St. John's

In 2014, the City of St. John's established a Mayor's Advisory Council on Crime Prevention Committee to provide information and advice to Council on crime prevention issues that affect the City.

The Committee implemented a survey in June 2014 which sought input from a continuum of groups on their clients' and members' concerns and experiences with crime, as well as effective prevention strategies.

Based on the survey results and input from committee members, the Committee identified three areas for further consultation:

- Youth and youth-serving agencies
- Community centres, neighbourhood groups, and tenant associations
- Key partners in the downtown business and bar industry

In focusing on crime prevention and creating safe communities, the St. John's Crime Prevention Committee advised that the City's approach must include supporting children and youth who are at the highest risk for offending.

In 2021, the City and Eastern Health (now Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services), signed a Memorandum of Understanding to plan and

implement a Healthy City Strategy that would support the inter-sectoral collaboration necessary to realize the vision of a Healthy City.

In May and June of 2021, the City of St. John's conducted public engagement to inform the development of the City's Healthy City Strategy. During the engagement phase, residents identified safety as the most important healthy city asset. However, very few (13.3%) considered their neighbourhood unsafe.

- Participants residing in the East end of the city perceived their neighbourhoods as the safest, followed by Central, and the West end.
- In addition to higher levels of safety, East end participants reported the strongest sense of inclusion and belonging in their neighbourhoods, while West end participants reported the lowest.
- Common safety concerns cited included vehicle and home break-ins, poor biking infrastructure, and being unable to walk comfortably due to heavy traffic, speeding, lack of crosswalks, inadequate lighting, poor sidewalk clearing, and fears of harassment.

Safety was included as a component of the Healthy Neighbourhoods and People pillar in the City's Healthy City Strategy. Implementation strategies include improving the safety and accessibility of neighbourhoods and streets for all residents, including under-represented groups.

2.2 Building Safer Communities Round Table

A Building Safer Communities [Round Table](#)¹ event took place in February 2023 which brought together community leaders and experts with a shared vision of a safe, connected, healthy city where everyone can live, learn, work, and play.

The event was also held in anticipation of receiving funding under the Building Safer Communities Fund. As announced on February 27, 2023, the City of St. John's will receive up to \$1.8 million through this fund to help address the underlying conditions that give rise to violence and crime.

¹ City of St. John's (February 2023). BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES ROUND TABLE EVENT REPORT.

The Round Table continued the long-term commitment by the City of St. John's to work in collaboration with key collaborators to affect real change. The goal of the event was to be solutions-focused, with the intent to build upon what has been working and identify the work that needs to be done.

Several key recommendations emerged from the Round Table for the City's consideration in the development of a Building Safer Communities Strategy:

- Form a multi-sectoral steering committee to continue the collaborative work that was started at the round table event and guide a community engagement process.
- Create a shared platform that enables cross-sectoral collaborative work and continue to engage partners and collaborators through events such as this one.
- Involve more diverse partners and collaborators in future events and engagement/collaboration activities. Representation or enhanced participation from the following groups is necessary when addressing this topic:
 - Community Sector Council
 - Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC)
 - People with lived expertise
 - 2SLGBTQIA+ community
 - Sex workers
 - School boards and Provincial Department of Education
 - Municipalities NL
 - Private and commercial sector
 - Neighbourhood associations
 - General public
- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of approaches to address public safety that work in other communities like St. John's and evaluate their application to the local context. The scan should focus on community-led initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of crime.
- Enhance community capacity and use a collective impact approach to address root causes to improve safety and well-being.

- Identify or develop a collective impact evaluation framework to monitor progress and support evidence-based decision-making.
- Identify or create a tool(s)/ template(s) that ensures various lenses, such as from oppressed, racialized, and marginalized groups, are used for decision-making.

These recommendations helped shape the City's priorities and processes for the development of the Building Safer Communities Strategy.

3.0 Definitions

Crime²

A crime is an act that breaks a law that is related to how to behave in society. The harm caused by the act is seen to be against society as well as against a specific person or group of people.

More specifically, a crime is an act or omission that is against the law and punishable upon conviction. Crime includes:

- Crimes against a person
- Crimes against property
- Drug offences
- Arson
- Gaming and betting
- Weapons possession

Social Determinants of Violence and Crime

The [social determinants of violence and crime](#) refer to the societal, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that influence or contribute to the likelihood or prevalence of criminal behaviour and violent acts within a community or society. These determinants stem from various systemic issues, inequalities, and social structures that influence individuals' circumstances, opportunities, and behaviour. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing and preventing violence and crime effectively.

Examples of the social determinants of violence and crime include:

- Income and social status
- Employment and working conditions
- Education and literacy
- Childhood experiences
- Physical environments
- Social supports and coping skills
- Healthy behaviours
- Access to health services

² Government of British Columbia (n.d.). What is a Crime? Retrieved November 16, 2023 from: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/criminal-justice/bcs-criminal-justice-system/reporting-a-crime/what-is-a-crime>.

- Gender
- Culture
- Race and racism

See Appendix A for additional information about the social determinants.

Violence³

According to the World Health Organization, violence can be defined as:

- “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”

Violence and abuse can take many different forms including but not limited to, the following:

- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological violence
- Verbal abuse
- Social abuse
- Intellectual violence
- Financial abuse
- Spiritual violence
- Cultural violence
- Digital / cyber violence
- Neglect
- Colonial violence
- State violence
- Abuse of pets
- Abuse of / using children
- Intimate partner violence

³ World Health Organization (n.d.). The VPA Approach. Retrieved June 27, 2024, from: <https://www.who.int/groups/violence-prevention-alliance/approach>.

4.0 Informing the Building Safer Communities Strategy

4.1 Building Safer Communities Steering Committee

In October 2023, based upon the recommendations from the February Round Table, a [Building Safer Communities Steering Committee](#) was formed. The Steering Committee was created to provide information and recommendations to the City of St. John's on the best ways of addressing the social determinants of crime and violence.

In keeping with recommendations from the Round Table, efforts were made to ensure diverse perspectives were included within the Steering Committee membership selection process to the greatest extent possible.

In addition to public members, and in recognition of jurisdictional responsibilities, the Steering Committee is also comprised of several non-voting, ex-officio members. These include City Staff, as well as officials from Provincial and Federal Government departments, agencies, and entities.

Committee areas of focus include:

- Sharing knowledge and evidence of what works in other jurisdictions in Canada as well as locally.
- Informing a data collection strategy and evaluation framework.
- Informing local and community-based strategies and initiatives.
- Informing evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities.
- Contributing to a public awareness campaign.

The Steering Committee meets monthly to discuss emerging issues and recommend actions to address the root causes of violence and crime for Council's consideration. To learn more about the Steering Committee, please see the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee Terms of Reference in Appendix B.

4.2 Research and Literature Review

To develop a comprehensive crime and violence prevention strategy, it is essential to ground our approach in a thorough understanding of current trends and underlying factors contributing to crime and violence in our city. This section provides a highlight of the analysis of crime and violence situation, supplemented by data on critical social determinants such as population, income levels, education, employment and unemployment rate, food insecurity, housing and homelessness.

4.2.1 Violence and Crime Data

This section provides a brief analysis of recent crime and violence trends across Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the St. John’s Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

The data highlights significant increases in various crime indices over the period from 2022 to 2023. These trends are contextualized within the last decade (2014-2023), illustrating how these indicators have evolved and key areas where the most significant changes have occurred.

Indicators Percentage Changes from 2022-2023	Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador	St. John’s CMA
Crime Severity Index ⁴	2.1% ↑	5.1% ↑	3.2% ↑
Violent Crime Severity Index ⁵	0.4% ↑	1.9% ↑	2.1% ↑
Non-Violent Crime Severity	3.1% ↑	6.7% ↑	3.8% ↑
Crime Rate	2.5% ↑	5.0% ↑	7.5% ↑
Youth Crime Rate	12.7% ↑	21.1% ↑	Not Available

⁴ The Crime Severity Index (CSI) is a statistical measure used by Statistics Canada to assess the severity of crime. It considers both the volume and the seriousness of crimes reported to the police. The index assigns weights to different types of offenses based on their perceived seriousness. More serious crimes are given higher weights, reflecting their greater impact on society. The overall Crime Severity Index includes all Criminal Code and federal statute offences.

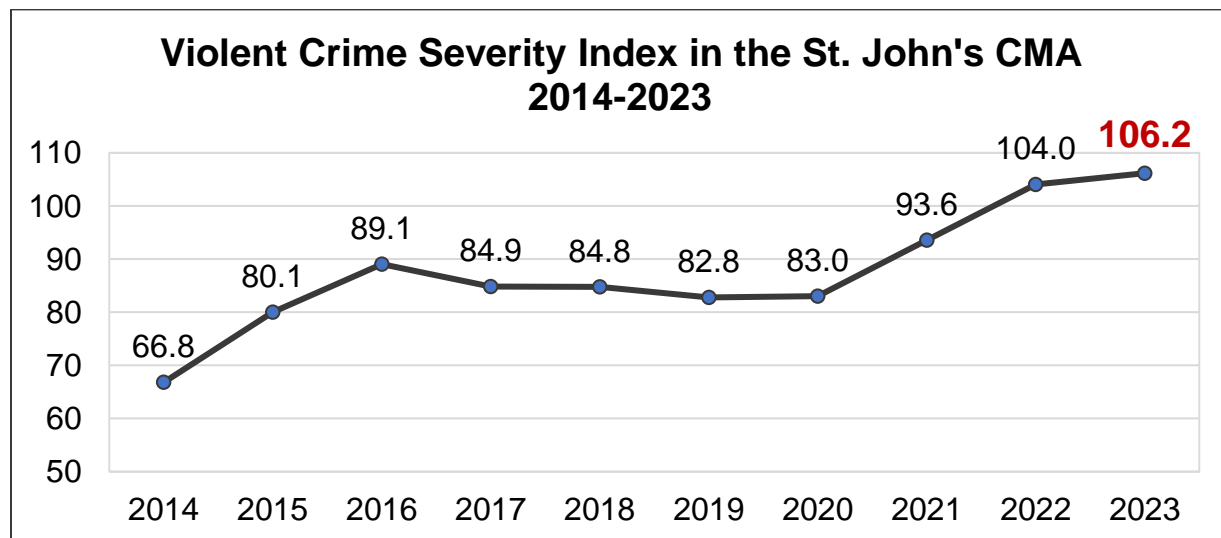
⁵ Like the Crime Severity Index, the Violent Crime Severity Index includes all violent offences.

From 2022-2023, the **Crime Severity Index** increased across Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the St. John's CMA. It is the highest recorded in all three regions in the last decade (2014-2023).

- In Canada, it increased by 2.1% to 80.5, from 66.9 in 2014.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, it increased by 5.1% to 86.3, from 62.4 in 2014.
- In the St. John's CMA, it increased by 3.2% to 82.5, from 73.0 in 2014.

In 2022-2023, the **Violent Crime Severity Index (VCSI)** experienced the following changes. Like the Crime Severity Index, the Violent Crime Severity Index is the highest recorded in all three regions in the last decade (2014-2023).

- In Canada, it increased by 0.4% to 99.5, from 70.7 in 2014. The 2023 Canadian VSCI is the second highest on record (next to a VSCI of 100 in 2006⁶).
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, it increased by 1.9% to 98.1, from 58.0 in 2014. Furthermore, the 2023 Violent Crime Severity Index is the highest recorded in all years of available data.
- In the St. John's CMA, it increased by 2.1% to 106.2, from 66.8 in 2014. This increase highlights a significant rise in the index over the past decade. Like the province, the 2023 Violent Crime Severity Index for the St. John's CMA is the highest ever recorded.



⁶ Please note that while Statistics Canada introduced the Crime Severity Index in 2009, indices recorded before 2009 are retrospective estimates provided by Statistics Canada.

From 2022-2023, the **Non-Violent Crime Severity Index** increased across Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador and the St. John's CMA regions.

- In Canada, it increased by 3.1% reaching 73.54. This represents a significant rise compared to previous years, marking the second highest level recorded since 2014.
- In Newfoundland and Labrador, the index increased by 6.7% to 82.32. This is the highest observed in the last decade, continuing the upward trend from previous years.
- In the St. John's CMA, it increased by 3.82% to 73.67, the highest recorded since 2016.

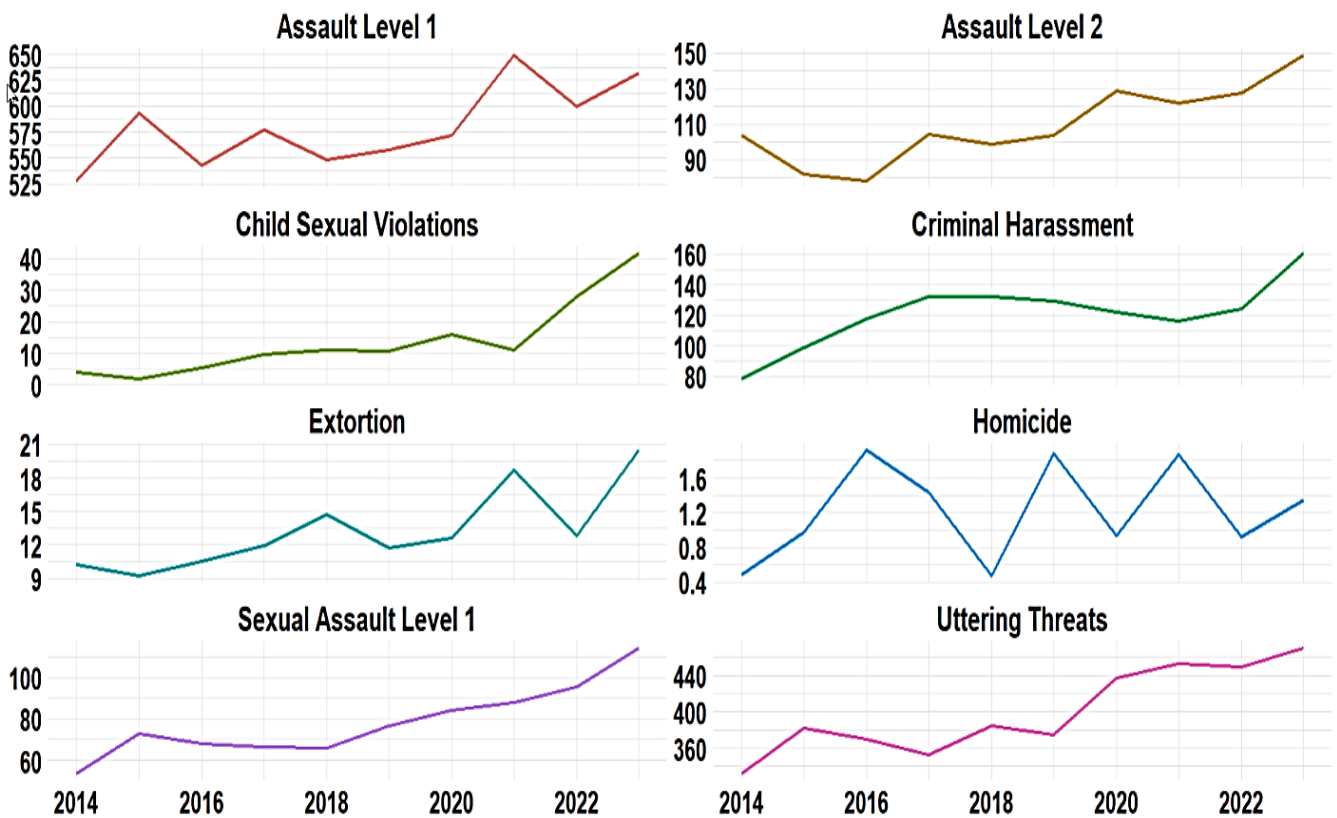
The table below presents selected police-reported violations in the St. John's CMA for 2023, depicting the number of incidents, the rate per 100,000 population, and the percentage change in rate from 2022 to 2023.

Offence	Number of Incidents	Rate per 100,000 Population	Percentage Change in Rate 2022-2023
Assault Level I	1418	632.0	5.3%
Uttering Threats	1056	470.69	4.64%
Criminal Harassment	361	160.9	29.2%
Assault Level II	333	148.4	16.56%
Sexual Assault Level I	257	114.6	20.2%
Extortion	94	41.9	50.0%
Sexual Violations against Children	46	20.5	59.9%
Homicide	3	1.34	Not available
Property Crime	8329	3712.5	10.5%
Theft Under \$5,000	3466	1544.9	4.4%
Fraud	1146	510.8	24.2%
Break and Enter	850	378.9	-9.2%
Criminal Code Traffic Violations	692	308.4	2.8%

Robbery	156	69.5	-32.5%
Drug Violations	104	46.36	16.32%

The following figure shows ten-year trends of selected police-reported violations in the St. John's CMA between 2014-2023.

Selected Police-Reported Violations (2014-2023) in St. John's CMA - Rate per 100,000 Population



- The rate of **assault level I**⁷ generally increased over the decade, peaking in 2021 with a rate of 649.0 per 100,000 population. Despite some fluctuations, the overall trend is upward.
- The rate of **assault level II**⁸ has been recorded the highest in 2023 with a rate of 148.4 per 100,000 population. The rate is higher in more recent years and continuously shows an upward trend.
- The rate of **uttering threats** showed an upward trend with continuous increases since 2019, peaking at a rate of 470.7 per 100,000 population in 2023.
- The rate of **criminal harassment** has steadily increased throughout the decade from a rate of 78.49 in 2014 to the highest recorded level of 160.91 per 100,000 population in 2023.
- The rate of **sexual assault level I** has continuously risen since 2018, with the highest recorded rate of 114.6 per 100,000 population in 2023.
- 2023 saw the highest recorded rate of **sexual violations against children** per 100,000 population. One decade earlier, the rate was half (10.24 rate in 2014).
- The rate of **extortion** has increased over the years, from 3.9 per 100,000 population in 2014 to 41.9 per 100,000 in 2023, showing a dramatic rise.
- The **homicide** numbers in the St. John's CMA fluctuated over a decade. The highest number was recorded in 2016, 2019 and 2021 with four number of incidents in each year (1.92, 1.88 and 1.87 rates respectively). In 2023, 3 incidents were recorded (1.34 rate per 100,000 population).
- **Fraud** rates per 100,000 population have consistently risen over a decade, from 285.2 in 2014 to 510.8 in 2023, with a significant increase in recent years. The 2023 rate is the highest in the past decade.
- Most **property and traffic** related crimes, including breaking and entering (from 601.61 in 2014 to 378.87 in 2023), property crime violations (from 3716.92 in 2014 to 3712.47 in 2023), and criminal code traffic violations (from 524.09 in 2014 to 308.44 in 2023) have shown a steady decrease.

⁷ Assault level I is described as a common assault, the least serious form including behaviours such as pushing, slapping, punching and face-to-face threats.

⁸ Assault level II is defined as assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm.

Intimate Partner Violence

- Between 2019 and 2021 in the St. John's CMA, the rate of intimate partner violence for female victims rose from 385.2 per 100,000 population (363 victims) to 441.3 (421 victims). For males, the rate of intimate partner violence increased from 116.5 (105 victims), to 143.1 (130 victims). Same-sex partners accounted for 11.5% of police-reported intimate partner violence in the St. John's CMA which is higher than the rates in Newfoundland and Labrador (5.2%) and Canada (3.4%).

4.2.2 Socio-Economic and Demographic Indicators

Understanding the socio-economic and demographic indicators of the city is crucial for gaining insights into the region's unique challenges and opportunities. These indicators provide valuable data that help identify trends and changes affecting the population's well-being and economic stability. They also develop targeted strategies that address the specific needs of the community, ensuring that interventions are both relevant and effective in improving the quality of life for residents.

Population

- The population of the St. John's CMA totaled 232,039 persons in 2023, up 3.2%, driven by record-high immigration levels. The population is estimated to grow to be 235,359 by the end of 2024⁹.
- The average age of St. John's residents in 2021 from census data was 42 years - six years younger than the provincial average of 48.

Indigenous Population

- The St. John's CMA had a population of 7,050 Indigenous individuals (3.4% of the total population) in 2021 with 60.6% (4,270 individuals) identifying as First Nations, 19.4% (1,370) as Métis, and 13.0% (920) as Inuit. The city has a similar proportion of Indigenous people (3.2% of total population).

⁹Economic Outlook 2024, St. John's Census Metropolitan Area.

- The average age of the Indigenous population in the area was 34 years, notably younger than the average age of the non-Indigenous population at 42 years.

Persons with Disabilities

- According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, the disability rate in Newfoundland and Labrador rose by 7.3% from 2017 to 2022 reaching 30.9% among individuals aged 15 or older.
- By comparison, the national disability rate increased by 4.7% to 27.0%. The significant rise and higher-than-average disability rate in the province can be linked to its aging population, as disability rates increase with age¹⁰. Newfoundland and Labrador has the highest median age in Canada, at 48.0 years¹¹.

Language

- In 2021, 99% people had knowledge of the English language in the St. John's CMA, the highest proportion in Canada.

Age Distribution

- In 2021, 14.8% of the St. John's CMA population fell within the age range of 0-14 years, 67% between the ages of 15-64 years, and 18.2% ages 65 or over.
- In the City of St. John's, the largest group consisted of individuals aged 25 to 54 years (41% of the population), followed by those aged 55 or over (34%), ages 15 to 24 years (12%), and ages 0 to 14 years old (13%).

Marital Status and Family Structure

- Of the St. John's CMA population aged 15 and over in 2021, 44.9%, were currently married and 11.6% were living in common-law relationships. A smaller percentage, 2.2%, were separated from a marriage, while 5.9% were divorced and 5.4% widowed.

¹⁰ Statistics Canada (1 December 2023). New data on disability in Canada, 2022.

¹¹ Government of Canada (n.d.). Economic Scan - Newfoundland and Labrador: 2024. Demographics.

Education

- According to the 2021 Census data in the City of St. John's, 12.0% of individuals aged 15 years and older did not possess a high school diploma, which was lower than the provincial average of 20.4%.
- In the City of St. John's, 88% of individuals aged 15 and over held at least a high school diploma, whereas the provincial average was 79.6%. Among individuals aged 25 to 64, 92.7% had obtained a high school diploma, compared to 87.4% for the province.
- 38.2% of individuals aged 25 to 64 in the city of St. John's held a bachelor's degree or higher, a significant contrast to the provincial average of 20.8%.
- In 2021, 31.7% of individuals aged 15 or over in the City of St. John's held a bachelor's degree or higher, while these percentages were 32.1% for St. John's CMA, 20.8% for Newfoundland and Labrador, and 32.9% for Canada.

Employment

- In 2023, employment in the St. John's CMA remained steady at 116,300 persons, matching the levels recorded in 2022.
- Employment in the CMA is estimated to increase by 1.7% (up 2,000 people) benefiting a total of 118,300 individuals in the year 2024. Sectors like forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil, gas, and construction are expected to grow. A collective increase of 5.1% in the goods sector and 1.0% in the service sector is estimated¹².

Income

- According to the 2021 Census, the median employment income in St. John's CMA was \$40,400¹³.
- Household income is projected to increase by 5.6% to \$12,952 million in 2024 in the CMA, driven by higher employment and additional federal transfers from the Canada Carbon Rebate and the Canada Pension Plan¹⁴.

¹² Economic Outlook 2024

¹³ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (February 2023). St. John's Population and Labour Market Overview.

¹⁴ Economic Outlook 2024

- From 2019 to 2020 the number of people living in low income in the province decreased from 58,000 to 36,000¹⁵. Since 2020, the number of people living in low income has been increasing and is recorded at 51,000 people in 2022.

Unemployment Rate

- The unemployment rate in the St. John's CMA showed fluctuations over the past year, from 6.0% in July 2023 to 7.1% by August 2024. This upward trend began in February 2024 and has continued to increase since then. Although St. John's rates are lower than the overall Newfoundland and Labrador rates, they remain higher than the national average in Canada¹⁶.

Housing

- In 2021, 11% of the St. John's CMA population showed a core housing need¹⁷, which is higher than Newfoundland and Labrador (8%) and Canada (10%). Additionally, 28% of the population lived in unacceptable housing.
- The total private apartment vacancy rate¹⁸ in the St. John's city decreased from 7.6% in October 2020 to 1.6% in October 2023, a significant 79% change¹⁹.
- The private apartment vacancy rate for 3+ bedroom dropped dramatically to 0% in October 2023 down from 5.3% in October 2020, indicating a complete lack of available units in this category.
- The median rental cost for private 2-bedroom apartments increased from \$985 in October 2022 to \$1050 in October 2023 (+ 6.6 percent change).
- In 2022, the percentage of households capable of affording the median rent varied across different housing sizes: studios at 50%, one-bedroom

¹⁵ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2022). Number of people in low income.

¹⁶ Statistics Canada (05 July 2024). Labour force characteristics, three-month moving average, seasonally adjusted.

¹⁷ Core housing need is defined as a situation where a private household's living situation does not meet one or more of the key housing standards—adequacy, affordability, or suitability. In such cases, the household would need to allocate 30% or more of its total pre-tax income to afford the median rent for a different local housing option that meets all three standards.

¹⁸ The vacancy rate represents the proportion of unoccupied rental housing units within a community.

¹⁹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 2023.

units at 45%, two-bedroom units at 37%, and three-bedroom or larger units at 34%²⁰.

- Regarding benchmark prices, the ability to afford housing differed by type: single-detached homes had a 5% affordability rate in 2023 (down from 10% in 2018), townhouses 9% in 2023 (down from 14% in 2018), and apartments 12% in 2023 (down from 21% in 2018).

Homelessness

- Homelessness is increasing within the City of St. John's. According to the City's Housing Needs Assessment Report, homelessness increased from 176 individuals in March 2022 to 263 in March 2023.
- Additionally, End Homelessness St. John's reported 374 individuals experiencing homelessness in February 2024 with 261 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness²¹.
- The establishment of a tent encampment by individuals experiencing homelessness highlights the plight of those struggling to find safe and affordable housing in St. John's. In early October 2023, protesters, including people experiencing homelessness, set up tents near Confederation Building, later relocating to the Colonial Building grounds where they remained throughout the winter. This encampment served as a powerful visual protest against the housing crisis in the province, pressing the provincial government to take more decisive and long-term actions.

Food Insecurity

- 25.9% of households (134,000 people) in Newfoundland and Labrador experienced some degree of food insecurity in 2023 which is 3% higher than the rate in 2022. Data was unavailable at the city level.
- Consumers in Newfoundland and Labrador faced a 2.3% increase in overall costs for goods and services in June 2024 compared to June 2023, with food prices rising by 3.2%. Food inflation outpaced overall inflation, particularly in categories such as vegetables and vegetable preparations (+7.9%) and dairy products and eggs (+3.8%)²².

²⁰ Turner Drake & Partners Ltd., David Harrison, MCIP and Upland Planning + Design Studio (July 14, 2023). Housing Needs Assessment. City of St. John's

²¹ End Homelessness St. John's. (February 2024). Dashboard- Data Snapshot.

²² Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (June 2024).

- Indigenous families, racialized communities, and immigrant families experienced higher levels of food insecurity in Canada²³.
- Rising inflation is surpassing increases in minimum wages (\$15.60 per hour) and creating a significant gap. A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recommended a substantial increase in the minimum wage to \$24.20 per hour in the Eastern region within three years to bridge this gap in Newfoundland and Labrador. Beyond three years, it is recommended that the minimum wage be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index for Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure wages keep pace with inflation and reflect the true cost of living²⁴.

Food Insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador²⁵	2021	2022	2023
% of households experiencing food insecurity	17.8	22.9	25.9
% of households experiencing severe food insecurity	4.5	6.2	8.7
% of households experiencing moderate food insecurity	8.6	9.9	11.0
% of households experiencing marginal food insecurity	4.8	6.8	6.2
% of children under 18 living in a food-insecure household	26.4	28.8	30.9

4.2.3 Risk and Protective Factors

Risk and protective factors play a pivotal role in shedding light on the underlying reasons behind the existence of certain issues. These factors provide insights into why specific individuals or groups are more, or less, susceptible to becoming either victims of crime or participants in criminal activities.

²³ Uppal, S. (14 November 2023). Insights on Canadian Society: Food insecurity among Canadian families. Statistics Canada.

²⁴ Closing the Gap between a living wage and minimum wages in Newfoundland and Labrador, 2024.

²⁵ PROOF (26 April 2024). New data on household food insecurity in 2023.

Risk factors encompass negative elements in the lives of individuals or within a community. They have the potential to increase the presence of crime, victimization, or the fear of crime in a community. Additionally, these factors may elevate the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal behaviour or becoming victims themselves²⁶.

On the other hand, **protective factors** represent positive influences that enhance the quality of life for individuals and the safety of a community. They act as a counterbalance, decreasing the likelihood of individuals engaging in criminal activities or becoming victims. Strengthening existing protective factors empowers individuals and communities, equipping them to better mitigate the impact of risk factors.

Risk and protective factors exist at the individual, family, peer, school, community, and societal levels. Please refer to Appendix C for a detailed listing.

4.2.4 Scan of Best Practices to Address Violence and Crime

Addressing violence and crime requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates proven strategies and innovative solutions from various contexts. This section presents a comprehensive scan of best practices employed by departments and communities throughout Canada to address the root causes of violence and crime for children, youth, young adults, and their families.

The following is a summary of the types of best practice programs in Canada. Please refer to Appendix D for a listing of evaluated best examples of each type of program.

Wraparound Support Programs

- Wraparound support programs are comprehensive, person- and family-centered initiatives designed to create individualized plans that address unique needs through a strengths-based approach. These programs employ a collaborative, team-based planning process, ensuring that strategies are tailored and implemented by a cohesive team. Team roles may include health, mental health and addiction support, housing

²⁶ Public Safety Canada (n.d.). Risk and protective factors.

support, case management, peer support, etc. as appropriate. The aim is to provide continuous, holistic support to effectively meet the day-to-day requirements of individuals and families.

Family-Focused Programs

- Family-focused programs are essential initiatives that aim to nurture and support families by addressing their specific needs and fostering a healthy, supportive environment. These programs offer a range of services and educational opportunities designed to enhance family cohesion, communication, and foster positive family interactions. By targeting various aspects of family life, programs focus on positive parenting, child health and behaviours, skill-building, self-esteem enhancement, mutual support, and connecting with community services.

School and Educational Programs

- School and educational programs play a crucial role in fostering academic achievement, personal development, and social skills among students. These programs are designed to create supportive learning environments that address the diverse needs of students, helping them to reach their full potential. By integrating academic support, extracurricular activities, and life skills training, school and educational programs aim to enhance students' overall educational experience and prepare them for future success.

Programs for Racialized or Vulnerable Populations

- Programs for racialized or vulnerable populations are critical initiatives aimed at addressing the unique challenges and barriers faced by marginalized communities. These programs focus on promoting equity, inclusion, and social justice by providing targeted support and resources tailored to the needs of these populations. By addressing issues such as systemic discrimination, economic disparities, and social marginalization, these programs strive to empower individuals and communities, promote resilience, and create pathways to opportunity and success.

Prevention Programs

- Prevention programs are crucial initiatives that aim to intervene early and address risk factors before they escalate into more significant challenges. These programs focus on providing targeted support and resources to individuals or groups who may be vulnerable to specific

issues, such as gang involvement, criminal activities, or other high-risk behaviours. By offering mentorship, education, and community engagement, prevention programs empower participants with skills and strategies to navigate challenges effectively and make positive choices.

Recreational Programs

- Recreational programs play a vital role in promoting physical, mental, and social well-being. These programs offer opportunities for individuals to engage in leisure activities, develop new skills, and build positive relationships within their communities.

4.3 Public Engagement and What We Heard

A public engagement strategy was developed to gather information and data to inform the Building Safer Communities Strategy. In particular, the City sought information and recommendations to increase understanding and identification of:

- Community and organizational experiences with violence and/or crime, particularly related to children, youth, young adults, and their families.
- Factors that contribute to youth victimization or perpetration of violence and/or crime.
- Best practices and gaps in the community to address the root causes of violence and/or crime.
- Recommendations for a strategy to address the root causes of violence and/or crime in the city.

Points of engagement included the following:

Engage Project Page

- 1700 total visits
- 115 project documents and reports downloaded
- 135 submitted quick poll answers
- Ideas sections: 160 visited, 22 contributed

Public Meetings

- One virtual meeting with six residents.
- Two in-person meetings with a total of eleven residents

Community Engagement Toolkits

- Six toolkits completed with 70 individuals with lived expertise representing the following perspectives:
 - Involvement with the justice system
 - Homelessness
 - Sex work
 - Urban Indigenous community

Residents' Survey

- 882 respondents
- 73% completion rate

Focus Groups

- Eleven focus group discussions were held with 50 staff representatives of community-based service providers working with children, youth, young adults, and their families.

City Advisory Committees and Working Groups

- Six focus groups were held with 70 representatives of the following committees:
 - Youth Engagement Working Group
 - Inclusion Advisory Committee
 - Seniors' Advisory Committee
 - Anti-Racism Working Group
 - Sustainable and Active Mobility Advisory Committee
 - Building Safer Communities Steering Committee

City Influencers' Survey

- Seventeen City Influencers between the ages of 18 and 30 completed a condensed version of the Resident's Survey.

The findings from public engagement were compiled into a [What We Heard](#) report and shared with Council at the [Committee of the Whole](#) meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024. The report has also been published on the [Engage project page](#) and publicly shared with City residents through a [media release](#).

What We Heard Highlights

Perceptions of Violence and Crime:

- Respondents across all engagement formats generally agreed that crime and violence have significantly increased in the city over the past two years, and either significantly or somewhat increased in neighbourhoods.
- Residents generally feel extremely or somewhat safe in their homes.
- Most residents believe their current neighbourhood is a safe place where neighbours look out for one another.

Experiences of Violence and Crime:

- The top forms of violence experienced by residents in their neighbourhoods and elsewhere in the city were threats, criminal harassment/stalking, and physical assault.
- The top form of crime experienced by residents in their neighbourhoods and elsewhere in the city was theft and stolen property.
- The top problems identified at the neighbourhood level were vehicle thefts and break-ins, drug use and trafficking, reckless driving, and noise disturbances.

Reporting Violence and Crime:

- Most respondents who experienced violence or crime reported it to the police.
- Of those who did not report violence or crime, the top reasons identified were the belief nothing would change, a lack of confidence in the legal system, and a lack of confidence in police.

Responses to Violence and Crime:

- The top changes respondents made to daily routines due to fear of violence and crime were locking windows and doors at all times, leaving lights on at night or when nobody is home, and not walking alone at night.
- The top security measures residents took to protect themselves were keep lights on when nobody home or at night, installed lights, alarm, surveillance system, etc., and installed new locks or security bars.

Root Causes of Violence and Crime:

- Respondents across all engagement formats identified poverty as the main root cause of violence and crime in the city.
- Other top causes identified were drugs and addictions, the housing crisis / homelessness, and a lack of healthcare and mental health services.

4.4 Building Safer Communities Grant Program

The goal of the Building Safer Communities [Grant Program](#) is to support community-based, non-profit organizations working with children, youth, young adults, and their families in their efforts to prevent or address root causes of violence and/or crime.

Priority areas for the first round of grants in 2023-2024 were developed based on Round Table recommendations, Public Safety Canada funding criteria, and a comprehensive review of best practices for addressing crime and violence.

Applicants were required to meet the following criteria to be considered for a Building Safer Communities grant:

- Organizations must be not-for-profit corporations or charities registered to carry on business and in good standing in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Organizations must offer programs and/or services for City of St. John's residents.
- Organizations must provide services to children, youth, young adults, and/or their families.

A [call for applications](#) was issued by the City on January 11, 2024. Priority areas for funding were as follows:

- Address risk factors and/or strengthen protective factors.
- Address the root causes of violence and/or crime.
- Help mitigate the impacts of violence and/or crime against children, youth, young adults, and families.
- Prevent or intervene in violence and/or crime involvement for children, youth, young adults, and their families.

Council [approved funds for three projects](#) on March 5, 2024, totaling \$489,000:

Iris Kirby House - \$130,000

- This project will provide specialized counselling services for children and youth living temporarily at the Iris Kirby House including a mental health and wellbeing counsellor, the redesign of three spaces and crisis prevention and intervention training for staff.

Thrive CYN St. John's Inc. - \$150,000

- In partnership with businesses and business associations, Thrive will develop a street-based outreach program that will operate exclusively in the downtown core. Outreach staff will be available for 35 hours per week to provide support, crisis interventions, referrals and community connections, and harm reduction supplies to vulnerable individuals.

MacMorran Community Centre Corp. and Buckmaster's Circle Community Centre Inc. - \$209,000

- This project will address the root causes of violence in eight low-income neighbourhoods within the city. Funds will primarily support staff to work with youth ages 8-12 to develop neighbourhood-based programming to address the risk factors and strengthen protective factors.

While many of the other submissions aligned with the grant program, the three recommended best addressed Public Safety Canada objectives, program goals, priority areas, and identified gaps with a focus on addressing the root causes of crime and violence for vulnerable children, youth, young adults, and their families.

Additional funding for projects which support this Building Safer Communities Strategy will be available in Federal fiscal years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. Priority areas and eligible activities will be aligned with the goals and objectives of the Building Safer Communities Strategy.

Sustainability

Funded projects contribute to the further refinement of this Strategy as well as the overarching sustainability plan. All grant recipients agree to contribute to the following:

- Knowledge sharing / dissemination that will inform and further the City of St. John's Building Safer Communities Strategy as it is developed (2024-2026).
- Knowledge sharing / dissemination that will inform and further the sustainability of the City of St. John's Building Safer Communities Strategy (2026-ongoing).
- Ongoing development and sustainability of the City of St. John's Building Safer Communities Strategy (e.g., participation in community forums, serving on steering or working committees, mentorship, research, other).

4.5 Integrating Existing Municipal Plans and Strategies

Relationship to 2019-2029 City of St. John's [Strategic Plan](#):

- [A Connected City](#) – A city where people feel connected, have a sense of belonging, and are actively engaged in community life.
- [A Connected City](#) - Develop and deliver programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy, and vibrant communities.

Applicable Legislation/City Bylaws:

- [City of St. John's Act](#)

Other City Plans, Guides or Strategies:

- [Healthy City Strategy](#)
- [10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019 to 2028](#)
- Envision St. John's [Municipal Plan](#) and the Envision St. John's [Development Regulations](#), Amended 2022
- City of St. John's [Accessibility Plan](#) 2024-2026
- City of St. John's [Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous People](#)

4.6 Links to the Healthy City Strategy

The Building Safer Communities Strategy is rooted in the City of St. John's Healthy City Strategy, a ten-year strategy that aligns existing City plans,

strategies, and initiatives, as well as the work happening in community through partners and collaborators, to make St. John's a healthier city.

The Healthy City Strategy provides decision-makers, staff, partners, and collaborators with a framework to consider health and wellness as part of their strategic planning, budgeting, and delivery of programs and services. Having a formalized strategy helps engage and align the community and other levels of government on issues that matter to them, while promoting change at the neighbourhood level.

Mission:

- The Healthy City Strategy is about making changes in our systems and neighbourhoods that promote mental and physical health, strengthen capacity, and create a healthy future for all.

Vision:

- St. John's is a progressive, inclusive, and connected city with active, healthy citizens, living in affordable, accessible, complete neighbourhoods where citizens can move about freely, connect with the natural environment and feel a sense a belonging.

As the social determinants of violence and crime are interconnected to the social determinants of health, the Healthy City Strategy will be the mechanism to sustain, monitor and evaluate the Building Safer Communities Strategy over the long term.

5.0 Building Safer Communities Strategy Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles

5.1 Vision

The **vision** of the Building Safer Community Strategy is a safe city where children, youth, young adults, families, and all people can live, learn, work, and play without fear.

5.2 Mission

The **mission** of the Building Safer Communities Strategy is to facilitate and support collaborative, community-based prevention, awareness, education, and research initiatives that help address the root causes of violence and crime in the City of St. John's.

5.3 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the Building Safer Communities Strategy and associated [Anti-Oppression Framework](#) are as follows:

Anti-Oppression: Recognizing the oppression that exists in our society and attempting to equalize the power imbalance in our communities. Oppression operates at different levels (from individual to institutional to cultural) and so anti-oppression must as well.

Anti-Colonialism: Recognizing and rectifying the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization. It emphasizes acknowledging historical injustices, centering Indigenous knowledge, and challenging Eurocentric ideologies. An anti-colonialism approach emphasizes the centrality of Indigenous voices, perspectives, and self-determination in engagement as well as other processes. Additionally, it promotes educational initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and solidarity to foster understanding and support for Indigenous communities' struggles for justice and self-

determination within the broader efforts of addressing systemic oppression and fostering inclusive, equitable spaces.

Intersectionality: Recognizing that individuals and communities often experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously. Intersectionality acknowledges that social identities, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class, and ability, intersect and compound to create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

Centering Marginalized Voices: Prioritizing the voices and perspectives of marginalized and oppressed groups in decision-making processes and problem-solving. This means actively seeking out and valuing their lived experiences and insights.

Trauma-Informed Approaches: Recognizing the impact of trauma resulting from oppression and integrating trauma-informed approaches into services and supports for affected individuals and communities.

Equity and Inclusion: Striving for equity by addressing historical and systemic disparities and providing necessary support to individuals and groups who have been marginalized. Inclusion involves creating environments where all individuals feel welcomed, valued, and respected.

Accountability and Responsibility: Holding individuals, organizations, and systems accountable for their role in perpetuating oppression. This includes acknowledging and addressing past injustices in order to make amends.

Allyship: Encouraging individuals who do not directly experience oppression to support those who do, including advocating for change, listening, and learning about the experiences of marginalized groups.

Empowerment: Promoting the empowerment of marginalized groups through education, advocacy, and support so that they can advocate for themselves and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Cultural Competence: Developing cultural competence and sensitivity to understand and respect the cultural differences and nuances that may contribute to oppression.

Critical Awareness: Promoting critical thinking and awareness of the ways in which oppressive systems and biases operate. This involves understanding and questioning systemic structures, stereotypes, and biases that perpetuate oppression.

Continuous Learning and Improvement: Committing to ongoing education, self-reflection, and adaptation of practices to better address oppression as understanding evolves.

Policy and Structural Change: Advocating for and implementing policy changes and structural reforms at the systemic level to address oppressive practices and create more equitable systems.

6.0 Priorities and Actions to Address Violence and Crime

The Building Safer Communities Strategy contains fifty action items under the following eight priorities to address violence and crime in the municipality.

All action items have assigned timelines for completion as follows:

- Short-term actions: within one to two years.
- Medium-term actions: within two to four years.
- Long-term actions: within five plus years.

6.1 Enhance Community Capacity

Goal: To strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations to address the root causes of violence and crime.

Short-Term Actions

6.1.1 Continue the [BSC Grant Program](#) until March 31, 2026 to address the root causes of violence and crime for children, youth, young adults, and their families. Projects must align with best practices noted in Section 4.2.4 and with the goals of this Strategy.

6.1.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of funded projects from the first round of BSC grants awarded in 2024 and make any needed adjustments.

6.1.3 Investigate additional funding opportunities from other levels of government and the private sector to support collaborative efforts to advance this strategy.

Medium-Term Actions

6.1.4 Provide an [incentive program](#) to encourage the development of or conversion to Multi-Unit Purpose-Built Rental housing projects (PBR)²⁷ (taken from Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Agreement).

²⁷ Attached multi-unit housing of at least four private dwelling units (with private kitchen, bathroom, and living area) built for long-term rental.

This program will provide incentives such as fee exemptions to a maximum of \$100,000 to developers.

6.1.5 Implement a [grant program](#) to support the development of Subsidiary Dwelling Units, Backyard Suites and Tiny Home Dwellings as long-term rental properties. Applicants can apply for a one-time maximum grant of \$20,000. Applicants who install accessibility features in their dwelling may be eligible for an additional grant (taken from HAF Agreement).

6.1.6 At the conclusion of the existing BSC Grant Program in 2026, explore opportunities for continued grants in future years based on lessons learned.

Long-Term Actions

6.1.7 Continue to offer funding support to the community as outlined in the [Community Grant](#) and [Capital Grant](#) programs.

6.1.8 Continue to redirect 10% of the development fees collected by the City to a reserve for community-led affordable housing projects.

Outcomes:

- Increased capacity of community organizations to address the root causes of violence and crime.
- Increased housing and affordable housing availability in the City.

6.2 Enhance City Capacity

Goal: To enhance the City's internal capacity by providing training and resources while fostering partnerships with advisory committees and community-based partners to address violence and crime.

Short-Term Actions

6.2.1 Explore options and training resources to support psychological safety²⁸ for City employees.

Medium-Term Actions

6.2.2 Investigate potential information and resources to share with City staff on the intranet to strengthen internal knowledge and understanding regarding safety and prevention.

6.2.3 Investigate community-based training programs and other educational opportunities that support the prevention of violence and crime for City employees.

6.2.4 Explore options for developing and/or customizing content for the City's internal training system related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and wellness.

Long-Term Actions

6.2.5 Continue to implement training for City employees such as Respectful Workplace, Creating Inclusive Recreation Settings for Everyone (Recreation staff only), First Aid, etc., to support safety and inclusion.

6.2.6 Consult with relevant City Committees and Working Groups on matters related to City programs, policies, and services that address the root causes of crime and violence.

6.2.7 Foster inclusion and anti-racism in our city through collaboration with individuals, organizations, and experts with lived expertise of racism and discrimination through the Anti-Racism Working Group.

6.2.8 Apply [Gender-Based Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#) intersectionality analysis to all initiatives associated with this Strategy²⁹.

²⁸ Psychological safety training is designed to reduce psychological hazards and foster mentally healthy work environments.

²⁹ GBA Plus is an intersectional analysis that goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider additional diversity factors, such as age, ability, ethnicity, economic status, race, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge and capacity within the City to increase safety and support violence and crime prevention.

6.3 Increase Public Awareness and Education

Goal: To increase public understanding of the root causes of violence and crime as well as local prevention / intervention programs and services.

Short-Term Actions:

6.3.1 Design and deliver a public awareness prevention campaign targeting children, youth, young adults, and their families.

Medium-Term Actions:

6.3.2 Develop a landing page on the City's public website to share resources and information with residents, visitors, and community partners including:

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)³⁰.
- Risk and protective factors for children and youth.
- Supports for survivors of violence, including gender-based and intimate partner violence.
- Culturally appropriate and accessible resources for newcomers and racialized people.

6.3.3 Support and promote the [Neighbourhood Watch Program](#) for residents to help build stronger, safer neighbourhoods.

6.3.4 Support, promote, and, where possible, enhance the City's [REAL Program](#) and [Financial Support Program](#) for individuals and families facing financial barriers to participate in recreation and leisure programs.

³⁰ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to prevent crime by modifying physical environments and architectural design. This involves improving visibility, increasing natural surveillance, and enhancing natural access control and territorial reinforcement. Some examples may include installing fences, lights and gates, designing spaces with clear sightlines and using signage to define boundaries.

6.3.5 Promote and support the [Pet Safekeeping Program](#)³¹ to provide foster homes for the pets of residents leaving intimate partner violence.

6.3.6 Provide information and resources related to safety and prevention to seniors in person and/or virtually on an ongoing basis.

6.3.7 Continue to provide free space for community-based organizations at the [Downtown Pedestrian Mall](#) to promote public awareness of programs and services including violence and crime prevention.

Outcomes:

- Increased public understanding of the root causes of violence and crime and available resources for community members and marginalized populations.

6.4 Strengthen Collaboration and Coordination

Goal: To enhance community collaboration and leadership in addressing the root causes of violence and crime.

Short-Term Actions

6.4.1 Hold networking events with community organizations, businesses, and different levels of government to strengthen collaboration in addressing crime and violence.

Medium-Term Actions

6.4.2 Continue to engage with community-based service providers, residents, and others to identify emerging issues and refine the Strategy as needed.

6.4.3 Enhance community collaboration to increase system coordination in addressing risk factors and strengthening protective factors.

³¹ The Pet Safekeeping Program is a joint initiative of the City of St. John's, the Iris Kirby House, and the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

6.4.4 Continue to convene the BSC Steering Committee to coordinate efforts, share information, and identify opportunities for joint programming.

Long-Term Actions

6.4.5 Continue membership in the [Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention](#) (CMNCP)³².

Outcomes:

- Enhanced communication and collaboration among sectors, agencies, residents, and organizations to address the root causes of violence and crime.

6.5 Advocate to Address the Root Causes of Violence and Crime

Goal: To advocate for systemic changes such as legislative and policy reforms to address the root causes of violence and crime.

Short-Term Actions

6.5.1 Advocate to the Provincial Government for:

- The implementation and enforcement of standards for private and non-profit shelters for people experiencing homelessness.
- The development of provincial standards for short term rentals to enable the City and other municipalities to regulate them.

Medium-Term Actions

6.5.2 Continue to advocate to the Provincial Government for legislative reform.

³² The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) is a community of practice to build capacity and mobilize Canadian municipalities to prevent and reduce crime and foster community safety and well-being.

6.5.3 Apply the BSC Anti-Oppression Framework³³ to all initiatives implemented through the Strategy.

Long-Term Actions

6.5.4 Advocate for policy, program, budgetary, and/or legislative changes to help address the root causes of violence and crime, such as:

- Poverty and low income
- Homelessness and lack of affordable housing
- Supports for mental health, addictions, and harm reduction
- Community funding and resources

Outcomes:

- Strengthened advocacy efforts with various levels of government for systemic changes to address the root causes of violence and crime.

6.6 Enhance Research and Data Collection

Goal: To improve knowledge and understanding of violence and crime trends and root causes and improve intervention effectiveness through research and evaluation.

Short-Term Actions

6.6.1 Collect and analyze violence and crime data as new reports are available to expand our evidence base.

6.6.2 Conduct research to advance community knowledge on evidence-based, effective practices for youth safety and violence prevention.

6.6.3 Continue to work with provincial partners to develop and analyze statistical profiles of the City's defined neighbourhoods.

6.6.4 Develop a comprehensive evaluation framework to measure the Strategy's outcomes.

³³ The framework will guide the work with the aim of identifying strategies and solutions to address power and privilege to mitigate and address the systemic inequalities that often operate simultaneously and unconsciously at the individual, group, and institutional levels.

6.6.5 Add a question to the City's Residents' Satisfaction Survey related to safety to measure and compare changes over time.

Medium-Term Actions

6.6.6 Investigate the feasibility of accessing City- and neighbourhood-specific police-reported data on violence and crime through policing and government sources.

6.6.7 Collaborate with other municipalities to explore the feasibility of developing a tracking system for community hate crimes³⁴.

6.6.8 Use data and research to inform City program priorities and coordinate monitoring and collective reporting across key indicators.

Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of violence and crime trends and root causes for more targeted and effective interventions.

6.7 Support and Advocate for the Urban Indigenous Community

Goal: To advance cultural respect and support for Indigenous people through collaboration, advocacy for Indigenous rights, and the integration of anti-racism and decolonization principles into City programs.

Medium-Term Actions

6.7.1 Promote and share information about Indigenous Cultural Diversity Training to learn about the Indigenous groups in our province, our history, and how that information can be beneficial to our community.

³⁴ This may include hate crimes based on age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and/or economic status, etc.

Long-Term Actions

6.7.2 Continue to recognize:

- National Indigenous Peoples Day to celebrate and honour the diverse cultures, contributions, and resilience of Indigenous Peoples.
- The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour residential school survivors, their families, and Indigenous communities.

6.7.3 Continue to participate in and co-chair the [Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights](#) and develop recommendations for implementing the City's commitments outlined in the 2020 [Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous People](#).

6.7.4 Identify areas of advocacy related to Indigenous people through the Joint Coordinating Committee on Indigenous Rights and bring forward to Council for consideration. These may include the following recommendations identified through public engagement:

- Better front-line, municipal, and provincial responses and supports for people leaving the prison / justice system.
- The legal recognition of Mi'kmaw, Innu-aimun, and Inuktitut as official languages of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- An apology from the Provincial Government for the legacy of harm to Indigenous people.
- Inclusion of culturally based foods in systems such as prisons and food banks.
- Involvement in the design of the new provincial prison to ensure the latest and best practices in rehabilitation and healing.
- Better support for Indigenous children who are coming out of care with fewer connections, networks, kinship, and skills.
- The creation of targeted support systems for Indigenous women who are disproportionately affected by violence, including culturally appropriate counselling and legal assistance.

6.7.5 Continue engaging with the urban Indigenous community to facilitate cross-sector collaboration and enhance collaborative efforts and resource sharing.

Outcomes:

- Strengthened collaboration and advocacy to improve systemic responses and targeted supports for Indigenous people.

6.8 Improve Urban Design and Infrastructure

Goal: To support public safety through improved physical design, infrastructure, and effective use of the built environment.

Medium-Term Actions

6.8.1 Increase the frequency of Metrobus routes during evenings and on weekends.

6.8.2 Investigate public art spaces for youth and potential opportunities to collaborate with private business partners and community organizations.

Long-Term Actions

6.8.3 Explore principles for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to increase public safety and security.

6.8.4 Grow a safe, accessible, balanced transportation network through the expansion of shared use paths projects and continued investment in Metrobus and GoBus transit.

6.8.5 Ensure development in the downtown features unique, context sensitive designs and promotes public safety and security (taken from Envision St. John's Municipal Plan).

Outcomes:

- Improved and effective urban design and infrastructure to support public safety.

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring Long-Term Change

The Building Safer Communities Strategy is housed within the City's Healthy City Strategy ([approved by Council](#) in 2021) which sets out long-term goals for the well-being of everyone in St. John's.

The Building Safer Communities Strategy primarily supports the Healthy Neighbourhoods and People pillar of the Healthy City Strategy:

- A city of complete neighbourhoods where residents feel safe, healthy, and connected to each other - neighbourhoods where people want to live, learn, work and play.

This pillar contains 21 implementation strategies related to the following areas, all of which are important considerations in addressing the social determinants of violence and crime:

- Neighborhood services, identity, and place-making
- Safety
- Mental and physical health
- Early childhood development and lifelong learning
- Arts and culture
- Access to food
- Poverty reduction and economic wellness

The Building Safer Communities Strategy also supports several implementation strategies related to the additional five pillars:

- Urban Design
- Environment
- Housing
- Inclusion
- Transportation

Please see Appendix E for a summary of all Healthy City Strategy goals and implementation strategies.

The Building Safer Communities Strategy's action items will be supported through an evaluation framework which will guide the work and inform measurable, outcome-based reporting on progress.

As the City of St. John's continues to grow and evolve, the Building Safer Communities Strategy will do the same. The Strategy is a living document, designed to be responsive and flexible to community needs. It will be reviewed and updated throughout implementation as City staff and the Steering Committee continue to receive feedback and recommendations from residents, community partners and collaborators.

Appendix A: Social Determinants of Violence and Crime

The social determinants of violence and crime refer to the societal, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that influence or contribute to the likelihood or prevalence of criminal behavior and violent acts within a community or society. These determinants stem from various systemic issues, inequalities, and social structures that influence individuals' circumstances, opportunities, and behavior. Understanding these factors is crucial for addressing and preventing violence and crime effectively.

The complex interplay among these various factors not only influences individuals' propensity to engage in criminal activities but also significantly shapes their vulnerability to becoming victims of violence and/or crime. These determinants encompass a wide array of social, economic, and cultural aspects that impact individuals' lives, influencing their decisions, behaviors, and overall well-being.

Understanding these factors goes beyond identifying why individuals might turn to violent and/or criminal behavior; it also sheds light on the circumstances that render them susceptible to victimization within their communities. Examples of the social determinants include:

Income and Social Status

- Lower income levels and social status often correlate with increased exposure to stressors, limited opportunities, and economic disparities. These conditions can lead individuals to resort to violence and/or crime for survival or improvement of their circumstances. Simultaneously, individuals with lower income or social standing might be more vulnerable to becoming victims of violence and/or crime due to their increased susceptibility in certain environments such as high-crime neighborhoods or due to inability to afford protective measures.

Employment and Working Conditions

- Unemployment, underemployment, or poor working conditions can contribute to economic instability and stress, potentially increasing the likelihood of individuals engaging in violent and/or criminal activities to meet their needs or due to frustration and lack of opportunities. Simultaneously, individuals in unstable work environments might face increased risks of victimization.

Education and Literacy

- Limited access to education and low literacy rates can result in diminished opportunities for employment and social mobility. Lack of education may lead to individuals' involvement in the informal or underground economy which involves labor-intensive jobs with minimal pay. Insufficient incomes that fail to meet basic needs may make some individuals inclined to turn to violent and/or criminal activities as a means of survival. Conversely, these jobs often lack legal protections, fair wages, or safe working conditions and pose risks of exploitation, underpayment, and abuse for individuals.

Childhood Experiences

- Negative experiences during childhood, such as abuse, neglect, or exposure to violence, can significantly impact a person's mental health and behavior. Such exposure may potentially lead to aggressive or criminal tendencies later in life. Additionally, those who have experienced childhood trauma may be more vulnerable to becoming victims of violence due to their increased susceptibility and potential revictimization.

Physical Environments

- Living in areas with high crime rates, inadequate infrastructure, lack of recreational spaces, or exposure to environmental hazards can contribute to a sense of insecurity and normalization of violent and/or criminal behavior, increasing the risk of involvement in crime. Similarly, residing in such neighborhoods can elevate the risk of victimization due to the prevalence of crime and violence in those environments.

Social Supports and Coping Skills

- While typically seen as protective factors, lack of social support and coping skills can contribute to criminal behavior and victimization under certain circumstances. Lack of adequate social supports or healthy coping mechanisms may lead individuals to seek alternative means of support by turning to illicit groups or illegal behaviors to fulfill their needs for belonging or resources. Moreover, this lack of support renders individuals more vulnerable to victimization, making them easy targets for exploitation or harm due to their isolation and absence of protective networks within their communities.

Healthy Behaviors

- Engaging in unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse or risky activities due to limited access to resources or stressful environments can increase the likelihood of involvement in violent and /or criminal activities. Individuals might resort to criminal activities to sustain their habits or fulfill their needs. This compromised judgment and vulnerability often make them targets for exploitation or victimization by others seeking to take advantage of their impaired state. Moreover, these individuals, due to their impaired decision-making, may inadvertently place themselves in risky situations, increasing their susceptibility to becoming victims due to reduced awareness or ability to protect themselves effectively.

Access to Health Services

- Health problems, when left untreated, can lead to financial strain through lost income from being unable to work. This economic strain might push individuals towards criminal activities as a means of meeting their basic needs. Without proper healthcare support for addictions or substance abuse problems, individuals might turn to illegal activities to support their addictions or engage in criminal behavior under the influence. In some cases, individuals facing chronic health issues with no access to care might feel they have limited options for survival. This can lead to

desperation, potentially resulting in violent and/or criminal acts to obtain necessities like medications or treatment. Access to healthcare services is also very important for victims of violence. Violence and abuse can have wide-reaching, damaging effects on the health and well-being of individuals including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and psychiatric impacts.

Biology and Genetic Endowment

- While biological factors might predispose some individuals to certain behaviors (e.g., antisocial), social determinants can exacerbate these tendencies, impacting both their involvement in violent and/or criminal activities and their susceptibility to victimization.

Gender

- Societal gender roles and inequalities can affect violence and/or crime. For instance, men are statistically more likely to engage in certain types of violent crimes, while women may face different types of violence due to gender-based discrimination. Moreover, gender-based discrimination and stereotypes might result in different forms of victimization, such as intimate partner violence or sexual assault, based on gender.

Culture

- Cultural norms, values, and traditions can impact attitudes toward violence and influence behavior within a community or society. Additionally, specific cultural practices might expose individuals to unique forms of victimization based on traditions or societal expectations.

Race/Racism

- Systemic racism, discrimination, and social inequalities based on race can lead to marginalization, exclusion, and reduced opportunities, contributing to their involvement in violent and/or criminal activities. Furthermore, racial or ethnic minorities might be more vulnerable to certain types of victimization due to societal biases and prejudices.

Appendix B: Building Safer Communities Steering Committee Terms of Reference

1.0 General Information	
Committee Name:	Building Safer Communities Steering Committee
Reporting to:	Manager, Healthy City and Inclusion
Last Revised:	April 9, 2024
Meeting Frequency:	Monthly
Staff Lead:	Building Safer Communities Coordinator
Other Staff Liaison:	Building Safer Communities Research Data Analyst Others as deemed necessary by staff lead as per Section 4.2.1
2.0 Purpose	
<p>The City of St. John’s will receive up to \$1.83 million through the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) to facilitate a crime and violence prevention strategy in collaboration with community partners. The purpose of the project is to help prevent crime and violence in the municipality by addressing root causes (i.e., social determinants).</p> <p>The Building Safer Communities Steering Committee will be solution oriented and provide information and recommendations to the City of St. John’s on the best ways of addressing the social determinants of crime and violence. Areas of focus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancing knowledge and evidence of what works in other jurisdictions in Canada as well as locally. • Developing a data collection strategy and evaluation framework. • Developing local and community–based strategies and key objectives for the prevention of violence and crime for local organizations that focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children, youth, young adults, and their families ○ Vulnerable populations ○ Addressing the social determinants of violence and crime. • Enhancing evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities. • Developing a public awareness campaign. • Developing a sustainability plan for the Building Safer Communities strategy. 	

Specifically, the Committee will:

- Provide the perspective of persons with lived experience and populations most vulnerable to violence and/or crime.
- Provide advice and perspective to the City on its violence and crime prevention and intervention policies, plans, programs, and services and how these meet the needs of the community.
- Identify gaps and barriers and suggest solutions that allow for the full participation of vulnerable populations and individuals facing barriers to improve safety and inclusion.
- Liaise with external groups and organizations with an interest in the prevention of violence and crime to share information, research, best practices, and other resources.
- Disseminate information on civic matters that affect children, youth, young adults, their families, and other populations most vulnerable to violence and/or crime.
- Provide a forum for dialogue between persons with lived experience, vulnerable populations, relevant external organizations, and the City of St. John's.
- Support and promote an increased consciousness of safety and inclusion within the City of St. John's and among the public.

Steering Committee recommendations to the City of St. John's will occur in the manner defined by these Terms of Reference to best support City Policy. The purpose of the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee in relation to specific City policies, plans and strategies is as follows:

Steering Committee Relationship to Strategic Plan:

- A Connected City – A city where people feel connected, have a sense of belonging, and are actively engaged in community life.
- A Connected City: Develop and deliver programs, services and public spaces that build safe, healthy and vibrant communities.

Applicable Legislation/City Bylaws:

- City of St. John's Act

Other City Plans, Guides or Strategies:

- Healthy City Strategy
- 10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019 to 2028
- Envision St. John's Municipal Plan and the Envision St. John's Development Regulations, Amended 2022
- City of St. John's Declaration in Support of the Rights of Indigenous People

Other Distinct Deliverables and Considerations:

1. The Committee will be consulted on the City's Building Safer Communities public engagement processes where persons with lived experience and populations most vulnerable to violence and/or crime are identified.
2. The Committee, working cooperatively with City staff and departments, will identify distinct opportunities to include the perspectives of persons with lived experience and populations vulnerable to violence and/or crime.
3. The Committee will work cooperatively with other relevant City committees on issues of mutual interest.

3.0 Membership and Composition

3.1 Composition

3.1.1 Committee Chair

This Steering Committee will be chaired by the Manager, Healthy City and Inclusion or a designated staff liaison. The staff member chairing this committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the committee carries out its work as per the Terms of Reference.

The Chair will ensure that matters requiring Council input and approval are brought forward for consideration, when required.

3.1.2 Public Members

The Steering Committee membership will be comprised of up to 12 total members from the following groups:

- Individuals representing agencies relevant to children, youth, young adults, their families, and other populations vulnerable to violence and/or crime.
- Persons with lived experience and/or who represent diverse voices within the community.

Efforts will be made to include the following perspectives within the Steering Committee membership to the greatest extent possible:

- Women and girls
- Children and families
- Youth and young adults
- Newcomers
- Indigenous people
- Racialized people
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Persons with disabilities
- Mental health and addictions
- Harm reduction

- Poverty and low income
- Social isolation
- Housing and homelessness
- Involvement with the justice system
- Employment
- Education
- Academia / research
- People with lived experience
- Seniors / older persons
- Recidivism prevention

Each organization may also appoint an alternate representative to attend Committee meetings if the primary member is unable to attend.

Youth Engagement Working Group

From time to time, the Steering Committee will benefit from the additional insight of the youth perspective. To this end, the Youth Engagement Working Group (YEWG) is available for consultation with the Steering Committee. The YEWG oversees implementation of the Youth Engagement Strategy and provides ongoing advice and guidance on how to best engage youth on City matters.

Inclusion Advisory Committee

The Steering Committee will also benefit from the additional insight of an inclusion perspective. The Inclusion Advisory Committee provides information and advice to the Council on matters of inclusion and accessibility as they relate to City programs, policies, and services. City projects and initiatives related to public service can be vetted through this experienced and knowledgeable committee to ensure access for all residents and visitors.

Subcommittees

When deemed necessary, the Steering Committee may strike up a working committee or subcommittee to deal with specific issues or deliverables (e.g., public engagement, evaluation). Subcommittees must have at least one Steering Committee member. Composition may also include other members of the public and organizational representatives. Subcommittees shall meet as an independent group, reporting to the Steering Committee on specified meeting dates, or as deemed necessary by the Chair.

3.1.3 Staff and Council Members (Ex-Officio Members)

Staff Lead

The Building Safer Communities Coordinator will act as Lead Staff for the Steering Committee. Other staff support/attendance may be requested by the Lead Staff where required.

3.2 Length of Term

Public Members

Unless otherwise indicated, the Steering Committee term of appointment is two years. Recognizing the value of experience and the need for continuity, incumbents who are willing to seek reappointment may signify their intent to serve an additional two years, for a total of two two-year terms. In some cases, members may be encouraged to provide guidance, expertise and attend in a bridging capacity following the end of their term.

Additional Considerations

- Midterm Appointments: When an appointment is made which does not coincide with the beginning of a term (i.e., to fill a vacancy) the partial term (i.e., less than two years) shall not count towards the maximum length of service or number of terms on the Committee for the appointee.
- Unless otherwise expressed in these Terms of Reference, the limit on the length of Steering Committee membership for any member of the public is two two-year consecutive terms.

Exceptions to the above terms are as follows: where there is an insufficient number of new members able to participate; if a particular area of expertise is indispensable and there are no other suitable replacements; if the Steering Committee would suffer from a lack of continuity (i.e., more than half of all members are replaced at once); or if directly related to the Steering Committee's purpose as defined in its Terms of Reference.

4.0 Roles, Responsibilities and Reporting

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

As a municipal advisory body, Steering Committee roles include:

- Advising and making recommendations to the City/Council in a manner that will support City policy matters relevant to the Committee's defined purpose.
- Providing resident and organizational-based expertise.
- Working within given resources.
- Knowledge sharing and evidence of what works in other jurisdictions in Canada as well as locally.
- Informing a data collection strategy and evaluation framework.
- Informing local and community-based strategies and initiatives.

- Informing evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities.
- Contributing to a public awareness campaign.

Shared Member Responsibilities

Conduct

Members shall strive to serve the public interest by upholding Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws and policies. Steering Committee members are to be transparent in their duties to promote public confidence. Members are to respect the rights and opinions of other Committee members.

Preparation

Meeting agendas and accompanying materials will be circulated electronically one week prior to all meetings. Members are expected to review all distributed materials prior to meetings. Alternate material distribution methods will be made available upon request.

Agendas

- Agendas require focus with clear parameters for content and alignment with the Steering Committee Terms of Reference and purpose.
- Agendas will be finalized one week before Steering Committee meetings.
- Items and accompanying material that are received after the agenda has been prepared and distributed (but prior to the meeting) will be reviewed and added to the existing or next meeting's agenda, as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- All Committee members are to submit potential agenda items and related material to the Committee Chair for consideration.

Attendance and Participation

Active participation in Steering Committee meetings is expected of all members of the public. "Active participation" may refer to both meeting attendance and/or engagement. An effort should be made to attend meetings in person or remotely. If a member declines two consecutive attempts to schedule a meeting or is unable to attend two consecutive scheduled meetings without justified absence, that member may be retired from the Committee at the discretion of the Chair.

Committee members who wish to request a leave of absence for an extended period (3+ months) may submit such a request to the Chair.

Voting

Wherever possible, decision making will be achieved by group consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved a vote will be used. City and government department, agency and entity staff representatives are ex-officio and therefore non-voting members.

Government members include the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, Department of Education, Department of Justice and Public Safety, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, Department of Health and Community Services, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

4.2 Member Roles and Responsibilities

4.2.1 City Staff

Chair

The presiding officer of the Steering Committee will be referred to as "Chair." The Chair will:

- Uphold Steering Committee processes and functions in accordance with all terms presented, maintaining productivity and focus. This includes ensuring Committee members conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- Build and coordinate a work plan for the Steering Committee.
- Prepare and submit agenda items and accompanying materials to the assigned Legislative Services Staff
- Work with the Lead Staff in fulfilling committee requirements related to reporting processes (annual presentations, written reports, FAQs etc.).
- Assist in the development of content for Notice of Vacancy documents.
- Review the Steering Committee Terms of Reference at the end of each term and be prepared to propose amendments as needed.

Lead Staff

- The Building Safer Communities Coordinator will act as the Lead Staff for this committee.
- Act as a liaison between the Committee and the City, linking across departments on issues relevant to Committee work.
- Ensure the Committee is informed about City policy, procedure, and available resources in reference to specific agenda items and provide procedural and/or technical advice to assist the Committee where appropriate.
- Request additional staff support/attendance as needed.
- Develop agendas in cooperation with the Committee Chair.

- Incorporate input from the Steering Committee into ongoing City work where appropriate (e.g., projects, staff updates, publications).

Other Staff Liaison

- The work of other staff liaisons intersects the purpose of the Steering Committee and may be required to participate.

4.2.2 Public Members

Public members are expected to inform City decision making, applying personal skills, knowledge, and experience in carrying out functions commensurate with the defined purpose of the Committee. Roles will include active participation in Committee meetings, representing select Committee interests in the community, and engaging with residents and experts when appropriate.

4.2.3 Council

In cases where an item of Committee business (as detailed in each meeting agenda) requires Council input or approval, it will be the responsibility of the Chair to bring it forward to Council.

4.2.4 Government Department, Agency, and Entity Members

In addition to community organizations and individual residents, and in consideration of jurisdictional responsibilities, the participation of key government departments, agencies, and entities is important to the work of the Steering Committee.

Representatives of the following government departments, agencies and entities are invited to participate in the Steering Committee as ex-officio, non-voting members, similar to City of St. John's staff:

- Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development
- Department of Justice and Public Safety
- Department of Education
- Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation
- Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Department of Health and Community Services

4.3 Reporting

The final Building Safer Communities strategy will be presented to the Council for input and approval.

Note:

- Organizational representatives will be required to report to (i.e., maintain open communication with) their respective organizations regarding Committee work.

5.0 Committee Recruitment and Selection

5.1 Recruitment, Vacancies and Applications

When new public members are required, the Chair shall invite the participation of one or more additional members as appropriate and defined in Section 3.1.1: Public Members.

A vacancy on the Steering Committee may occur when a member resigns, vacates a position or when their resignation is requested by the Chair. Vacancies may occur at the date of resignation, the date the member ceases to be qualified (i.e., vacates their position with their respective organization), or the date Chair declares the position vacant due to lack of attendance or incapacitation.

5.2 Eligibility and Selection

Eligibility

Appointments to Steering Committee will be made providing adherence with the following eligibility requirements:

1. Individuals and/or organizations represented by Committee members must be based in or serve/do business within the City of St. John's.
2. Organizational representatives are not required to be residents of St. John's.
3. Organizational representatives must have decision-making authority with the agency that they represent.
4. The City of St. John's will ensure a broad perspective of ages and diverse perspectives will be included on the Steering Committee during the membership selection process.

Commitment to Equity and Inclusiveness

The City of St. John's is strongly committed to equity and inclusiveness. In selecting Steering Committee members, the City will aim to design processes that are transparent, accessible, respectful, and free of discrimination, as well as seek to remove barriers to participation.

Selection Criteria

In addition to eligibility requirements, an individual's specific skills and experience will be important factors in Committee selection. While all who meet the eligibility requirements outlined above may be considered, individuals with demonstrated participation in groups or initiatives with goals relevant to the Steering Committee's purpose will be preferred. Some other considerations pertaining to general selection criteria include past professional and volunteer experience, the ability to perform required tasks, complementary skills, and/or competencies possessed. Those who are selected to serve on the Steering Committee will be invited by email.

6.0 Public Engagement

The City of St. John's recognizes that engagement between the City and its residents is an essential component of an effective municipal government. The City views public engagement as a process – one that facilitates dialogue with the right people, using the right tools, at the right time on subject areas of mutual interest.

In accordance with the City of St. John's Engage! Policy, the role of the Steering Committee in the spectrum of engagement will fall within the realm of "consultation." This means that the Committee will provide a forum for the public and additional partners to provide specific feedback on relevant City matters and to help inform Council decision making. As such, the Steering Committee will be based on the principles of commitment, accountability, clear and timely information, and inclusiveness.

The Steering Committee is only one of the ways to engage with the City. Where applicable the City will consider the use of other tools to gather perspectives and input. For more information on public engagement in the City of St. John's or to find out how to get involved or learn about what is coming up, check out the engagement page on the City's website. You can also check out the City's Engage! St. John's online engagement platform and connect with us on Twitter and Facebook.

7.0 Other Governance

7.1 Review of Terms

Considering recommendations from the Committee Chair, the Lead Staff will review the Steering Committee Terms of Reference documents annually. The purpose of this review will be to ensure that the operations and function of the Committee are still aligned with its defined purpose.

7.2 Meetings and Schedules

The Steering Committee will formally meet monthly. The exact timings of Steering Committee meetings will be determined by the Chair.

To meet the Committee meeting quorum, 50% + 1 voting member must be present. Unless otherwise specified (generally one week prior to a meeting) Steering Committee meetings shall be held at City facilities or via accessible video/virtual meeting platforms and shall be closed to the public. Meetings may be recorded.

7.3 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to situations in which personal, occupational, or financial considerations may affect or appear to affect the objectivity or fairness of decisions related to the committee activities. A conflict of interest may be real, potential, or perceived in nature. Conflict of Interest may occur when a Steering Committee member participates in discussions or decision making about a matter which may financially benefit that Member, an organization in which they are employed or represent (e.g., serve on the Board of Directors), a member of their family, or someone with whom the member has a close personal relationship directly or indirectly, regardless of the size of the benefit.

In cases where the Committee agenda or Committee discussions present a conflict of interest for a member, that member is required to declare such conflict; to abstain from discussion; and remove themselves from the meeting room until the agenda item has been dealt with by the Committee.

Confidentiality

All Committee members are required to refrain from the use or transmission of any confidential or privileged information while serving on the Building Safer Communities Steering Committee.

The City of St. John's is subject to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015.

7.4 Data Sharing

Where appropriate, the Steering Committee and relevant partners will formalize a data sharing agreement and work to share non-personal data that supports the

defined purpose of the Committee. Any data collection or data sharing that takes place will be to inform decision makers on matters of Building a Safer Community. The Committee and partners will agree to share measurable outcomes, indicators, and regular reports to ensure that there is clear and consistent communication on impacts at the community level.

Appendix C: Risk and Protective Factors

Individual Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative attitudes, values, or beliefs • Low self-esteem • Drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse. • History of violent victimization • Mental or physical illness • Attention deficits, hyperactivity, or learning disorders • History of early aggressive behavior • Poor behavioral control • Deficits in social cognitive or information-processing abilities • High emotional distress • History of treatment for emotional problems • Antisocial beliefs and attitudes. • Illegal gun ownership • Early and repeated anti-social behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes, values, or beliefs • Positive self-esteem • Problem-solving skills • Conflict resolution skills • Intolerant attitude toward deviance • Good mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional health • Highly developed social skills / competencies • Highly developed skills for realistic planning • Involvement in social activities • Strong sense of responsibility

Family Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to violence, neglect, and conflict in the family • Leaving institutional / government care (hospital, foster care, correctional facility, etc.) • Low emotional attachment to parents or caregivers • Poor monitoring and supervision of children • Low parental involvement. • Harsh, lax, or inconsistent disciplinary practices • Poor family functioning / family distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental supervision • High parental education and income • Healthy prenatal and early childhood development • Good parenting skills • Parental involvement in children's education and activities • Supportive and nurturing parenting • Consistent and appropriate discipline • Ability to discuss problems with parents • Frequent shared activities with parents • Quality childcare

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children of parents in conflict with the law • Parental substance abuse / addictions • Family disorganization, including broken homes • Family members in a gang • Lack of adult and parental role models • Pre-teen exposure to stress • Parents with violent attitudes • Siblings with anti-social behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent presence of parent during at least one of the following: when awakening, when arriving home from school, at evening mealtime, or when going to bed • Parental / family use of constructive strategies for coping with problems (provision of models of constructive coping) • Connectedness to family
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Peer Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social rejection by peers • Association with / high commitment to delinquent peers • Lack of positive role models • Lack of involvement in conventional activities • Involvement in gangs • Street socialization • Friends who use drugs or who are gang members • Desire for group rewards such as status, identity, self-esteem, companionship, and protection • Anti-social behaviour towards peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive peer influence • Social skills / competencies • Involvement in prosocial activities • Positive adult role models, coaches, mentors • Building positive relationships and patterns of interaction with mentors and pro-social peers • Membership in peer groups that do not condone antisocial behaviour • Interpersonal / prosocial skills

School Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor academic performance • Low commitment / attachment to school and school failure • Low literacy • Gang members in class • Negative labelling by teachers • Few teacher role models • Educational frustration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High academic achievement • High educational aspirations • Access to high-quality preschool • Parental involvement in children's education and activities • Perceived parental expectations about school performance are high

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning difficulties • Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations from teachers to perform well • Schools that provide a safe environment • Exposure to school climates with the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intensive supervision ○ Clear behavior rules ○ Firm disciplinary methods. ○ Engagement of parents and teachers
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Community Level

Risk factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially disorganized neighborhoods • High concentration of poverty. • Lack of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc.) • High level of transiency • Low levels of community participation • High crime area • Neighbourhood youth in trouble • Presence of gangs • Availability or perceived access to drugs • Availability of firearms and weapons • Cultural norms supporting gang behaviour • Feeling unsafe in neighbourhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of services (social, recreational, cultural, etc.) • Participation in traditional healing and cultural activities. • Sense of community belonging and cohesion • Participation and engagement in community organizations and events • Presence of social support networks • Creating positive social environments through community, family, and service organizations • Volunteering • Connectedness to adults outside the family

Societal Level

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Unemployment / underemployment • Racism • Discrimination • Stigma • Oppression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of economic resources • Access to health and social services • Strong social supports • Safe, stable housing • Steady employment

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food insecurity• Homelessness• Extreme economic deprivation• Lack of access to quality education• Negative media messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting social and economic policies that support positive youth development• Access to medical care and mental health services• Access to quality education• Positive media messages
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Appendix D: Examples of Evaluated Best Practices to Address Violence and/or Crime

Wraparound Support Programs

Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention (AYCP) Program

- The Abbotsford Youth Crime Prevention (AYCP) Program was established in Abbotsford, British Columbia, between 2009 and 2014, aiming to reduce the risk factors associated with criminal and gang involvement among youth aged 12 to 24 from South Asian community. It employed a Wraparound approach, focusing on community consultation, outreach services, educational assistance, access to positive recreational activities and mentoring to steer youth away from criminal activities.

Heavy Users of Services (HUoS) project

- The Heavy Users of Service (HUoS) project in Edmonton, Alberta, collaboratively led by Boyle Street Community Services and the Edmonton Police Service, aims to aid individuals frequently engaging with emergency systems due to a multitude of complex issues like trauma, mental health struggles, substance dependence, and homelessness. Through a comprehensive approach, HUoS employs intensive case planning and wraparound support to enhance the self-sufficiency of the most vulnerable. The program targets individuals, particularly Indigenous populations, grappling with significant trauma, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and systemic barriers, striving to reduce their frequent use of health, justice, and social services.

Family-Focused Programs

Strengthening Families Program (SFP)

- The Strengthening Families Program (SFP) operates across multiple Canadian regions, aiming to reduce behavioral problems, substance abuse, and delinquency among children and adolescents aged 6 to 16, while promoting family cohesion, communication, and organization. The sessions span 14 weeks and consist of three core components: child/youth classes, parenting classes, and family practice classes. These segments focus on imparting skills, enhancing communication, and fostering positive interactions among family members.

Nobody's Perfect

- The Nobody's Perfect Project is a parenting program designed to support parents of children aged zero to five, with the goal of improving participants' capabilities to maintain and promote the health of their young children. Nobody's Perfect employs a participant-centered approach, emphasizing adult learning principles in a group setting. The sessions focus on various aspects, including positive parenting, child health and behavior, skill-building, self-esteem enhancement, mutual support, connecting with community services, and preventing family violence.

School and Educational Programs

Pathways to Education Program

- The Pathways to Education Program is designed to support adolescents aged 13 to 17 from low-income neighborhoods, aiming to combat high dropout rates and encourage academic success through academic tutoring, mentoring, advocacy, and financial support.

Upstream Canada

- The Upstream Canada Project is a cross-sector, social innovation initiative that addresses the issue of youth homelessness in Canada, aiming to support youth between the ages of 12-16 who are identified as at risk of homelessness and school disengagement. The project uses a universal screening tool called the Student Needs Assessment (SNA) to identify students experiencing extreme barriers to resiliency in school engagement and the potential risk of homelessness. Students flagged as at risk by the assessment are invited to a validation interview, and if needs are validated, students are offered coordinated supports.

WITS Primary Program

- The WITS Primary Program (Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, Seek help) is a bullying prevention program for elementary school children aged 6 to 12. It teaches children strategies to deal with bullying and peer victimization. Tailored for at-risk youth prone to making unsafe choices during peer conflicts, the program integrates various components like police-liaison involvement, WITS lesson plans, and tools for reinforcement at home, aiming to reinforce positive behaviors and safe conflict resolution techniques.

Fourth 'R': Strategies for Healthy Youth Relationships

- The Fourth 'R': Strategies for Healthy Youth Relationships program is designed to promote healthy relationships and prevent dating violence, bullying, and peer victimization among adolescents aged 14-16. It integrates relationship skills into the school curriculum. The curriculum spans 21 lessons across three units, emphasizing personal safety, healthy growth, sexuality, and substance use within the context of fostering non-violent relationship skills.

LifeSkills Training (LST) Program

- The LifeSkills Training (LST) Program is a school-based program aimed at preventing substance abuse among youths aged 7 to 17. It focuses on enhancing social and personal skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, and coping strategies.

Youth Inclusion Program (YIP)

- The Youth Inclusion Program (YIP) in Canada aims to address antisocial behavior and reduce youth crime by offering a safe space and various activities for at-risk youth aged 11 to 20 in both urban and rural areas. The program focuses on decreasing risk factors, enhancing school attendance and performance, and

preventing involvement in the criminal justice system through individualized plans and community resources. Successful implementation requires understanding community resources, partnerships with schools and organizations, staff training, and risk assessment tools.

Programs for Racialized or Vulnerable Populations

Exit Doors Here: Helping Sex Workers Leave Prostitution

- The Exit Doors Here program, implemented from 2017 to 2022, focused on assisting women aged 16 and above in leaving the sex trade through a tailored Critical Time Intervention (CTI) model. It implemented a personalized time-based approach, offering services across multiple phases such as assessment, service implementation, behavior change interventions, and support for transitioning participants out of prostitution.

Aboriginal EMPATHIC Program

- The Aboriginal EMPATHIC Program, implemented in Eskasoni Elementary and Middle School in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, between 2003 and 2006, aimed to address aggressive and antisocial behaviors among Aboriginal children aged 7 to 11 (grades one to five). It focused on emotional awareness, impulse control, self-esteem, and pride in Aboriginal culture to reduce aggressive incidents, antisocial behavior, and enhance self-control.

Ceasefire in the HRM (Halifax Regional Municipality) - A Nova Scotian Approach

- The Ceasefire in the HRM - A Nova Scotian Approach is a crime prevention initiative developed in response to escalating gang-related violence in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). It focuses on community mobilization, conflict resolution, job employment, outreach, and conflict mediation to reduce gang violence. It targets youth aged 16 to 25 involved in or at risk of engaging in gang activity, particularly those from visible minority or ethnic groups. The program incorporates specific Nova Scotian and Africentric elements to address the unique needs of African youth in the region.

Prevention Programs

Youth at Risk Development- Hamilton (YARD Hamilton)

- The Youth at Risk Development (YARD) Hamilton program targets youth aged 12 to 17 who are at risk of gang involvement or criminal activities. It provides individualized support through mentorship, education, and community engagement. The initiative focuses on conflict resolution, anger management, problem-solving, and social development skills to steer youth away from gang involvement and reduce recidivism among those in contact with the criminal justice system.

Children Exposed to Violence Programs

- Children Exposed to Violence Programs in Saskatchewan assist children and youth between the ages of 3 and 18 who have been exposed to interpersonal violence or

abuse. The main goals of these programs are to prevent children and youth from becoming victims of violence and abuse in the future; help them cope with violence by providing the skills, resources, and tools necessary to cope in the healthiest way possible; and prevent children and youth from committing acts of violence and abuse against others in the future. The program evaluation captured parent feedback indicating positive changes in how their children: dealt with conflict at school (e.g., dealing with bullies) and conflict at home with siblings.

Recreational Programs

Velocity Adventure Program

- The Velocity Adventure Program uses outdoor adventure activities to engage youth aged 13 to 18 in substance abuse prevention. It aims to build resilience, self-esteem, and healthy lifestyle choices through experiential learning. Comprising three main components, Velocity includes group-building exercises, adventure camps, and engage-conflict-shift sessions.

Lighthouses

- The Lighthouses program is a youth crime prevention program in Manitoba serving children and youth ages 6 to 25. The Lighthouses Program is designed to provide safe, effective, prosocial activities delivered by well-trained staff outside of school hours. Each Lighthouse is unique and is developed to meet the specific needs of the community within which it is located. Lighthouses uses community facilities like schools and recreation centres for activities identified and organized by local children, youth, and community members.

Appendix E: Summary of Healthy City Strategy Pillars, Goals, and Implementation Strategies

Healthy City Pillar: Healthy Neighbourhoods and People

Goal: A city of complete neighbourhoods where residents feel safe, healthy, and connected to each other - neighbourhoods where people want to live, learn, work and play.

Neighborhood Services, Identity & Place-Making

- Support the use of public spaces in neighborhoods that contribute to place-making.
- Continue to foster connections between people and places in neighborhoods [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Work with partners to develop policy approaches to improve health and wellness at the neighbourhood level.
- Connect residents with health support services in every neighbourhood across the city.

Safety

- Improve the safety and accessibility of neighborhoods and streets for all residents, including under-represented groups.
- Improve collaboration on emergency planning with Eastern Health to support and protect public health and safety.

Mental and Physical Health

- Support training in mental and physical health promotion activities across the City of St. John's and partnering community organizations.
- Identify strategies and tools to improve health literacy as part of health promotion across the lifespan.
- Work with partners to increase social programs and resources for parents, guardians and caregivers that support mental health.
- Create equitable opportunities for residents to engage in active lifestyles.

Early Childhood Development & Lifelong Learning

- Work with partners to design programs and services that support early childhood development.
- Support and connect parents and guardians with access to information and education that promotes healthy child development.
- Provide opportunities that enable residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to participate in programs that build new skills.

Arts and Culture

- Encourage the growth and development of arts and culture in the City of St. John's, including considerations of diversity and inclusion.

Access to Food

- Support and protect local food systems, including urban agriculture, local food production and distribution [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Support food security through efforts to expand access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food within a sustainable food system.
- Work with community partners to create environments that support healthy eating in all neighbourhoods.
- Empower residents by strengthening food literacy to improve food and nutrition knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, and confidence.

Poverty Reduction & Economic Wellness

- Collaborate and work with the provincial government and community partners to advocate for, and to create improved social supports for persons living in poverty.
- Work with community partners to minimize health inequities in vulnerable populations.
- Make St. John's an attractive, livable city for persons of all ages, abilities and backgrounds [from: Roadmap 2021 Economic Plan].

Healthy City Pillar: Urban Design

Goal: A City where residents' quality of life is improved through the development of accessible, healthy built environments, neighbourhoods and public spaces.

Mixed-Use

- Support the creation of complete, mixed-use neighbourhoods for all new and re-development opportunities [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan]
- Adopt healthy community policies under the Municipal Plan.

Getting Around and Accessibility

- Enhance neighborhood walkability and wheel-ability [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Enhance the accessibility of streetscapes and facilities using universal design principles [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Increase understanding, advocacy and implementation of Universal Design Principles.
- Support the implementation of complete streets guidelines [from: Envision St. John's Municipal Plan].

Healthy City Pillar: Environment

Goal: Connect and preserve parks and open spaces to support equitable access to natural environments.

Parks & Open Space

- Support the addition and preservation of diverse and accessible forms of neighborhood parks.

Interaction & Connectivity

- Use greenways and trails to provide continuous connections between neighborhoods and to destinations across the city [from: Open Space Master Plan]
- Support the connectivity of natural space to neighborhoods and residential areas [from: Open Space Master Plan]
- Support natural environment features and sustainable infrastructure in public spaces and in new developments to mitigate the impacts of climate change [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan]

Environmental Benefits

- Support the development and implementation of a stormwater management policy, incorporating climate change, to ensure safe, clean, reliable drinking water [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Support a sustainability plan to address the effects of climate change on the City of St. John's.

Healthy City Pillar: Housing

Goal: A city with a wide range of affordable, adequate, and accessible housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth and economic security.

Accessible & Affordable Housing

- Support the implementation of the City of St. John's Affordable Housing Strategy to address housing needs by working with partners, and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable and affordable housing throughout the city [from: Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028].
- Support End Homelessness St. John's, Community Entity under Reaching Home, as they lead the implementation of the St. John's community Plan to End Homelessness [from: Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028].
- Advocate for and support collaboration across all three levels of government in their housing and homelessness sector commitments [from: Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028].
- Increase residents understanding of the connection between affordable housing and health (addressing housing as a basic human rights and health equity issue).

Healthy City Pillar: Inclusion

Goal: A diverse city where residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds feel safe, included, connected, with each other and with the city.

Social and Community Connections

- Support activities, policies, and programs that enable equitable opportunities for residents to participate in and connect with the city.
- Collaborate with community partners to support transitional, alternative, and bridging programming to connect people to the community.

Diversity

- Foster equity and support diversity initiatives and visibility of under-represented groups and demographics in St. John's.
- Foster inclusion and anti-racism in our city through collaboration with individuals, organizations, and experts with lived experience of racism and discrimination including, but not limited to ableism, indigeneity sexism, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural identity.

Healthy City Pillar: Transportation

Goal: An efficient, active, and accessible transportation network that gets people where they need to go safely.

Active Transportation

- Support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Bike Master Plan [from: Bike St. John's Master Plan].
- Support the expansion and maintenance of a safe, accessible active transportation network for all users [from: City of St. John's Strategic Plan 2019-2029].

Accessible Public Transportation

- Support a sustainable, efficient, accessible public transportation system [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Increase public transit through higher density and mixed-use areas, and along main transit corridors [from: Envision St. John's draft Municipal Plan].
- Build an accessible, coordinated multi-modal transportation system [from: City of St. John's Strategic Plan 2019-2029; Bike St. John's Master Plan].

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