

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Summary of Priorities



Safe and Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Safe and vibrant neighbourhoods was identified as a desired outcome of Brantford City Council's 2021-2022 Priorities (Report No. 2020-462). Multiple priorities were identified, including improving municipal capacity for by-law enforcement, advancing the Downtown Master Plan, and development of a CCTV program. Brantford City Council also endorsed the creation of the Vision Zero Road Safety Committee and the Downtown Community Improvement Plan (Report No. 2020-111) which promotes increased safety and positive experiences for residents.

In review of community data and consultations, themes related to safety in the Downtown, negative experiences with social disorder such as loitering, litter, graffiti, and public drug use, and traffic safety were identified. The proposed and ongoing initiatives described below present opportunities to address these challenges.

Opportunities and Key Initiatives:

Improve Municipal Capacity for By-Law Enforcement

The City of Brantford committed to the improvement of municipal capacity for By-Law enforcement, including extended hours and expanded scope, as well as addressing concerns related to property standards, noise, nuisance, and compliance with COVID-19 regulations.

Expand and Promote Neighbourhood Associations

Neighbourhood Associations (NAs) are volunteer committees that work in cooperation with the City of Brantford to support their community. There are currently 21 active NAs consisting of 174 executive members that offer a variety of activities, including neighbourhood events and programs, outdoor ice rinks, and learning opportunities. Increasing the number of NAs across Brantford, as well as increasing overall membership and volunteers, will help to promote community connection and enhance neighbourhood programs, activities and events.

Implement a Downtown CCTV Program

The City of Brantford and Brantford Police Services are working jointly on the development of a downtown CCTV Program to help deter crime in the downtown. The program will consist of a network of CCTV cameras in the downtown area that will enhance existing security measures from both public and private partners, including post-secondary institutions, law enforcement, and local businesses.

Continue to Implement the Downtown Master Plan

Through partnerships with the provincial government, post-secondary institutions, the Downtown Brantford BIA, and other stakeholders, the City of Brantford has created opportunities for sustained growth, and continues to improve the vitality of the downtown for visitors, students, citizens of Brantford and surrounding communities to use and enjoy. The Downtown Master Plan guides development and improvements and provides a vision for the future. Plans for the Downtown include completion of the Downtown Streetscaping Environmental Assessment (EA) and the implementation of a Property Tax Increment-Based Grant program through the Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to support the redevelopment of Downtown properties with residential and mixed use buildings.

Support the Goals of Vision Zero Task Force

Vision Zero Safety is a global initiative that promotes road safety. By adopting the initiative locally, Vision Zero Brantford will aim to improve education, enforcement, engineering, evaluation and community engagement to promote street safety. One of the main goals of Vision Zero Brantford is to complete a feasibility study for implementing red light cameras throughout the City.



Children and Youth

Brantford City Council's 2021-2022 Priorities (Report No. 2020-462) highlighted children and youth, including the development of a newly updated Youth Strategy, initiatives that support youth engagement, and program expansion to various neighbourhoods and community centres.

Brantford has experienced higher than average youth crime rates, youth pregnancy rates, and youth obesity rates. Brantford also has lower than average high school graduation rates and above average youth unemployment rates. In 2015, the City of Brantford and County of Brant were identified by the Ministry of Youth and Children Services, as a priority

area for youth-at-risk. The City of Brantford worked with community partners to develop the 'Together for Youth' Coordinated Youth Services Strategy, to support youth engagement, leadership, and education.

The Best Start Network and the Child and Youth Strategic Leadership Table are multi-sectoral planning networks that support positive outcomes for children, youth and families, and have identified the need to foster community connections, collaboration and program development, and enhanced service system planning and management for child care and early learning. Children and youth were also reflected in community consultations and data and addressed challenges related to youth social isolation, accessibility and availability of youth programming, substance use education and violence prevention.

Opportunities and Key Initiatives:

Expand the Healthy Kids Program

Healthy Kids supports healthy lifestyles for children and families by offering programs and activities that promote physical activity, healthy eating, and positive relationships. The Healthy Kids program adds a new theme each year and the 2021 theme is Healthy Kids Celebrate Culture! encouraging children and families to participate in various cultural opportunities that help promote inclusion and community connection.

Coordinated EarlyON programming

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free programs in Brantford and County of Brant for children 0 to 6 years old and their caregivers. EarlyONs are staffed by Early Learning professionals trained in early childhood development and offer support and resources for families. Participants learn and play with their child through reading, storytelling, songs, and games, while connecting with other families. Indigenous led programs are available and teach Indigenous activities and language. Offering alternative program options and coordinating EarlyON programs with recreation centres and other community programs can enhance support for families with young children.

Update 'Together for Youth' Coordinated Youth Services Strategy

The 2015, Together for Youth: Coordinated Youth Services Strategy identified opportunities for supporting youth in the community. The City of Brantford will work with community partners to develop a new and updated Youth Strategy that will include engagement with the Brantford Youth Council, and identify opportunities to enhance and expand youth programming to other community centres.

Develop and Launch Youth Violence Prevention Initiatives

There is an opportunity to further research best practices and evidence based programs for youth violence prevention. The City will work with community partners to explore ways to develop and implement youth prevention programs, and further enhance current programs and services to support local youth.



Age-Friendly Community

City Council continues to identify the well-being of seniors as a priority, and highlighted the continued implementation of elder abuse prevention and awareness, and other age-friendly initiatives in City Council's 2021-2022 Priorities (Report No. 2020-462).

In 2016, the City of Brantford completed an internal audit of age-friendly policies, programs, and services and supported an extensive community consultation process, facilitated by the Grand River Council on Aging, which engaged over 700 older adults, caregivers, and service agencies. In 2018, City Council approved, Healthy Aging: The City of Brantford

Age-Friendly Plan, a three year plan that outlines recommendations to maintain and enhance quality of life for Brantford's aging population. Additionally, City of Brantford worked with the Brant Elder Abuse Awareness Committee, and over 200 community partners, service providers, and residents to develop Right Now: A Community Strategy to Prevent and Address Elder Abuse, which outlines community awareness, education and training opportunities, as well as programs, services and resources that prevent social isolation and promote community connections.

Residents over the age of 65 accounted for 16,760 (17.2%) of the City's population in 2016, a 17.5% increase from 2011, making the 65+ age groups the fastest growing in Brantford. In Ontario, it is projected that 25% of the population will be over the age of 65 by 2041. Various factors can impact older adults and make them more vulnerable; 29.5% of older adults who live alone in Brantford live below the low income measure; seniors are among those who wait the longest for affordable housing; and 48% of seniors self-reported their health as below average/ average. Community data and consultations addressed supports for seniors, and identified concerns regarding social isolation and the availability of programs and services for seniors.

Opportunities and Key Initiatives:

Update the Healthy Aging: City of Brantford Age-Friendly Plan

The City of Brantford Age-Friendly Plan outlines 99 recommendations and 42 actions based on the World Health Organization eight domains of an Age-Friendly community. As the Plan ends this year, there will be opportunities to assess additional gaps in age-friendly planning and explore ongoing actions and initiatives for the City to continue to support seniors.

Expand Senior's programming within Community Recreation

The Beckett Adult Leisure Centre, located in downtown Brantford, offers programs for adults aged 50 and over. The Centre offers arts programs and workshops, drop-in activities and games, and promotes physical activity and recreation. There are opportunities for the City to enhance program participation, shift service delivery to promote accessibility, and explore other locations and space for programming.

Expand the 'Let's Get Moving' Program

The Let's Get Moving program provides opportunities for older adults to remain active and connected to the community. The City will continue to engage new and existing community partners to develop educational and recreational programming, and will explore additional opportunities to reduce social isolation and promote increased connections.

Support the 'Right Now: A Community Strategy to Prevent and Address Elder Abuse

Right Now: A Community Strategy to Prevent and Address Elder Abuse outlines 13 recommendations and 42 actions to prevent and address elder abuse and serves as a shared work plan for community partners. In partnership with the Elder Abuse Awareness Committee, the City continues to explore grant opportunities that support educational and awareness campaigns and local training, and updates and promotes the Seniors Toolkit and Elder Abuse Service Provider Protocols.



Diversity and Inclusion

Brantford is becoming increasingly more ethnically and culturally diverse; approximately 6% of the Brantford population immigrated to Canada between 2001 and 2016, and approximately 10% of Brantford residents have a first language other than English or French. Immigration trends also indicate an increase in secondary migration since 2008. Additionally, the Brantford downtown is home to Conestoga College and Wilfrid Laurier University campuses, which attract significant numbers of international students.

In 2017, the City of Brantford received funding from the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to research ways to better connect newcomers and their families to municipal programs and services. The Newcomer Connections Research consulted over 100 newcomers and provided 15 recommendations to increase newcomer engagement, including establishing a local immigration partnership (Report No. HHS2018-039). In 2020, the City of Brantford received federal funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish the Brantford Immigration Partnership (BIP) which represents a multi-sector network committed to ensuring Brantford is a welcoming and inclusive community.

Survey results from the Newcomer Connections Research indicated that 20% of newcomers felt discriminated against based on their ethnicity when accessing services in Brantford, and 61% of newcomers reported feeling “somewhat/ not connected” to the community. Community consultations further addressed themes related to stigma experienced by newcomers and Indigenous populations, language barriers that limit access to services, and lack of connection to the community.

Opportunities and Key Initiatives:

Cultural Celebrations, Events and Campaigns

In partnership with the BIP, cultural associations, and Indigenous partners the City will explore additional opportunities to celebrate cultural diversity in Brantford, including cultural activities and programs, social media and videos, and education and awareness campaigns that promote cultural learning and anti-discrimination.

Support Urban Indigenous Engagement and Connection

Working in collaboration with Indigenous partners to enhance inclusion of urban Indigenous residents and foster community connection. For instance, other municipalities have developed local Indigenous health research and Urban Indigenous Strategies and Action Plans to help guide community initiatives.

Increase Accessibility to Community Services and Resources

In collaboration with community partners we can enhance participation and access to recreation and other community programs by incorporating cultural activities, fostering participation for intergenerational families, and exploring opportunities for interpretation services and translation of information guides and community resources.



Affordable Housing

The City of Brantford continues to prioritize affordable housing options that address housing pressures. The Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force was developed in 2019, and City Council identified additional housing developments as a 2021-2022 Council Priority (Report No. 2020-462).

Brantford-Brant Housing Stability Plan (HSP) and created a new Municipal Housing Master Plan in October 2019. The HSP supports the vision that everyone "has a home to live in that meets their needs" and the Master Plan established a long-term infrastructure plan to guide the City and County in maximizing the use of land and assets to increase the supply of

ongoing affordable housing.

The Brantford Brant Ontario Health Team (BBOHT) was officially approved by the Province in November 2020. The BBOHT developed a framework for delivering integrated care and includes the following population specific priorities: 1) Mental Health and Addictions 2) Dementia 3) Homelessness. The City of Brantford will continue to work with the BBOHT and community partners to support health priorities.

As of 2020, the Affordable Housing wait list for Brantford and County of Brant remained at an all-time high of over 1,700 active applicant households. Depending on household composition and client type, applicants are waiting two to eight years for affordable housing. Pressures on the general rental housing market are evident from vacancy rates that have decreased year over year since 2013, and continue to be at an all-time low. According to the 2018 Point in Time (PiT) Count, 186 people at minimum were homeless in Brantford, 54% were living in shelters or transitional housing, and 69% were on social assistance. Additionally, homelessness and supportive and transitional housing were identified as priorities in community consultations.

Opportunities and Key Initiatives:

Implement Recommendations of the Mayors' Housing Partnership Taskforce

The goal of the Mayors' Housing Partnerships Task Force was to build partnerships to create more housing options, more quickly, across the housing continuum. The Mayors' Housing Partnership Task Force Affordable Housing Action Plan outlined 34 actions to aid in the creation of more housing options.

Housing Stability Strategy

The City of Brantford developed a mid-term Housing Stability Strategy, reviewed by Council in February 2021, outlining future actions and key partners needed to enhance homelessness prevention and shelter diversion efforts. The strategy also supports coordinated access, case management, tracking and reporting through the implementation of the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) that enhances data analytics and helps us to better understand and support the homeless population.



Substance Use

Brantford City Council's 2021-2022 Priorities identified the continued implementation of the Brantford-Brant Community Drugs Strategy (BBCDS) in collaboration with health partners (Report No. 2020-462).

The Brant County Health Unit is committed to leading the ongoing implementation of the BBCDS which includes the four pillars of prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and advocacy. Staff is committed to working with the Drugs Strategy Coordinator to determine how the City can best support community efforts.

As noted in the BBCDS, 49.7% of Brantford residents exceed the low risk alcohol drinking guidelines; 15.1% have used an illicit drug in the previous 12 months, excluding one-time use of cannabis; between 7-14% identified having used crack/cocaine, amphetamine (speed), MDMA (ecstasy), and hallucinogen/PCP/LSD in their lifetime. Substance use among youth was also a priority of the BBCDS, highlighting that 30% of youth reported using cannabis in their lifetime, 14% of youth reported using at least one prescription drug for non-medical purposes, and 53% of youth have used alcohol at least once in their lifetime. In recent years rates of opioid related overdoses, hospitalizations, and deaths in Brantford have exceeded the provincial averages. Substance abuse and social disorder associated with substance use such as needles, public intoxication, and public drug use was also identified in community consultations.

Key Initiatives:

Development of Youth-focused Substance Prevention Programs

As a priority of the Youth Strategy and the Community Drug Strategy, the City will explore program models for youth drug education and prevention, including working with community partners to develop community campaigns and health programs.

Increase the Availability of Supportive Housing

The City of Brantford Live Well program provides housing supports to individuals who have experienced repeated or chronic homelessness and have high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use. The program focuses on the "Housing First" philosophy of homelessness prevention that provides safe, affordable housing, with access to health and social services. Included in the Live Well program, funded through the province's Home for Good program, the City has a new 30 unit supportive housing building on Marlene Avenue. Additionally, with Council approval the City will be posting an Expression of interest for more supportive housing units.

Enhance Service Connections

The City of Brantford will continue to promote connections to health and community services through our reach of clients and service users. The integration of community recreation and social services through the corporate re-organization will also present a unique opportunity for Brantford to implement creative methods to reach people throughout the community. The City will also continue to work collaboratively with the BBOHT and offer support within our municipal role.

Advocacy to Other Levels of Government

The City of Brantford plays a role in advocating for needed community resources and will continue to explore opportunities to support community efforts through ongoing advocacy to stakeholders and other levels of government.