



# Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan



City of  
Campbell  
River

This Community Safety Plan was developed with the support of the Project Advisory Team and in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities.



Canadian Centre for  
**Safer Communities**

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we are on the territory of the Liḡ̓'itdax̓ people of the Wei Wai Kum and We Wai Kai First Nations.

### Why is this here?

A land acknowledgement statement represents an act of reconciliation, honouring the land and Indigenous heritage and history.<sup>1</sup> To recognize the land is an expression of gratitude and appreciation to those whose territory we reside on, and a way of honouring the Indigenous peoples who have cared for this land for thousands of years.

## Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and relevance of this document; however, certain limitations in the data must be acknowledged. The information presented is based on a review of existing data, engagement with community groups, and findings from a public survey. A key challenge with qualitative data—such as focus groups and open-ended survey responses—is its inherent subjectivity. Participants share insights shaped by their personal experiences and knowledge, and such individual statements may not be representative of the broader community. As a result, the findings informing this plan should not be viewed as a definitive representation of community safety and well-being challenges in Campbell River. However, through thematic analysis, the data provides valuable insights into key concerns, priorities, and other emerging trends.

This is a living document. As new evidence, actions, and recommendations related to community safety and well-being continue to emerge, this plan reflects the best available data at the time of its development.

**Trigger Warning:** This document and the supporting documents include discussions about sensitive topics related to crime, safety, and victimization that could be triggering to some people.

Have questions about the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Action Plan? Contact Jeff Ford, City of Campbell River Director of Community Safety at [jeff.ford@campbellriver.ca](mailto:jeff.ford@campbellriver.ca) or 250-286-5740, or visit [getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb](http://getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb).

## Acknowledgements

Developing the Campbell River Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan was a collaborative effort. Our sincere gratitude is offered to the community members who attended the engagement sessions and completed the survey questionnaire. Your participation will help root community safety and well-being efforts in the experiences and context of Campbell River residents. This plan is stronger because of your voices.

The City of Campbell River (the City) would also like to extend a sincere thank you to the Project Advisory Team (PAT) members who played an integral part in ensuring the planning process was rooted in local context:

City of Campbell River, Downtown BIA, Island Health, RCMP, School District 72, Strathcona Community Health Network, Strathcona Housing Alliance, Strathcona Regional District, Vancouver Island Mental Health Society, We Wai Kai First Nation, Wei Wai Kum First Nation, the business community and a community member.

Finally, thank you to the local organizations, citizens, community groups and practitioners, along with City Staff and service providers in Campbell River for supporting and participating in engagement sessions.



Photo credits: Brent Curtain, Bluetree Photography, Island Photo, Jarrod Evans, Tyler Cave



## Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement .....	2
Disclaimer .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	2
Message from Mayor and Council .....	4
Message from We Wai Kai Chief Chickite .....	4
Message from RCMP Detachment Commander .....	5
Executive Summary .....	7
Purpose .....	7
Our Vision .....	7
Campbell River’s Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan .....	7
Background.....	8
Reconciliation in the Context of Community Safety and Well-being .....	9
Community Assessment.....	10
Priority Areas, Goals, Recommendations and Actions .....	10
Moving Forward: Taking Action and Tracking Our Progress .....	19
Governance – Community Safety Working Group and Action Teams.....	19
Evaluating Results and Reporting on Progress .....	20
Reporting.....	21
Appendices.....	22
What is Community Safety and Well-Being? .....	22
Key Findings.....	24
Positive Aspects About CSWB in Campbell River .....	24
CSWB Concerns in Campbell River .....	25

## Message from Mayor and Council

This Council committed to prioritizing a healthy and safe community when campaigning back in 2022 and has remained focused on and progressed toward this goal. During our term we have actioned countless initiatives, such as the opening of Homewood, a supportive housing initiative; the creation of a dedicated downtown cleanliness team; increasing RCMP, Bylaw and security capacity; and supporting more downtown activities. The development of this Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan is another tool that will support our mission to create an inclusive and comfortable environment for all residents, businesses, and visitors.

This Plan recognizes that a safe community requires a vibrant economy, an open, accessible and welcoming downtown, safe places and programs for youth, effective systems of support for those in need, as well as crime prevention.

While the City has already acted and will lead some of the actions set out in the plan, this document also highlights that community safety is a shared responsibility. We hope that community partners will embrace the goals and actions, and we will advocate for support from other levels of government, to strengthen safety and well-being in Campbell River and get the support that we need.



Thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of this plan – from the residents who completed the survey, to the businesses that participated in workshops, to the dedicated members of the Project Advisory Team, and the many Indigenous voices. Your time, feedback and insights helped to create this shared vision and strategy that will guide Campbell River to a safer and more prosperous place to live, work and visit.

**Mayor Kermit Dahl**  
*on behalf of City of Campbell River Council*

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## Message from We Wai Kai Chief Chickite

Our First Nation is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Community Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan. We view the Plan as a meaningful step towards reconciliation, fostering collaboration and partnership among communities, building relationships, and guiding us towards enhanced safety and wellbeing in the future.

**Chief Ronnie Chickite**  
*We Wai Kai Nation*



# Message from RCMP Detachment Commander

As the Detachment Commander of your local RCMP detachment, it is my privilege to have worked with so many community members to help develop this Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan. This document reflects our shared commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and resilient community for all who live, work, and visit here.

Community safety is not the responsibility of any one agency—it is a collective effort that relies on strong partnerships, open communication, and a clear understanding of local needs. This plan was built with input from community members, service providers, and our policing partners, and it focuses on proactive, long-term approaches to the root causes of crime and social disorder.



Our officers are deeply committed to not only responding to incidents, but also working collaboratively to support prevention, intervention, and recovery. By aligning our efforts with health, housing, education, and social services, we can make meaningful progress in reducing harm and enhancing the well-being of everyone in our community.

I thank you for your continued trust and partnership as we move forward together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Preston".

**Inspector Jeff Preston**  
RCMP



# Executive Summary

## Purpose

To engage community partners, organizations and citizens to create an action-oriented plan to reduce crime and victimization while building on community strengths to improve safety and well-being in the future.

## Our Vision

Campbell River is a diverse and vibrant community where people feel safe and where everyone works together for the best outcomes for all.

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## Campbell River's Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan

Community safety and wellbeing planning is an increasingly common approach by local governments to address root causes and risk factors that contribute to harm and victimization. The central idea is that resolving complex challenges such as crime, disorder, homelessness, mental health, and addictions require a collaborative approach and actions that span many different sectors and agencies. The planning process first seeks to understand the set of problems faced by a community through comprehensive information gathering and research, followed by community consultation, surveys, and field assessment. The planning process helps identify a community's strengths alongside gaps or problem areas that need to be addressed. From there, key priorities are identified with actions that could affect positive change.

The City is among a growing number of municipalities demonstrating leadership and vision in the development of a community safety and well-being plan. In 2023, Mayor and Council endorsed moving forward with the CSWB Plan project which aligns with Council's strategic priority of supporting a Healthy and Safe Community: Downtown Revitalization, Crime Reduction and Livability.

The CSWB Action Plan brings together community leaders, organizations, and members to foster a sense of ownership and serve as a roadmap for creating a safer, more connected, and responsive community. Unlike traditional municipal plans, CSWB plans require ongoing, active collaboration with both the community and community partners. While the City intends to lead some actions, it also hopes to leverage other levels of government and community partners who have a direct mandate in community safety and well-being.

With its emphasis on taking action and promoting positive change, this plan sets out the Priorities, Recommendations and Actions based on key findings.



## Background

Campbell River, located on the east coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia, is a mid-sized coastal city known as the “Salmon Capital of the World” due to its rich fishing heritage. Historically, the area has been home to the Li ḡ “itdax” people of the Wei Wai Kum and We Wai Kai First Nations with deep cultural ties to the land and waters. European settlement and industry, particularly forestry and fishing, expanded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, shaping the city’s economic development. Geographically, Campbell River serves as a gateway to the northern part of Vancouver Island, with stunning natural surroundings that include Strathcona Provincial Park, the Discovery Islands, and the coastal waters of the Salish Sea. The city has a population of approximately 37,000 residents, with a growing economy that now includes tourism, aquaculture, and technology.

In recent years, Campbell River, much like other communities across the country, has faced challenges related to crime, violence, and safety. The city’s Crime Severity Index, which is a summary measure of the volume of severity of police-reported crime, stood at 173.4 in 2023, reflecting an 11% increase from the previous year, with violent crime at 156.3 and non-violent crime at 181.7.<sup>1</sup> Issues such as property crime, public disorder, and substance use-related incidents have been prominent concerns, particularly in the downtown area, where business owners and residents have reported increasing incidents of vandalism, theft, and public safety risks.

Additionally, a number of crime and safety related incidents covered by the media in recent years have exacerbated safety concerns among the community. While local service providers and community groups are actively working to address these challenges, it was recognized that ongoing collaboration and long-term strategies are essential in ensuring a safer and more vibrant Campbell River for everyone.

Recognizing the need for such strategies, the City partnered with the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC) in September 2023 to develop a CSWB plan. Among other objectives, the CSWB Action Plan aims to bring together system leaders, organizations, and community members to co-create a vision and an actionable way to increase safety and well-being in the community.

Campbell River’s CSWB planning builds upon a strong foundation of existing efforts that contribute to the safety and well-being of the community. One example of our community’s assets is Campbell River’s deep-rooted culture of volunteerism and mutual support, shaped in part by its history of employment in the resource sector, which fosters a strong sense of collaboration. From the outset, the City and the (PAT) emphasized the importance of recognizing and leveraging these strengths and building on and augmenting some of the great initiatives already underway.

## Reconciliation in the Context of Community Safety and Well-being

Within the Canadian context Indigenous experiences and knowledge are of special relevance. Campbell River, like other Canadian communities, is built on a long history of Indigenous stewardship of the land and sea, as well as the determination of those who left their homelands to settle there. This history plays a significant role in shaping present-day experiences. The Indigenous population comprises approximately 13% of Campbell River's population. Recognizing this, the PAT with CCFSC co-designed a community engagement approach that tried to ensure that Indigenous voices were as central to the plan as the voices of the non-Indigenous population of Campbell River.

The engagement process included one-on-one interviews with the Chiefs of the We Wai Kai and We Wai Kum First Nations (who were also directly participating in or represented at the PAT). Additionally, three sharing circles were hosted with Indigenous and Métis members of the community to ensure their experiences could be more fully understood and inform decisions about priorities.

A validation meeting with an Indigenous leader, once actions had been designed, added further confidence that the PAT was heading in a direction that resonated with Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders alike.

Truth and reconciliation is an overarching theme to the CSWB Action Plan.



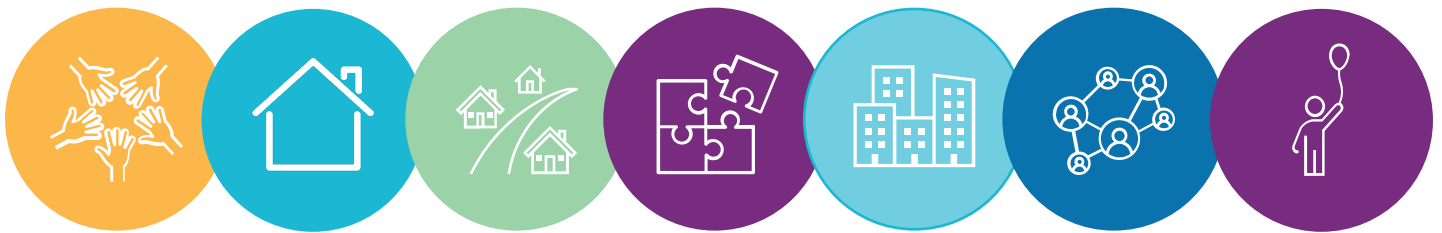
# Community Assessment

To support the development of the Campbell River CSWB Action Plan, local data was gathered to provide a comprehensive understanding of the community's strengths and challenges related to safety and well-being. This process included a review of existing data, a community-wide survey, and engagement sessions with diverse groups, including local service providers, Indigenous peoples, older adults, business representatives, social service agencies, and individuals with lived or living experience. The PAT and City staff contributed valuable expertise and insights, ensuring a well-rounded approach. Proposed actions were then reviewed by a broad range of partners who are anticipated to play a role in the implementation process.

You can access the technical project report provided by the CCFCS including all data and a summary of feedback collected during the engagement process through the City of Campbell River community safety site at [getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb](http://getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb).

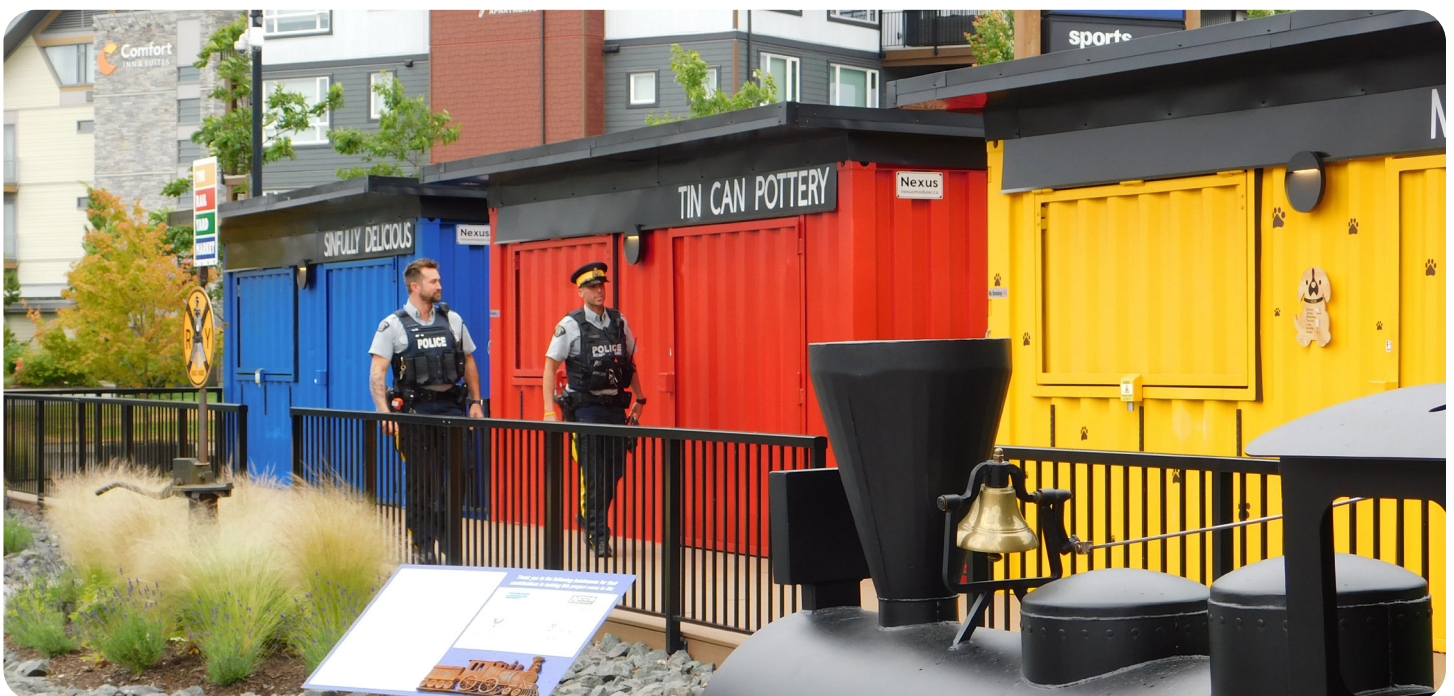
For the list of Key Findings, see the Appendix.

## Priority Areas, Goals, Recommendations and Actions



Having reviewed the key findings from the community assessment and consultation process, the PAT Team identified priority areas, goals, and recommendations, along with 70 actions for implementation. The CSWB Action Plan reflects the City prioritization of the most critical actions to be implemented in the next one to two years; this includes 39 unique priority actions. The following pages include a summary of the priorities, recommendations and key actions along with the City's role including leading, partnering advocating and/or supporting. The City will lead 15 different projects and initiatives, some of which are already underway.

For the full list of priorities and actions, see the CSWBP Project Report at [getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb](http://getinvolved.campbellriver.ca/cswb).



1



## Priority

### Collaboration for Crime Prevention

**Goals: To visibly increase collaboration between enforcement, community, and social services in preventing and reducing crime.**

#### Recommendations

- Increase community safety efforts in responding to non-criminal matters, deterring unlawful activities, and fostering a sense of public safety.
- Improve coordination and effectiveness of joint responses by ambulance, fire, bylaw, police, mental health and substance use professionals through greater information sharing, collaborative case management when appropriate and by creating a shared understanding of emerging trends and critical areas of focus.
- Foster a sense of ownership and purpose over the design of solutions to homelessness, crime, victimization and fear of crime.
- Expand the response options where multiple mandates are involved in priority situations and in neighborhoods/locations.
- Continue to advocate with other orders of government to support local community safety and well-being efforts.
- Increase understanding of and engagement in efforts that reduce vulnerabilities and risks to community safety and well-being and increase capacities for prevention.



## Actions

## City Role

**Action 1.1.** Expand bylaw hours and coverage to enhance the response to public safety issues.

Lead

**Action 1.2.** Enhance pro-active patrols and multi-disciplinary approaches to calls for service in problem locations and in response to persistent issues.

Lead

**Action 1.3.** Advocate to expand the hours of government and contracted social service organizations beyond the 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. window to be able to work with the RCMP and bylaw on joint interventions that mitigate risk.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 1.4.** Increase collaboration between social and health services, the RCMP, bylaw, fire and other city departments for interventions in priority locations and situations.

Lead

**Action 1.5.** Identify properties that are problematic and/or experienced as nuisance properties, co-design interventions and engage the services that are mandated to provide the interventions.

Lead

**Action 1.6.** Meet with the Provincial and Federal Crown Prosecution Services to impress upon them how bail applications, delayed justice, and repeat offenses have a detrimental impact on the community and ask for stronger supervision and support for repeat offenders, as well as for longer custodial sentences when appropriate

Lead

**Action 1.7.** Lobby the federal and provincial governments for additional police funding and project resources to prevent and reduce organized crime, drug trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 1.8.** In consultation with the special victims' unit, review current training practices in intimate partner violence, domestic violence, de-escalating erratic behaviors and trauma-informed care and if needed, develop and provide additional training for first responders, as well as municipals teams and contractors.

Partner

**Action 1.9.** Establish a team that looks more closely at the issues and extent of domestic and intimate partner violence in Campbell River as well as best practices for how to respond to it and ultimately how to prevent it.

Lead



## Priority Housing and Homelessness

**Goals: To make housing in Campbell River more accessible and affordable and to decrease homelessness.**

### Recommendations

- Keep housing and homelessness interventions at the forefront of the CSWB Action plan, ensuring they remain central to its ongoing efforts and outcomes.

### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 2.1.** Collaborate with not-for-profit providers and operators, for profit developers, and faith-based landowners to enter partnerships for affordable housing projects.

Lead

**Action 2.2.** Continue to support and increase the availability of safe, accessible spaces for people experiencing homelessness, such as the expansion of projects like Homewood Village, including both day-use areas and shelter/housing options, helping to ensure that the unhoused have places to rest, and seek support.

Partner

**Action 2.3.** In alignment with the Housing Accelerator Fund commitments, review the city's land acquisition policies and land inventory, with the aim of expanding opportunities for accessible, affordable and inclusive housing, including through rent-g geared-to-income units, second-stage housing, non-market housing, and innovative housing options such as smaller lots and tiny homes.

Lead

**Action 2.4.** Continue to advocate for the expansion of capital funding programs (CMHC, province).

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 2.5.** Advocate to other orders of government for and support the expansion of recovery beds and supportive housing while coordinating efforts to address homelessness.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 2.6.** Advocate for funding for projects and programs on the North Island that support the region's unhoused including: food, hygiene facilities, services and housing, ensuring that people can access the help they need within their own communities.

Advocate/  
Support



## Priority Community Connections and Civic Participation

**Goals: To enhance community participation in planning, increase positive interactions in public spaces, and foster opportunities for celebration.**

### Recommendations

- Explore and implement ways that foster community cohesion and harmony.
- Promote greater civic participation.

### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 3.1.** Honor individuals and partner agencies with annual community safety awards, celebrating their outstanding contributions to enhancing community safety and well-being.

Lead

**Action 3.2.** Recognize diverse cultures for their contributions to community well-being through hosting cultural activities, festivals, and celebrations.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 3.3.** Advance the well-being of First Nations communities through cooperative economic and other partnerships, collaborative advocacy efforts, and promote public education that respects and acknowledges their history and traditional territories.

Partner

**Action 3.4.** Encourage local funding agencies to allocate grants for activities that support grassroots initiatives for community safety and well-being and that align with the priorities and recommendations of the CSWB plan.

Partner

**Action 3.5.** Leverage partnerships such as those with the Business Improvement Areas (BIA) to expand free activities and events where everyone is welcome and that promote community wellness and cohesion.

Partner



# Priority

## Responsive Systems

**Goals: To strategically work together across disciplines to develop more proactive approaches to CSWB.**

### Recommendations

- Leverage the implementation of the CSWB Action plan to foster greater collaboration among all services in Campbell River involved in community safety and well-being related work.
- Use the CSWB Action plan implementation phase to identify opportunities to optimize resources.

### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 4.1.** Increase substance use treatment options and support for recovery.

Partner/  
Advocate

**Action 4.2.** Increase restorative justice and diversion measures for both adults and youth through the work of the RCMP’s restorative justice program and through collaboration with the provincial and federal crown.

Lead

**Action 4.3.** Adopt a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to identify and address gaps in early childhood services and family support with a focus on improving access to affordable childcare, parenting programs, and early intervention efforts, ensuring all families have the resources necessary for their success and well-being.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 4.4.** Expand the service hours and reach of existing community outreach programs, in partnership with the business community, to proactively engage marginalized community members.

Advocate/  
Support



5



## Priority

### Revitalization of Public Spaces

**Goals: To employ place-making initiatives to revitalize and make welcoming public spaces in Campbell River.**

#### Recommendations

- Prioritize the revitalization of community spaces in the city making them more safe, accessible, and welcoming for all.

#### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 5.1.** Form a partnership between the City and local business owners to “kick off a contagious commercial area revitalization” campaign that builds on the City’s “It’s time for Downtown” campaign.

Lead

**Action 5.2.** Use public investment strategically to attract and leverage private investment in the downtown area, such as the “Re-imagine the Row” downtown revitalization project.

Lead

**Action 5.3.** Continue support for family friendly events including those that are alcohol free.

Lead

**Action 5.4.** Consider innovative ways of activating public spaces, such as Spirit Square, in ways which respond to the recommendations from the field study and community input.

Partner

**Action 5.5.** Continue to support downtown programs such as the Downtown Small Initiatives Fund and the Façade Improvement Program, and explore further opportunities to make downtown a hub of connectivity with sidewalk cafes, benches, games, etc.

Partner



## Priority Vibrant Economy

**Goals: To increase efforts that can make the economy of Campbell River stronger, more diversified, and more resilient.**

### Recommendations

- Continue to support the resource sector to ensure stable and continuous local employment.
- Equip local innovators with more opportunities, resources, and spaces to launch and scale their businesses.
- Expand access to training, including micro credential programs and skills training.
- Leverage existing assets and streamline services to deliver impactful economic development.

### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 6.1.** Develop a Local Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub: Establish a co-working and innovation space (makerspace) strategy that includes mentorship, networking, and startup support services.

Partner

**Action 6.2.** Partner with North Island College and local industries to offer micro-credential programs or skills training – particularly in high-demand areas or resource sectors (forestry, aquaculture, mining, etc)

Partner

**Action 6.3.** Establish a Business Concierge Service: Develop a one-stop support hub within City Hall/downtown to assist new and existing businesses with permits, funding applications, and workforce connections.

Lead

**Action 6.4.** Create a Downtown Activation Fund: Building on the “Its time for Downtown” campaign and brand, provide small grants or logistical support for increased storytelling through digital platforms and the development of a downtown ambassador program. Create a late night downtown program that encourages businesses to stay open later in the evenings.

Lead





## Priority Youth Engagement

Goals: To increase positive youth engagement.

### Objective

- Help to ensure that youth in Campbell River have safe and welcoming places for socializing and receiving support as needed.
- Increase the resilience of youth in Campbell River.
- Decrease the number of youths who use alcohol and other substances.

### Actions

#### City Role

**Action 7.1.** Provide support for community-based, accessible drop-in centers for youth that foster engagement in the arts, culture, sports, and technology.

Partner

**Action 7.2.** Help ensure that the design of youth spaces and programming is youth driven, and evidence informed.

Advocate/  
Support

**Action 7.3.** Inform youth and their caretakers on the risks of gang involvement and how to reduce these risks by harnessing the experiences and knowledge emerging from the youth gang prevention project and related initiatives.

Lead

**Action 7.4.** Educate youth and their caretakers on warning signs and strategies to avoid online harassment, bullying, and exploitation including sex-tortion and other risks.

Partner

**Action 7.5.** Seek provincial, federal and foundation funding for the implementation of strength-based youth interventions that advance the prevention of crime and victimization and the reduce the risks for youth coming in conflict with the law or becoming victims of crime.

Lead

**Action 7.6.** Develop and support existing programs that raise awareness about the impact of drugs and alcohol as well as drug trafficking while highlighting viable alternatives.

Partner

# Moving Forward: Taking Action and Tracking Our Progress

## Governance – Community Safety Working Group and Action Teams

### Working Group

Implementation of the Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan will involve an operational working group chaired and coordinated by the City, which brings together key partners who are invested in the plan's proposed actions. The Community Safety Working Group's primary responsibilities will include:

- **Guiding the implementation of the plan:** Oversee the process and ensure the plan is executed effectively.
- **Serving as ambassadors for the plan's vision:** Advocate for the plan and its goals within their own networks and communities.
- **Communicating the plan's priorities:** Promote the plan's objectives within their organizations and align them with internal goals and initiatives.
- **Reporting on progress:** Provide regular updates on the implementation status to the public and community partners. Identifying and securing resources: Seek out new resources or align existing ones to support the implementation of the plan.
- **Facilitating connections:** Help connect ongoing efforts and initiatives with the plan's priorities to enhance coordination.
- **Supporting action teams:** Offer guidance, act as a sounding board, and provide oversight to the action teams established to focus on specific tasks.
- **Staying informed:** Keep up to date on developments related to community safety and well-being both locally and beyond Campbell River and share relevant information with the committee.
- **Leading priority area action teams:** Take a leadership role in guiding action teams focused on specific priority areas (see below the description of action teams).

This structure ensures that the working group plays a central role in driving the plan forward, coordinating efforts, and creating a collaborative environment for achieving community safety and well-being goals.

### Action Teams

Action Teams are integral to the execution of specific actions or initiatives outlined in the plan. These teams extend the initiative's reach by including a broader group of organizations and community members, thereby increasing available resources and, more importantly, fostering community-based participation.

The CSWB Action Plan will leverage existing working groups and forums as action teams where possible and consider the formation of additional action teams as necessary.

## Evaluating Results and Reporting on Progress

Since the goal of the CSWB Plan is to create meaningful, lasting change in the community, it is essential to have a reliable method for assessing progress and identifying areas that may require further action. This process involves both monitoring – collecting and analyzing data – and evaluation, which determines the extent to which the CSWB Plan is achieving its objectives.

Recognizing that community safety and well-being is multifaceted and influenced by various factors such as education, health, victimization, living standards, social issues, access to services, and sense of belonging, it is crucial for monitoring and evaluation to incorporate diverse measures. This approach goes beyond relying solely on traditional indicators like reported crime statistics and the crime severity index, ensuring a more comprehensive assessment of safety and well-being.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are the data and metrics used to monitor and evaluate progress toward goals and objectives. These indicators provide concrete, measurable insights into the extent to which specific outcomes are being achieved. They can track both outputs—the immediate, tangible results of an initiative, such as the number of workshops held or materials distributed—and outcomes, which reflect longer-term changes or impacts, such as improved community safety or enhanced well-being. KPIs can be quantitative, such as statistical measures (e.g., the proportion of the population reporting experiences of violence), or qualitative, capturing subjective experiences and perceptions (e.g., how effective CSWB actions are perceived in driving change).

A diverse set of performance indicators is essential for setting realistic expectations about progress and results. Enhancing perceptions of safety and preventing harm are complex, long-term processes that require time.

The following is an initial set of high-level indicators for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the CSWB plan in Campbell River. While this list provides a foundational framework, it is not exhaustive, and additional indicators may be identified as the implementation progresses.

Once KPIs are selected, they will be measured continuously and used to:

- Establish baseline data to assess progress over time
- Set realistic and achievable targets
- Identify and expand potential data sources
- Determine the frequency of measurement and data collection
- This ongoing evaluation ensures that the CSWB Action plan remains responsive and effective in achieving its objectives.

Performance Indicators	Potential Sources of Data
Number of children vulnerable on one or more scales of the EDI	Early Development Instrument report
Percentage of the population that rates their quality of life as very good or good	Campbell River Citizen Satisfaction Survey
Level of satisfaction with efforts to revitalize downtown	Campbell River Citizen Satisfaction Survey
Percentage of the population reporting feeling very safe or safe when visiting downtown	Campbell River Citizen Satisfaction Survey
Rate of police-reported violent crime	RCMP quarterly reports, incident-based crime statistics (Statistics Canada)
Number of police-reported incidents of domestic violence or intimate-partner violence	RCMP quarterly reports, Incident-based crime statistics (Statistics Canada)
Top 10 calls for service types to police per year	RCMP quarterly reports
Number of toxic drug deaths annually	Greater Campbell River Local Health Area Profile (Island Health)
Number of people experiencing homelessness	Point-in-Time Count
Percentage of students who score in the low range on at least 1 or the 5 measures of well-being	Middle Years Development Instrument report
Level of satisfaction with services and programs for children and youth	Vital Signs report
Percentage of residents who report a strong sense of belonging with their neighbourhood	CSWB survey results
Percentage of residents that report feeling very safe or somewhat safe in their neighbourhood (day and night)	CSWB survey results
Percentage of crime victims who reported to police	CSWB survey results

## Reporting

Progress on the CSWB Action Plan will be measured against the performance indicators on an annual basis and reported out to Council and the public. Interim updates will also be provided through the City's community safety website as information from surveys and other source such as Stats Canada reporting becomes available. Measuring progress is a means of understanding whether initiatives and interventions are making a difference and to determine if additional actions are needed to affect change.

# Appendices

## What is Community Safety and Well-Being?

*“Community safety and well-being (CSWB) is the ideal state of a community equipped with clear safety nets as well as equitable pathways towards meeting the needs of individuals and families. CSWB encompasses a holistic approach that fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support. It transcends the notion of physical safety by addressing the psychological, social, and environmental factors that contribute to a thriving community.”*

In 2023, the Campbell River City Council appointed a PAT to oversee the development of the Community Safety and Well-Being Action Plan. One of the team’s first tasks was to establish a clear and shared definition of community safety and well-being. Their goal was to articulate what these concepts mean in the context of Campbell River, ensuring that the plan reflects the community’s unique needs and priorities.

Below is the agreed-upon definition, along with key elements that the PAT identified as shaping safety and well-being.

Key elements of community safety and well-being include:

### Sense of Belonging

Creating environments where individuals feel accepted and valued, promoting healthy relationships and a collective identity.

### Purposeful Living

Ensuring everyone has opportunities to engage in meaningful activities that provide a sense of purpose.

### Intergenerational Connections

Providing spaces that encourage interactions between youth and seniors/elders facilitating the exchange of experiences and wisdom and fostering mutual respect.

### Youth Development

Establishing safe and supportive spaces for young people to engage in positive activities, encouraging constructive peer interactions, and nurturing positive influences.

### Strong Leadership

Promoting a form of leadership that advances unity and conveys positive messages that strengthen community bonds.

## Accessible Support Services

Offering accessible resources, including mental health support, without stigma or long wait times, ensuring everyone can get the help they need when they need it.

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## Neighbourhood Relationships

Encouraging positive interactions and relationships among neighbours, fostering micro-communities where people know and support each other.

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## Connectedness

Promoting social interactions in public spaces, such as greeting others on the street, to build a connected and friendly community.

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## Clean and Well-Maintained Spaces

Ensuring public spaces are clean, well-preserved, and cared for, reflecting a community that takes pride in its environment

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## Education and Prevention

Supporting a well-funded school system that recognizes the importance of education in preventing social issues and advancing community well-being.

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## Resource Sharing

Ensuring resources and information are shared equitably among service providers and community organizations, thereby promoting cooperation over competition.

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## Mutual Understanding

Finding common ground and mutual respect, addressing the safety concerns of all community members, including those who are unsheltered, to create an inclusive and supportive environment.

# Key Findings

## Positive Aspects About CSWB in Campbell River

The analysis of existing statistics, community safety and well-being survey results, and findings from community engagement sessions highlighted several positive aspects of community safety and well-being in Campbell River. They are outlined below.

### Access to Services and Community Amenities

The 2024 Campbell River Community Foundation Vital Signs survey<sup>vii</sup> highlights strong engagement in arts and culture, with many residents visiting libraries, attending arts events, and exploring local heritage. Those who participated in the engagement sessions mentioned that they appreciate Campbell River's natural beauty, services and amenities, strong sense of community, economic opportunities and infrastructure improvements like the Seawalk, Beaver Lodge Lands and waterfront developments.

### Community Resilience and Support Services

According to the assessment findings, the community benefits from numerous programs and initiatives supporting safety and well-being.

### Governance and Cross-Sector Collaboration

The engagement sessions highlighted that the City is recognized for its commitment to community safety and well-being. Participants indicated that City council advocacy has successfully secured resources such as the Homewood Project and government grants. Cross-sector collaboration is evident, with effective partnerships between the city, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and social services.

### Indigenous Culture and Contributions

Based on the survey and engagement results, residents perceive that Campbell River is a hub for Indigenous culture and heritage, with a strong presence of Indigenous artists, storytellers, and knowledge keepers. The city's diversity is enriched by First Nations contributions to arts, economy, and cultural events.

### Quality of Life and Community Perception

The 2023 Citizen Satisfaction Survey found that overall perceptions of quality of life in Campbell River are highly positive, with 90% of residents rating it as either "good" (66%) or "very good" (24%). The city is also seen as a great place to raise children (84%) and an excellent place to retire (89%), with older residents (65+) more likely to rate it "very good" (38% for raising children and 51% for retirement). Residents' favorite aspects of living in Campbell River include its natural beauty and scenery (31%), proximity to the ocean (25%), and access to outdoor recreation (20%).<sup>viii</sup>

### Safety Services and Perceptions of Safety

Fire services in Campbell River continue to receive high satisfaction ratings in the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, maintaining a 94% approval in 2023.<sup>ix</sup> The Downtown Business Community Safety Survey highlights increased private security and police patrols as key factors improving the sense of security. While some concerns exist, residents generally perceive Campbell River as a safe community, with violence largely limited to peer groups rather than random incidents. Many feel safety has improved in recent years, aided by increased downtown activities and summer events.

### Sense of Community and Inclusivity

The Student Learning Survey indicates that most students feel a sense of belonging in their schools, with 71% of elementary and 70% of secondary students reporting they feel welcome. Among Indigenous students, 71% of elementary and 64% of secondary students shared the same sentiment. Additionally, over 85% of elementary students and 82% of secondary students reported regularly respecting people who are different from themselves. Reports of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity were low, with fewer than 10% of students in both elementary and secondary schools reporting that they are experiencing it.<sup>x</sup>

## CSWB Concerns in Campbell River

### Childhood Development, Youth Engagement, and Education

According to the Early Childhood Development Instrument, childhood developmental vulnerability in Campbell River's SD72 has risen to 35%, with emotional maturity and physical health most affected, particularly in Campbell River Centre (44%) and North (37%).<sup>xi</sup>

During the engagement sessions, we heard that youth, especially those aged 10–12, face growing risks at home and from exploitation, with addiction worsening these challenges. Participants indicated that rising youth violence against parents has led to more children entering care, while, in the view of some, concerns about children's rights hinder protective measures like mandatory treatment.

The assessment findings show that schools struggle with food insecurity, staff safety, and social disorder, including drug use and unhoused individuals on school properties. We also heard from participants that a lack of recreational opportunities contributes to boredom, substance use, and families leaving the area, while safety concerns limit children's mobility. Expensive programs, limited teen services, and fears of online radicalization and polarization further isolate youth, who remain largely excluded from community decision-making despite support from initiatives like the Foundry.

### Mental Health and Substance Use

According to the BC Coroners Service, the Greater Campbell River area also reported 109.1 unregulated drug-related deaths per 100,000 people in 2024, up from 93.3 in 2023, placing it among the highest rates in British Columbia.<sup>xii</sup> Specific concerns highlighted by residents during the engagement sessions include diverted prescription opioids in schools and increased open drug use downtown, raising safety issues. Residents report encountering discarded needles and inebriated individuals, deterring families from using public spaces. Harm reduction strategies face criticism for overshadowing prevention and treatment. We also heard that mental health issues are worsening, driven by economic stress and intergenerational trauma, with high overdose and suicide rates.

### Housing and Homelessness

Homelessness was cited by 76% of CSWB survey respondents as a key concern, with a recent Point-in-Time count showing a 70% increase.<sup>xiii</sup>

According to participants, encampments, street drug use, and perceived inaction from law enforcement have heightened tensions, while vigilantism and violence against unhoused individuals are growing issues. During the engagement sessions, we heard that women in encampments face heightened risks of experiencing violence, and many carry weapons for self-defense, escalating safety concerns. Indigenous peoples make up an estimated 60% of the unhoused population, and many in social housing have disabilities, increasing their vulnerability. We heard that housing support is inadequate, with limited shelter beds, provincial funding, and second-stage housing options. Rising living costs are making stable housing harder to attain, affecting younger generations and seniors alike.

### Social Stigma and Polarization

The assessment findings highlighted that stigma around substance use and homelessness has polarized Campbell River, with debate over enforcement versus harm reduction fueling division. Residents perceive that misinformation, political tensions, and negative media coverage have worsened the divide. Trust in police was described as low, especially among marginalized groups, while some business owners feel that law enforcement is unresponsive. Participants also shared that vigilantism, including assaults on unhoused individuals, has escalated, making productive dialogue more difficult.

### Racism and Discrimination

During the engagement sessions, we heard that racism remains a significant issue in Campbell River, particularly against Indigenous peoples, who face ongoing stigma and discrimination. The overrepresentation of Indigenous communities in downtown social challenges have exacerbated tensions between the business community and Indigenous residents. The lasting effects of colonization continue to impact Indigenous culture, language, and economic opportunities, reinforcing broader social and economic inequalities. Additionally, participants indicated that discrimination against the 2SLGBTQ+ community persists.

### **Challenges for First Nations**

Indigenous community members expressed that the loss of culture is an increasing concern, especially as elders pass away, which hampers the passing down of language and traditions. They highlighted the absence of culturally relevant programs for Indigenous youth as a key factor contributing to this cultural erosion.

### **Economic Changes and Poverty**

The resource sector in Campbell River remains an important employer, although pressures in the sector have resulted in fewer people being employed in resource industries. This downward trend in resource sector employment has been ongoing for more than a decade. As a result, Campbell River has seen new avenues for economic growth and diversification over the years, particularly in the service and hospitality sectors. Although some of the new jobs created to offset the loss in resource sector jobs may not pay as much, they still contribute to the community's overall economic health. There is also a focus on encouraging innovation in traditional industries to help them stay and grow locally. As is the global trend, some people are traveling to jobs elsewhere, such as working in remote camps, contributing to de facto lone-parent households. There is some evidence pointing to increased substance use when they return with disposable income. Food banks have noted an increase in users, including those who are employed, highlighting the need for continued support and innovative solutions to address food insecurity. Participants emphasized the importance of bridging the economic divide, particularly among seniors, to create a more prosperous community for all.

### **Crime and Violence**

Based on the Citizen Satisfaction Survey results, perceptions of Campbell River as a good place to raise children and retire have declined, with approval dropping in 2023. A majority (69%) feel quality of life has worsened due to crime, drugs, homelessness, and downtown conditions.<sup>xix</sup> Fear of crime is rising, with some residents reportedly carrying weapons for protection, while vigilantism and concerns for women's safety have increased. A sense of social belonging also tends to be a challenge in small-town settings such as Campbell River.

The police-reported data shows that crime rates have steadily risen since 2021, peaking in 2023, with violent crimes and domestic violence at record highs.<sup>xv</sup> Reports of gang activity, drug sales, and youth-related disturbances persist, along with concerns about weapons in schools. RCMP data shows that domestic violence remains a critical but underreported issue, exacerbated by economic hardship and limited support services.

During the engagement sessions, we heard that violent crime and disorder near the Overdose Prevention Site is a growing concern among residents. Lastly, we heard that rising property crime affects seniors' sense of safety, forces businesses to relocate, and destabilizes the local economy.

### **Challenges in Collaboration**

Participants mentioned that efforts to establish collaborative decision-making structures have been difficult in the past. Many individuals feel that current engagement processes are more consultative than truly participatory. Business representatives are hesitant to engage, feeling overshadowed by social service organizations, which results in a lack of diverse perspectives in decision-making spaces.

### **Jurisdictional Challenges**

The assessment results highlighted that municipalities and First Nations struggle with provincial and federal policies that overlook local realities. Data sharing is challenging, and decisions are often made without community input. As an example, some participants expressed that services like the Overdose Prevention Site are not based on local consultations. We also heard that bylaw and police officers find themselves responding to complex social issues beyond their mandates and expertise, creating unrealistic public expectations. The lack of clarity with regards to complex mandates in a time of changing demands leads to frustration for both the officers and the community.

### **Campbell River as a Service Hub**

As a regional service hub, Campbell River attracts people from across Vancouver Island, especially those seeking healthcare and addiction services. This includes individuals recently released from prison and those needing opioid treatments, all of which further strains resources. Many participants indicated that addressing these challenges requires a regional approach to effectively meet the growing demand for support.

### **Gaps in Services and Programs**

According to those who were engaged during the community assessment, existing services for the unhoused and those struggling with addiction in Campbell River are inadequate, with limited access to mental health and addiction treatment. While programs have expanded, they are concentrated in specific areas, and the lack of public washrooms exacerbates sanitation issues. We heard from participants that non-profits are overwhelmed and underfunded, with staff shortages and cultural workers increasingly handling crises outside of their mandates. Local businesses are frustrated, with some blaming the siting and operation of harm reduction and other social services for the community's challenges, particularly in the downtown.

### **Healthcare and Resource Limitations**

During the engagement sessions, participants indicated that healthcare services in Campbell River are stretched thin, with long waiting times for both emergency and routine care, and no walk-in clinics. Access to addiction treatment is limited, with month-long waitlists. Long-term care beds are often occupied by dementia patients, creating unsafe conditions by mixing vulnerable populations. Participants indicated that mental health services, already underfunded and understaffed, are expected to address homelessness without the necessary resources. Families struggle to navigate complex support systems, reflecting a broader gap in service coordination and public awareness of services.

### **Criminal Legal System**

There is growing concern among participants that the criminal legal system is failing to hold offenders accountable. During engagement sessions, we heard that the "catch and release" model has led to frustration and diminished public trust, with a perception that repeat offenders face minimal consequences. According to participants, recent policy changes, including bail reform and decriminalization, have compounded these issues. Inadequate support for those convicted, both in and out of correctional facilities, and high-profile cases, like the acquittal of an offender in a recent stabbing, have fueled calls for stronger sentencing and better communication from the criminal legal system.

### **Organized Crime**

Organized crime was highlighted as an issue in Campbell River, with rising concerns about the presence and influence of organized crime and concerns of youth being recruited into criminal activities, including the drug trade and sex industry. According to participants, weapons are circulating, and groups like Brother's Keepers have established a presence, following the dismantling of the Devil's Army. However, the full extent of organized crime's impact in Campbell River is not fully understood.

### **Infrastructure and Built Environment**

The design of public spaces plays a significant role in safety concerns. During the assessment process, we heard from participants that the town's infrastructure, primarily built for cars, limits walkability and accessibility. Additionally, issues like some poorly designed schools, as highlighted by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, can contribute to vandalism and social disorder. Community members call for a shift toward more human-centered planning to create safer, more accessible environments for the community.

### **Transportation Barriers**

Limited transportation options are perceived as hindering access to employment and essential services, further entrenching economic disparities. Although a bus system is in place, residents indicated that it fails to adequately serve the needs of a sprawling community, particularly for those relying on it for work or appointments. Improved transportation options, particularly for late-night travel, are perceived as crucial to enhance accessibility and support greater economic participation.

### **Seniors' Safety and Well-Being**

Results from the assessment show that seniors are facing increasing challenges, including isolation driven by fear of crime, financial insecurity, and homelessness. Financial abuse and fraud are significant concerns, although these types of crimes remain underreported. Many older adults are hesitant to discuss issues like elder abuse, and this reluctance deepens their vulnerability. Participants indicated that there is an urgent need for greater support to help seniors age in place, access affordable housing, and engage with essential social programs.

