

2026

CITY OF VICTORIA | Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities

Breaking Bread

A conversation on making space for community, in community safety and wellbeing

Presented by Mayor Marianne Alto

Chiefs, Mayors, and Chairs Forum, Friday, April 24



Territorial acknowledgement



Victoria is located on the traditional and contemporary homelands of the Songhees First Nation and the Xwsepsum First Nation

Purpose of today's session

- Share Victoria's experience in creating intentional community safety and wellbeing.
- Hear perspectives, challenges, and opportunities as it relates to community-built community safety and wellbeing.
- Learn strategies, approaches, and feedback on ways to bring the community alongside when building strategic plans.

Wicked Problems

Complex social or cultural issues that are difficult, or impossible to solve due to their interconnected nature, ambiguity and lack of clear solutions.

They are constantly changing and have so many variables that it becomes difficult to measure outcomes, success and failure.

What is a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan?

- Community safety and wellbeing looks at factors such as:
 - Social determinants of health
 - Social determinants of crime
 - Protective factors and risk factors
- A community safety and wellbeing plan is a composite of ideas, structures, actions and goals to address these challenges.
- Outlines a path forward to create meaningful policies that address community concerns.

The realities:

- Community safety is a deeply personal, emotional, and challenging subject, with no easy answers.
- Residents, visitors, and businesses are frustrated, burnt out, and looking for solutions.
- Inflation has caused goods and services to increase in cost, significantly.
- Government processes are confusing and in-accessible. There are many barriers to participating in, and working with, governments.
- There is a lot of service duplication, and many organizations and agencies working in the CSWB space.

The response

Upstream: Prevention

- Investing in community connection to prevent homelessness and its causes
- SPARK program, placemaking, Downtown Service Provider collaboration
- More funding for successful services

Intervention: Destinations

- Creating safe spaces for people now street sheltering
- Transportation partnerships, Bridge St. shelter, Johnson St. recovery housing, expanding shelter beds, parks relocation, street outreach

Response: Enforcement

- Provide staff and resources to enforce as necessary
- Street ambassadors, FOTS and foot patrol, bylaw hubs, hiring police and bylaw officers, and CSTEP

Response: Community Services

- Meet the needs of the community
- Continued engagement, emergency weather response, public works response, etc.

Response: Business Services

- Public realm improvements, simplifying business with the City, façade program and heritage restoration, vacant storefront activation, business neighbour network

Connecting with Community: Victoria's approach

Community Leaders Panel:

- Community champions, stewards, and leaders who guided the CSWB plan creation.
- Representatives from small business, First Nations, residents, health, emergency response, non-profits, service providers, and more.

Engagement:

- Multi-pronged approach with facilitated sessions, drop-in sessions, digital surveys, and more.
- Contracted to 4 external facilitators with knowledge and relationships.
- Sought out distinct organizations and communities.
- Low barrier, de-structured sessions

Partnerships:

- Establishing new and renewed relationships with proven community expertise.
- Delivering new, innovative programs.
- Investing in programs that are already proven and successful.
- Building capacity, community, and stability.

Accountability:

- Public report back in Council, at events, in household mailers, on social media, and with partners.
- Continued opportunity for feedback and routine engagement.
- Mobile, adaptive plan.
- Comprehensive communications.

Open House

Help Shape Victoria's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan



Drop by an open house or pop-up event in the community to share your concerns, experiences and suggestions.



engage.victoria.ca/cswp

Help Shape Victoria's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan

The City of Victoria is developing a Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan and is seeking community input. Drop by an open house or pop-up event to learn more and share your concerns, experiences and suggestions to help inform the Plan.

Have your say.

Tuesday, June 25 | 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Fernwood Community Centre, Studio*
1240 Gladstone Avenue

Saturday, June 29 | 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Moss Street Farmers Market
1330 Fairfield Road

Monday, July 8 | 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Victoria West Community Centre
521 Craigflower Road

Thursday, July 11 | 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Victoria Public Market at the Hudson
#6–1701 Douglas Street

Thursday, July 11 | 4:30–6:30 p.m.
The Atrium
800 Yates Street

*The Fernwood NRG is not involved in this engagement process.



Complimentary refreshments will be provided.
Registration is not required.



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Pop-up

Help Shape Victoria's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan

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Share your concerns, experiences and suggestions in our online survey by **May 12**.

Take the survey.



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Key Takeaways



Local governments are the catalyst for action.



Relationships are key, and they are built on trust, reciprocity, and time.



Engagement isn't enough without report back to community.



Community members, organizations, and interest holders have knowledge, skills, resources, and networks that can be relied on.



Local governments can, and must, try new things, be provocative, and meet people where they are at.



We can Indigenize our processes and engagement to make them more accessible, less traumatizing, and more inclusive.

Discussion

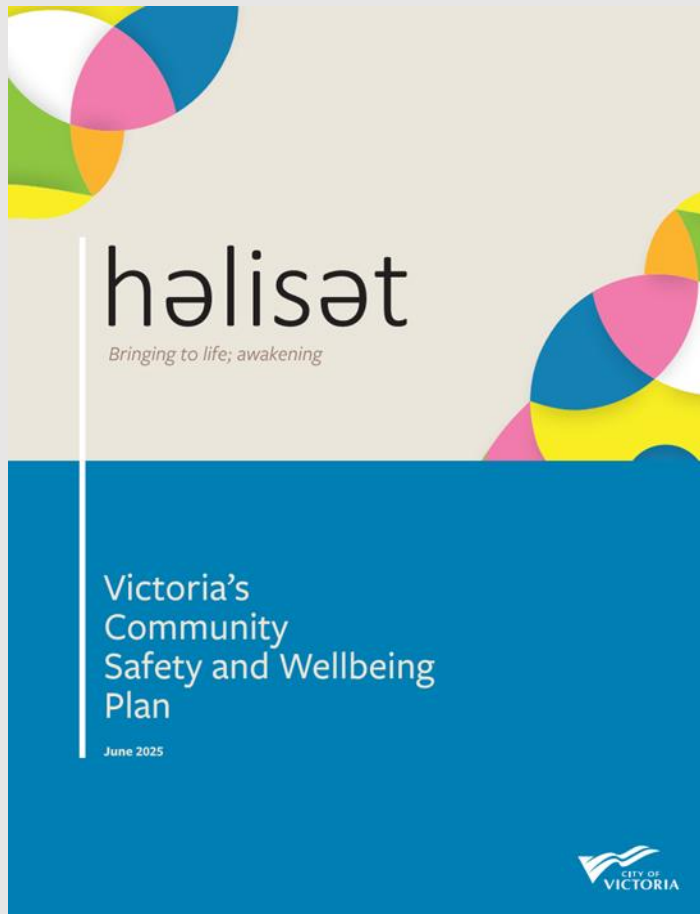
What are your local government's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities when it comes to communication and report-back?

What organizations and networks can, and should be catalyzed in your community to help achieve community safety and wellbeing?

What prevents people from engaging with local government in your community?

What will it take to build improved relationships with partners?

Who is at the table when it comes to community safety and wellbeing?
Who is missing?



Learn More

- Read the plan at victoria.ca/cswb
- Email Mayor@victoria.ca

Thank you!