

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Community Leaders' Panel Biographies

Brianna Bear

Speaker and Artist, Songhees Nation

Brianna has explored her story-telling and artistic roots for more than 15 years. She began learning under her grandfather Skip Dick, and his younger brother, Butch Dick, exploring her history and cultural connections to Songhees and Namgis. She continues to offer traditional welcomes and learning through story-telling for visitors to Lekwungen lands. Brianna is one of a few Indigenous female artists within her traditional territory of the Songhees people, the place to smoke herring lands of the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation.

Daniel Atkinson

Chief, Victoria Fire Department

In June, Daniel Atkinson was formally recognized as the 34th Fire Chief of the City of Victoria at an inauguration ceremony at the Victoria Conference Centre. As Fire Chief, Daniel supports the Victoria Fire Department and its members in the delivery of fire prevention and education, emergency planning and preparedness, and fire suppression and emergency response. Dan was hired by the City in 2002 as a recruit firefighter. Prior to the appointment to Acting Fire Chief in July 2021 and Fire Chief in 2023, he held the role of Deputy Chief – Operations. Dan has an educational background in Fire and Emergency Services, Public Administration, Labour Relations, and Risk Management. He holds the professional designations of Executive Chief Fire Officer (ECFO) and Certified Canadian Risk Manager (CRM). Dan is extremely proud to be part of a team of more than 120 members who have protected the City of Victoria with pride, 24 hours a day, seven days a week since 1858. With the recent opening of the new state-of-the-art, post-seismic Victoria Fire Department Headquarters, Dan's focus is on the future as Victoria transitions to a modern and complex city.

Del Manak

Chief, Victoria Police Department

Chief Constable Del Manak is in his 34th year of policing. He started his policing career with the Vancouver Police Department and joined the Victoria Police Department in 1993, where he has served in a variety of sections and roles. Chief Manak was promoted to the rank of Chief Constable on July 1, 2017, and is honoured to serve as the Chief Constable in the city where he was born and raised. Chief Manak is a graduate of the FBI's National Academy Program and the Dalhousie University Police Leadership Program. In 2019, he completed his Masters of Arts in Terrorism, Risk and Security Studies from Simon Fraser University. In 2014, Chief Manak was appointed Member of the Order of Merit of the Police Forces, and in 2011 was the recipient of the Sergeant Bruce MacPhail Award for Academic Excellence. In addition, he is the recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal and the Police Exemplary Service medal. Chief Manak has coached many baseball, hockey and soccer teams over the years and remains active in the community.

Jonny Morris

CEO, Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division

Jonny is the CEO for the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division. Jonny has spent almost 25 years in community mental health care, starting out in the crisis line movement with a strong focus on suicide prevention throughout. At CMHA BC, Jonny is responsible for leading an organization focused on advocacy, providing direct services, and delivering education and training to reduce stigma and equip people with the skills to support mental health for all.

Julian Daly

CEO, Our Place Society

Born in Ireland, Julian has over 30 years' experience working in non-profit, government and private sectors in Canada, the UK, Indonesia and his country of birth. The vast majority of his working life has been spent working at the margins

of society -- in particular, in the inner-city communities of London, UK, and Edmonton, Alberta and now Victoria where he has been the CEO of Our Place since 2020 -- seeking to achieve some degree of social justice for those served through a combination of practical, needs-based programming and advocacy. He has been a frontline worker, manager and CEO in a wide range of programs and projects over the years, which have included housing, poverty reduction, community engagement, HIV/AIDS, harm reduction and recovery, the differently abled, employment, youth services, social enterprises, health, education, and children and family services.

Marianne Alto
Mayor, City of Victoria

Convenor of the City's Community Safety and Well-Being initiative, Marianne is a facilitator by trade with university degrees in law and science. A businesswoman active in community causes for decades, Marianne was first elected to Victoria City Council in 2010. Mayor Alto is currently co-chair of the Victoria/Esquimalt Police Board, a member of the Victoria Regional Transit Commission, the BC Transit Board, Victoria's Citizens' Assembly Council Committee, the Te'mexw Treaty Advisory Committee, and is co-chair of the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus. Mayor Alto has been Council liaison to most of the city's neighbourhoods and is matriarch of the City Family (a unique collaboration among the City, the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation) nurturing a rich relationship with those Nations. Mayor Alto convened the City's first collaboration with Island Health and service providers working in harm reduction, addictions and mental health. A zealous advocate for increased housing supply and affordability, Mayor Alto is actively facilitating the realization of an intentionally transformed city.

Mike Benusic
Medical Health Officer, Island Health

Dr. Mike Benusic has been a Medical Health Officer since 2020. In this role, he provides leadership to Island Health Population and Public Health and is required under the Public Health Act to advise, in an independent manner, authorities and local governments on public health issues. As a practising family physician, Benusic is continually reminded that most issues – especially the most challenging ones – stem back to social and structural determinants of health. Benusic notes that “social inclusion and a sense of community are crucial factors towards individual and community health. I look forward to bringing the lens of public health to the development of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.”

Robert Jawl
Managing Director, Jawl Properties Ltd.

Robert is managing director with Jawl Properties Ltd., Victoria, BC's largest owner, manager and developer of commercial real estate. Prior to Jawl Properties, Robert was an associate with the Blackstone Group involved in the firm's real estate investment initiatives. Robert holds a Bachelor's of Science in Economics from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and a Master's of Science in Sustainable Urban Development from Oxford University. Robert is a current director of the Royal British Columbia Museum, past chairperson of the Urban Development Institute Capital Region and a past director of the Downtown Victoria Business Association. Robert is engaged in a range of philanthropic initiatives with a principal focus on youth, education and community well-being.

Sandra Severs
President, Victoria Downtown Residents Association | Chair, Victoria Community Association Network

Sandra Severs is a former non-profit leader, working for a decade in the area of homelessness, poverty, mental health and addictions in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and in community mental health in North Vancouver. She has been a resident of downtown Victoria for six years and currently is the President of the Victoria Downtown Residents Association and Chair of the Victoria Community Association Network (VCAN).

Shelly D'Mello
CEO, Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria

Shelly D'Mello is a skilled relationship builder, a collaborative coach who takes a strength-based approach to team and community development, a creative thinker, and a visionary leader. With over 25 years of experience in private, government, and non-profit organizations, Shelly is an inclusive and transformational leader whose strengths include strategic planning, financial acumen, organizational development, and organizational change management. She has held executive and management positions in organization sectors including settlement and integration, management consulting, information technology, education and health care.

Suzanne Bradbury**Co-Owner/CEO, Fort Properties**

Suzanne Bradbury owns and runs Fort Properties with her sister Jayne. Fort Properties is a Victoria family business, focused on property management and development. Suzanne believes that healthy communities can positively influence the economy, a city's character and individual lives for the better. Her commitment to promoting the health and well-being of our region has led her to chair the board for the Downtown Victoria Business Association, participate in the development of the Victoria 3.0 Economic Development Plan, serve as Vice-President of the Esquimalt Chamber of Commerce and work with the South Island Property Partnership as a board member. She is passionate about the potential of Vancouver Island and downtown Victoria and is deeply inspired by the many talented people who contribute to the betterment of our region. With an educational background in the psychology of human well-being, Suzanne takes an ecosystem and human-focused approach to problem solving and seeks solutions that enable all members of our communities to thrive.