

Progress Update October 2026

Victoria's
**Community Safety
and Wellbeing
Plan**



Territorial Acknowledgement

The City of Victoria sits, in its entirety, on the ancestral land and current territories of the Ləkʷəŋən people, now the Songhees Nation and Xʷsepsum Nation. These lands have been stewarded for centuries by leaders, elders, matriarchs, knowledge keepers, and more, and we honour them and their presence on this land.

We collectively acknowledge that community safety and wellbeing work must be undertaken with truth and reconciliation in our hearts, and an understanding that respecting and including Indigenous ways of knowing and doing will make this work more relevant and effective. When carried in this spirit, community safety and wellbeing work may be seen as an act of reconciliation.

We thank the Songhees Nation and Xʷsepsum Nation for their willingness to walk together with us, share their knowledge, and help us envision a safer community for all.

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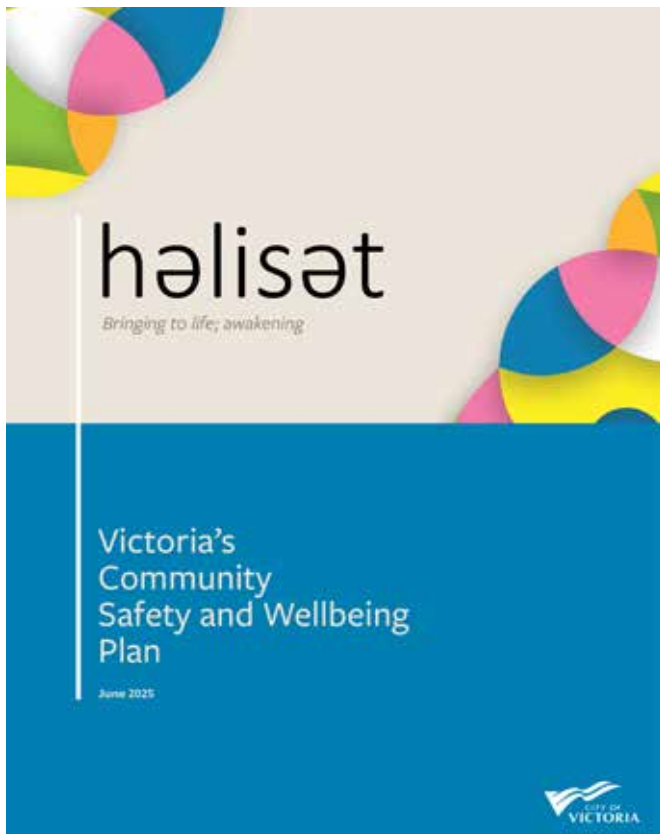
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Background

In June 2025, Council adopted its inaugural Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWB Plan) to strengthen belonging, social cohesion, and safety for everyone in the community.

The CSWB Plan was developed over an 18-month period and guided by a panel of community leaders who supported public engagement, data gathering and analysis, discussion, and debate.



The result was a comprehensive plan designed to catalyze change in the community – it is a call for action, investment, partnership, and advocacy across all orders of government, business, community, and agency partners.



Learn more about how the CSWB Plan was developed and read it in its entirety at victoria.ca/cswb.

Introduction

For almost a decade, British Columbia has been dealing with a housing shortage, a toxic drug crisis, declining civility and social cohesion, growing mental health concerns, and a rising cost of living.

These issues are deeply rooted and the result of complex social changes and significant underfunding of services, over time. The impacts we see and feel negatively impact quality of life for residents (both housed and unhoused) and businesses and undermines the City's reputation as one of the best small cities in the world.

Addressing these challenges – and the associated distress and frustration they cause – requires bold action, collaboration with community partners and agencies, and securing commitments and action from regional partners and other orders of government.

The CSWB Plan provides a starting point – building on a model of collaboration with service organizations, emergency responders, businesses, and all levels of government – to prevent, intervene, and respond.

Implementation Progress

Upon adoption, Council directed City staff to begin the first phase of implementation. Existing staff were reorganized to form the Community Safety, Wellbeing and Partnerships department.

Council prioritized 11 actions focused on creating new housing and sheltering solutions, increasing community services and supports, enhancing public cleaning and investing in streetscape improvements, and supporting enforcement and response activities.

This report shares some of the progress we have made from the CSWB Plan's adoption to Oct. 1, 2026.

It is important to note that the CSWB Plan is a catalyst for ongoing action, investment, partnership, and advocacy.

- Plan recommendations guide collective efforts.
- The City will seize and create new opportunities.
- Evolution is expected to meet changing community needs.
- There is a continued process of implementing, learning, and adapting.

Existing City services and programs contribute to safety and wellbeing more broadly – including non-market housing initiatives, public art, business licensing process improvements, food security programs, road safety initiatives, community grants, and tenant protection programs.

Implementation Progress

Housing and Sheltering Solutions

\$3.09
million

Plan Objectives include:

Support renters and increase the housing supply in the city.

Improve the system of supportive housing and address gaps in the delivery of sheltering.

Address current homelessness concerns while preventing people from becoming homeless.

Key Highlights

- Opened **Johnson Manor Recovery Housing** in partnership with Victoria Cool Aid Society and BC Housing, offering **20 self-contained homes** in substance-free surroundings for people who have completed early-stage recovery and are preparing for independent living.





Protecting existing affordable housing and creating new transition housing and shelters helps build a safer, healthier community by improving stability, preventing homelessness, and connecting people with essential supports they need.

- Collaborated with BC Housing to add **30 new HEART & HEARTH shelter beds at Rock Bay Landing Shelter** to support people moving indoors.
- Opened the **Bridge Street Pathways Program** in partnership with BC Housing with **34 new beds** to help people transition from living on the street or a shelter into supportive housing.

- Collaborated with Salvation Army Victoria and BC Housing to add **13 new sober-living shelter beds through the STEP Program** at the existing Addictions and Rehabilitation Centre.
- Delivered the **Housing Relocation Program** with Pacifica Housing to help 78 people access housing who were previously living on the street or in parks.
- Launched the \$1 million **Community Housing Renewal Grant Program** to retrofit existing affordable housing at seven non-market housing sites across the municipality in 2026-27.
- Facilitated the **Victoria Situation Table** to rapidly connect people to the services they need before a crisis occurs by bringing together frontline workers from public safety, health, and social services.
- Launched the **Victoria Pet Care Access Support Program** to provide voluntary, short-term pet care for individuals accessing health services or housing transitions, in partnership with Recovery Tails Society and BC Housing.
- Provided a \$200,000 grant towards the **Rent Bank Program** to support low-income households accessing interest-free loans through the Community Social Planning Council.

Coming Soon:

While the responsibility for supportive and affordable housing lies with the Province of British Columbia, the City is launching a **Positive Transfer Support Program** in fall 2026 to intentionally support individuals to move from higher support environments (e.g., shelters or supportive housing) into more independent living. These movements can then free up space for those sheltering on the street or in parks, to come inside.

Community Services and Supports

\$3.24
million

Plan Objectives include:

Address issues like crime, safety, and the local impacts of homelessness by investing in and supporting up-stream interventions.

Improve health outcomes for people, families, seniors, and newcomers in Victoria.

Make social supports more accessible to people who need them.

Support downtown businesses in responding to the financial impacts of street disorder while encouraging economic activity.

Key Highlights

- Launched the **Indigenous Outreach and Transportation Program** with Peer2Peer Indigenous Outreach Society to help 22 individuals reconnect with family and relocate home to their family, culture, and Nation.
- Partnered with the Downtown Victoria Business Association to pilot the **Neighbour Network**, an online resource that allows businesses to connect with each other and to reach the correct City department or agency.
- Distributed \$750,000 in funding as part of the **Spark Program for Enhanced Youth Safety and Wellbeing**, aimed at supporting at-risk children, youth, and young adults, to 16 diverse community organizations to deliver counselling, mentoring, case management, employment readiness training, and access to recreation, arts and cultural programming to more than 17,000 residents and their families.

- Launched the **Building Bridges Employment Readiness Program**, in partnership with the Bridges for Women Society, for 20 women residing in transitional housing who have been impacted by trauma and violence.
- Partnered with Disability Alliance BC to launch the **Right Fit Program** for people using wheelchairs through peer-led support in their housing search, application, and move-in process.



PHOTO CREDIT: MakeSpace For Art Society



Investing in programs for children, youth and young adults helps them feel connected, valued, and included – creating stronger relationships and safer, healthier communities for everyone.



PHOTO CREDITS (clockwise from top): Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria Capital Region; Peer2Peer Indigenous Outreach Society, Good Night Out Victoria

Implementation Progress

- Partnered with the Victoria Youth Empowerment Society to expand the **Supported Independent Living Program** to reduce waitlists, strengthen transitions to independence, and promote housing and financial stability among youth. To date, 25 at-risk youth have used the **Youth Transportation Program** to travel to appointments or return safely to their home community.
- Provided administrative support to the **Downtown Service Providers Network** and sponsored the **2026 Project Reconnect** event, giving 400 at-risk individuals information, resources, and supports to improve health, community connection, and housing outcomes.
- Partnered with Destination Greater Victoria to support **Good Night Out Victoria** who deliver education, harm reduction and bystander intervention at late night events and businesses in the downtown core.

Coming Soon:

Bringing people together helps increase a sense of belonging, improve safety and nurture wellbeing. **Victoria After Five** is a new program that will support community and business-led projects aligned with priorities in arts, culture, economic development, community safety and neighbourhood vibrancy. Activities funded through the program will take place between November 2026 and February 2027, creating more opportunities for people to connect with one another and enjoy Victoria after 5 p.m.

Enhanced Cleaning and Streetscape Improvements

\$4.44
million

Plan Objectives include:

Ensure downtown is safe and welcoming for residents and visitors.

Encourage people to visit and spend time downtown.

Continue to support livability and wellbeing by investing in public amenities and resources.

Support employers and employees by ensuring commercial viability.

Ensure that residents and visitors have access to world-class small businesses, shops, experiences, and services.

Key Highlights

- Expanded the **Urban Clean Team** to hire more staff, expand services, and increase coverage across the downtown core to support activities like early morning and late evening garbage removal, street cleaning, infrastructure repair, and graffiti removal.
- Completed the **Annual Maintenance and Infrastructure Repair Program** on Pandora Avenue and Ellice Street to repair damaged infrastructure, provide deep clean services, and improve pedestrian health, safety and accessibility.
- Planted a **new landscaped median at Pandora Avenue and Vancouver Street** as part of a multi-year streetscape restoration and rehabilitation program for sites that have been impacted by sheltering.
- Piloted the **Downtown Street Ambassador Program** with SOLID Outreach Society to provide early, daily contact and support, including wake-up and pack-up assistance and bylaw compliance.



PHOTO CREDIT: City of Victoria



Implementation Progress

- Partnered with the Downtown Victoria Business Association to distribute \$120,000 in **Business Facade Improvement Grants** to support businesses and property owners in contributing to a safer, cleaner, more welcoming, and vibrant downtown.



Coming Soon:

A **new outdoor music plaza** will be opening next to the Victoria Conservatory of Music on the 900 block of Pandora Avenue in October 2026. This plaza space will allow the Conservatory to operate at full capacity while contributing to downtown placemaking and public space remediation.

Enforcement and Response

\$7.12
million

Plan Objectives include:

Ensure residents and visitors feel safe across the city.

Support the relationship between the City and Victoria Police.

Ensure that the police service is nimble, and able to be adaptive to the changing needs of the city and its residents.

Key Highlights

- Hired **12 new bylaw officers** and **expanded the Feet on the Street team** to provide visible presence and enforce bylaws related to sheltering activities, proactively engaging with business owners and the public to prevent and resolve local issues.
- Opened **two new community safety field hubs** on Douglas Street and Pandora Avenue, establishing community bases for joint patrols and coordination between police and bylaw officers.
- Delivered **27 security assessments and safety talks** with businesses, property owners and community organizations focused on accessing resources, sharing information, and contributing to a community-led safety response.
- Provided matching funds from the Province of B.C. for Victoria Police to support **increased enforcement through foot and bike patrol** through the **C-STEP Program**.
- Increased funding to Victoria Police to hire **nine additional police officers** to support enforcement and launch a **new Crime Reduction Unit**.



PHOTO CREDIT: City of Victoria

What's Next?

Over the past year, we have demonstrated that change is possible.

We have seen immediate improvements from some interventions and initiated work that will yield results in the future by targeting the root causes of poverty, isolation, and social disorder.

There are fewer encampment sites across the municipality, but homelessness is still a major challenge.

The growing severity of substance use and complex health needs continues to impact residents' ability to access and remain in shelter and housing.



PHOTO CREDIT: Connective

PHOTO CREDIT: City of Victoria

A comprehensive and compassionate approach will continue to respond to the diverse needs and perspectives of all community members.

Creating a safer, healthier and more connected community is long-term work. The CSWB Plan will continue to adapt and evolve, building on progress already underway while responding to emerging challenges and opportunities.

To follow this work and learn more about ongoing initiatives, visit **victoria.ca/cswb**.



PHOTO CREDITS (left to right): Connective, Peer2Peer Indigenous Outreach Society, Connective

Community Partners

While City services are at the heart of community safety and wellbeing, the success of this plan depends on collaboration between community partners, businesses, residents, and other levels of government. We are grateful to all our partners, and we continue to explore new opportunities.

AVI Health and Community Services

Beacon Community Services

BC Emergency Health Services

BC Housing

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Victoria Capital Region

Bridges for Women Society

Capital Bike

Capital Regional District

The Cridge Centre for the Family

Disability Alliance BC

Downtown Services Providers Network

Downtown Victoria Business Association

Good Night Out Victoria

Government of Canada

Greater Victoria Housing Society

Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria

Island Community Mental Health Association

Island Health

John Howard Society of Victoria

MakeSpace for Art Society

Mustard Seed Victoria

Our Place Society

Pacifica Housing

Peer2Peer Indigenous Outreach Society

Power to Be Adventure Therapy Society

Province of British Columbia

Restorative Justice Victoria

Salvation Army Victoria

Thrive Social Services Society

Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health

University of Victoria

Victoria Conservatory of Music

Victoria Cool Aid Society

Victoria Youth Empowerment Society

Learn more about the City's
**Community Safety
and Wellbeing** work.

victoria.ca/cswb

