

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE CITY OF VERNON

January 1 – March 31, 2024

VISION STATEMENT: A safe, healthy and inclusive community in which to live, work and grow

MISSION STATEMENT: To identify and implement manageable solutions to social issues by mobilizing community-based action teams

SOCIAL PLANNER/COMMUNITY DEVELOPER POSITION: Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan

COMMUNITY DEVELOPER FUNDING SOURCE: City of Vernon

COMMITTEES: HART Committee, COOL Team, Housing Action Team, Local Immigration Partnership Council

COMMITTEES/ACTION TEAM FUNDING SOURCES: Provincial and Federal Government, Local Funders and Various Foundations

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- Build awareness and understanding of social issues
- Work collaboratively to problem-solve areas of concern
- Develop resources/policies to address gaps
- Monitor and evaluate action teams and their outcomes
- Provide sustainability for the Partners in Action model and Community Committees

Action Team	Open/ Closed	Background/Activities	Outputs	Direct Outcomes	Updates/Follow Up
Homelessness/Housing					
COOL Team Update	Ongoing	The COOL team is a partnership between bylaw officers and outreach workers for a collaborative approach to addressing homeless campers. Bylaw officers and outreach workers connect campers to services provided by Turning Points Collaborative, emergency food programs and Interior Health.	Census/survey of homeless population every two years. Protocol development and updates.	The COOL team works closely to monitor the health and safety of people sleeping in public spaces.	The COOL Team have been monitoring the service needs of people sleeping outside and ensuring ongoing access to meals, showers, laundry, harm reduction supplies and referrals to mental health/substance use programs. In February 2024, the Ministry of Transportation provided eviction notices to people camping on their property in the North end of the community. Outreach workers assisted as best they could to problem solve storage issues and support clean up efforts.

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Extreme Cold Weather Action Team	Open	In order to be prepared for an extreme cold weather event, a team was formed with participation from Turning Points Collaborative, the Upper Room Mission and a community partner who provides a warming bus.	A protocol was developed that outlines the additional resources to be made available during a cold weather event.	Plan in place with community partners in case of cold weather event. People sleeping outside have safe, warm spaces available.	The goal of the team is to ensure that people sleeping outside have an opportunity to come inside and stay warm during a significant drop in temperature. Social Planning Council provides updates to the COOL Team during cold weather events to advise when additional resources are to be put in place and when they are to be decommissioned. During the cold snap in January 2024, the shelter at Turning Points Collaborative and the winter shelter at the Upper Room Mission provided extra mats to bring more people inside. In addition, the warming bus was activated overnight while temperatures remained below -10. Community partners provided hot beverages and winter clothing as well as promoting the additional services, in an effort to keep people warm and safe during the extreme cold weather event.
Food Security and Emergency Food Access	Closed	In March 2024, the North Okanagan Land 2 Table Network hosted a Community Food Security Planning Session. The Social Planning Council was a member of the planning team and played an advisory role for the session. In addition, the Social Planning Council worked with faith groups to ensure that free meals were provided over the Easter long weekend.	Community Food Security Planning Session Easter Meal Calendar	Emergency food partners provided input into funding priorities for infrastructure and collaborative food security projects. Low-income households have access to at least one free meal per day over the Easter long weekend.	The Community Food Security Planning Session was attended by 21 different organizations and provided partners an opportunity to network, share, learn, and provide input into funding priorities for upcoming infrastructure and food security projects. In addition, the community is fortunate to have dedicated groups willing to provide free meals over the Easter long weekend. Thanks to volunteer and faith groups, Vernon provides emergency food access 365 days of the year, even on long weekends and during holiday seasons.

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Housing Action Team	Ongoing	The housing action team meets quarterly to review the housing inventory, identify gaps and explore opportunities. This provides the non-profit housing sector a chance to network, brainstorm and be strategic with plans for future affordable units.	Quarterly meetings. Updated inventory. Increased collaboration and partnership development.	Increased number of affordable units owned and managed by the non-profit sector.	In February 2024, Social Planning Council hosted an in-person presentation by CMHC to the Housing Action Team. CMHC provided an overview of their funding and programs and promoted the launch of their seed funding grants. The seed funding provides financial assistance to community housing providers for the costs of early development activities related to the predevelopment costs of building a new affordable housing project or renovating an existing affordable housing project. At least two of our local nonprofits will be pursuing this funding.
Building Safer Communities Grant	Open	The City of Vernon has received funding from Public Safety Canada to implement the Vernon Gun & Gang Violence Prevention Strategy. Social Planning Council is part of the City of Vernon's Project Team as well as a member of the Steering Committee.	Vernon Gun & Gang Violence Prevention Strategy Steering Committee and Evaluation Framework. Partnership development between the City of Vernon and NOYFSS, OKIB and CMHA.	Increase access to supports with an Outreach and Navigator Support Program for at-risk youth. Provide cultural safety through an Indigenous, peer based, Youth Mentorship Program. Provide access to mental health supports through a Youth Service Waitlist Management Program.	In March 2024, the community partnerships for the three youth-based programs were finalized and contracts provided to NOYFSS, OKIB and CMHA. Urban Matters developed an Evaluation Framework for the project in consultation with the community partners. The Steering Committee has met to review the Evaluation Framework and to better understand the components and scope of each of the youth-based programs. The programs are expected to be launched by each partner in early May 2024.

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Harm Reduction/HART					
Harm Reduction Team (HART)	Open	Vernon receives provincial funding to address the opioid crisis at the local level and support Community Action Teams (known locally as the HART Committee).	<p>Grant secured.</p> <p>Launch of RCMP/OAT Pilot Project.</p> <p>Development and launch of Folks on Spokes Program.</p> <p>Development and launch of Peer Outreach Program.</p>	<p>Enhance access to treatment, recovery, social stabilization, and supports.</p> <p>Reduce the community impacts of opioid addiction.</p>	<p>The Social Planning Council and the HART Committee oversee the implementation of the <i>Harm Reduction and Opioid Overdose Response Strategy</i>. The goal of the strategy is to reduce and prevent overdose deaths in Vernon.</p> <p>Tragically, during the pandemic, the number of overdose deaths began to rise significantly, with Vernon recording 26 deaths in 2020, 44 deaths in 2021, 51 deaths in 2022, and 54 deaths in 2023. These are devastating statistics for the families, friends and coworkers who are impacted by the loss of loved ones. Service providers and peers are now regularly planning and attending Memorial Services for clients who have died due to the toxic drug supply.</p>
Peer and Indigenous Peer Outreach Program	Open	The main role of this action team was to get direct input from key target populations with lived experience and to develop and support peer led programs.	Peer Outreach Program.	<p>Ensure people know where to access harm reduction interventions, treatment and recovery programs.</p> <p>Strengthen cultural supports/services for Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>The Street Clinic continues to host the peer outreach program which provides harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention services, referrals to treatment, and support services to marginalized people. The team consists of 7 individuals with at least 4 peers working weekly to support the daily drop-in and harm reduction program.</p> <p>An Indigenous Peer, Elder, and Artist have co-developed a series of sessions where Indigenous women with lived experience have an opportunity to come together on a monthly basis and participate in low-barrier cultural activities. Funding was also leveraged to develop a program to support Indigenous men.</p>

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Communication Plan with DVA and Community Safety Office	Open	An action team was formed to better inform downtown businesses of the variety of programs and services offered by the Community Safety Office.	<p>Community Safety Office updated resources.</p> <p>Webpage of resources posted on the DVA website.</p> <p>Monthly submissions to the DVA newsletter from the Community Safety Office.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of Community Safety Office programs and services available to downtown businesses.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>The DVA website now has a resource page that provides an overview of the programs, services and resources available to downtown businesses for various situations.</p> <p>This includes information on the Sharps Hotline, Folks on Spokes and who to call for various situations including aggressive panhandling, public intoxication, and vandalism.</p> <p>The Community Safety Office is also partnering with the DVA on a three-part series in the DVA newsletter on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED).</p>
Anti-racism/Inclusiveness/Multiculturalism					
Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC): Immigration and Settlement Strategy for Vernon	Open	The final strategy document as well as supporting research reports are available at www.socialplanning.ca	Vernon Immigration and Settlement Strategy.	<p>Newcomers choose Vernon as their new home.</p> <p>Newcomers participate in the local labour market, broader community and social networks.</p>	<p>The Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC) implements and monitors Vernon's Settlement and Immigration Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to attract and retain Immigrants to Vernon.</p> <p>The LIPC meets three times each year, to provide input, direction and feedback on the implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>The meetings also provide partner members an opportunity to share information and promote collaboration on initiatives that support newcomers to Vernon.</p>

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Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot - Vernon	Open	Social Planning Council is a member of the Advisory Committee for the federal Northern and Rural Immigration Pilot (RNIP).	Pilot project that assists employers to attract and retain Immigrant employees.	Newcomers choose Vernon as their new community.	<p>Given the skills shortage and local labour challenges, this program has been an important tool to assist employers in recruiting new staff. More than 465 employers have been approved to access the program. As of March 2024, approximately 900 individuals have been recommended from over 50 different countries.</p> <p>Although the RNIP program will be ending in August 2024, the Rural Community Immigration Pilot will launch in the fall of 2024. It aims to ensure that RNIP communities continue to have the ability to access programs that address labour shortages and help local businesses find the workers they need.</p>
Resilience BC Funding	Open	In the Summer of 2023, the Social Planning Council received another \$7500 grant from the Province of BC to coordinate anti-racism projects at the local level.	<p>SAGE (Service Agencies Grounded in Equity) Meetings</p> <p>Events and Workshops.</p>	<p>Identify and address racism at the local level.</p> <p>Provide resources and education to service providers and community members.</p>	<p>In conjunction with members of the Local Immigration Partnership Council, the Social Planning Council is hosting ongoing SAGE (Service Agencies Grounded in Equity) meetings, grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppressive work.</p> <p>SAGE members have the opportunity to engage in educational workshops and work collaboratively to create a safer and equitable environment for equity deserving populations, specifically IBPOC (Indigenous, Black, and People of Color) members.</p> <p>A workshops series on Anti-Racist & Anti-Oppressive Practice in the Workplace was hosted by the Social Planning Council in March 2024 with approximately 20 organizations taking part in the three-part series.</p>

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Access to Health Services					
Community Health Clinic – Business Case	Open	Community Futures North Okanagan, City of Vernon and the Social Planning Council have formed an action team to research the feasibility of a non-profit Community Health Clinic in Vernon.	Grant Secured.	Improve access to primary care in Vernon.	<p>Community Futures North Okanagan was successful in securing funding to hire consultants to develop a business case for a non-profit Community Health Clinic in Vernon.</p> <p>Social Planning Council is assisting the action team with initial community consultations within the health sector and with social service providers.</p> <p>The business case should be completed by May 2024.</p>
Evaluation of Partners in Action Committee					
Indicator Updates	Ongoing	As part of the evaluation process, the Social Planning Council collects statistics from local partners as well as regional and national sources on an annual basis.	Indicator data tool on a wide range of topics.	Evaluation and monitoring of data guides informed decision making.	The data is used on an ongoing basis by the Social Planning Council and partners to inform the discussion of social issues in the community and ways to address these problems/concerns.