



COBOURG POLICE SERVICE

BOARD REPORT

Report to:	Cobourg Police Services Board (CPSB)	
Submitted by:	Chief Paul VandeGraaf	Meeting Type: Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	May 16, 2023	
Report Type:	Information Only Report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Required Report <input type="checkbox"/>	
Previous Related Reports:		
Subject/Title:	Downtown Action Plan	

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

THAT the Board receive the following report for informational purposes.

BACKGROUND

The CPS is pleased to introduce a written action plan that will strategically focus on enhancing the perception of safety and invest in the quality-of-life issues in downtown Cobourg. The launch of the **Downtown Action Plan** will be a constellation of proactive initiatives and will formalize a variety of harm reduction related programs.

The Downtown Action Plan will build on the progress from strategies and will compliment and cascade from the Cobourg Police Service 2024 - 2025 Strategic Plan. The objective of this exercise is to establish community safety priorities that are strategic, sustainable, and cost-effective but most importantly the priorities will be informed by and promote the involvement of our community partners, stakeholders, and the residents we serve.

This plan will require “less dependence on reactionary, incident-driven responses and focus efforts and investments towards the long-term benefits of social development, prevention, and in the short-term, mitigating acutely elevated risk.” (Province of Ontario - Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework Booklet 3, Version 2)

The new plan will undertake a systems approach and incorporate localized priorities that ensure compliance with the Police Services Act and have initiatives and programs that are specific to:

1. Incident Response
2. Risk Intervention
3. Prevention
4. Social Development

The Downtown Action Plan is appended to this report.

The infographic is titled "COBOURG POLICE SERVICE DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN" and features the police crest. It is organized into four columns: Strategic, Measured, Collaborative, and Sustainable. A central white dashed line with circular icons connects five initiatives: DYNAMIC PATROL (Strategic), HARP (Measured), CCTV NETWORK (Collaborative), COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER (Sustainable), and NOCC (Sustainable). Each initiative includes a brief description of its focus. At the bottom, there are logos for "CRIME PREVENTION" and "COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL", along with the website cobourgpolicesservice.com/dt-action-plan.

COBOURG POLICE SERVICE
DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN

Strategic Measured Collaborative Sustainable

DYNAMIC PATROL
Foot patrols focused on engagement, intervention, prevention, enforcement, and community mobilization.

HARP
Homelessness, Addiction Response Program
Working with local agencies to connect vulnerable community members to services.

CCTV NETWORK
Camera network will help deter criminal activity and support the investigation and prosecution processes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER
Foot patrols focused on engagement, intervention, prevention, enforcement, and community mobilization.

NOCC
Notification of Community Crime will focus on increasing education about crime and safety and increasing reporting of suspicious crime.

CRIME PREVENTION **COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

cobourgpolicesservice.com/dt-action-plan



DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW

The Cobourg Police Service (CPS) is a trusted community partner committed to quality policing that protects the safety, security and, in turn, enhances the quality of life in the Town of Cobourg. As its most valuable resource, the CPS takes pride in its members who each day strive to keep our community a safe place to live, work and play.

The CPS is pleased to introduce a written action plan that will strategically focus on enhancing the perception of safety and invest in the quality-of-life issues in downtown Cobourg. The launch of the Downtown Action Plan will be a constellation of proactive crime prevention initiatives and will formalize various harm reduction related programs.

The Downtown Action Plan will build on the progress of strategic objectives and cascade from the Cobourg Police Service 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan. The purpose of this exercise is to establish community safety priorities that are strategic, sustainable, and cost-effective, but most importantly, the priorities will be informed by and promote the involvement of our community partners, stakeholders, and the residents we serve.

This plan will require *“less dependence on reactionary, incident-driven responses and focus efforts and investments towards the long-term benefits of social development, prevention, and in the short-term, mitigating acutely elevated risk.”* (Province of Ontario - Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework Booklet 3, Version 2)

The new plan will undertake a systems approach and incorporate localized priorities that ensure compliance with the Police Services Act and have initiatives and programs that are specific to:

1. Incident Response
2. Risk Intervention
3. Prevention
4. Social Development

The Downtown Action Plan will have several areas of priority, and a police manager has been asked to lead the development of each of these priorities. Each element of the plan will have clear objectives that allow for incremental or phased implementation and a framework to ensure progress can be measured. The plan will include ideas and concepts supported by academic research and incorporate best practices from our organization and beyond. The police-specific elements will complement the public safety priorities established by stakeholders.

Conceptually the plan will be divided into phases, and each phase will be a minimum of 6 months. On the annual anniversary of each phase, there will be a recalibration exercise to ensure the plan continues to address priority risks and needs of the community through strategic and holistic planning. The Downtown Action Plan will follow the provincial Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework, which envisions

community safety as a shared responsibility and encourages multi-sectoral partnerships and an integrated approach.

The Dynamic Patrol initiative and the Homelessness & Addiction Response Program (HARP) will underpin the priorities outlined in the Downtown Action Plan. These initiatives are intended to enhance police service delivery through proactive foot patrols, increased visibility, and community engagement efforts. The police service will establish a sustained downtown foot patrol presence to build relationships with residents, business owners, and visitors in downtown Cobourg.

The Downtown Action Plan has incorporated investigative and crime analysis, community feedback, and information gathered by officers in relation to localized safety concerns. It is recognized that for some communities with a significant urban district, there are aspects of downtown that make some people uncomfortable. For large population centres, the visible presence of the unsheltered population has become a normalized part of city living. However, for communities that do not have the same density (like Cobourg), people have communicated that they feel unsafe and often choose to avoid the downtown.

This action plan, commissioned by the Office of the Chief of Police, shall commence in April 2023, and progress will be reported monthly.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The following (see proceeding info graphic) critical success factors will be taken into consideration when developing the Downtown Action Plan and connecting this plan to the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The success factors are defined in Section 3 of the Province of Ontario – Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Framework Booklet 3, Version 2 (on pages 11-14).



The Downtown Action Plan has the following aims (this is not an exhaustive list):

- a) To affect an 8% increase in the reported crime rate within the geographical area defined as downtown Cobourg and compare this data to the five-year average.
- b) To identify opportunities to collaborate with other agencies on issues affecting the social determinants of health and identify and correct conditions that could lead to crime, raise public awareness, and engage the community in finding solutions to problems.
- c) To ensure a daily deployment and presence of uniformed CPS members integrating the assignment of the Police Constable, Special Constable, and Auxiliary Constable cadre. This approach leverages the Tier-Policing approach employed by the police service.
- d) To affect an increase in residents' overall feeling and perception of safety in downtown Cobourg.
- e) Increase overall communication promoting downtown Cobourg as a very safe community through the use of social media.
- f) Identify projects that target vulnerable groups, high-risk groups and high-risk environments.
- g) Initialize the first 25 CCTV cameras.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

HOMELESSNESS, ADDICTION, RESPONSE PROGRAM (HARP)

CPS has seen a steady rise in calls relating to mental health, addiction, and public mischief over the last three years. Similarly, during this same period, on-street officers detailed an increase in visible of people experiencing homelessness centred within the downtown core and key local tourist areas (beachfront/municipal parks). As a result, CPS developed the Homelessness, Addiction Response Program [HARP]. HARP focuses on increasing police presence in the downtown core with an emphasis on connecting with members of the community with the highest acuity who may be experiencing homelessness, struggling with addiction, or mental health. This program employs one full-time officer dedicated to: identifying local social service organizations that provide services or programs to support mental health, addiction and homelessness; creating an outreach and education program (between CPS and these social services groups); establishing an inter-service community communication plan; creating a rapid response plan in coordination with CPS M-HEART officer(s) and community resources; and developing a permanent increased police presence within the downtown core (and other identified areas of need through CPS analytic services) that works to connect community members struggling with permanent housing, mental health and substance use issues to community partners, decreasing barriers to the services they need.

DYNAMIC PATROL PROGRAM

CPS has created the Dynamic Patrol initiative as part of the Downtown Action Plan. Officers wearing highly visible uniform apparel will conduct foot patrols focused on engagement, intervention, prevention, enforcement, and community mobilization. Their mandate is to reduce violence and related disorderly activity, improve safety and enhance the quality of life in Cobourg with an emphasis on the downtown.

Dynamic Patrol is an ongoing initiative to increase police presence in local neighbourhoods and near businesses. Deployment of officers on foot will occur as necessary in various community areas. Foot patrol officers are expected to visit businesses along their beat and interact with citizens. They also respond to calls for service within their area.

It is indisputable that foot patrols increase the number of impromptu citizen contacts officers have during a given shift. In terms of community relations, an officer on foot is more approachable than one in a vehicle. If an

officer is on foot, they can be more easily approached by any community member experiencing a community safety concern. Those individuals with whom officers have daily conversations may provide relevant information police might otherwise never discover on incidents of crime, and opportunities to connect with those in need. In addition to information from citizen contacts, officers who walk the beat will vastly increase their knowledge of the neighbourhoods they patrol.

COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

To achieve an enhanced level of engagement with our community, we will establish a Town of Cobourg Community Advisory Council comprised of ten (10) residents who will be invited to provide regular input and constructive feedback related to the various policing services we provide. The newly established Community Advisory Council will help inform the plan and monitor the progress during the implementation aspects of the Downtown Action Plan.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL INPUT

Members of Cobourg's Town Council are being asked to provide structured input that will help inform the Downtown Action Plan. Each member of Council was recently elected or re-elected. During the election campaign, as the Councillors engaged residents as they went door to door, they became acutely aware of the public safety issues that are a priority to the residents we serve. Councillors will be asked to outline resident concerns to ensure we align our plan with public expectations. The members of Council will be asked to provide regular input and formally monitor the progress made during the plan's implementation.

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with people is central to creating social change, for which media can act as a conduit. Media's reach allows us to engage with broad stakeholder groups and communities and support individuals in acquiring new knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Consequently, communities not only experience change but they also guide it. Media such as Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok have allowed people to share and discuss their concerns and perspectives openly and have become important catalysts for social change. The Downtown Action Plan will ensure regular communication and discourse on CPS social media channels promotes Cobourg as a safe and welcoming community. This aspect of the plan will hopefully reduce exposing viewers to negative stimuli that spark discussion about a particular issue.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

CPS is pleased to introduce the Community Engagement Officer pilot project as part of the Downtown Action Plan. The Community Engagement Officer will promote organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. This position will work in tandem with M-HEART, HARP, and the Dynamic Patrol Initiative and be responsible for facilitating partnerships to deliver a series of community safety functions and activities. This position will also involve planning and facilitating community service initiatives moving forward.

NOTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY CRIME (NOCC) PROGRAM

CPS join other police services in Canada by implementing a Notification of Community Crime (NOCC) program. The NOCC program will be integrated into the Downtown Action Plan suite of initiatives.

A NOCC initiative will be completed weekly, and CPS officers will go door to door in the downtown neighbourhoods to educate community members. Officers engage with residents, visitors and business owners during each initiative. Educational material relating to community safety is provided, asking residents to share their concerns and encourage residents to report crime – this campaign will operate under the ‘See Something - Say Something’ or ‘See Something – Report Something’ monikers. NOCCs are intended to increase the reporting of suspicious activity and crime after gaining knowledge and education about crime and safety. The NOCC program was initiated in Durham Region in 2015 and is an expanded and replacement program for the “Lock It or Lose It” program.

FRAUD AND IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION

A series of fraud prevention seminars are routinely hosted within the Town of Cobourg at several community centres and senior residences. CPS members educate the community on various forms of identity theft and common cyber scams. These seminars are hosted quarterly or when requested by a community group or agency. Within the Downtown Action Plan, a goal is being established to reduce the instances of fraud and identify related theft amongst those aged 55 and older.

INITIALIZING THE CCTV NETWORK

CPS has established a network of CCTV cameras throughout the Town of Cobourg, with the largest concentration in the downtown core. The CCTV network is part of the CPS Next Generation Community Safety Strategy developed through various provincial grant programs. The Ontario government grant funding covered 50 percent of project costs.

CPS will initialize the first 25 cameras before June 15, 2023. Investing in CCTV equipment will mean vast public areas in Cobourg will be captured by video surveillance. The camera network will help deter criminal activity and support the investigation and prosecution processes. The technology of the new cameras will provide high-quality video captures that have proven invaluable in solving local investigations. We are confident that this technology will positively impact public safety.