

DATE OF MEETING April 29, 2024

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**SUBJECT DOWNTOWN NANAIMO COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN  
EVALUATION AND STRATEGY ALIGNMENT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation and Strategy Alignment Report.

### **Recommendation**

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to proceed with a cost analysis of the preferred scenarios found in the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation and Strategy Alignment Report for the expansion of the Community Safety Officer and Clean Team programs and to prepare a business case for 2025 budget deliberations.

## **BACKGROUND**

In recent years, Nanaimo has experienced an increase in homelessness, open drug use, and social disorder in the downtown core. In response, the City of Nanaimo implemented the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan (DNCSAP) in 2022 to provide a tactical response to the highest risk, most visible, and serious issues affecting the safety and viability of the city's downtown area.

The DNCSAP outlines strategies for tiered responses and includes the creation of the Community Safety Officer (CSO) team; programs to keep public spaces and infrastructure clean, safe, and accessible; and recommendations for a governance plan to align these efforts with measures taken by other agencies.

In April 2023, the City hosted the Premier, the Attorney General, and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General to announce details around the Repeat Violent Offending Initiative (REVOII) and the allocation of \$75,000 for a Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Plan. A CSWB plan consults with community to identify risks and proactively works to develop evidence-based strategies and programs to address local priorities related to crime and complex social issues. With the extensive consultation done over the last two years through City Plan, the Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP), the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan (DNCSAP), and the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy (NYRS), the Province supported using the funds to:

- evaluate the DNCSAP;
- consider options for expanding and enhancing the DNCSAP; and,
- ensure strategic alignment of the DNCSAP with City Plan, HHAP, and NYRS.

## **DISCUSSION**

In January 2024, the City retained the consultant Deloitte to evaluate the DNCSAP, determine the feasibility of expanding the DNCSAP, and to ensure that the DNCSAP is aligned with other City initiatives and strategies. The scope of work for the project included a background review, conducting a current state analysis of the DNCSAP, consultations, building a strategic framework, and developing recommendations for next steps. The DNCSAP Evaluation & Strategy Alignment Report ("the Report") (Attachment A) is complete and is being presented to the Governance and Priorities Committee and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in accordance with the funding agreement.

The analysis in the report consists of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data was captured through surveys, interviews, workshops, and focus group sessions that included City employees, service providers, neighbourhood associations, business associations, and members of Nanaimo's vulnerable population. The quantitative data was captured through CSO calls for service. Due to the limitation of available quantitative data and the scope of work, the Report was unable to objectively measure whether the perception of downtown improved, or if there was a tangible decrease of social disorder. However, what is clear through consultations is that social disorder downtown would be worse without the implementation of the DNCSAP. There is overwhelming support for the CSO and Clean Teams from various stakeholders and it is noted that both teams have made a notable impact on the perception of safety and cleanliness of the downtown area. In addition, it is clear that the CSO team has added a more compassionate approach to connecting individuals in need to supports and services.

The key findings and recommendations found in the Report are reflected from the analysis of the DNCSAP, the feedback collected, and the consultant's experience in the community safety and wellbeing sector. The tables provided on the following pages summarizes the Report's key findings and recommendations.

**Key Findings and Recommendations - Group One: Tiered Responses**

| Measure                          | Status  | Recommendation   |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Downtown Ambassadors Program     | <i>Not Delivered</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a Downtown Ambassadors program in collaboration with the Nanaimo Downtown Business Improvement Association and the RCMP as outlined in the DNCSAP.</li> </ul>   |
| Private Security for Parkades    | <i>Delivered – effectively contributing to safety in parkades particularly in absence of CSO coverage overnight.</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the use of private security for City parkades when and where necessary.</li> </ul>  |
| Community Safety Officer Program | <i>Delivered – an important part of the emergency response continuum, a key contributor to public safety and health, takes a compassionate approach and provides key connections to service providers for people in need.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase resources and consider expansion of hourly and geographical coverage:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scenario 1: Status quo – increase to 20 CSO FTE and 1 additional Supervisor to ensure adequate coverage of existing schedule and the safety and wellbeing of officers.</li> <li>Scenario 2: increase to 24 CSO FTE and 1 additional supervisor to allow for 24 hour, 7 days per week coverage.</li> <li>Scenario 3: increase to 30 CSO FTE and 1 additional Supervisor to allow 24 hour, 7 days per week coverage and increase geographical coverage outside of the downtown core.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Investigate options for adequate and effective back up to CSOs when needed.</li> <li>Implement Mental Health supports.</li> <li>Create common standards.</li> <li>Invest in training.</li> <li>Investigate and implement technology tools.</li> </ul> |
| RCMP Downtown Engagement Team    | <i>Delivered – implemented in summer 2022 and planned for summer 2024.</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider implementing this measure when there are sufficient resources within the context of the RCMP's priorities.</li> </ul>  |

**Key Findings and Recommendations - Group Two: Public Spaces & Assets**

| Measure                       | Status   | Recommendation  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Enhanced Clean Team           | <i>Delivered</i> – has had a visible impact on the cleanliness of downtown.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase resources and expand geographical area:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Scenario 1: status quo - increase to 6 FTE to ensure sustained coverage of downtown.</li> <li>○ Scenario 2: increase to 10 FTE to expand coverage outside of the downtown area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Expedite the procurement of the required number of purpose-built vehicles allowing the Clean Team to be more effective and efficient.</li> <li>• Services planned for persons in need such as facilities, temporary or permanent, need to consider the decrease or increase support costs associated with Clean Teams.</li> <li>• Review reporting lines for Clean Teams to ensure more effective and efficient management of resources.</li> <li>• Explore the co-location of the Clean Teams with the CSO Team.</li> <li>• Implement common standards to determine hand over processes and responsibilities between Clean Team and CSO Team.</li> </ul> |
| Vandalism Relief Grant        | <i>Delivered</i> – very well received by the business community to offset the expenses of vandalism to businesses.             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to provide the grant program and consider enhancing the public awareness of the program.</li> <li>• Review compliance and enforcement of graffiti bylaws and other actions resulting in uncleanliness or contributing to urban decay.</li> </ul>  |
| Downtown Parkade Cleaners     | <i>Delivered</i> – feedback from consultations revealed a positive difference in parkades' cleanliness and feelings of safety. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to use parkade cleaners to supplement the Clean Teams to strengthen cleanliness and sense of safety.</li> </ul>   |
| Parkade Security Improvements | <i>In Progress</i> – implementations of improvements are currently underway.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to pursue the implementation of the measures recommended by the security consultant.</li> </ul>   |

**Key Findings and Recommendations - Group Two: Public Spaces & Assets (Continued)**

| Measure  | Status  | Recommendation  |
|--|---|---|
| Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Improvements | <i>In Progress</i> – several changes to public spaces downtown have been identified and are intended to be implemented in fall 2024 and CSOs have received CPTED training and identify CPTED needs as required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the continued execution of this measure.</li> <li>Establish a clear process of review, assessment, and decision making between CSO Team and City Departments to implement CPTED recommendations where appropriate.</li> </ul> |
| Rules and Resources  | <i>Delivered</i> – a guide has been published and made available to people in need and service providers.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post guides in shelters and other high visibility places where people in need frequent.</li> <li>Ensure guides are up to date and easy to understand.</li> </ul>   |
| Park Ambassadors   | <i>Partially Delivered</i> – program was initially launched in summer 2022.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proceed with plans to re-establish the program in summer 2024.</li> </ul>  |

**Recommendations - Group Three: Action Plan Governance**

| Measure                         | Status  | Recommendation  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Downtown Safety Coordination    | <i>Partially Delivered</i> – supporting the CSO program and liaising with stakeholder groups have been undertaken by existing City Staff.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan for the hiring of an additional internal manager as originally recommended in the DNCSAP to lead the ongoing coordination and monitoring of the existing plan and to be involved in future planning activities.</li> </ul>  |
| Interdepartmental Working Group | <i>Partially Delivered</i> – the Public Safety Department hosts a bi-weekly meeting attended by City Staff from other departments to discuss issues, and the planning and directing of resources. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a clearly defined governance model for the ongoing monitoring, tracking, and reporting of the DNCSAP and any future plans.</li> </ul>  |
| Stakeholder's Committee         | Partially Delivered - the Public Safety Department hosts a bi-weekly meeting attended by City Staff from other departments to discuss issues, plans, and directing resources.                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an overarching vision for CSWB in collaboration with external stakeholders and clearly articulate roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder towards the collective vision.</li> <li>Develop key performance indicators to measure the impact of the DNCSAP.</li> </ul> |

The Report identifies the critical need to invest in the CSO and Clean Teams to ensure the sustainability of the program and the safety and wellbeing of CSOs and Clean Team Staff. This will allow for the continued comprehensive supports to the downtown area. Staff will return to a future Finance and Audit Committee meeting with a cost analysis of the preferred scenarios for the CSO and Clean Team expansions. This will include options for a governance model to support the teams and any additional program and capital costs that will be needed to support the expansion of staffing. Options for the Committee to consider may include a phased approach allowing for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of resources and budget capacities.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to proceed with a cost analysis of the preferred scenarios found in the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation and Strategy Alignment Report for the expansion of the Community Safety Officer and Clean Team programs and to prepare a business case for 2025 budget deliberations.
  - The advantages of this option: Conducting the cost analysis and business case for the expansion of the Community Safety Officer and Clean Teams will allow the City to determine the capacity and resources to ensure the teams can continue promoting community safety and wellbeing in the city effectively, efficiently, and sustainably.
  - The disadvantages of this option: Staff time is required to conduct the cost analysis and prepare the business case.
  - Financial implications: No additional funds are needed to conduct the cost analysis and develop the business plan.
  
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide alternative direction.

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- In 2022, the City of Nanaimo implemented the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan, which recommended specific measures to address the increase of social disorder, homelessness, and drug use in the downtown core.
- In April 2023, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General allocated \$75,000 to the City of Nanaimo to conduct a review of the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan, consider options for expanding and enhancing the plan, and to ensure the plan is strategically aligned with other City strategies and initiatives.
- The Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation and Strategy Alignment Report is being presented to the Governance and Priorities Committee and will be submitted to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in accordance with the funding agreement.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

ATTACHMENT A: Link to “Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation & Strategy Alignment Report – 2024”

ATTACHMENT B: Link to “Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan – 2022”

**Submitted by:**

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Deputy CAO |

## ATTACHMENT A

Link to “Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation & Strategy Alignment Report – 2024”: <https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/community-social-service-programs/city-of-nanaimo-project-report--dnscsap.pdf/>



## **ATTACHMENT B**

Link to "Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan – 2022":

<https://www.nanaimo.ca/docs/social-culture-environment/community-social-service-programs/downtownnanaimocommunitysafetyactionplan2022.pdf/>

**Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan  
Evaluation & Strategy Alignment**

**April 2024**



**Background**

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- In recent years Nanaimo's Downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods has experienced a rise in levels of:
  - Visible homelessness
  - Open drug use
  - Conflict
  - Vandalism
  - Lack of cleanliness
  - Overall social disorder
- In 2022, the City of Nanaimo implemented the Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan (DNCSAP) which recommended specific measures to address the most serious and visible issues affecting viability and safety in the City Centre.



## Request

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- Evaluate the **Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan (DNCSAP)** to determine if:
  - Plan objectives and goals are being achieved.
  - Sufficient resources are available and sustainable to achieve the objectives.
  - Ensure it is **aligned with other City initiatives** and strategies including City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined, Health and Housing Action Plan (2021), and the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy.
- Explore the feasibility of **expanding measures beyond Downtown**, to be City-wide initiatives.



## Methodology

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- The evaluation was conducted using a review of existing documents and some quantitative data (i.e. calls for service).
- Deloitte conducted qualitative research to inform its recommendations – based on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders that contribute to the community safety agenda in the city.



## Overview: DNCSAP

### Desired Outcomes

1. Improved Perception of Downtown
2. Tangible Decrease in Social Disorder
3. Support for Businesses and Neighbourhoods
4. Support for Service Providers & Non-profits
5. Connection to Services
6. Compassion-based Approach
7. Expectations and Responsibilities Understood

### Strategy Alignment



### Groups of Measures

**Tiered Response** - Effective, timely and flexible response to behavioral issues and their impacts in the Downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods, using resources that are best suited to the specific types of incidents.

1. Downtown Ambassadors Program
2. Private Security for Parkades
3. Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program
4. RCMP Downtown Engagement Team

**Public Spaces and Assets** - City of Nanaimo programs aimed at keeping public spaces and infrastructure clean, safe and accessible.

1. Enhanced Clean Team
2. Vandalism Relief Grant
3. Downtown Parkade Cleaners
4. Parkade Security Improvements
5. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Improvements
6. Rules & Resources
7. Park Ambassadors

**Action Plan Governance** - Coordination of the City's implementation efforts, development of new additional measures, and support for and alignment with measures taken by other agencies.

1. Downtown Safety Coordination
2. Interdepartmental Working Group
3. Stakeholder's Committee

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## Findings: DNCSAP's Measures

Out of DNCSAP's 14 measures:

• **7 (half) were fully implemented:**

1. Private Security for Parkades
2. Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program
3. RCMP Downtown Engagement Team
4. Enhanced Clean Team
5. Vandalism Relief Grant
6. Downtown Parkade Cleaners
7. Rules & Resources

• **4 were partially implemented:**

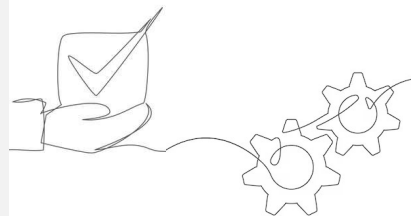
- o Park Ambassadors and the three Governance measures

• **2 are in progress:**

- o Parkade Security and CPTED Improvements

• **1 is incomplete:**

- o The Downtown Ambassador Program



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## Findings: DNCSAP's Measures



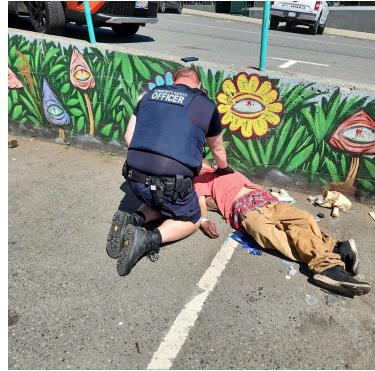
### Key Successes

- **The CSO and Clean Teams** – Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. They have made a notable impact on the perception of safety and cleanliness of Downtown areas.
- **Strong operational coordination among service providers** – There are strong relationships among service providers supporting persons in need Downtown.



### Key Challenges

- Monitoring and governance
- Upstream service availability & capacity
- Find the 'right person' to help



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## Recommendations: DNCSAP's Measures

### Group 1: Tiered Responses

**1. Downtown Ambassadors Program** – Implementing in collaboration with the Business Association and the RCMP.

**2. Private Security for Parkades** – Continue to support the use of private security for City parkades when and where it is deemed necessary.

**3. Community Safety Officer (CSO) Program** – Increase resources and expand hourly and geographical coverage:

- **Scenario 1:** Provides the same level of hourly and geographical coverage but accounts for the safety and wellbeing of CSOs – ensures there are 2 FTE per team and 2 teams working at all times (20 CSO FTEs and 1 additional Supervisor).
  - **Scenario 2:** Increase hourly coverage Downtown to 24x7 (24 CSO FTEs and 1 additional Supervisor).
  - **Scenario 3:** Increase geographical and hourly coverage by expanding beyond Downtown (Increase the number of FTEs to 30 CSO FTEs and 1 additional Supervisor).
- In addition, investigate options for adequate and effective backup to CSOs when needed, implement mental health supports, create common standards, invest in training, and, investigate and implement technology



**4. RCMP Downtown Engagement Team** – Implement this measure when there are sufficient resources within the context of the RCMP's priorities.

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## Recommendations: DNCSAP's Measures

### Group 2: Public Spaces & Assets

#### 1. Enhanced Clean Team – Increase Resources & Expand Geographical Area

- **Scenario 1:** Increase FTEs to 6 to ensure sustained coverage of Downtown.
- **Scenario 2:** Increase FTEs to 10+ FTEs:
  - 6 FTEs dedicated to sufficient coverage of Downtown.
  - 4 FTEs dedicated to expansion beyond Downtown.
- Expedite appropriate equipment, including vehicles
- Increase services (facilities, appropriate disposals, etc.).
- Ensure appropriate reporting structure with the CSOs.
- Implement common standards including formalized ways of working, handover processes, and responsibilities between the two teams.
- Invest in training and mental health support.

**2. Vandalism Relief Grant** – Continue to offer the grant program and ensure appropriate communication. Review compliance and enforcement of graffiti bylaws and other actions resulting in uncleanliness or contributing to urban decay.

**3. Downtown Parkade Cleaners** – Continue leveraging parkade cleaners to supplement Clean Teams as necessary to attract more traffic to business areas, increase tourism, and strengthen overall sense of safety.

**4. Parkade Security Improvements** – Implement the measures recommended by the security consultant, seeking additional funding as required, and review options for extending security to suburban parking lots and for providing increased security in other areas of need.

## Recommendations: DNCSAP's Measures

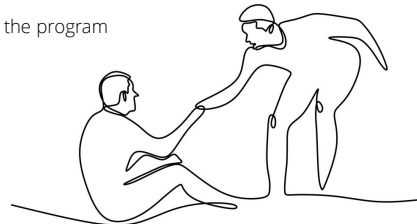
### Group 2: Public Spaces & Assets (cont'd)

**5. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Improvements** – Establish clear roles and responsibilities. CSOs could carry out the assessments if their capacity increased. They need to be kept informed of the process to assess, review, and decide on proposed CPTED recommendations they put through to other teams in the City (e.g. Parks) to enable a process of continuous improvement and encourage the identification of additional opportunities.

#### 6. Rules & Resources

- Rules and resources are best shared through in-person interactions by service providers. Proper awareness and training for the totality of these resources is critical.
- In addition, the Rules & Resources guide can be posted in shelters and other high-visibility places where they frequently visit. This will increase the likelihood of it being used as a reference, particularly considering people are unlikely to keep paper guides.
- If SPO will be leading the coordination of services, efforts will need to be made to ensure awareness and that it appropriately works within the larger governance framework (for upstream feedback).

**7. Park Ambassadors** – Proceed with plans to re-establish the program in the summer of 2024.



## Recommendations: DNCSAP's Measures

### Group 3: Action Plan Governance

- 1. Downtown Safety Coordination** – Hire an additional internal Manager-level resource to lead the ongoing coordination and monitoring of the existing plan, as well as to play a central role in facilitating future planning activities, including those outlined in the following section, which proposes a framework for future planning.
- 2. Interdepartmental Working Group** – Establish a clearly defined governance model for the ongoing monitoring, tracking and reporting of the DNCSAP.
- 3. Stakeholder's Committee** – Develop an overarching vision for community safety & well-being in Nanaimo in collaboration with key partners and clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner towards the collective vision.

#### Additional Recommendations

- Invest in **alternative places for people to go** (24 hr. warming centers)
- **Remove temporary fences** when possible, and clearly communicate their need to public
- Create opportunities for **positive news** in Downtown



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## Findings & Recommendations: Outcomes & Strategic Alignment

### Findings

1. The plan was aspirational, but the success of the outcomes outlined was not all under the city's control.



2. There were several recommendations the city should consider that do not fall directly within the current DNCSAP.



3. The city's outcomes are not always within its control and require coordination with the other partners that have public safety in their mandate



4. To objectively evaluate the plan, baseline measures must be established, and appropriate key performance indicators established with regular review and reporting.



5. There is a lack of awareness of the strategy and the successful implementation.



### Recommendations

**Identify a vision or "North Star"** and ensure it is clear about what the City of Nanaimo can achieve based on their mandate.

#### Gaps:

- Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation
- Preventative measures
- Youth-specific measures
- Diverse housing and infrastructure (i.e. 24/7 warming centers)

**Create desired outcomes** that are within the control and influence of Nanaimo and **coordinate with other partners** who have a responsibility for public safety.

**Build measures or actions that are directly linked** and contribute to the achievement of the stated outcomes. **Develop a baseline of data** for the measures outlined in the plan.

**Create a communications strategy** and include public education.

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## Next Steps

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**1. Coordinate with public safety partners** – The social disorder issues Nanaimo faces are a manifestation of complex challenges that cannot be addressed by a single organization. They require a multi-agency approach, with organizations coming together.



**2. Create a governance framework and hire resources** – Development and resourcing of a strong governance framework which is responsible for delivery of the whole strategy and its initiatives.



**3. Develop key performance indicators** – The ability to measure the impact of the strategy and related initiatives on the desired outcomes is critical to understanding the impact made, track progress during the implementation, and an important communication tool to the public, in support of accountability and perceptions of community safety.



**4. Implement Recommendations; Critical Path: Invest in CSOs and Clean Teams** – Implement recommendations within this report but start with the most important: The CSO and Clean Team expansion.