

Downtown Nanaimo Community Safety Action Plan Evaluation & Strategy Alignment

April 2024



Background

- 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

- 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.



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Methodology

- 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.



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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:**

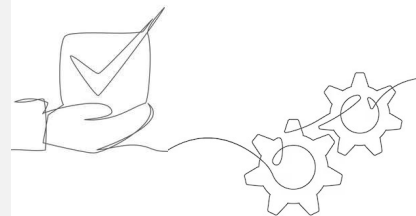
- Park Ambassadors and the three Governance measures

• **2 are in progress:**

- Parkade Security and CPTED Improvements

• **1 is incomplete:**

- The Downtown Ambassador Program



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Findings: DNCSAP's Measures



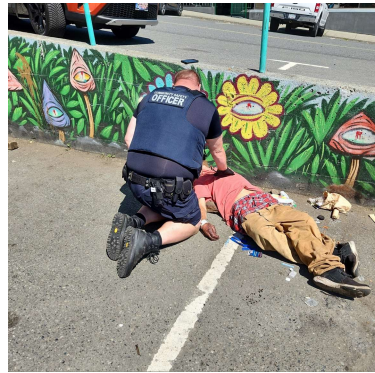
Key Successes

- **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

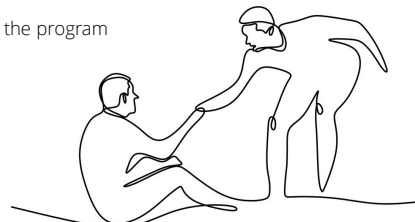
Group 2: Public Spaces & Assets (cont'd)

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



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.