



**The Corporation of the  
City of Sault Ste. Marie**

**C O U N C I L   R E P O R T**

February 23, 2026

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council  
AUTHOR: Brent Lamming, Deputy CAO Community Development &  
Enterprise Services  
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services  
RE: Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

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**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the new five-year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

**Background**

The Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan (Attachment A) for Sault Ste. Marie is prepared to ensure compliance with *Part XI, Sections 143–150 of the Police Services Act, 2018 (PSA)*. These legislative provisions were introduced through the *Safer Ontario Act, 2018*, which updated the Province’s approach to community safety in recognition that enforcement alone cannot address the complex social issues affecting communities across Ontario.

Under the PSA, municipalities are required to:

- Prepare and adopt a CSWB Plan;
- Engage and consult with legislated partners, including police, health, mental health, social services, education, and Indigenous organizations;
- Identify local risks to safety and well-being based on evidence;
- Develop strategies across four planning areas:
  - Social Development
  - Prevention
  - Risk Intervention
  - Emergency Response
- Establish a governance structure to oversee plan implementation; and
- Publish the plan and report regularly on progress.

Sault Ste. Marie’s CSWB Plan 2026-2030 fully complies with these requirements and extends beyond minimum legislative expectations through a strong emphasis on prevention, Indigenous partnership, system integration, and community leadership.

The CSWB Plan is a shared roadmap for building a safer and healthier community. It was developed through extensive engagement with residents, youth, Indigenous

partners, frontline workers, service agencies, health and justice partners, business owners, educators, and people with lived and living experience. It draws on data from Police, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hospitals, schools, social services, housing, and homelessness systems, along with the perspectives of those who experience these pressures directly.

A Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan (Attachment B) has been developed with the DSSAB in partnership with community partners, which supports and is referenced within the CSWB Plan. Community partners involved in its creation include the Canadian Mental Health Association – Sault Ste. Marie, Indigenous service partners, municipal staff, shelter, street outreach and housing providers, and community members who shared their expertise, data, and lived experience to inform this 10-Year Homelessness Strategy. The strategic priorities of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan focus on six priorities noted below:

- Priority 1: Strengthen Housing-Focused Responses and System Flow;
- Priority 2: Improve System Access, Coordination, and Integration;
- Priority 3: Advance Equity and Indigenous Leadership;
- Priority 4: Prevent Homelessness and Sustain Housing Stability;
- Priority 5: Build and Leverage Affordable and Supportive Housing Supply;
- and
- Priority 6: Strengthen Community Partnerships and Accountability.

### **Analysis**

The CSWB plan recognizes that many upstream factors are outside local control. Local partners cannot redesign provincial addiction treatment systems, regulate income support levels, or resolve the toxic drug crisis alone. What Sault Ste. Marie can influence is the coordination, prevention, early intervention, community presence, housing stability, youth support, and public space strategies that create conditions where safety and well-being are strengthened.

This CSWB Plan was prepared by OrgCode Consulting Inc. <https://www.orgcode.com/> throughout 2025. The work was guided by the leadership committee and strengthened by the insight and experience shared by residents of Sault Ste. Marie, Indigenous partners, youth, local businesses, first responders, community organizations, and government departments. Their honesty, expertise, and commitment to the community shaped every section of this Plan. The Plan reflects the voices, concerns, strengths, and aspirations of the people who participated in meetings, conversations, site visits, engagement sessions, and ongoing dialogue. OrgCode Consulting Inc. extends sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed their time and perspective. The Plan is made stronger by their participation and reflects a shared determination to improve safety and well-being across the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The guiding principles in the development of the CSWB plan were as follows.

- Prevention First;
- Shared Responsibility;
- Equity and Inclusion;
- Indigenous Partnership and Reconciliation;

- Lived and Living Experience Leadership;
- Data-Informed Decisions;
- Transparency and Public Accountability; and
- Dignity, Compassion, and Safety.

This plan sets out four priorities for collective action:

**1. Safer Shared Public Spaces** – Sault Ste. Marie will improve safety in shared public spaces by strengthening a coordinated presence across sectors, applying clear community standards, and connecting people showing distress to health and social supports earlier, so crises are less likely to escalate in public areas.

**2. Early Outreach and Support** – Sault Ste. Marie will strengthen early outreach by creating a more consistent, coordinated presence that engages people when distress first appears, connects them to health and social supports sooner, and reduces preventable crises that currently escalate before help arrives.

**3. Housing Stability and Reduced Homelessness** – Sault Ste. Marie will strengthen housing stability by improving coordination across outreach, shelter, health, and housing services, creating clearer pathways out of crisis, and increasing prevention and stabilization supports so fewer people cycle through homelessness.

**4. Youth Belonging, Prevention, and Structured-Time** – Sault Ste. Marie will strengthen youth wellbeing by expanding opportunities for belonging, connection, and safe, structured activities that reduce stress and isolation. This work is hoped to be informed by the *Icelandic Prevention Model*, which focuses on increasing protective factors, reducing risk, and providing consistent, accessible opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful activities.

**Community Consultation** –The plan was built on extensive community consultation throughout 2025.

- Public Community Safety and Well-Being Survey responses from more than 1,200 residents;
- Youth survey findings and Algoma Public Health insights on wellbeing, substance use, and risk factors;
- Perspectives from Indigenous partners, service providers, community organizations, and frontline staff;
- Local data from police, EMS, health care, housing, and homelessness systems;

- Priorities were shaped by bringing these voices and data sources together, not by any single perspective;
- Community Open House;
- On-Line Surveys;
- Webinar;
- One-on-one Sessions; and
- Community Safety Well-Being Advisory Committee.

### **Key Insights from the Community and Local Data**

- Mental-health crises and substance toxicity are leading to frequent emergency responses and visible health-related crises in public spaces
- Residents described feeling compassion for people in distress and feeling unsafe in shared public spaces because of unpredictable, crisis-driven behaviour
- Experiences of housing instability and homelessness are deepening, with limited pathways to regain stability
- Systems were described as fragmented, making coordination, navigation, and consistent support difficult
- Youth are experiencing rising stress, disconnection, and limited safe, accessible places to belong or connect

An **Implementation Framework** has been developed (Attachment C), which translates the CSWB Plan priorities into actions, identifies leadership roles, and agrees on outcomes and indicators to support coordinated implementation. Lead organizations identified in the framework represent agreed points of accountability for coordinating implementation within each priority area. Leads are expected to convene partners, support alignment, and advance actions in collaboration with identified partners, consistent with their mandates and capacity.

The Plan can be implemented in three stages over two years:

1. Foundation Building – Months 1 to 6
2. System Alignment and Integration – Months 6 to 18
3. Expansion and Evaluation – Months 18 to 24

Successful implementation also requires dedicated coordination capacity. While responsibility for specific actions rests with identified lead organizations, a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator is required to support cross-sector implementation by convening partners, aligning work across priorities, tracking progress, and sustaining momentum over time. This role functions as an enabling resource and does not replace or assume the responsibilities of lead or partner organizations.

In addition to preparing the Homelessness Strategy and the CSWB Plan, a group of local leaders led by Village Media has held a session leading to a Community Conversation report.

<https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/new-report-calls-for-specific-action-on-saults-opioid-crisis-11770213>

Outcomes from that initiative align very well and tie into the Homelessness Strategy and CSWB Plan. This group will continue to be engaged to ensure that all the important items are raised and deliverable action plans are created to impact positive change in the community.

### **Financial Implications**

Implementation of the Plan requires the hiring of a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator. A previous grant to the DSSAB was provided for social equity position, in the amount of \$50,000. Included in the budget, the \$50,000 is available to be transferred to assist in funding the new position of a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator.

The City and partner funding commitments should be sufficient to fund the position for a minimum of one year and other related program expenses. In addition, there is approximately \$19,000 available remaining in the FutureSSM reserve to backstop and address commitment shortfalls.

The following organizations have committed to providing funding of \$32,500 for the next three years in addition to the City's contribution:

- District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board;
- Algoma Children's Aid Society ;
- Algoma Family Services;
- Canadian Mental Health Association Algoma;
- Huron Superior Catholic District School Board;
- John Howard Society;
- THRIVE; and
- Sault College.

### **Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact**

The recommendation supports the focus area of the Community Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 in a number of ways:

- It exemplifies communication and stakeholder consultation to create an environment that encourages engagement and the exploration of mutual goals to grow our community. Collaboration with community partners and stakeholders is essential to our success.
- It demonstrates Fiscal Responsibility in managing municipal finances in a responsible and prudent manner.
- Under Well-Being, taking a collaborative approach towards a healthy and safe community.

### **Recommendation**

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services dated February 23, 2026 concerning Community Safety and Well-Being Plan be received and that the Plan be approved;

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

February 23, 2026

Page 6.

Further that a contract position for a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator be created utilizing \$50,000 in previously approved funds, community partner contributions, and remaining funds of approximately \$19,000 in the FutureSSM reserve.

Respectfully submitted,

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