



On a culturally significant site to the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, this is one of seven markers created with circular bronze casts of original cedar carvings. The artwork depicts the spindle whorl, a tool traditionally used by Coast Salish women to spin wool - considered to be the foundation of a Coast Salish family. The base's top is inscribed with the traditional place name, phonetically in Lekwungen, and English.

Master carver and Songhees First Nation elder Clarence "Butch" Dick (*Yux'wey'lupton*), is an inspiring local visionary trained in fine art who continues to play a pivotal role in youth empowerment and whose tireless commitment to creatively championing the Songhees carving style has touched every generation.

The City of Victoria sits in its entirety on the traditional and contemporary lands of the Lekwungen People, the Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations.

2024

CITY OF VICTORIA | Mayor's Office

Creating Intentional Community Wellbeing



CITY OF VICTORIA |

Why?

Competing Interests > Visibility > Disorder

Housed – Unhoused

Business – Residents – Visitors

Change – Comfort

Past – Future

Civility – Compassion – Fear

An intentionally transformed community must feel & be safe

Our Roots – Victoria City Council 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

- 2023, Council adopts its new strategic plan – a road map to building a modern City, responsive to existing & emerging needs through 2026
- The Plan embraces Victoria as an evolving, bright, diverse city, with challenges, opportunities & tough decisions ahead. It identifies the City as convener, social engineer, executor – bringing together strategic partners, governments, neighbourhoods & residents
- One of the plan’s eight priorities is community well-being & safety, recognizing the need for an intentional prioritization of CSWB
- The Plan identifies six CSWB action items:
 - Support a range of civilian, bylaw & policing crisis response & prevention services
 - Beautify, support & enhance Victoria’s urban villages
 - Advance City policies that support accessibility, equity, diversity & inclusion through a social justice lens
 - Support innovative, well-being solutions to reduce harm for housed & unhoused people living in neighbourhoods
 - Work with partner agencies & governments to create life opportunities for unhoused people
 - Develop & implement a community safety plan
- This CSWB plan will be our map to the future city
 - “By 2026, Victoria will be a dynamic, inclusive, more affordable, safer, intentionally transformed city where people can imagine a future for themselves and seven generations to come. We will be known for decisive leadership and innovation in climate action, housing, transportation and meaningful reconciliation with the Ləkʷəŋən-speaking Songhees and Esquimalt Nations on whose lands the city exists.”*

Where Our Work Began

Acknowledge complex issues:

- Declining civility & social cohesion
- Gaps in health & social services
- Increasing social disorder
- Inadequate housing supply & homelessness
- Poverty, inequality, addictions
- Mental & physical health challenges
- Criminal activity



Consider local government responsibility – or not?

Not Our Responsibilities – But Our People

Struggles with mental & physical health concerns, a rising cost of living, an impossible housing market, systemic discrimination & poverty, major gaps in health & social services, little recognition of concurrent disorders

Fear – a common aspect of everyday life – fear of strangers, fear of loss, fear of danger, fear of “other”

A CSWB plan recognizes the tensions, anger, frustration & vulnerability

In many ways, Victoria is thriving

The city has invested resources, creating partnerships, programs & planning to improve quality of life – continuing to provide unprecedented levels of social, economic, & health supports, despite these last being outside the responsibilities of local government.

So We Set to Work – and the Work Would Need to Recognize

- Diverse Leadership
- Collaboration
- Police
- Civilian roles & response
- Other orders of government
- Service delivery/providers
- Reconciliation
- Urban placemaking
- Neighbourhoods
- Evolving demographics
- Local government reorganization & evolution
- Victorians' ability to pay
- Risk

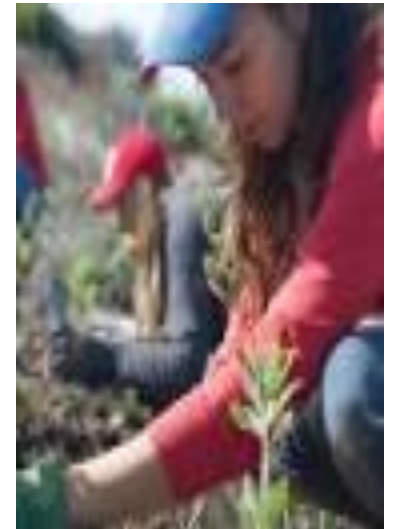
No 'sacred cows'

The Community Leaders Panel

Stewards of the Initiative

Selected to reflect different experiences, opinions & perspectives in the community, bringing together local leaders with proficiency & knowledge in the challenges – & solutions – of CSWB, panel members reflect expertise in social service provision, business & land leadership, public health, housing, law enforcement, emergency response, local neighborhoods, local Indigenous knowledge & newcomers.

- Brianna Bear
- Daniel Atkinson
- Del Manak
- Jonny Morris
- Julian Daly
- Marianne Alto
- Mike Benusic
- Robert Jawl
- Sandra Severs
- Shelly D’Mello
- Suzanne Bradbury



Building the Engagement

Public engagement: diverse, aware, sensitive & accessible, from September 2023 to October 2024

Available data compiled, reviewed & analyzed – local input: surveys, facilitated community & sectoral dialogues, pop-up community events

Quantitative & qualitative data: population metrics, education, literacy & crime rates, access to health & more – a launch pad for local engagement

Victoria's draft CSWB plan – an amalgam of existing national data data, experience, history, local reality, personal & collective storytelling, Indigenous & non-Indigenous best practices, the city's strategic plan, other information & lived experiences

A “how-to” document that sets out a path to a safer community of wellbeing

Victoria is downtown for 400,000, a prime tourist destination for international & domestic visitors, major commerce centre for Vancouver Island

Many voices heard – 1600+ – residents not typically heard as participants – unhoused or underhoused, people with disabilities, people w/o internet access & others, local sessions crafted to be unintimidating, minimize harm, trauma or triggering

What we wanted to know

- What we don't know
- What Victorians imagine as CSWB
- What makes Victorians feel safe now
- What actions will get us to real CSWB
- What Victorians are willing to have their Council do

Quantitative Data Collection



Publicly available data sources like Stats Canada

Data from agencies, organizations, & sectors

- Indicators include Citizen satisfaction, demographics, crime & victimization, education, health, homelessness, income, racism, etc.

Muflehun for data relating to:

- Intimate Partner Violence
- Human Trafficking
- Gang violence & recruitment in schools
- Street Violence
- Random assaults

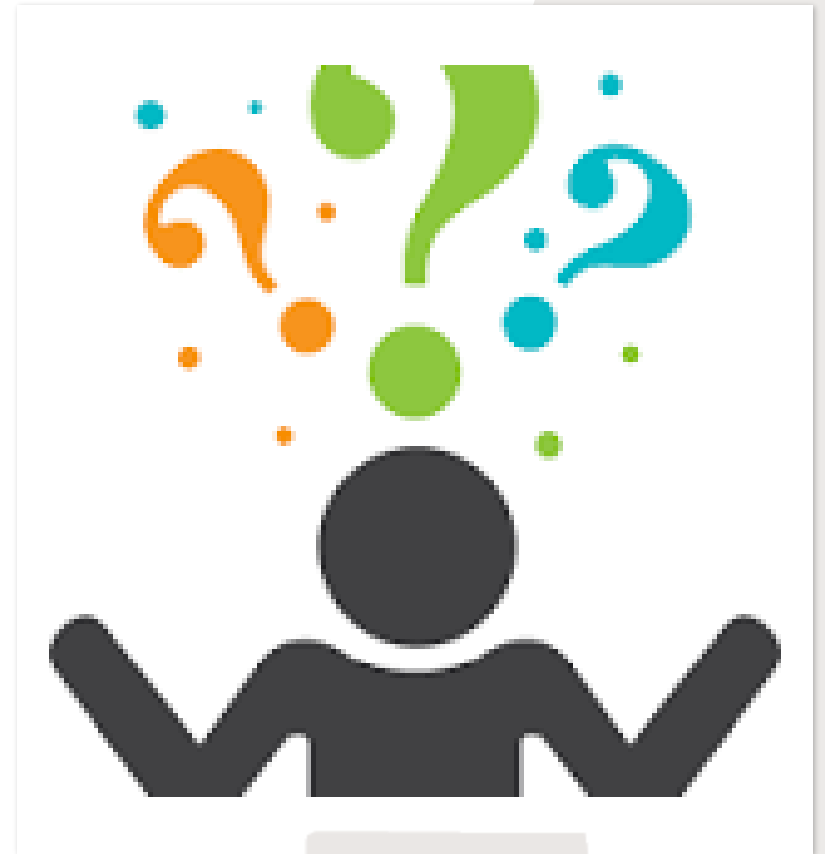
Helpseeker for AI analysis & theming

Some local sources & data sets

- Early Development Index data from School District #61 from 2016-2019
- City of Victoria Budget Survey, conducted 2023
- Police reported crime statistics for Victoria, 2019-2022
- Crime Severity Index
- Census data
- Greater Victoria Local Immigration Partnership & the Intercultural Association immigration data
- BC Ministry of Education “How are We Doing? Aboriginal Performance Report”
- Island Health toxic drug death, mental health, & maternal mortality reports
- BC Adolescent Health Survey
- Point in Time count, 2023
- Middle Years Development Index
- Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
- Victoria Foundation’s Vital Signs reports

Community & Interest-based Surveys

- Open to everyone in the Capital Region
- Asks about connection to the city
- Online & via paper
- Personal sense of safety, family wellbeing, housing, time in the city
- How people feel in the City, how they want to make it better
- Sent to target experts & those with direct delivery experience
- Asks about systemic problems & challenges in creating CSWB
- Relate personal & professional experience
- If – how – people want to address “wicked problems”
- ***If anything was possible...***



Engagement - In Person Sessions – Exploring Wicked Problems one-on-one

Facilitated sessions

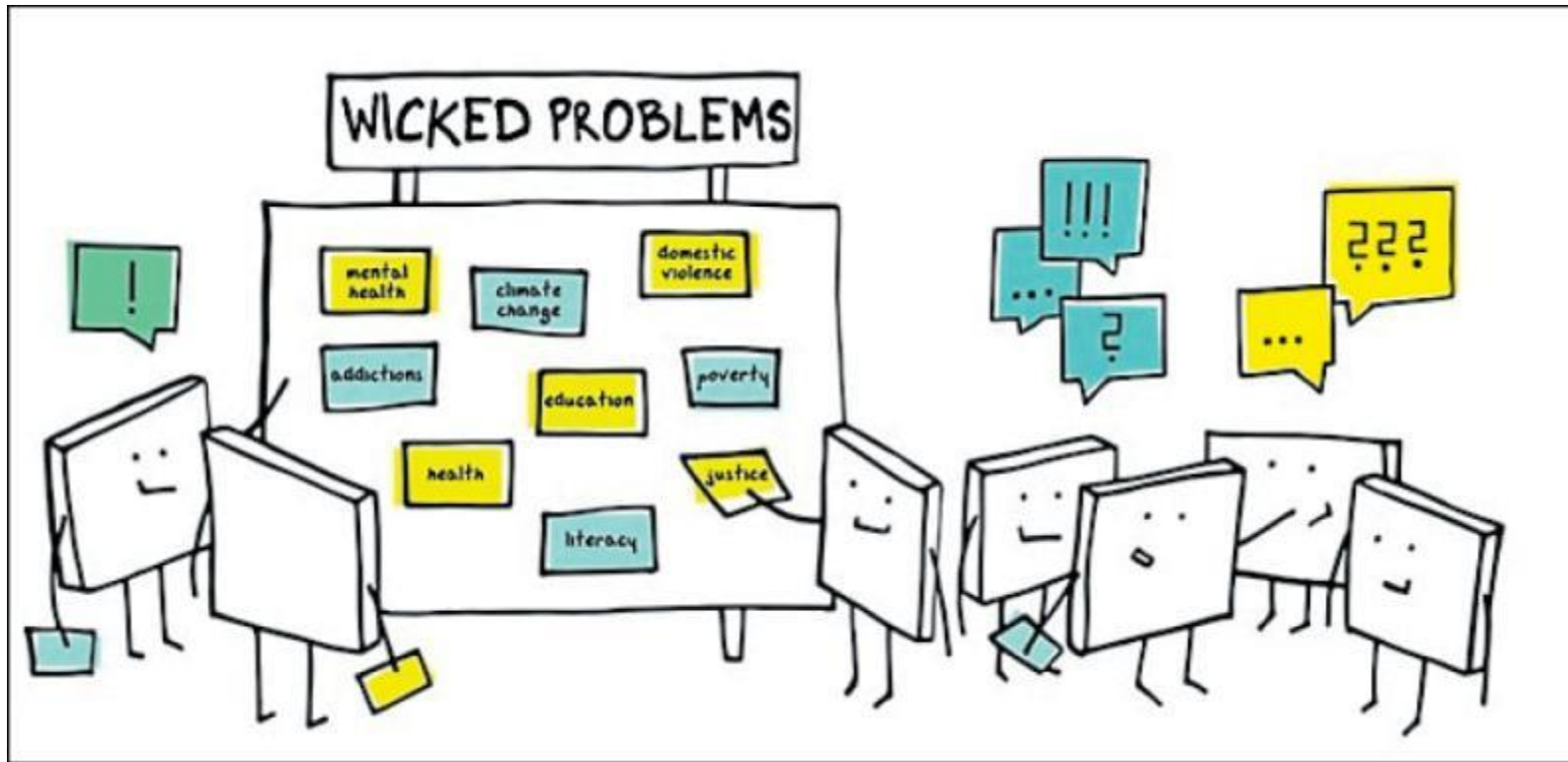
- Led with guided questions
- In-person, in spaces that are open & accessible
- Asks what makes people feel safe or unsafe
- Looks at actionable items from those with experience
- ***If you could change one thing...***

Community Led sessions

- Little structure, & facilitated based on what participants want to discuss
- Minimizing harm experienced by vulnerable participants
- Provides space for safe, open, honest, & emotional conversations

System Change – wicked problems

A wicked problem is a social or cultural problem that's difficult or impossible to solve because of its complex and interconnected nature.



Delivering CSWB – Community Services

CSWB is about community services, about serving community better when it comes to community safety and wellbeing – Victoria’s CSWB Plan may have three parts:

- **Community Values**
- **Advice to Others**
- **City Authority, Capacity & Operations**

While still in draft form, three sections may emerge as core aspects, which can be seen as components of “Community Services”, derived from the totality of all processes & inputs, overlain one on another. Each is a complementary path on the roadmap to greater CSWB, as mechanisms for action.

Policing

Community Service Providers

City Community Safety & Wellbeing Services

Community Values

To create a safe, inclusive, connected community where all residents feel welcome, the CSWB plan must champion the values Victorians hold & share:

- Uphold, promote, & value truth & reconciliation
- Use an equity & anti-racist lens
- Have a place-based & local approach
- Have an upstream focus (intervene proactively & reactively)
- Demonstrate compassion, empathy, dignity, & care
- Be community informed
- Be action orientated
- Have stated measures & metrics
- Aspire to wellbeing for all
- Be courageous, brave, & inspiring
- Have hope & aspiration
- Be plain speaking, truth telling & honest

*Addressing complex, different visions of community safety & wellbeing means challenging people to confront their own discomfort, to urge them to leave their own comfort zones, & embrace a reality that is not confined to binary options. **We can, & must, do things differently.***

Advice to Other Governments

- The City has its own work to do, but CSWB needs more than just city action. More than 24 recommendations provide advice for other orders of government, such as:
- Province
 - Planned & sufficiently resourced housing, shelter, emergency & primary health & social services
- Federal
 - Clear, enforceable laws (bail reform, ‘catch & release’, drug use)
- Other Municipal
 - Local emergency shelter, supportive & affordable housing – providing local services to welcome & support their own residents

City Authority, Capacity & Operations

The City has authority to invest in programs & operations that support CSWB. Some examples:

- Funding for non-profit housing
- Direct contracts for social services
- Clean & beautification resources for neighbourhoods, inc downtown
- Attention to more green & public spaces
- Education about resident rights & programs
- Simplifying policies to accelerate residential & commercial development
- Pilot a UBI



Policing as Community Service 1

- Policing is funded by the city, but outside its authority
- The relationship between police services & the city is key to community safety & wellbeing
- City can't direct police operations but can advise police leadership about direction, principles, values & tone as they relate to the CSWB plan
- CSWB is evolving – society expects a more diverse, adaptable & nuanced response to community crises & to the preventive work that ensures greater CSWB
- Police remain a core constant, an essential service
- As society evolves, so must police – recruiting, training & education, professional & operational development – change operations & tactics to meet community expectations
- Police services around the world are grappling with these expectations & with the intense work needed to balance effective policing with changing social structures



Policing as Community Service 2

- Victoria has been a vanguard of new civilian community response services, such as the Community Lead Crisis Response team (CLCR – Clicker) teams
- Unique civilian team is one example of innovation & evolution in crisis response
- Other blended teams, including police & health professionals, non-profit service providers & others [e.g. co-response teams, Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams, Integrated Mobile Crisis Response (IMCRT) teams) demonstrate that ‘civilian’ ways to respond to community crises can work
- A continuing thread of how modern policing complements an emerging demand for civilian community crisis responses has been woven through the draft CSWB plan
- Participation of the police chief on the CSWB initiative’s CLP ensured practical consideration of real-life policing, allowing for an intentional, respectful – & realistic – design for harmonious police & civilian crisis response

Community Service Providers



Non-profit service providers are the backbone of community programs, support, social & health services, particularly for our most vulnerable residents. The City could:

- Provide more, direct financial & spatial resources
- Explore unconventional partnerships with agencies
- Act as convenor, with service providers, to help facilitate cooperation & collaboration
- Offer supportive, complementary programs to supplement non-profit services

City CSWB Services

While still a work in progress, the City's CSWB plan will consider:

- Review of city policies affecting CSWB
- Proactive “Upstream” efforts
 - Prevention & harm reduction programs
 - Education & Information
 - Advocacy & Outreach
- Responsive “Downstream” work
 - Direct services, funding & partnerships
 - Relationship building leading to treatment referrals & enforcement

Remaining Work

- Establishing Actions & Identifying Actors
- Setting Benchmarks, Measures & Oversight
- Consideration by City Council
- Getting to Action



In Closing

*The Community Safety & Wellbeing initiative is a **launch point**, providing City Council with data, experiential advice & city residents' counsel on what is, & how to enhance, community wellbeing.*

*We need cooperative, innovative approaches to create the safe, welcoming, inclusive city in which we all want to live. Victoria's CSWB plan will outline **what work will craft that city.***

*Recommended **actions** arising from the work will come to city Council for consideration, deliberation &, as Council determines, implementation.*

*Council will be challenged to **embrace change, innovation & alternatives encompassing a new definition, & delivery, of community wellbeing.***



Questions?

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