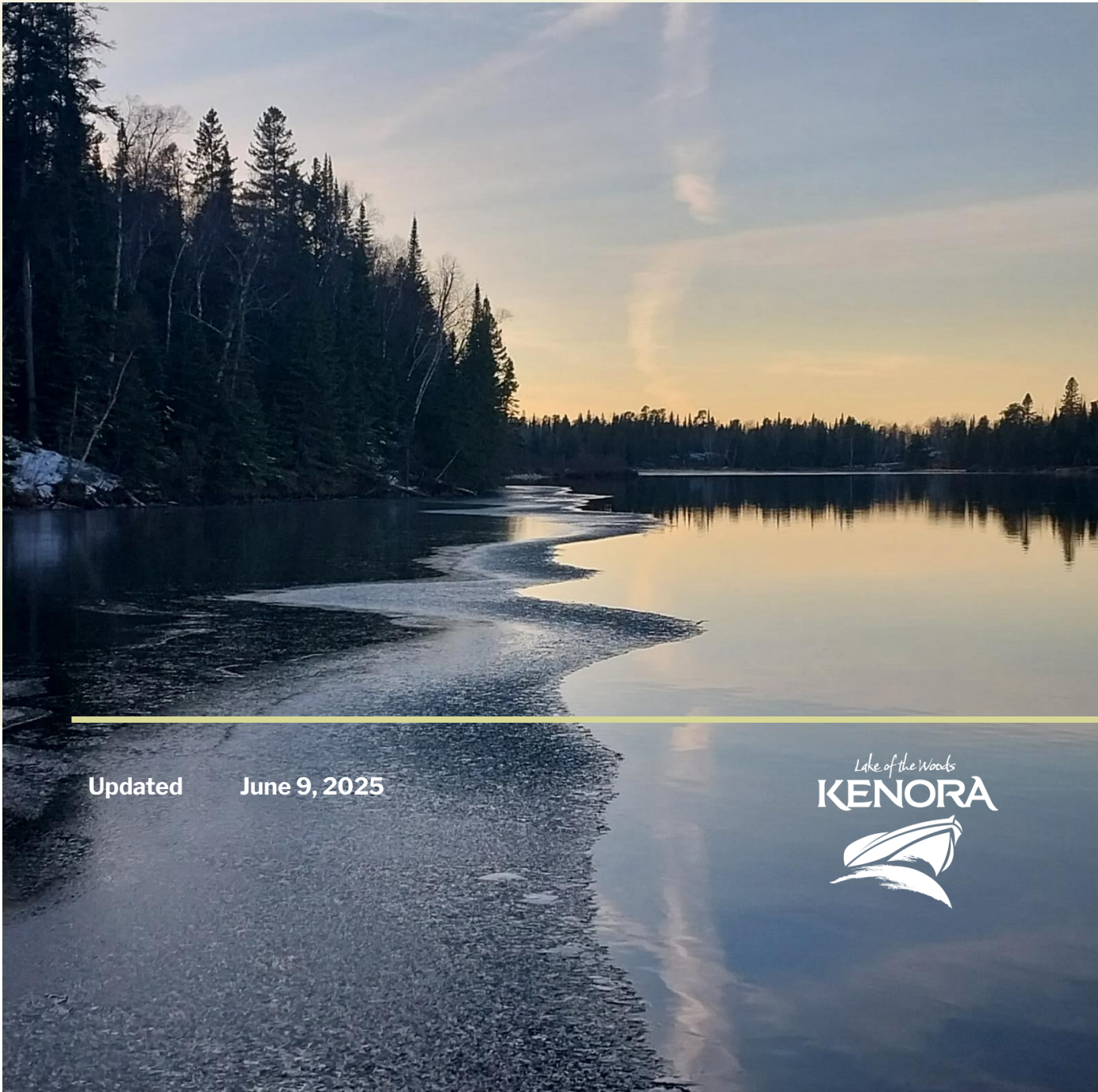




Kenora's **Community Safety & Well-Being Plan**

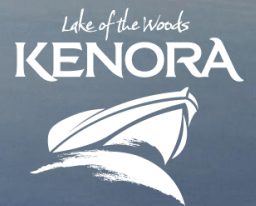
2025 - 2035

Executive Summary



Updated

June 9, 2025



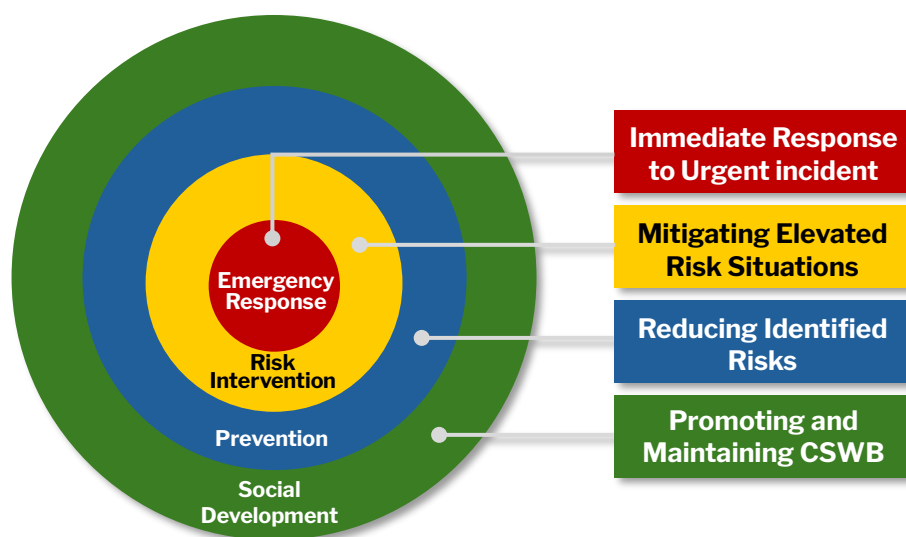


City of Kenora Community Safety and Well-Being Plan 2025-2035

Executive Summary

Many municipalities across Canada have developed Community Safety and Well-Being plans because they recognize their value in fostering healthier, more resilient communities. In Ontario, CSWB plans are required by legislation. The Ontario Community Safety and Policing Act specifies that plans should identify risk factors that contribute to crime, victimization, drug overdose and suicide, identify strategies to reduce identified risk factors, and set out measurable outcomes. The act further allows for other issues that impact community well-being such as homelessness and mental health and discrimination to be addressed in the plan.

The following framework from the Ministry of the Solicitor General which oversees CSWB plans illustrates the breadth of the areas of Community Safety.



Planning should address all four areas shown in the visual above, however, most investments should focus on prevention and risk intervention to reduce the need for incident response. Prioritizing preventative over reactive strategies to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability of safety and well-being across Ontario is the recommendation. The Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees CSWB work, advises that actions in this area of social development should be limited, as they often do not produce measurable results within a five-year timeframe.

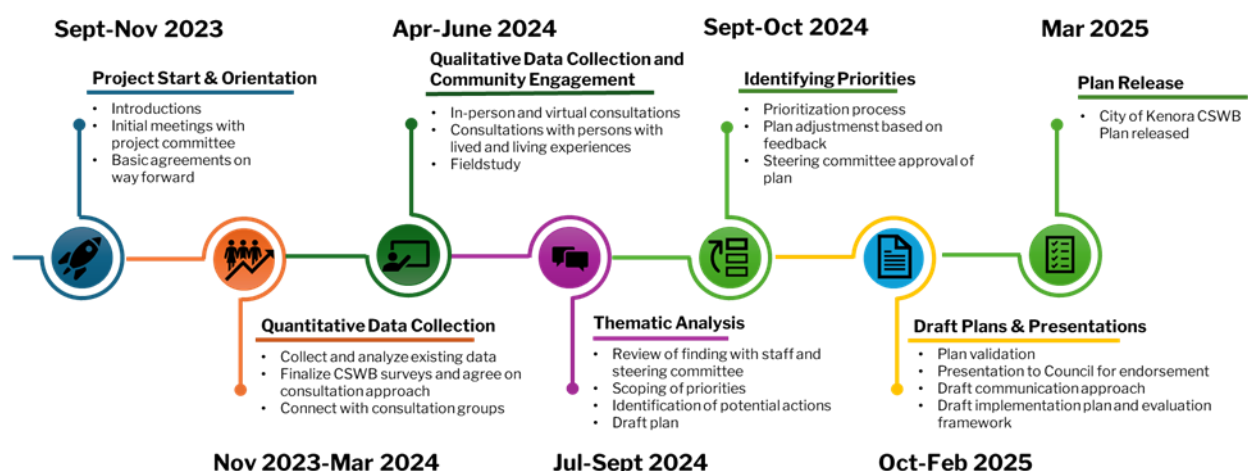
While municipalities are responsible for facilitating the development of these plans, they must do so in collaboration with key community sectors and citizens. CSWB plans act as roadmaps for building smarter, more collaborative, and responsive communities by balancing aspirational goals with actionable steps that are tailored to local needs. Plans should also

explore more efficient and effective service delivery methods, particularly for front-line incident response, ensuring that individuals in crisis receive the right support from the most appropriate services. They are more than a service plan – they are a change plan designed to move beyond the status quo by confronting entrenched issues with innovation.

The Kenora Approach to the Development of the CSWB Plan 2025 - 2035

Starting in the Fall of 2023 the City of Kenora, through direction of City Council, started the comprehensive process to develop a CSWB Plan. This included creating an advisory committee with members appointed by City Council, hiring a dedicated staff position, and engaging a consultant.

The following is the Kenora Community Safety and Well-Being Plan timeline for the plan development.



Development of the Kenora CSWB Plan took place throughout most of 2024. The early part of the year was dedicated to data collection for a community safety assessment, then analysis and then determination of priorities. The work included multiple visit to the community by the Consultant for data gathering to engaging with the Advisory Committee in day-long workshops for development of the plan.

The Community Safety Assessment

This work included the distribution of a detailed community survey with an impressive response rate, an in-depth analysis of available data, and extensive engagement sessions, complemented by validation meetings once the actions had been drafted.

Community Profile Data

Existing quantitative data was collected and compiled. This information included demographic details from Statistics Canada (e.g., population, diversity, income, labour force), police data (e.g., crime and overdose rates), as well as information from several other community organizations. 90 Data sets were reviewed.

Community Survey

To gauge residents' perceptions of community safety and well-being in the City of Kenora, a city-wide survey was conducted in February 2024. A total of 1,013 residents participated, representing approximately 6 -7 percent of Kenora's population.

Community Consultations

Community consultations were conducted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges highlighted in the quantitative data and shed light on the experiences of various groups within the community. Consultations were either online, in person, with individuals and in focus groups. This included three sharing circles with First Nation and Métis members of the community were also facilitated through collaboration with the Community Safety Monitoring project of the Canadian Centre for Safer communities. And consultations with children in a local schools conducted by the Keewatin Patricia District School Board through a marketing consultant. A total of 229 individuals engaged through this process.

Youth Photo Voice Project

Youth in Kenora were encouraged to submit photographs of their community with a note of explanation about them. The focus on the photos was on places they enjoy and appreciate in their community. 62 photos were submitted.

The full plan elaborates on these developments and three supporting documents provide the details needed to support the implementation of the plan and to facilitate future comparison with these baseline data.

Data Saturation

Through a combination of all the data sources it became clear that a point of saturation had been achieved. Saturation in the context of research refers to the stage where adding more data or information doesn't significantly improve or change the results or insights.

Validation Meetings

A validation process was added to the process in late 2024. This was a critical addition because many of the actions involve organizations that are not members of the Advisory Committee, are outside of the control of the City and necessitate the buy-in from key leaders in the community in moving forward with the plan's implementation.

Highlights from Community Safety Assessment

Combining all data from across the community safety assessments led to the following observations:

Positive Aspects

Kenora has many strengths, assets and positive attributes that are well recognized by its resident and visitors. The following themes emerged in this area:

- Access to spectacular nature
- Collaborative projects
- Diverse and rich cultural heritage
- Great amenities (recreation, parks, library, museum, etc.)
- Many social and health services
- People who care and step up to help
- Small town feel
- Strong economy and business opportunities
- Tourism that is successful

Challenges

Some of the above positive attribute also featured as key challenges alongside additional themes:

- Addiction (both alcohol and drugs) and related social issues (i.e., public drug use, littering of syringes)
- Austerity measure having stretched and eroded services in mental health and addictions
- Confusing services system
- Downtown decline
- Gaps in services while there is overlap in other areas
- Homelessness and lack of accessible and affordable housing
- Increased cost of living
- Intergenerational trauma and loss of Indigenous ways of life
- Justice system failing the community.
- Lack of attention so some crimes such as hate crimes, domestic and intimate partner violence and sexual assault
- Lack of collaboration and competition between services
- Lack of meaningful integration of newcomers (immigrants and migrants)
- Lack of transit
- Mistrust in leadership and the accountability of government and services
- Negative media attention including social media
- Neglect and abuse of children
- Polarization
- Racism and discrimination
- Sex trafficking
- Significant health challenges including problematic use of alcohol across the population
- Social disorder, lack of sense of safety and increased fear of crime

Opportunities for Change

While the themes for the positive attributes of the community and the challenges came from all three data sources, the proposed solutions came entirely from the engagement sessions and interview. The proposed actions amounted to over 16 pages of themes and subthemes. The following is a high-level overview of what participants suggested needs to be part of the solutions to the challenge:

- Act more, plan less
- Collaborate don't compete
- Close the gaps in mental health and addiction services
- Create a more transparent system of accountability
- Focus policing on areas with the highest public insecurity
- Increase housing (from shelters to market housing)
- Look for neighbourhood-based solutions that engage people where they live
- Make the justice system more responsive to community experiences
- Make prevention matter to overcome the high reliance on first responders
- Mobilize an attitudinal/culture shift including addressing the polarization in the community
- Mobilize knowledge more broadly across the community to enhance understanding and involvement
- Provide more inclusive employment and volunteer opportunities
- Put the well-being of children and youth first
- Revitalize the downtown through multi-pronged efforts

It was obvious during the engagement session that the community is divided in terms of what they think will work to counteract the challenges. It was, therefore, the demanding task for the advisory committee to sift through these data and select priority areas as well as design actions within them.

A Vision for Kenora

Kenora is a community rich in history, nature, and people — a place where everyone can live, grow, and play together in harmony.

This vision statement was created by the Advisory Committee and serves as a foundation for the planning. It is meant to be a big picture statement, a north star that we reach for. Vision statements are ambitious and future oriented.

Summary of Priority Areas, Goals and Recommendations

The Advisory Committee recommends that actions be taken in seven (7) distinct but interrelated priority areas with (15) recommendations with a total of 48 actions.

Priority Areas

- 1. Collaboration and Communication**
- 2. Children, Youth, and Families**
- 3. Downtown and Community Spaces**
- 4. Belonging and Engagement**
- 5. Housing along the Continuum**
- 6. Prevention of Interpersonal Violence**
- 7. Mental Health and Problematic Substance Use (including Alcohol)**

It is further recommended that:

1. This plan be considered as a ten-year strategy, with a midpoint review in 2030 to assess progress, adjust priorities, and update goals and actions based on lessons learned.
2. A developmental evaluation approach be adopted to help ensure that the plan remains a dynamic, living document, allowing for continuous adjustments to enhance its success over time.
3. The issue selection process designed by the Advisory Committee continue to be utilized and refined to attend to evolving situations.
4. A multi-disciplinary implementation committee be appointed with the mandate to guide the implementation of the plan.
5. The committee utilize a lightweight governance approach to balance flexibility and engagement with accountability.
6. A dedicated budget be provided for the coordination of the CSWB efforts as they appear in this plan.



Priority Area One: Collaboration and Communication

Goal: To foster greater collaboration across the community enhancing engagement and maximizing resources.

Recommendation: Leverage the CSWB plan to enhance collaboration across the service sectors and the community.

Action 1.1 Organize a series of collaboration summit(s) with the following expected outcomes:

- (a) The community of Kenora will have a “No Wrong Door” approach for all health and social services to help ensure effective triaging.
- (b) The community of Kenora will have a community services map that visually represents the available resources and services within the community and provides a transparent and accessible system of accountability where programs and services are clearly linked to measurable outcomes.
- (c) The community of Kenora will establish a Child and Youth Well-Being Alliance to integrate existing roundtables focused on children and youth.

Leads

City with community partners

Action 1.2 Partner with local funders, such as the Kenora and Lake of the Woods Regional Community Foundation, to endorse the plan's priorities and align their funding criteria with the CSWB plan's recommended actions, supporting local initiatives that advance the plan's vision and goals.

Leads

City with funders

Recommendation: Keep the community informed about the implementation of the plan and provide opportunities for engagement along the way.

Action 1.3 Host an annual Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) event that connects the public with local institutions, provides updates on implementation successes and challenges, and offers opportunities for community feedback and engagement.

Leads

City with Implementation Committee members

Action 1.4 Develop and enhance access to existing publications and websites that provide the public with a clear understanding of the local service ecosystem including the justice system.

Leads

ANHP with partners

Action 1.5 Make CSWB work an ongoing priority in the City's communication strategy.

Leads

City



Priority Area Two: Children, Youth, and Families

Goal: To reduce the number of children and youth who are at risk of harm to self or others.

Recommendation: Advocate whenever possible to make the safety and well-being of children and youth a priority.

Action 2.1 Call for the development of barrier free (low cost, within easy access to transit and readily available) childcare spaces with quality early years programming.

Leads
KDSB

Action 2.2 Engage the Province of Ontario in a collaborative review of funding being provided to young people who are aging out of care especially within the Northern Ontario context.

Leads
Child Welfare Services

Recommendation: Pro-actively and collaboratively address the factors that put children and youth at risk.

Action 2.3 Foster greater collaboration between youth services and adult support services to create comprehensive transition plans, ensuring that young people aging out of care receive the assistance they needed.

Leads
Youth and Adult Services

Action 2.4 Foster collaboration among child and youth-serving organizations, school boards, and the police to develop an attendance resolution and engagement approach for children and youth who are currently disconnected from school with the goal of boosting their enrollment and attendance.

Leads
School Boards, OPP, and child and youth services

Action 2.5 Identify and provide family-based interventions for children and youth at risk of entering the child welfare system and/or of coming in conflict with the law through the development of a standardized, culturally sensitive and locally applicable risk assessment tool.

Leads
Child and Youth Well-Being Alliance (once formed)

Action 2.6 Enhance and expand upon prenatal and early childhood development programs that promote strong caregiver-child attachment for children aged 0-6 by partnering with existing programs and networks and by leveraging Provincial funding to ensure effective implementation.

Leads
KDSB with community partners

Action 2.7 Broaden access to developmental health programs for all children (0-5) and implement targeted individual support to improve EDI outcomes where needed

Leads
KDSB

Action 2.8 Develop a case management system for children and youth who are at chronically elevated risk to enable community partners to collaborate effectively in: (a) identifying the children and youth at prolonged risk of harm to self or others (b) fostering efficient communication within a multidisciplinary team (c) engaging in problem-solving to address and reduce identified risks, both in the short and long term (d) ensuring children, youth and their caregivers have timely access to the appropriate services (e) e) coordinating swift and effective responses for children and youth at imminent risk of harm to themselves or others, including children and youth who have run away from home	Leads Human Services Justice Coordinating Committee (HSJCC), FIREFLY, and other child and youth services
Action 2.9 Assess the feasibility of implementing programs that promote strong family-school connections in select schools in Kenora (such as the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program), while ensuring alignment with the school boards' strategic plans.	School Boards
Action 2.10 Coordinate free, culturally inclusive recreational programs for children and youth, particularly between the hours of 3-10 pm.	City with community partners
Action 2.11 Encourage and support the Kenora Coalition to End Human Trafficking, the OPP, Treaty 3 police and other partners to align and increase their efforts towards ending sex trafficking in Kenora.	Implementation Committee
Action 2.12 Ensure that children and youth who are experiencing abuse (including sexual abuse) and who feel unseen and unheard know where to go for help and support.	Child Welfare and Youth Justice
Action 2.13 Identify and secure sustainable funding sources for early intervention programs such as SNAP (Stop Now and Plan).	FIREFLY and other child service providers



Priority Area Three: Downtown and Community Spaces

Goal: To enhance safety and inclusivity in the downtown core—the heart of the community—as well as in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Recommendation: Adopt a proactive, integrated approach to addressing downtown challenges and enhancing public safety and security.

Action 3.1 Advocate to the Province of Ontario for funding to hire two Community Safety Outreach/Peace Officers to improve public safety and foster a sense of security in Kenora's downtown area.	Leads City
Action 3.2 Design a comprehensive and integrated approach that is inclusive of all services which provide enforcement and outreach in the downtown area and ensure that this approach is widely known and easily accessible to the community.	Leads OPP and CMHA-K
Action 3.3 Provide 24-7 access to washrooms.	Leads City with social and health services partners
Action 3.4 Co-develop between the City and social services a work readiness program that hires vulnerable people for downtown and park clean-ups, safe disposal of syringes, removal of graffiti etc., and advocate to the Crown's office to dedicate community service hours to this work.	Leads City with social and health services and the crown's office
Action 3.5 To review the recommendations from the Field Study with a view to supporting its implementation wherever possible and appropriate.	Leads City
Action 3.6 Increase efforts to safely dispose of syringes that have been discarded in public spaces.	Leads NWHU and ANHP
Action 3.7 Convene a roundtable of business and social service professionals to increase mutual understanding and collaboration for the downtown.	Leads City with Kenora & District Chamber of Commerce

Recommendation: Make improvements to the downtown area an ongoing priority across departments of the City and across sectors.

Action 3.8 Review and enhance the City's Community Improvement Program

Leads
City

Action 3.9 Host a one day workshop that brings together diverse stakeholders, community members, decision makers, service providers, business, and urban planners to generate creative ideas and integrate diverse perspectives in achieving a shared vision of what the downtown will look like in ten years, and utilize that vision to guide amendments in the City's official plan, propose rezoning opportunities and to achieve a balance between the needs of business, the public and the services required in the downtown area.

Leads
City with Kenora & District Chamber of Commerce

Recommendation: Continue to support victims of crime, the unhoused, and other marginalized populations.

Action 3.10 Enhance the resources for all shelters, including homeless shelters, women's shelters, and the Fellowship Center, to provide a safe and supportive space throughout the day for individuals who are victims of crime, and/or unhoused and/or presenting with complex needs that makes it hard to engage them.

Leads
KDSB



Priority Area Four: Belonging and Engagement

Goal: To increase the percentage of residents in Kenora who feel welcome and a sense of belonging by 25% within five years

Recommendation: Mobilize the significant number of residents in Kenora who want to participate in actions that increase community safety and well-being.

Action 4.1 Leverage local expertise to deliver public education, training, and engagement sessions focused on prevention. These sessions should cover:

- (a) Effective strategies for addressing and preventing theft, break-ins, vandalism, and harassment
- (b) Understanding problematic substance use, including alcohol
- (c) Recognizing signs of human and sex trafficking and knowing where to seek help
- (d) Increasing awareness of hate crimes and their impact
- (e) Preventing and responding to sexual assault

Leads
Implementation Committee with multiple partnerships

(f) Preventing and supporting victims of domestic and intimate partner violence (g) Overcoming the bystander effect and encouraging proactive intervention (h) De-escalating volatile behavior in non-crisis situations (i) Differentiating between social disorder and crime, and responding appropriately (j) Addressing discrimination and preventing violence against newcomers, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, women, and Indigenous Peoples (k) Understanding child and youth developmental milestones and the concept of resilience (l) Applying trauma-informed approaches to support individuals	
Action 4.2 Host events throughout the year that advance belonging and increase civic pride*, such as: (a) events that celebrate all people and cultures (b) events that highlight the positive attributes of the community and the City (c) events focused on families (d) events that feature Indigenous organizations and teachings *Whenever possible provide transportation to and from these events and make some of them alcohol free.	Leads Implementation Committee and the City
Recommendation: Take meaningful actions that foster a more inclusive and welcoming community.	
Action 4.3 Engage all sectors of the community (including those w/lived experience) to develop a coordinated anti-racism strategy to help recognize and reject all forms of racism and to implement this strategy across the community and the City.	Leads Implementation Committee to decide
Action 4.4 Create an Indigenous Gathering Space that celebrates local Indigenous culture.	Leads First Nations and City
Action 4.5 Enhance networking opportunities and foster volunteer welcome efforts for newcomers in the community.	Leads City with recruiters from local employers



Priority Area Five: Housing Along the Continuum

Goal: To increase the housing stock across the housing continuum by 2030.

Recommendation: Foster and showcase a united effort in expanding access to housing ranging from shelters to market level options.

Action 5.1 Align the actions in priority area five with the KDSB's ten-year plan on housing and homelessness.

Leads
KDSB

Action 5.2 To regularly and proactively communicate to the public the Kenora the housing situation and the steps that are being taken to improve it.

Leads
City with
KDSB

Action 5.3 Evaluate whether a policy on tiny homes or pallet shelter homes is needed in the City of Kenora.

Leads
City

Recommendation: Attend to the immediate needs arising from homelessness.

Action 5.4 Consolidate the housing wait lists for youth (KACL, AAFS), adults with developmental disabilities (KACL), adults/families (KDSB), and seniors (KDSB, Kenora District Homes for the Aged, WIIGWAS) and to co-develop a waitlist management program.

Leads
KDSB

Action 5.5 Provide warming and cooling centers as a collaborative effort between the City, community organizations, social services, and the Health Unit, as part of emergency management efforts and to mitigate weather-related harm, particularly for the unhoused, during extreme weather conditions.

Leads
City with
shelter
providers



Priority Area Six: Prevention of Interpersonal Violence

Goal: To reduce interpersonal violence in the community of Kenora by 25% by the year 2035.

Recommendation: Develop a clearer understanding of the extent and nature of interpersonal violence in Kenora.

Action 6.1 Conduct a gap analysis to assess what programs are currently available in Kenora for victims and perpetrators of violence, what preventive efforts exist, and utilize that knowledge for program and policy development.

Leads
Implementation Committee to decide

Action 6.2 Explore whether the evidence-based Glasgow model of violence prevention (or parts thereof) would be value added to the Kenora social and health services system.

Leads
Implementation Committee

Recommendation: Increase efforts to raise awareness about the multiple facets of interpersonal violence and how they can be prevented.

Action 6.3 Collaborate in the creation of public education campaigns focused on preventing interpersonal violence, with particular attention to (but not limited to) women, children, seniors, newcomers, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and others who experience heightened vulnerabilities.

Leads
Leaders in organizations working with victims of interpersonal violence

Action 6.4 Create additional and/or continue current evidence-based programs that challenge perceptions and behaviours which can lead to interpersonal violence such as “Other Ways Now” or “I am a Kind Man.”

Leads
Kenora Sexual Assault Centre



Priority Area Seven: Mental Health and Problematic Substance Use (including Alcohol)

Goal: To strengthen individual and community well-being in the areas of mental health and addictions.

Recommendation: Engage key stakeholders in establishing the connection between problematic substance abuse, the prevention of crime and victimization, fear of crime, and overall community well-being.

Action 7.1 Advocate to the federal and provincial governments for Kenora to receive funds beyond the per capita allocation.

Leads
City, KDSB,
ANHP

Action 7.2 Work with provincial and federal orders of government in applying a comprehensive approach to addressing the harms of problematic substance use including alcohol.

Leads
NWHU in
partnership
with the City

Recommendation: Build upon, expand, and strengthen current efforts to improve mental health and addiction support, particularly at the intersection of community safety.

Action 7.3 Engage with and support the ANHP and their partners in closing the gaps in comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation options for persons with problematic substance use disorders (including alcohol).

Leads
ANHP

Action 7.4 Partner with the ANHP in developing a wait list management program for mental health and addiction services.

Leads
ANHP

Action 7.5 Support the creation of a comprehensive and widely accessible resources list about mental health and substance use services.

Leads
ANHP and
City

Action 7.6 Establish a 24/7 crisis center model to divert persons with acute mental health and addiction issues from hospital admissions.

Leads
CMHA-K



For more details, please consult the full report found at:
kenora.ca/communitysafety