



Kenora's **Community Safety & Well-Being Plan** 2025 - 2035

Supporting Document Three **Report on the Community Consultations**



Updated October 7, 2025

Photo credit: Haylee C



Report on the Community Consultations in the Development of the Kenora Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Supporting Document Three

Cover photo is taken by Haylee C. who participated in a Photo Voice Project, titled 'Youth Photo Contest: My Community, My Lens', during the development of the plan. She writes:

"This photo, taken in my friend's tinner, captures a special moment with my rescue dog, Gunner, and her dog, Tilly, as we pass through the iconic Devil's Gap on our way to her camp on Treaty Island. I'm incredibly grateful for the chance to explore Kenora's breathtaking landscape and to learn about the rich history that surrounds this beautiful area."



Trigger Warning: This supporting document and the other supporting documents and the plan report include discussions about sensitive topics related to crime, safety, and victimization that could be triggering to some people.

Rational for the Consultations

In addition to the community survey and the completion of the Kenora data profile we engaged in community consultations through focus groups and stakeholder conversations. These were completed throughout the community safety assessment process, some as early as the beginning of 2024. Most were completed over the summer of 2024.

Focus group and stakeholder consultations are key tools in gathering qualitative insights and feedback, especially when making decisions or developing plans/strategies. They can provide a deep, nuanced understanding of the perspectives, needs, and concerns of different groups. This is especially useful when trying to understand complex issues. And community safety and well-being is a complex issue. While many people come to community safety with a sense of urgency and more often than not well intended ready made solutions, many of these solutions can oversimplify the complexity and ignore the broader context. Focus groups and interviews bring together a diverse range of people to share their views and experiences. This helps to identify common themes, differences, and potential areas of conflict as well as areas of consensus, and it broadens the generation of possible solutions. Through this process we can also uncover underlying motivations and attitudes that cannot be captured through quantitative methods alone. This richness of detail often leads to more informed decision-making.

Additionally, engaging stakeholders and participants helps build relationships and can increase buy-in and support for initiatives and upcoming changes. This was indeed the case with many participants expressing appreciation for being involved. People are more likely to support decisions if they feel heard and engaged. We used the same set of questions (modeled on the survey) for all focus groups and stakeholder conversations allowing the consultations to be as free flowing as possible. Through this process we were able to generate ideas, solutions, and leverage collective expertise and creativity including that of persons with lived and living experiences. The consultations also helped to validate thoughts emerging from other research methods, ensuring that decisions can be based in as well-rounded an understanding of the issues as possible. Overall, it is by now well recognized that in the development of Community Safety and Well-being Plans focus groups and stakeholder interviews are essential for gathering detailed, qualitative data that can guide decision-making, enhance planning, and improve project outcomes.

Consultation Stakeholders and Groups

The possible groups and individuals to consult with in the development of CSWB plans is seemingly endless. The Kenora Crime Prevention and Community Well-being Advisory Committee (hereafter referred to as the Advisory Committee), early in the process, in addition to identifying data sources reviewed a list of groups commonly consulted in the CSWB development process. These groups either have expert knowledge of risk and resiliency factors and/or are likely to be impacted by the plan. Confirming groups and individuals for the consultations was an ongoing challenge because some groups were reluctant to meet, and others quickly asserted their right to be heard. Every group that expressed an interest in meeting was consulted with. Other groups were approached through connections with

committee members. As with all CSWB work the centrality of relationships was again obvious.

In addition to balancing who came forward with whom we considered as a critical voice to be heard we needed to balance the participation of elected official, professional in the field, persons with lived and living experiences and other key stakeholders (e.g. business) in a way that was as equitable as possible and did justice to the complexity of the Kenora populations. Not reflected in this report are conversations during the consultant's site visits with Kenora residents including city and agency staff, local business owners and staff, among others. The consultant also spent one evening with Kenora Moving Forward in handing our food and water to the unhoused which provided an opportunity to gain a better sense of their reality. These experiences while not included in the analysis, nonetheless, helped to round up the knowledge and informed the writing of the plan.

Below is the final list of those that were consulted:

Overview of Consultations (focus groups and stakeholder conversations)

Consultation	Format	Number of Participants
Focus Groups		
2SLGBTIA	In person	6
Business	Virtual	16
Business	In person	13
City of Kenora Staff	In person	25
DelArt Recovery Home staff	In person DIY ¹	7
First Nations and Métis sharing circles	In person through CSM project	Three circles with a total of 16 participants
Fellowship Center	In person	10 (9 Indigenous)
KACL	In person	3
Kenora District Home for the Aged	Virtual DIY	3
Kenora Ministerial Consultation	In person DIY	6
Kenora Moving Forward staff and volunteers	Virtual	5
Lake of the Woods District Hospital staff	In person DIY	5

¹ DIY = Do it yourself

Mental Health Recovery Group staff	In person DIY	5
Mental Health Counsellors	In person DIY	9
Multi-cultural association	In person DIY	6
OPP	In person	10
Sexual Assault Centre	In person	3
Seasonal Residents	In person	11
Social Service Providers	In person	16
St Albans unhoused	In person	8 (Indigenous number unknown)
Victim Services – post custody	In person DIY	6
Women’s crisis services	In person DIY	9
WNHAC	Virtual	4
Total focus group participation		N=202
Stakeholder Interviews		
Catholic School Board	In person	
CMHAK	Virtual	
KDSB	Virtual	
Mayor and Members of Council	Virtual	6 individual interviews
Committee members Interviews	Virtual	14
KCA staff	In person – virtual	2 individual interviews
MP	In person	
NWHU	Virtual	
Total stakeholder conversations		
Overall total		N=229 (First Nations and Métis = 33²) Professional Capacities: 149 Persons with lived and living experiences: 40 Seasonal residents: 11 Business: 29 Plus 58 children

² This number is approximate including staff and persons with lived and living experiences from all consultations that we are aware having identified as First Nations or Métis

As the table shows many of the consultations were completed by the consultant with support for note taking from city and agency staff. Several consultations were completed by a committee member who coordinated the consultations and provided the notes to the consultant. To ensure consistency a DIY guide was developed, and a copy of the guide is attached in Appendix one.

Three sharing circles with First Nations and Métis were completed by the Advisory Committee Indigenous representative in partnership with the Community Safety Monitoring project (CSM). The CSM is a project funded and hosted at the University of Waterloo, Ontario (UW). As such these consultations were paid for by UW and co-facilitated by one of their staff and a local Indigenous facilitator from Kenora. Participants in the sharing members and the co-facilitator were compensated for their time. These consultations served a dual purpose: (1) the voices from First Nations and Métis persons will be included in an update to the indicators by which we nationally measure urban safety, and which are often Eurocentric and need to be adjusted to the Canadian context; (2) the data can be utilized to inform the CSWB plan for Kenora. The outcomes from these consultations remain disaggregated rather than merged with the remaining consultation data so to not drown out these voices in the broader context. For an overview of the CSM project see Appendix two.

Additionally, and similarly the Keewatin Patirica District School Board on their own time and resources hosted sharing circles to include the voices of children and youth. Close to 60 children and youth were reached through this approach. These data also appear as stand alone so to not have the voices of children hidden within the overall thematic analysis. The questions for children were adjusted in consultation with child and youth experts from the advisory committee and questions about safety concerns were altered to meet developmental standards and to avoid raising anxiety.

Photo Voice Project

Finally, the City of Kenora in partnership with FIREFLY hosted a photo voice project. In the spirit of “a picture can be worth a thousand words” youth in Kenora were asked to send in photographs of what they most appreciate about Kenora with an explanation of what the image speaks to.

*“I love the gorgeous sky's
in Kenora and the fact
that you can always see
the stars and moon from
wherever you are.”*

-Abigail G



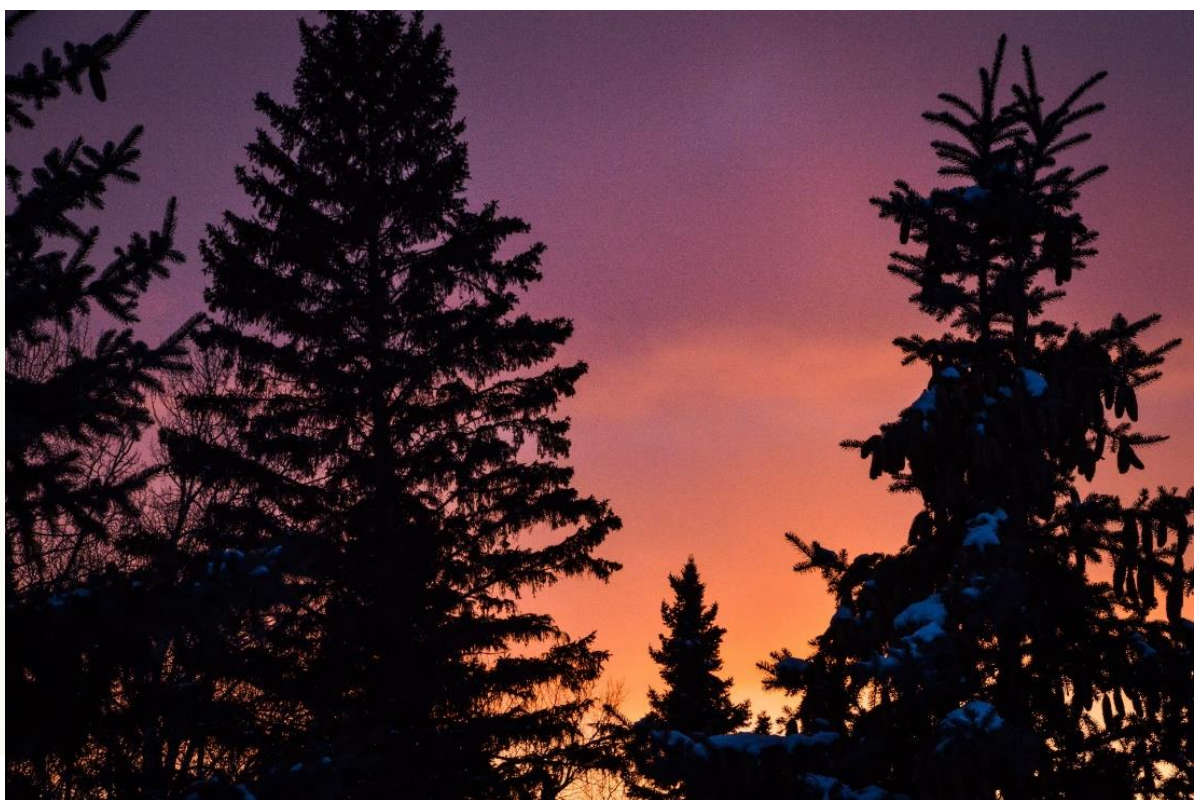


"I love the water spout at McLeod Park and how it creates rainbows. The water and the rainbow creates a beautiful City!"

- Devyn M

"Black Sturgeon Lake - Love the abundance of nature that surrounds our community.."

- Tazio M.





"Vernon Trails - One thing I love about Kenora is how connected to nature we are. Not only are there gorgeous lakes to jump into, nice parks to visit, fun trails to explore, but there are so many animals to see.

From deer in front yards, fish in the lakes, or birds that fly into your hands for a little treat, there are so many ways to connect with the nature around us. It is truly an amazing place to be."

- Gabrielle D.



"I love jumping on the water trampoline and trying new tricks."

- Leah B.



"I love fishing and casting off the dock."

- Luc B.

"I took this photo with my friends and we all loved it so much and thought it was so cool, so I decided to put it on here because Kenora is so amazing and I love taking Kenora's sunsets because the skies are always so clear."

- Marla M.





*"Moncrief Construction
Skate Park –*

*This photo represents two
of my favourite things;
nature, and skateboarding.*

*I love nature and
skateboarding because
they both have a powerful
ability to dissolve barriers
between one another.*

*When you're
skateboarding it doesn't
matter your age, ethnicity,
gender, etc. everyone is
still able to appreciate
each others individual
journey and the fact that
everyone is out there
trying. The same thing
happens with nature when
you're provided with a
beautiful orange sunset
over the water, everyone is
able to rise above their
differences and appreciate
the beauty of the world
that we're all in together.*

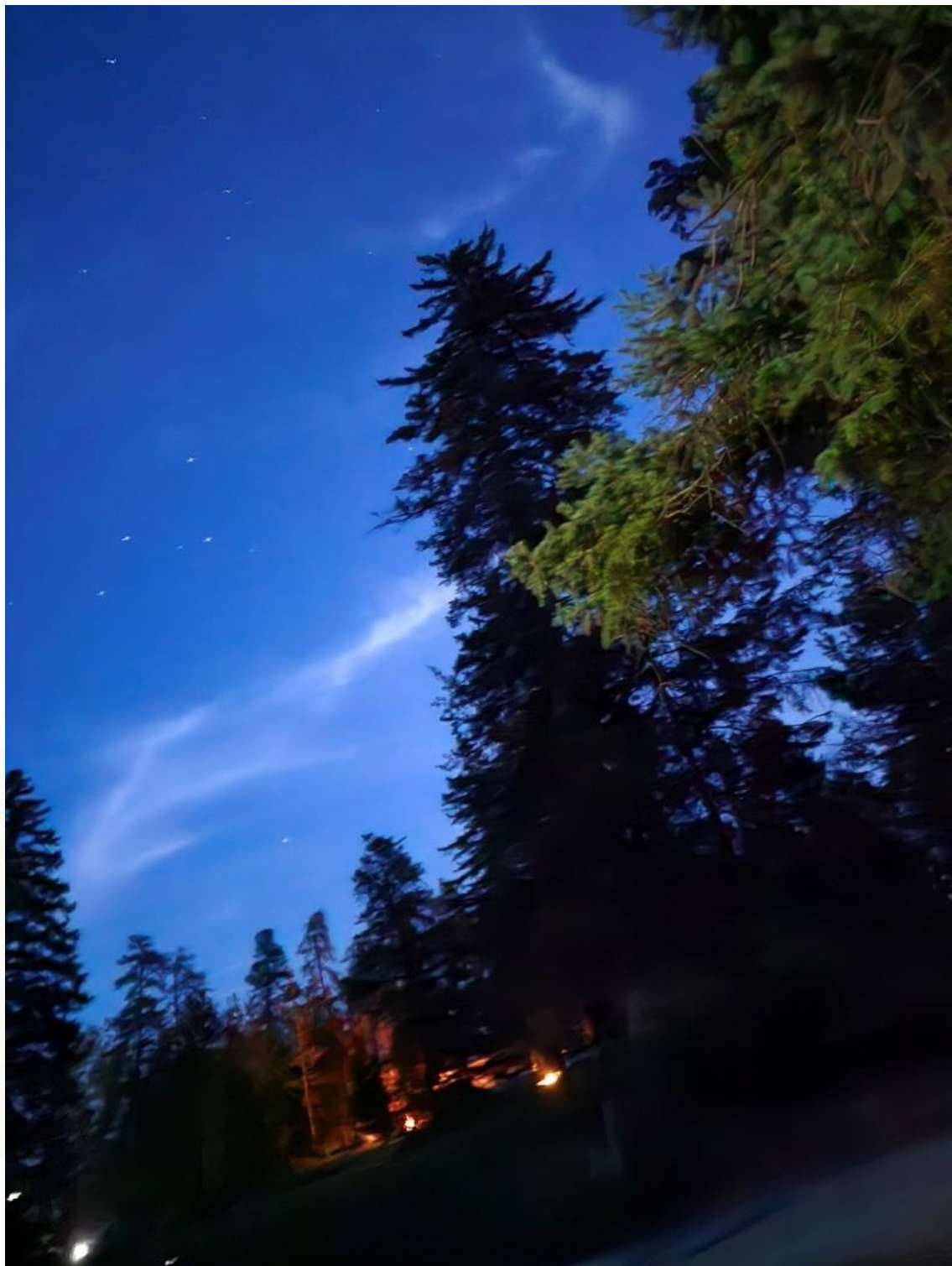
*An aspect of this photo
that is unique to Kenora is
that skateboarding and the
beauty of nature are rarely
experienced at the same
time since the average
skate park is surrounded
by infrastructure.."*

- Quinn A..

"Rushing River Provincial Park

It's one of my favorite places to spend times with my family. It's such a peaceful place to spend weekends."

- Davanee W





"Winnipeg River

*The beautiful view, calmness of
the water and fishing in your
backyard and enjoying the
nature*

- Theo K



Not all the photos by all participants have been presented here in this supporting document, but at least one photo from each participant features throughout the plan and other supporting documents.

A copy of the photo voice project overview and the flyer to encourage participation are provided in Appendix three.

Consultation Results

Indigenous and Métis Voices

What does safety mean to you?

There isn't a commonly accepted definition of safety from an Indigenous perspective. Currently we are operating off a definition of safety based on the medicine wheel teachings. The definition is that safety is when there are no threats to mental, physical, spiritual, or emotional wellbeing.

Does this definition resonate with your understanding of safety?

- Small word with so many factors
- Don't feel safe anywhere, because my son said that the people he has been doing drugs with might come after us
- Daughter feels unsafe when she comes into town, she's been followed twice
- Don't feel comfortable going into some shops
- When I am at peace, content, with my husband
- Children's safety matters the most
- Not having to worry
- Being able to leave my doors unlocked
- Trusting that nobody will violate my personal spaces.
- When I am not violated
- Feeling as if I matter, my life matters
- Sense of trust, I can go on my way, and nobody will bother me
- My granddaughter is safe
- Comfortable and feeling secure
- Content/happy
- Mini biimidaziwin
- Add financial to the definition
- Being relaxed in your own world
- Knowing you can rely on community to have your back: trusting community members
- Not having to lock your door
- Safe in my own home
- Safe downtown, but worried about safety of other people downtown
- Able to do things without feeling unsafe or anxious
- Safety of spirit
- Mutual respect for others
- People who care about others, giving hugs
- I feel safe: I am well trained
- Community contributing to community safety, knowing that something is being done to address safety issues (e.g. this work)
- First thing I think about is my kids, feel the safest when were all under one roof
- Discrimination, kids bullying for having a braid

- Trust, on the rez not locking doors
- Being comfortable
- Being at home
- Medicine wheel definition
- Agree with medicine wheel definition of safety
- Idea of real vs perceived threat, what one identified as a threat may not be a threat to others
- Risks/threat are evolving and changing

What do you appreciate and enjoy about Kenora? What makes you feel safe? What promotes your well-being?

- Fence around my house
- Someone's always at my house
- Bridge building/finding common ground
- Friends and community
- Strong women who want to make change
- Activist community, knowing who to reach out to
- Able to have open conversations, explaining to white people why we can't just forget
- Traditional mediation methods, e.g. circle of grandmothers
- Eye contact and smiling at people on the street
- "I am a kind man" (support for men to treat women better)
- Able to connect to the land, going for walks
- Sense of peace being close to water, trees, nature
- Knowing people, seeing people you know in town, relationships, kinship, friendship
- Sense of community
- Schools teach kids about residential schools/teach the youth
- Awareness of current and historical risks
- Family creates a sense of community
- Nature: lakes, trails, water, parks
- Walking downtown and knowing everyone
- Community gatherings (e.g., music in the park at Anishinaabe)
- Arts
- Markets
- Shopping downtown
- Social spaces
- Don't like much about Kenora
- Métis council
- Relationships with surrounding Indigenous communities
- Connection to ancestors through land
- Views/scenery
- Resources: youth hub, leap (employment), ONWA, Ne-Chee (Friendship Centre), transportation services, etc.
- The people/community

- Social media/awareness, knowing what's happening in the community
- Connecting with people/having community

In terms of your safety and well-being what concerns you in Kenora? What do you worry about? What makes you feel unsafe?

- Call the police but they don't come
- Uncomfortable with counselor/service provider
- Kids coming on my property and refusing to leave when asked
- Police
- Children's aid, worried about them taking my granddaughter
- Police: called them because daughter's partner hit her and broke an artery in her nose, called 911, police took both (daughter and partner) and charged both, said she didn't want partner in her house, and they did nothing
- Social media, rant and rave
- Downtown incidents
- Transient homeless people (mostly non-Indigenous), don't recognize them
- Financial exploitation, especially with elders
- Racism
- Victimization of youth and women
- Young girls being followed
 - creepy men, e.g., bell services coming into the community
- Lack of accountability, specifically for white people
 - community reactions to attempts to hold people accountable
 - police discrimination
- Unhealthy people in positions of power
- Healers being exposed for unhealthy behaviour
- Needles
- Meth, people lose consciousness and understanding
- Politics, lack of transparency around effectiveness of drug programs (e.g., methadone clinics)
- Hell's Angels coming in to distribute drugs, look like any other businessperson in town (well disguised)
- Polarizing politics (e.g. tension between FN and Métis)
- Racism, worrying for children who are visibly racialized
- Discrimination
- Ageism, elders targeted (e.g. elders being followed picking up medication)
- Dealers/drugs
- Sex trade/human trafficking
- Some trails becoming unsafe (e.g. encampments & needles behind Amik trail)
- Political issues: specifically related to FN people
- Untreated addictions and mental illness
- Dangerous people coming through with criminal intent
- Not knowing where to reach for help
- More concerned with peers than street people

- Lack of consent culture, specifically men who feel entitled to women's bodies
- Sexual assault
- Process of reporting sexual assault is not safe (legally and personally living in a small community and having everybody know)
- Lack of police presence on foot
- Trees blocking night lighting
- People walking around with weapons
- Home invasions with weapons
- Social polarization (compared to that of Nazi Germany)
- Identifying as Métis
- Drugs/drug houses
- Men driving around looking for little kids/girls
- Animals, deer with rabies/babies, lynx, cougars, animals being drawn in because of the deer
- Tent cities in the bush
- Trails/people on the trails
- People approaching you
- Natives more comfortable approaching other native people

When did things change for the worse?

- Between 2012-2017
- When methadone clinics were introduced, drew a lot of unsafe people and drugs into Kenora
- Immigration has changed concerns, specifically in terms of domestic violence

What are your ideas for improving community safety and well-being in Kenora? What can you contribute to community safety and well-being in Kenora?

- Sitting with people/grandmothers in circle
- Creating an urban reserve, able to apply for things (e.g., an arena), have their own facilities to generate income
- Indigenous taxi service, mainly women drivers, reasonably priced
- Honest commitment from city of Kenora to adopt UNDRIP
- City leaders going beyond performative action, read the TRC calls to action
- Accountability from city
- Report on the city's efforts
- Community gathering places
- Improving the economy
- Neighborhood watches
- Stop letting some people out of jail (very short jail terms, people come out and do the same thing again)
- Family activities
- Bringing together mothers of the community
- Community looking out for each other, unconditional love and support but consequences for bad behaviour
- Less technology, more time out on the land (specifically for youth)

- More affection and bonding between kids and family
- Community events/gatherings supported by organizations
- Opportunities to be heard in a respectful setting (e.g. with a moderator)
- Youth drop-in times
- Métis liaison in addition to First Nations liaison at the city
- Arts Center/Community Auditorium
- More time to get to know other community members; people fear the unknown (need to humanize each other)
- Incentives for cleaning up needles like the bottle return program
- Prevention programs
- Phone alerts, like amber alert but just for Kenora (e.g., there is a fire on X street, stay away from that area)
- Reliable transit
- More parks/green space
- More community safety patrol & better use of community safety patrols resources (currently they mainly just give rides to homeless people)
- More coordination to pick up needles, organizations talking to each other and coordinating who's going where/doing what

As you thought about coming here today did you want to share something that we did not give you an opportunity to share?

- Neighborhood used to be more safe
- Don't have wine with meals if driving, feel that I will be charged
- Uncomfortable saying no to people asking for money
 - People are labeled, cliques
- Police pulling guns on youth
- Police intimidation, saying white law is superior to 'nish law
 - businessmen picking up women for sex
 - need to help people find their spirit
- Funding divides people
- External funding with its own goals, strings attached to funding
 - it's hard to advocate when doing programming
 - want Kenora to be safe for my grandchildren
- I don't like how people are afraid of me as an Indigenous woman
- Things have changed for the worse, used to be able to leave doors unlocked
- Have to carry something if walking in the dark: 2 young people attacked an older man, had to strike both of them, no respect for the older man, police arrived and picked up the offenders without asking questions
- Problems started when meth arrived, took the innocence out of the town that day
- Started feeling unsafe when there were murders on his street when he was 10-12, sweet older lady was killed and shortly after another murder close by
- Wanting to help others but fearing for your own safety
- Where's the safety for youth on the street?
- How do I look after my grandchildren?
- Kenora is the centre of NA drug trade, distributed from Kenora

- Greed is why people get involved in the drug trade
- Have lived all over ON, Kenora is the most racist place: targeted at work, lost a lot of friends when I became apart of Métis council, called a “f*cking jackpine n*gger” at work
- Worry about laws changing to accommodate crime, specifically domestic violence
- Many white people causing problems, not Indigenous
- A lot of people end up coming back
- Police often return to the community, thankfully the good ones usually return
- We are accommodating/enabling drug users
- People fear the unknown, often they fear people they don’t know, there’s a youth who people tend to fear, I know him and he’s a very talented song writer and artist, if people knew that, they would fear him less
- Don’t feel as safe anymore, last 3-5 years, every year gets worse
- Family members on drugs, difficult to navigate those relationships
- A lot of handouts/accommodating to the homeless

Children’s voices

Below is the report provided by the consultant engaged for this work. There are some strong consistencies between the voices of the children and adult participants although the voices of children also have a thrillingly upbeat tone upon occasion.

Student voice collection for the Kenora Community Crime Prevention, Safety and Well-Being Plan development

Facilitator & Report: Mike Greaves, Wake Marketing for the CPCWBAC

During the week of September 9-12, we held focus group sessions in school classrooms. We engaged 58 students, aged 11-14.

This report captures the primary topical themes from the entirety of all focus groups.

What places in Kenora bring you the most joy?

Nature and Outdoor Spaces

Lake of the Woods, beaches, Rushing River, nature trails, Minaki trails, Anishinaabe Park, Garrow Park.

Participants find joy in the natural beauty of Kenora’s lakes and outdoor areas. The sense of peace and recreational opportunities (swimming, hiking, etc.) that these spaces offer play a significant role in their lives.

Sports and Recreational Facilities

MCL Sports Centre, arenas, football field, soccer fields, basketball courts, Lake of the Woods Speedway, golf course.

Engaging in sports and fitness activities, whether at organized arenas, school sports fields, or community gyms is a source of joy. Hockey, football, soccer, and basketball are most popular.

Local Businesses and Eateries

Dairy Queen, Chip Truck, McDonald's, Walmart, downtown stores, restaurants.

These places provide comfort, convenience, and social interaction. Dining spots like Dairy Queen and the Chip Truck are seen as enjoyable places to treat oneself.

Entertainment and Leisure

Movie theatre, fair.

These places provide an escape from daily routines, offering fun, relaxation, and time with friends or family.

School and Educational Spaces

Schools are not only seen as educational institutions but also as places where students participate in extracurricular activities, social interaction, and personal growth. The music room at school suggests joy through creative arts.

Home and Personal Spaces

A few respondents find comfort and joy in their personal spaces, reflecting the importance of home as a place of relaxation, safety, and happiness.

What are your favourite things to do in Kenora?

Outdoor Recreation and Nature

Camping, fishing, hunting, boating, tubing, seadooing, snowmachining, swimming, hiking, dirt biking, biking, wakeboarding, waterskiing, wake surfing, trails, skateboarding.

Outdoor activities are highly prominent, especially those related to water, such as swimming, fishing, and boating. Other outdoor adventures like snowmachining, dirt biking, and camping are also popular.

Kenora's natural environment, particularly its lakes and forests, plays a significant role in recreational activities. Participants enjoy engaging with nature through fishing, hunting, and water sports.

Water-Based Activities

Swimming, boating, fishing, wakeboarding, tubing, seadooing, waterskiing, lake activities, beaches.

Swimming is one of the most frequently mentioned activities, along with boating and fishing. Lake of the Woods and other nearby waterbodies provide ample opportunities for water-based recreation.

Sports and Physical Fitness

Gym, hockey, volleyball, basketball, soccer, skiing, running, skating, golf, hockey, working out.

Organized sports like hockey, basketball and volleyball, as well as individual physical activities like running and working out at the gym, are important for both recreation and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Socializing with Friends and Family

Hanging with friends, family, pets, eating out, hanging out, sleeping, playing music.

Many participants find happiness in simple pleasures like hanging out with friends or family, eating out, and relaxing together. These activities provide a sense of connection, community, and belonging.

Winter Sports and Activities

Hockey, snowmachining, skiing, snowboarding, skating.

Winter sports are frequently mentioned, with hockey, snowmachining, and skiing being some of the most popular cold-weather activities. Kenora's winters are celebrated through activities that take advantage of the snowy landscape. These sports and recreational activities bring fun and enjoyment during the colder months.

Creative and Personal Hobbies

Video games, music, drama, playing music, learning, school, air cadets, cleaning, shopping.

While not as common as outdoor or sports activities, personal hobbies like playing music, video games, and creative outlets like drama are still important sources of joy. Participants find joy in artistic and personal hobbies that allow for self-expression and creativity.

Relaxation and Leisure

Sleeping, eating out, shopping, working, eating ice cream.

Several respondents enjoy more leisurely activities like sleeping, eating, and shopping. These activities reflect a need for relaxation and indulgence, offering comfort and enjoyment in everyday life.

Which businesses/organizations/programs in Kenora contribute to your life?

Sports and Recreational Facilities

MCL Sports Centre, Lake of the Woods Girls Hockey, Ski Hill, outdoor rink, minor hockey, soccer fields, arenas, Beaver Brae Broncos Football, Hoopla Island, skate park, golf course.

The MCL Sports Centre is one of the most frequently mentioned locations, with a strong presence of hockey-related organizations (Girls Hockey, Minor Hockey, Kenora Thistles).

Participants highly value their local sports facilities and organizations. Hockey is particularly important, along with skiing, football, and general fitness. These places and programs promote physical activity, community participation, and team.

Local Dining and Restaurants

Quesada, McDonald's, Subway, Downtown Restaurants, Dairy Queen, Chip Truck, Sushi 251, The Black Oven, Boston Pizza, Bob's Burger, Redden's.

Kenora's dining scene is a source of comfort and pleasure for the community. Participants enjoy the mix of local restaurants and national chains, appreciating the diversity in cuisine, whether for casual dining or quick meals. Places like Dairy Queen, McDonald's, and the Chip Truck are popular.

Retail Stores and Shopping

Walmart, Dollarama, Safeway, Downtown Stores, The Hardware Company, Keewatin Place, Sure Thing, Farmers Market.

Both big box stores and local retail shops are valued for convenience and variety. Walmart and Safeway serve as essential shopping hubs, while smaller businesses like The Hardware Company and Keewatin Place add a unique, local shopping experience.

Community and Social Services

Cat Shelter, Anishinaabe Abonjii Family Services, Rotary Club, Firefly, Kids Help Phone, Homeless Shelters, Bimose Tribal Council, Royal Air Cadets, OPP.

The community shows a strong appreciation for social support services and organizations that provide help and care, such as homeless shelters, the cat shelter, and youth-focused programs like Firefly and Royal Air Cadets.

Education and Arts Programs

School, school music program, arts program (school), Trylight Theatre, Kenora Swimming Sharks.

Education and arts programs are an important part of life in Kenora, with schools and extracurricular activities like music, theatre, and swimming providing creative and developmental opportunities for youth. Programs like Trylight Theatre and school arts activities offer creative outlets and community engagement.

Seasonal and Outdoor Experiences

Ski Hill, Farmers Market, Anishinaabe Park, Perch Bay Resort, Lake of the Woods Girls Hockey, Rotary Club's Shake the Lake.

Outdoor recreation and seasonal events are central to the community's lifestyle. The ski hill is especially popular during the winter months, while places like the Farmers Market and parks offer enjoyment in warmer weather. Events like "Shake the Lake" represents music and community spirit.

What makes you uncomfortable or worried about Kenora?

Homelessness

Participants express discomfort with the visible presence of homeless individuals, particularly downtown. Issues range from perceived messiness, loitering, and harassment to general feelings of unease when encountering homeless people.

Specific areas mentioned include downtown, Main Street, and around public spaces such as movie theaters and trails.

Drug Use and Related Issues

The presence of drugs and drug paraphernalia (e.g., needles) in public spaces is a major concern. Participants are troubled by open drug use and its impact on public safety. The frequent appearance of people using drugs on the streets adds to feelings of discomfort and danger.

There was identified connection between drug use and homelessness, as well as the littering of needles in places like trails and near stores.

Public Safety and Crime

Many respondents express fear regarding certain areas of town, labeling them as "sketchy" or "unsafe." Main Street and downtown are areas where people feel unsafe due to the presence of "dangerous" or "crazy" individuals, loitering, and intoxicated people.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) and a lack of funding for local police services (Treaty 3 Police, in particular) suggest deeper concerns about crime and community safety.

Downtown Conditions

Participants highlight downtown as an area associated with litter, bad smells, loitering, drug use, and general untidiness. The lack of cleanliness contributes to the negative perception of this area.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

There is mention of "drunks" and calls for limiting alcohol sales or availability. This suggests that alcohol abuse is seen as another major issue contributing to the uncomfortable atmosphere in Kenora.

Youth Behaviour

Issues such as kids vaping and smoking are concerning, pointing to broader anxieties about youth behavior and substance use.

Public Infrastructure and Cleanliness

Issues such as broken glass on beaches, litter, and poorly maintained public areas like hospitals and the self-cleaning bathrooms are highlighted as contributing to discomfort. These factors make the area seem unsafe.

If you could fix something in Kenora to make it healthier, safer or more inclusive, what would it be?

Addressing Homelessness

Homelessness is a significant issue, with a strong call for more shelters and support systems to help individuals transition off the streets. Providing safe, warm food and creating a compassionate, caring environment is a priority for improving the overall well-being of homeless people in Kenora.

Tackling Drug and Substance Abuse

There is a clear concern about the impact of drugs and alcohol on the community, especially in public spaces. Suggestions include making drugs illegal, reducing access to substances like vapes and alcohol, and addressing the needle exchange program to minimize discarded needles and enhance safety.

Improving Public Safety and Cleanliness

Improving public safety is essential, especially downtown, where suggestions focus on cleaning up streets and buildings, addressing potholes, and dealing with break-ins and discarded needles. There is also a desire for more visible law enforcement or consequences for illegal activities to make public areas feel safe and welcoming.

Affordable Housing and Housing Crisis

The high cost of housing is seen as a problem, with calls to reduce house prices and provide more affordable housing options to meet the needs of the local population. This theme ties into the issue of homelessness, as affordable housing is viewed as a solution to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Infrastructure and Public Spaces

Participants want better maintenance of roads and public spaces (e.g., fixing potholes) and want to see improvements in community facilities such as baseball fields and more inclusive activities like fishing tournaments. Enhancing arts programs and making them more accessible are also viewed as ways to enrich community life.

Results from all the community consultation and stakeholder conversations in aggregate form³

Below in table format are the results from all other consultations as per the table on pages 2-3. Qualitative analyses are inevitable subjective. To prevent as much subjectivity as possible it is common practice to have several persons engaged in the coding. Resources did not allow for this, and all the coding was completed by More Better Solutions (MBS). MBS kept as close to the wording of participants as possible to avoid coding bias. In the very least the hope is that participants recognize their voice in the tables below. However, the additional step of taking notes during the consultations, even if they were close to verbatim, inevitably will have introduced a selective process that was not present in the survey where respondents provided their own wording. Nonetheless, the data is fairly consistent across the survey and the consultations indicating that we have reached a point of data saturation, i.e. we were not hearing anything surprising or new.

How to read the tables below

The left columns in the tables speak to larger categories and themes. The right columns are the responses received within those categories. If something was mentioned several times, which was often the case, it only received one mention. Analyzing qualitative data is not about

³ Aggregate data refers to data that is collected and summarized from individual observations into a larger group or category to identify trends.



counting the quantity of responses to look for a “majority”, but rather it is about trying to include all responses no matter how divergent. This leads to as comprehensive a picture as possible. The thinking behind this approach is that majority voices are not necessarily right, and singular voices may contribute something important that was missed by the majority. Attempts to quantify qualitative responses should mostly be avoided. Quantifying qualitative responses can often lead to a loss of nuance, meaning, and context. In qualitative research, every voice matters, and the richness of the data comes from capturing **all** perspective, not just the ones that are most common. Focusing on the majority responses can also reinforce confirmation bias where researchers look for the dominant view thereby ignoring marginalized and underrepresented populations. **Majority opinions tend to align with dominant narratives and oversimplify the complexity of what is happening in a community.**

Kenora Strengths, Assets and Positive Attributes	
Business	• Strong group of businesswomen who care • Lots of opportunities for small business • The small business community is welcoming and supportive of each other. • Opportunities for growth • Business survey showed business owners overall are happy to do business in Kenora
Children and youth	• Low suspension and expulsion rates • Small number of children and youth 2-5% are low functioning (doable interventions) • Schools have great short- and long-term data available for planning • Schools see themselves as much more than academic institutions (looking at wellbeing more broadly) • Youth hub from Kenora Chief's Advisory (KCA) a great addition to the community • The youth justice center should be celebrated • OPP youth engagement program is where my kids are safe: Police that act like "uncles" to the kids
City	• Talented and committed staff. • Events, programs, and activities • The city's physical design is appealing. • Proximity to all that you need • Security cameras create a sense of safety • Proximity to two airports • Worldclass library and museum • Lots of great amenities, especially as a parent • We are looking at the issues through a broad lens • "I live downtown, walk my dog and baby, and never once felt unsafe" • "Common ground initiative of the city of Kenora and local history project important to review. Occupation of Anishinaabe park about 50 years ago was acknowledged with Mayor and others present and it was a wonderful day (now standing in stark contrast to the recent shooting)". • Kudos to the city for moving this forward • Shift in Council demographics • Indigenous relations staff a welcome addition

Collaboration	• People willing to learn about Pride and be more involved/excited • Connections to lean on throughout the community • Partnerships that are mutually supportive like the youth hub (which “shattered barriers”) • Having a voice even if it only leads to hope for the better. • “Collaboration is the queer way”. • It all starts with relationships • Community foundations add potential • Willingness to acknowledge issues among services • Police (OPP and Treaty 3) are willing to partner with social agencies • “WNHAC and KCA are great partners to work with”. • There is lots of capacity for cross cultural connections and strong expressions of holding value in TRC • Being at the ANHP table and being seen as a contributor • KCA antiracism project in collaboration with others • Crisis mode forces collaboration • We work together for the best of the community
Community	• Welcoming, caring and warm place • Sense of community • Born and raised here • Small town feel • Opportunities for entertainment (movies, restaurants, music scene, etc.) • Long history of attracting tourists • Efforts by some organizations and community leaders to create safety and belonging • Neighbourhood feels safe • “The community has a very strong will to be part of the solution. Big opportunity lost if not [utilized]” • OPS not opening was welcome news (would move away if it did) • The community is stepping up in efforts as such the CSWB • A strong even if small volunteer base, e.g. volunteers - including youth - delivering between 500 and 600 meals on wheels per month • Meals at St Albans where people feel they belong • Fellowship Center acknowledging someone has died with a sacred fire and they are there seven days a week • To the outside what we do looks like leadership innovation

Cultural heritage	• Connection to ceremony, tradition and land • Arts and culture are vibrant, and programs are well attended • Multi-cultural association being available to newcomers • Rich Indigenous culture
Economy	• Economically, Kenora is a pretty wealthy place. A lot of people work for public service, so there is a security of income, and they can spend money. • Manitobans and Indigenous people are two key economic pillars
Nature	• Stunning natural beauty • Lake life • Wilderness • Summertime (fishing and BBQ season) • Location location location • Quality of the water • Size of the lake • Dog park • The Peace Park by the lake
People	• People care about their community • They return after university etc. because it is HOME • People being more friendly in the summer • “Most people are good” and well-intended • Interactions at work that increase belonging • “We show up for each other, including the trolls.” • Go fund me campaigns. • People say “hi” • Diversity of people • Generosity of seasonal people • People share their resources • Resilient people that haven’t thrown in the towel
Recreation	• Lots of kids’ activities • Splash Park was a great idea • Yoga and being able to get out on the lake and away from downtown create well-being • Great golf course • Lots of fun summer attractions • Walking and paddleboarding etc. creates wellness

Services	• Kenora Fellowship centre is a safe place for many with sacred fire and offering of tobacco “bringing peace even if just for a moment” • WNHAC street nurses are non-threatening to the unhoused • Strong Indigenous led services • Great hospital and one more to be built • Commitment to prevention • Innovation examples prevalent during Covid show what we are capable of • Counselling supports wellbeing • Makwa outreach • KCA drive arounds • OPP and CMHAK crisis team • WNHAC focus on primary needs (housing etc.) keep people safe • KMF outreach • “Women’s shelter has been an amazing program” • Neechee Friendship Center is a positive place for safety • When it comes to homelessness Kenora as a hub is actually holding its ground (but no one talks about that)
Safety	• The city is relatively safe • Drivers stop at crossing (polite) • Seeing police in the mornings creates safety • Being in a group of people makes me feel safe • I feel safe when everyone’s needs are met • Safety depends on the level of privilege we have, and we need to acknowledge that
Tourism	• Tourism survey showed that 86% of visitors that have been here 8 or more times are likely to return • For seasonal residents Kenora is the second home
Work	• Lots of opportunities for work

Kenora Concerns, Challenges and Negative Attributes

Addiction	• Service culture for those with addiction issues is enabling and “there needs to be something in the middle between tough love and bleeding heart” • Current drugs make behaviour more dangerous and unpredictable than previously with just alcohol • Ambulance saves the same youth over and over because of lack of treatment and lack of prevention • Blaming and shaming people with addictions is counterproductive and ill informed • “Alcoholics look down on other addicts”
City	• Push back on recreational and grass roots efforts that support community and brings people together in the DT • Challenges reach beyond the DT (e.g. Keewatin) • Infrastructure has not grown sufficiently after amalgamation • There is a breakdown in communication between city and business. • Mayor and Council have to deal with a lot of misinformed members of the public • All these meetings and no follow through • “One irk I have and it's a finance thing. I have noticed that every time there is, say a long weekend or whatever, we have all these things advertised for families to do and then we shut down our transit”. • The problem is too big for the city, it needs federal work • Bad zoning decisions lead to DT deterioration • Inaccessible sidewalks make the city inhospitable for disabled people • “Every time there is an issue the city says let’s get a consultant”

Community	• This town has 2 solitudes. There's that community and the Indigenous community • Hard to break into the community • Low civic pride and sense of belonging • Low immigration and diversity • Inequities are prevalent • Public discourse is polarized: FN vs settlers, rich vs poor • We tend to fall apart as a community when we face difficulties...are we strong enough when it gets rough? • There's such a lack of empathy and caring • Newcomers are astounded at our level of freedom and "liberal nonsense", and it tempts them to experiment with illegal acts • Nimbyism is alive and well; Kenora District Services Board (KDSB) provided Kenora Moving Forward (KMF) rent and then KMF was asked to leave on advice of OPP • Sometimes it seems no one is in charge • What is innovative becomes described as disruptive
Corrections and Justice	• Out of town people come and stay after court (even when we give them free bus tickets) • Many repeat offenders ("catch and release") • Lack of crown attorneys • Jails over capacity and housing people with MH issues • No reintegration planning for people coming out of jails • The term "unfounded" in sexual assault cases needs changing • Police breaking down encampments and taking belongings makes the problem worse • 95% of persons in crowded jails haven't been to court • OPP not trying to get fentanyl off the streets as they did with previous drugs • The jail relies on shelters for their release planning and if a shelter were not available over 120 people could be released into homelessness at one time

Crime and social disorder

- Active gangs (not organized) but some with connections to organized gangs
- Violence is mostly peer to peer, not random
- Trafficking to support addiction
- Sexual assault harder to prove after #me2
- Break and enters (and having to pay the deductible for that)
- People sit outside our agency and steal our Wi-Fi and electricity
- Preying on the elderly and stealing their groceries
- Violence against service staff like EMS
- Theft from homes and backyards
- Unprovoked erratic behaviour

- Crimes that fly under the radar:
 - Elder Abuse
 - Financial Abuse
 - Sextortion and Revenge Porn
 - Sex work solicitation
 - Dogs being left unattended and roaming free
 - Domestic violence is a “dirty little secret” in Kenora
 - Some staff in social services get death threats

Children and Youth

- Lack of daycare spaces
- Some children (often 14-18) are not in school and cannot be re-engaged and schoolboards don't communicate with police
- No VRTA (violence risk threat assessment) in schools
- 100-200 children of concern are aging out of care and there is no plan
- Top 25 youth are responsible for most issues
- All kids in care are not from here. Homes not loving. FN child welfare not monitoring.
- Police being asked to charge children and youth because of behaviour issues being out of control
- Child welfare not effective, neglect high, kids vulnerable to being recruited into gangs
- Children as young as 12 being suicidal "looking for love and affection"
- Many "cross over children" (going from welfare system into the justice system) are FN
- Not enough programs for children
- We may not have residential schools, but we have child welfare. We have more children in the child welfare system than we had in residential schools at their height
- Children and youth don't get to be outside in the community like we used to because we are afraid for them, and this turns us into a car culture place because we have to pick them up

DT challenges	• Proximity of services to the core • Town less vibrant than it once was • Empty stores and businesses that leave are not replaced • More disrespect especially by young street involved people • Needles • Being the hub and being too caring • Social disorder AND crime • Impact of visible homelessness on business and tourism • Feel of DT changes according to time of day • Pedestrians walk way light are always flashing and then drivers ignore them • Main street business having to put bars on windows sends a message that you are not safe here • Kenora doesn't offer a lot as a city • Services replace businesses – out of balance • Dinky storefronts signal neglect • Feels unsafe because there are not enough people there • No different to any other city • I cannot send kids downtown alone any more
Economy	• Living expenses are creating homelessness • High cost of housing • Young people will lose corner store jobs because of alcohol being sold there
Fear	• Some incidents have been highly publicized and that creates fear • The “DT is unsafe” narrative is very strong. Business staff are afraid because of it. • Social media creates toxicity: the message is that crime is extremely high in Kenora • Afraid of actions taken by others that might impact family and/or people we serve • “I work with the population everyday, and I still don't feel safe in the public”. • “Being followed and threatened just because I was watching someone” [was scary] • Never walk on harbourfront in evening. Always walk in pairs. • Concerned that being vigilant can turn into vigilantism

Gaps in Services	• Lack of queer healthcare, gender affirming care and queer therapy (“having to therapize your therapist is really exhausting”). • Some work is redundant, and some programs are under-utilized • Services are not equitably/accessible for all • Kenora serves people from outside of the community because they don’t have their own services • Unable to get enough rape kits provided and people trained to administer them • At LWDH patients must be sober for a rape kit to be administered and/or wait for up to 6 hours and there is no ambulance service to take patients to Dryden hospital if needed (they have to travel by taxi which is expensive) • High staff turn over in social service agencies leaves program gaps • The over-focus on the visible homelessness creates gaps in other areas • No place for persons without an address to cash a cheque which makes them open to exploitation (e.g. a 50% fee being charged to cash a cheque) • 1-800 and 211 services are located in Thunder Bay and lack knowledge of the local community • Navigating the service landscape in Kenora is very difficult • No creation of bylaws that are locally focused • We are eight staff short of what is needed for essential coverage • FASD is a barrier to accessing services • Long wait list for persons with intellectual disabilities and only three units available • Nowhere for the unhoused to go during the day • Hard to get staff that have longevity in the field of work • We lack clear data to support our advocacy efforts
Governments	• Lack of provincial-federal agency collaboration and communication • “It’s hard these days to stick your neck out” [for fear of getting funding cut] • In reaction mode for years
Hate Crimes	• Complaints about hate crimes go nowhere especially complaints about health care and police • Violence against marginalized groups is underreported.

Health	• No accountability by NWHU [for needle exchange] • No MH hospital • Not enough forensic psychiatrists • Alcohol is the predominant issue • LHIN led to fragmentation and lack of clear pathways • No public appreciation for the determinants of health • No health care navigation • Protected sex among homeless is an exception and communicable diseases are on the rise • “I would never use the self-cleaning toilets”. • Unhoused have no washrooms to go to [which creates ill health for them and others] • Too many people come to ER because they don’t have a family doctor • ER staff are treated badly and don’t want to work there • Healthy food is too expensive and junk food leads to ill health
Housing and Homelessness	• Hard to recruit staff because they cannot find housing • Lack of new builds and new subdivisions • Too much red tape holding back progress • Burnt down housing has not been replaced putting challenges of the unhoused in plain sight (Hungry Pug fire made it visible it has always been there) • Lack of housing supply causes high rents • Large Indigenous population among the unhoused • Supportive housing and post custody housing needed [according to HSSJC data] • Fear of rent increases and becoming homeless significant • “If housing issue is not solved by the end of this term KDSB will have failed”. • Some courts require people to stay in Kenora which adds to homelessness • Challenges with finding warming spaces that are accepted in the community • Housing is unaffordable and out of reach for young people • Unhoused with nothing to do is worrisome • Current shelters are one size fits all. Some won’t go there and rather sleep in a snowbank. • Housing has become commodified • Kenora has one of the highest death rates for homelessness going back to the 1970s

Human Trafficking

- Increasing number of people vulnerable to trafficking in Kenora
- Victims are not coming forward
- “We have assisted in sending victims to treatment, but we find clients often fall back into the sex trade because they need money to survive, and often self-medicate with substances to forget their past trauma”.
- The shelter cannot accommodate human sex trafficking victim needs
- Most victims are Indigenous and females ages 15-30 (it happens in broad daylight) - “Exploitation of Indigenous women happen daily right outside our doors”
- Women are picked up and taken to Winnipeg
- “Some drug users have a barter system, and this is how people become trapped and enslaved”.

Indigenous population	• Band cheques of \$100k handed out without a plan is creating problems in community • Federal work downloaded to municipalities • Treaty 3 has 23 communities in Kenora, and yet Indigenous peoples are disconnected from each other • Indigenous teachings are ignored • Macintosh residential school had over 1000 children many of them as adults now that live here • Loss of traditional ways (hunting and trapping) has led to Indigenous people turning to welfare • “God created the animals to stay with us, to sustain us, walk with us in the bush, among our medicines, the bark, and the berries. But that way of life is now lost, and people are lost as a result”. • “It was hard to remember who we were at the time. Things have changed so badly”. • Mercury poisoned our way of being. The book: Poison is Stronger than Love is about Kenora • Women suffer because they don’t have access to their children [who are in the child welfare system] • “I have been trying to find my roots for over 40 years and it is a painful journey”. • “We would get beaten when we were unable to answer the question, “Who made you?” We would answer in our language by saying, “My mom made me.” and it was not the right answer. We kept getting beaten”. • Out of 74 clients served by KACL 72 are Indigenous • “Going back to the 1970s on average 58 First Nations people died in the streets of Kenora every year most through accidental drowning and we wonder why there is still tension today going back to the stand-off in 1974”
Lack of safety after dark	• Lack of transit restricts free movement after dark • Police foot patrols are inconsistent
Leadership	• Lack of leadership and vision in the city • We are progressing to a frenzy – people want solutions, change but not knowing exactly what. Almost like a body missing a head • In Kenora change is slow • We have been stuck in planning and need courage to act
Mental health	• Many that need support cannot get it • Waitlists are way too long

Polarization	• “In Kenora we have white people or Indigenous people” • When you don’t want to “step over people” [unhoused laying down in the streets] you are described as lacking compassion • “People don’t want to hear about colonization, they take it personal”. • People want to ignore history • Polarization and stigmatization are symptoms of a community that is not well • KDBS gets blamed for homelessness
Resource	• No new funding for mental health work in 11 years (austerity measures). Austerity measure have led to divisions and downloading • “The North is least resourced for people coming out of court and the fidelity on the resources is lost”. • Resources to service are disjointed and seemingly without a plan • Duplicate conversations [round tables] using up resources • Who gets funded is political not evidence based • Ministries pit programs against each other • Sometimes we have operating dollars but no capital dollars
Racism	• Negative attitudes towards Indigenous peoples • Massive racism leads to some problems not being addressed because they are seen as “Indigenous problems” • Non-natives would rather not see us: “One day at the Harbourfront I saw men with saws. They were cutting the trees and bushes. They told me they were doing this to push back the native people, so they were not seen”. • Discrimination and lack of empathy are the largest impediment to this plan succeeding • “No-one wants to hear us” (Elder) • Racism became normalized in the 70s and 80s even of those that are housed and employed • “Canadians may be nicer than the US about their racism, but it is still there”. • During Covid some stores refused to serve Indigenous people claiming they had spit on the food • “Everyone is dancing around the issue here” • Racism makes people unsafe • When I was walking home I was yelled at by white teens • Kenora “Indian Beaters” exist but police deny it

Safety

- Especially older customers don't feel safe and are being harassed
- ATMs outside banks feel unsafe
- People don't want to bring their kids DT
- Business struggling because of safety concerns even with seasonal customers.
- Local unhoused are afraid of people from out of town
- Hazardous waste needing to be cleaned up by staff is not safe
- Street involved people asking for money
- Public drug use
- Closed doors out of safety concerns
- "2019 was the change, it was instant, fast hard, visceral, dangerous".
- Can't keep young staff because they are afraid to walk to bus stop after work
- Keewatin has been safe for a long time, but it is changing now

Service culture	• Duplication, gatekeeping and empire building • Lack of collaboration between services and lack of a service continuum that is well understood • Silos and turf protection • Lack of transparent connections between services creates confusion • Repeat users of services and staff burn out • Mental health system is failing which leads to people calling the police • Services outcompete business in capital funding • Fragmentation of services • Lack of collaboration must be identified as a key gap • Lateral violence within organizations (nepotisms, bullying, gossiping etc.) that get in the way of collaboration • Services get all the capital funding • Enabling: “Why go anywhere if you can get everything here for free?” • Police taking over grass roots initiatives is also a form of duplication • “The problem is that there is no narrative that people agree on. There is just finger pointing”. • Some staff just work for the paycheck • Services hold cards close to their chest • All Nations Health Partners (ANHP) is not accountable to the community (one sided accountability) • There is mission drift because services don’t collaborate despite having many round tables
Sexual assault	• In some circles assault is regarded as normal sexual behaviour
Social media	• Fuelling fear and algorithms making it worse (by bringing back the same topics that creates confirmation bias)

Stereotyping and stigma

- In health care system: Rainbow community needing syringes for hormone treatment and being seen as drug users
- Harm reduction has become a dirty concept
- Dehumanizing people that struggle with day-to-day needs
- Shelter staff are not appreciated by the public and stigmatized alongside the unhoused
- “We all want to be part of the solution and continuing to talk about these people [negatively] doesn’t help. These people have problems, the fellowship centre is packed and doing their best”.
- We wrongfully link low student achievements to low-income neighbourhoods
- Stigma of programs creates division and grief

Solutions and the Actions We Can Take

Addictions	• Need multi-pronged approach including healing lodges and rehab and assistance with everyday life skills • More treatment including involuntary treatment • Alcohol should be in a separate room in corner stores and grocery stores • Teach the unhoused how to use Naloxone kits at the shelter in the evening • An OPS should be seen as a place of greatest potential for change • Emulate the Winnipeg model where at festivals they offer safe drug testing • Provide treatment centers on reserve so people can be helped at home • Meet people where they are at (“I cannot go to detox unless I am impaired”) • Have city staff carry naloxone kits • Move needle exchange away from detox entrance or separate the two altogether (“it is triggering”) • More sharps containers everywhere including near big garbage cans • Exchange full sharps containers for gift certificates • Put a suggestion box about needle exchange at detox center • Create more safe beds for sobering up that is medically monitored • “We need a state-of-the-art treatment center”
Children and youth	• OPP engagement program eventually needs to find a new home • Screen for school readiness • We need more representation in these [child welfare] systems, more advocacy, more questioning, more critical thinking. Indigenous people encourage that thinking. • Provide guidance to newcomer children about how to live in a free society • Implement the scared straight program

City	• City planning for business needs to be more intentional not ad hoc • “Create a business-service table and engage in some out of the box thinking. Be daring! Don’t focus on the elite and decision making through power based on donations”. • Consistent bus services • Work with business to activate new developments • Develop larger strategic plan including for tourism • Enhance civic pride through a “be proud again of being in Kenora” campaign • “Welcome home” the seasonal visitors each year • Create a full-time community space to take the pressure of the fellowship center • Move the LCBO onto the highway • More bike lanes to promote wellbeing • Communicate more about the work of the committee • The “not belonging story” needs leadership for change
--------------------	---

Collaborate (not just more) but better

- Identify gaps cross sectors
- Bring collaboration to the level of leadership (from the ground up)
- “We need a building full of navigators “
- Better coordination (there are 35 agencies related to Mental health and addiction)
- Stop the talk and act
- Solve issues together not in isolation
- Sign clear Memoranda of Understanding
- Understand that collaboration does not lead to decreased funding as is feared
- Change models of care and collate resources
- We need to find ways for people to mingle across the divide to build relationships (e.g. business and services)
- Business to sit down with local services
- Take time to build relationships at all levels including neighbourhoods
- Create a three-way table to share realities between city-federal/provincial governments and services
- Host lunch and learn sessions where agencies can share their work
- Bring direct service reports to the decision-making tables
- Develop and regularly update a directory of local services
- We need wrap around care and “no wrong door” mentality
- Some things that are identified as duplication are in fact diversification (clients need to be able to make some service choices)
- Some clients are agency “shopping”, and we need to find a way to identify them
- More collaboration across governments to help federal ministries understand local realities
- Join board of directors in agencies to gain better understanding
- Work together to lower the barriers [create some consistency in response to risk]
- Call on social services to consult best practice for how to collaborate better
- Virtual supports have extended collaboration and service opportunities that we need to integrate better

	• Services need to stay in their lane and then enter the collaborative space – clarity is needed on who does what when • Collaboration cannot happen without discomfort and being critical and that needs to be understood • Build on existing relationships such as ANHP or more grassroots actions such as “festival of trees” • Identify the broken links in the system and be open to criticism and change because the status quo is not working • Get out of Groundhog Day • Host a service providers speed date event
--	--

Communication

- We have to invest more in communications so we can tell the truth such as Kenora has a lower poverty rate than other local municipalities
- Tell people what is going on (OPP, city, services)
- Develop a regular forum where people can honestly speak to issues
- Make sure the CSWB work is easily accessible on the city website and broadcast that CSWB meetings are public
- Increase number of people that sign up for the tourism and economic development newsletter
- Communicate a shift in culture
- Challenge social media posts that increase fear and stigma
- Acknowledge improvements over the last 15 years
- All political leaders in their communication including MPs should be solution focused and provide hope
- Have services use their political representatives to help shed a light on local issues that have federal and provincial connections
- Speak and teach the basics: humanity and the gift of life is what makes up community **not** institutions.
- More positive messaging: If we focus on the naysayers, we become them [negative social media posts]
- Communicate better with newcomers what to expect
- Media need to tell the service story to be better understood not just the negative

Downtown (DT) improvements	• We need greater cleanliness, filled potholes, swept streets because “when people come from outside the community, they see a clean and shiny downtown and people will want to stop” • Make sure property owners take care of their property • Employ the unhoused to clean up streets • Oppose hostile architecture • Be strategic about zoning • City to check places like behind the library and the washrooms (which should be closed) • No social services in store fronts • More business and less spaces taken up by social services • More entertainment especially for youth (boredom creates issues) • LCBO location should be closed • Wash down sidewalk (not a business owner responsibility) • Remove benches outside BrewCo • Move services outside the core • Vision what DT should look like in ten years • Washrooms that people can use 24/7 • Add cross walks near green spaces
Evidence and best practice knowledge Better use of what we know is working	• Treat gaps as opportunities • Emulate the First Nations farm model for persons with addictions • Ensure use of accurate data • Understand and plan for the fact that 90% of clients that show up in social services have some form of trauma history including sexual trauma • Find out what works in other communities

Education	• We need to teach intersectionality • Acknowledge the root causes of person being addicted, unhoused, etc. (trauma) • Understanding must be more than skin deep • Change culture and stop “othering” • Help newcomers to adapt to small community living in the North • More education on life transitions and how to help self • Help people see who does what and whom to call for what • Provide free de-escalation training • We need to learn about colonialism and historic oppression even if it is uncomfortable • Compassionate Kenora tried to help shift the lens - revisit that model • Bring back the DARE program in schools • Teach cultural awareness and diversity • Educate about violence prevention and bystander effects • Everyone should know the signs of sexual abuse and human trafficking • Help people understand who is responsible for what in local services and governments
------------------	--

Engagement	• Animate community • Ignite civic pride and begin a culture shift akin to the Glasgow “citizen oath” model⁴ • Know that we all inherited this space and that we need to move on from there • Create a community development officer position at the level of neighbourhoods and catch people doing good things such as the “ladies in black” knitting group that provide for the unhoused • Engage fire fighters and paramedics that are just waiting for calls in street patrols • Provide more advance notice for events so more people can manage to come out • Bring in the foundations to be part of the solution not just governments • Learn out loud from the past • Keep people and their stories visible not hidden away • Broaden the engagement base • More training for everyone on naloxone, first aid, food handling, needle handling, etc. • Create incentives for summer residents to become involved
Health	• Change the needle distribution approach • Distinguish harm reduction from enabling • Create fundamental policy change for concurrent disorders • Create a point of contact for mental health that is not hospital based • Reallocate funding from hospital to the community and make hospital responsible only for acute care • Help foreign workers integrate better and support them in getting health insurance • We need a walk-in clinic • We need an Overdose Prevention Site with services attached
Enforcement	• More police presence in downtown and out of their cars • Deal with “frequent flyers” [i.e. repeat offenders] • Have a duty to report policy for Domestic violence/intimate partner • Learn from violence declining 44% during LCBO strike

⁴ The Glasgow Citizen Oath Model is a concept developed to promote civic engagement and community responsibility, where citizens pledge to contribute to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of their city or community through a set of ethical principles and active participation. It emphasizes collective responsibility, shared values, and the idea of a “social contract” between individuals and society.

Housing and shelters	• Rent geared to income • KDBS filling vacancies in senior care homes to free up housing • More affordable housing • All housing on a continuum • A shelter for the unhoused • Safe beds for victims of domestic and intimate partner violence • Create an interim sanctioned encampment while we work on housing • We need a shelter for those that are human trafficked • Peer support for people living in tent cities • “There are 10 open units in Benediction Court and Gardner House, but they are using the units as storage for windows. And it has been like this for years”. • During pandemic KACL housed almost all people; use that model post pandemic and don’t waste the lesson • Define housing as the best harm reduction • Housing first • Bring in modular homes and tiny homes (waitlist for housing is 10 years) • Housing with community kitchen • Transition out of jail housing akin to the program in Winnipeg • Kenora District Services Board housing policies need to change (e.g. no substance use, no visitors, etc. is a barrier) • <i>Elevate</i>, the Northwestern Ontario harm reduction housing should be a model
Inclusion	• Need places for the unhoused to sleep and eat so they feel part of the community • Build a queer center: Being seen creates safety • “The community has changed. Fundamentally we need to set a standard for community safety for everyone. What does it mean for all people. It is not about making people feel better walking the streets. It is also about the safety of the unhoused. Qualify that safety looks different for everyone. And spell that out: e.g. the nostalgia of the town and how it “used to be” plus how the visibility of the unhoused is what makes THEM vulnerable”. • Read the Jessie Sutherland report on belonging • Food and water and a smile de-escalate problems

Indigenous population	• Engage elders to create positive change and move on from trauma. “Even Grand Chief says it is time to move forward”. • We need a wellness memorial to remember those [Indigenous people] that were lost. • We need to create space for people to unlearn • We need to tell the stories when Indigenous peoples actively engage in their own healing to change the trend that “Indigenous people only get into the media if they are dead, drunk, or drumming”.
Justice system	• Create laws for public intoxication • Develop post custody support care plans for people that are in and out of custody • Apply restorative justice models • Turn jails into a mental health facility (like the Texas model) • Make the laws stiffer and enforce them • Make the OPP more responsive to local community needs

Plan (the CSWB plan)

- Give it a feel of “Kenora welcomes you” and “welcome home”
- The plan must have key performance measures
- Bring Chamber of Commerce onto the Advisory Committee
- Communicate excitement about the plan
- In First Nations work we make decisions WITH community the Chief is at the bottom of the triangle and the membership is above him [emulate that in the CSWB work]
- The quickest way to the bottom is when the city Kenora District Services Board, the OPP and Northwestern Health Unit point fingers at each other – that must be avoided at all costs though meetings to talk about our roles in the plan
- “Plan can be a chance to expand what works and discontinue what does not. It is a living document that can be used to speak to other orders of government and community stakeholders”.
- Make the plan everyone’s responsibility
- “Some of these questions you are asking could take days to answer because they have never been asked before”.
- City staff need to be positive about the plan and model the way
- Create a comprehensive and integrated plan for resources that come to Kenora
- “The plan needs to get buy-in from Kenora Chief’s Advisory and Treaty 3. If there is mistrust in the process and if there is insufficient representation of Indigenous voices the product won’t be well received. In the plan qualify the process with evidencing the truth around who had input and provide a special note of consideration for Indigenous peoples”.
- Find a process of validation. Reach out to the Grand Chief ahead of the plan going out and ask for his insights plus other subject matter experts.
- We need a larger official community plan with vision
- The plan needs to hold people accountable for the budgets they have
- Find the people in the middle between the polarized fronts and have them take leadership

	• Use the opportunity of the small population of Kenora [when compared to other cities] to make the plan come alive • Communicate the benefits of prevention not only for economy but for the overall well-being and longevity • Everyone that is part of the plan needs to account for adhering to it • There should be one big plan that formally commits us all to making it happen • We need to find a way to quantify how much the federal government is responsible for (e.g. Kenora has many individuals from surrounding First Nations who should have their own shelter but have no resources for that) • Identify the champions and bring them together
--	--

Poverty Reduction	• We have the lowest rate of people on social benefits in the 47 service areas in the province for five years running. We need to tell that story. • Focus on the households that are on social assistance and the lone parents
Prevention projects that work	• PARTY prevent alcohol and risk related trauma in youth (Kenora Sexual Assault Centre) • Coaching boys into men program (Kenora Sexual Assault Centre) • Strengthen the 19-25 youth cohort • Invest in children • Invest in young mothers • Find a balance between immediate needs and longer-term solutions • “What will make the biggest difference in ten to twenty years is a focus on children now because every person on the streets was a baby at one time”. Make that rallying cry of “no child left behind in Kenora”
Recreation	• Keep people busy through free recreation
Services	• Assess what is needed and what is duplicated to create better use of resources • Make services accountable for their funding • Stop providing access to people who don’t live here • Provide a continuum of services including showers, places for laundry etc. to the unhoused • Provide services beyond the 9-5 window (police cannot do it alone) • Increase Makwa • Create a substance use continuum of services including for alcohol • Don’t co-locate victim and offender services even if the services intersect • Provide community-based navigators • We [social services] need to show some leadership and stop being under the radar: ask the city how can we help? • Protect what we need as “essential services” • Distinguish between mission drift and filling gaps • We need better case management • Establish a 1-800 navigator line • More outreach • Return Makwa to its original approach

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

- Have Advisory Committee members meet with Indigenous boards to gain better understanding.
- Everyone in Kenora should read the thesis on *Canadian apartheid: boundaries and bridges*
- Create an understanding between the city and the surrounding nations for attending to the TRC
- Attend to the **calls for action** from the TRC
- It will take many more meetings between non-natives and Indigenous peoples to get understanding and reconciliation
- “The Treaty 3 connection to the city matters. We need to work closely together on hard things and provide shared messaging. Behind closed doors there is a lot of common understanding. But the message of solidarity and how we relate needs to be spelled out because otherwise mistrust creeps in”.
- At the governance level ensure a City-First Nations partnership. This has not been done before. Demonstrate good relationships and how they create a sense of safety to do innovative things and not be sacred. Look for the “we have never done this before” moments. Maybe create a pool of participants for a shared table. “Be specific that their role is to create a space where polarization doesn’t happen”.
- Build a bigger Fellowship Centre right where it is now as a gesture of reconciliation
- Model reconciliation
- Patience! It takes seven generations to create a problem and another seven to uncreate it.
- Every member of city council should read *While people were sleeping* from 1976
- The Mayor or and the Grand Chief should ask for ministry data to help understand the local stresses that are not of local making
- We need to know: “How does the City of Kenora define safety? [...] How is the City of Kenora serving the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)? [...] We [Indigenous organizations] need stronger connections with people who really want to help”.

Volunteering Enhance volunteering	• Volunteering aids belonging • Identify people that speak different languages so they can be called upon for people accessing services • Establish an anonymous tip line for underreported crimes • Implement a one stop place for friends and family who lost loved ones
Work	• More work-related programs not just housing • Social enterprise programs hiring the unhoused for clean-up work and to build their confidence and sense of belonging in partnership with local business

Quotes:

The task of selecting quotes from the many pages of the consultation notes (over 200) was daunting. The quotes below in addition to those in the tables above are meant to give a flavour of what we heard when we met with people. They are provided in here in the order in which we encountered them.

The narrative gets blown up. [We] have had three violent instances and with Kenora being a small town the gossip gets going. We need to be conscious of what we are saying and stop exaggerating.

The people that are attracted to the services might not be the most wholesome but [in need of the services]. [We] see drug exchanges, people pushing shopping carts full of stuff, people shoplifting and going straight down to the Fellowship Centre, we see young girls getting picked up by guys. People see people passed out on the ground, needles all over the ground. People don't know how to react.

I talk to people downtown because everyone has a story

Gossip is that the KDSB has rent geared for seniors and multiple units are vacant in these properties. Let's get [seniors] moved and allow for more houses on the market. The waiting list on these houses is enormous. KDSB isn't getting these units ready for people to move in.

I am feeling very optimistic about the conversation that we have had – don't want to see any hostile architecture or things that are harmful to people – people deserve respect.

About 150-200 people in Kenora are out of control. It depends on who is jailed. They are all addicted, unhoused, not working. Increasingly so also kids. The most troublesome refuse to engage, want no change. [They are] often housed in shelters without any rules.

Children sleep all day including in hotels where they are exposed to drugs and pornography. Even when the police are called and they call child welfare, there is pressure to keep families together.

[Some services] have revolving doors. Sometimes I bring the same person [to them] several times a day. [...] I see the roots. Look at what worked for the ones that made it [out of homelessness] and duplicate that. Ask why are you downtown?

We are at a crossroads. We can't fix what we don't understand.

[We need] something more structured. The Fellowship Centre is a tear down by now and the district service board maybe needs to step up and fund something of that nature or re-birth the 24/7 warming and cooling centres. During Covid an apartment burned down and that brought many people to the street. WNHAC created isolation centres in hotels [...] it was a successful model (the health unit evaluated it).

Being able to access fitness everyday is a huge part of promoting my well being. Knowing I have a safe place to gain confidence, strength and a place where I can forget the rest of the world for a little while. When it was shut down for covid and the LCBO was open, it really showed where priorities are with the governments.

I think moving the LCBO to a different location is a good idea. I think selling alcohol in corner stores is a horrible idea. It will mean more people hanging out at more stores and making them LESS accessible for the rest of the population. The more places to purchase alcohol, the more places these people will be gathered, harassing more people and detouring more people from going into these stores.

People blow things out of proportion. Sometimes people are internally uncomfortable and might mistake that as safety issue.

Lots of people don't feel important or appreciated at their place of work. Need more money, vacation time to be approved. Some places won't offer full time so then people don't have benefits. And some places have no benefit to being a full-time employee anyhow.

Whose job is it to dismantle the harmful systems? Be explicit about the anti-oppressive and anti-racist approach of the committee. Show how they use their privilege to be good allies. Show how non-Indigenous peoples are sticking their neck out and are doing their own emotional work. The readiness of the community always goes both ways. Ask them to show the voices they represent and whose voices need to be amplified.

Sometimes if we look at something we cannot see the solutions. There is a lot of work in progress with the unhoused. But who is asking what THEY need to experience well-being.

We must set expectations to work together. It is not about equality but about equity. But that is not well understood. And often we hear that Indigenous peoples are "asking for too much". But a per capita allocation would not be equitable. We need to bring out some of these principles and bring out organizational leaders to speak with one voice.

If it's said 3 times it becomes the truth, if it's said 1000 times it becomes a part of the social fabric.

You know I don't think people wake up the morning and say I want to live like this. I mean there's underlying issues that are causing this.

On my licence plate back home, it says: best place on earth.

I went to take money out of a of a bank machine on Main Street and I had two people walking towards me, one on each side, but I've never been fearful of that before. It was just the fact that you hear so many stories that I was scared at that moment of withdrawing money. And like I said, they were just two random people, and it didn't matter what their appearance was or anything, I was just scared about it in that moment.

I know just an example from a couple months ago I worked at the hospital and there was a street person that that came in and he was medically discharged. And he was kicked out of detox. He wasn't allowed there anymore. So, you know, there were no safe places for him to go. So, he just stayed in the waiting room because it was still the cooler temperatures. And I just thought to myself like, there has to be a better system than this.

I think most people have been here, have been through some type of difficulty before and are drawn to this place for the light that shines in this area.

But you know that's my attitude, is make the laws a little stiffer and enforce them. And it doesn't matter who it is. If the law is broken, the law is broken. Because there are victims.

So often we don't ruffle feathers. So, we sort of gloss over it. And sometimes that's part of our job is to get under that skin and make people feel uncomfortable.

Racism still goes on. Not like when we drowned people in the lake but more the global racism that lives within the history of colonization including the old charity model and the notion that white people will fix the problems.

We hire consultants but we don't talk to people with lived and living experiences. Consult the leaders with the small "I".

What I love about Kenora is that Kenora tries

You are in nature, but you are moments away from civilization.

But there is a better feeling downtown today and certainly a lot more than there was 2 years ago when it was real bad. That doesn't happen my accident. There is work to make that happen.

On the walk back [from town] my grandchildren learned that people have to inject in different places of their body because they've used up the other spaces.

None of us are knocking it out of the park telling our [good] story. If we don't write the narrative, someone else will write it.

If you have focus on tourism, you can't have a care economy.

[Unhoused male hands consultant a letter at St Albans and it says:

Hi



KMF staff asked me to be part of your enquiry as to what would make Kenora a better place. I am 66 years old semi-retired professional that has lived and worked here from 1985 to late 2002 until Harper downsized me out of my job. I am homeless and have been so since 2018. In my opinion all Kenora needs is to be re-educated [because] there is too much stupidity here.

[He left his name and phone number]

Appendices

Appendix one: DIY guide



“Do It Yourself” Guide to Community Consultations

The goals of the consultations are:

1. To set a tone for collaboration by seeking participants’ insights and experiences in community safety and well-being.
2. To prioritize listening to and understanding of the lived and living experiences of the residents of Kenora and to create avenues for diverse perspectives to be heard. Special attention will be given to those that are and/or feel marginalized.
3. To harness community expertise and tap into relevant knowledge and experiences to explore potential solutions. These solutions can inform the actions to be recommended by the Advisory Committee.

Overview of Community Safety and Well-being Planning?

Municipalities in Ontario are mandated to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan. These plans are about more than just the absence of crime; they are about creating a community where everyone has a range of opportunities to grow, learn, play, work, and connect.

This is achieved through long-term, collaborative efforts that reduce risks and strengthen resiliencies and through employing evidence-informed approaches to address unique local circumstances. According to the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General, there are four key aspects of community safety and well-being work that should be considered in the planning process: **incidents response, risk reduction, prevention, and social development**. CSWB plans are supposed to be focused on the last three and are designed to complement enforcement methods. The goal is to reduce the number of incidents that create victimization and public insecurity. Simply put, CSWB plans emphasize **upstream** approaches to the prevention of crime, victimization, and fear of crime by preventing and reducing harms from occurring in the first place.

Here are some videos from other communities which you may want to preview or parts of which you may chose to share with participants either ahead of time or at the beginning of

the consultation meeting. These videos speak of CSWB work as well as definition of upstream efforts in other communities (please note that unless you own a YouTube Channel you will need to skip through the ads).

[Peel Region on CSWB planning](#)

[York region CSWB planning](#)

[WRCPC Upstream Prevention Video \(youtube.com\)](#)

Kenora's Community Safety and Well-being Plans

The City of Kenora has established a Crime Prevention and Community well-being Advisory Committee (from herein referred to as the Advisory Committee) to partner with community organizations and citizens to develop a Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Plan. The goal of the plan is to increase community safety and well-being for all people living in Kenora through working together to deal with issues such as: poverty, inequality, issues facing those struggling with mental illness or problematic substance use, houselessness, abuse of children and elders, fear of crime, business insecurity, among other community problems. The CSWB plan will bring attention to systemic issues which can go a long way to help address community safety in the long run.

Such efforts will also need to be balanced with more immediate interventions to prevent and reduce harm in the here and now.

Why Host Community Consultations?

The main goal of engaging with the community is to understand how people think and feel about safety and well-being in their community and what solutions they may have to address these challenges. But without an examination of data, plans easily become an opinion piece. Therefore, we have looked at data that is readily available (e.g. Census Canada), we have conducted a survey that had 1013 responses, and we are gathering data from organizations across the community through consultation. These consultations help us to develop a better knowledge of the perspectives and experiences of various groups in Kenora, particularly those who tend to have challenges related to community safety and well-being and/or are engaged in dealing with these challenges.

Why this DIY approach?

Certain groups may not feel comfortable or safe engaging with staff from the City of Kenora or the consultant with the city (More Better Solutions). Therefore, some consultations are best led by local partners and/or service providers such as yourself who already work with and deliver services and are connected to certain groups. Sharing the task of community consultations also allows us **to reach a much broader audience** than would be possible otherwise.

Facilitating a Community Consultation Session

Key ethical considerations

It is important to ensure that all participants in the consultations know that their participation is voluntary. Participants should also be made aware that only aggregate data will be shared beyond the consultation circle, i.e. no names will be shared by you, and no quotes will be attributed to any one person or shared in a way that it can be attributed to one person. The data will be analyzed in **terms of themes that emerge across groups** as well as experiences and **insights that may be specific to one population**. At all times it should be clear that participants can refrain from responding to a question. Participation of anyone under the age of 18 should be approved by a parent or caregiver either through a consent form from your organization⁵ OR, if applicable, through an existing agreement between the participants' parents/caregivers and your organization.

The topic of crime, victimization, and fear of crime is sensitive, and the well-being of participants always takes precedent over gathering the data. Whenever possible a trauma informed approach should be employed. This means:

- Acknowledging the intense need to have one's life experiences understood.
- Recognizing the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences among all people, including that many behaviours can be the result of these experiences.
- Understanding that being treated with kindness and respect and being empowered with choices is key in recovering from traumatic experiences.
- Providing any person that shows distress with a warm hand-over to a provider that can support them.

Trauma is an understandable reaction to an abnormal situation.

How to Prepare for the Consultation

1. Please read this guide in its entirety and do not hesitate to connect should you have any questions or concerns.
2. Secure a location/ space that is safe and confidential and maintains a sense of neutrality (for example, faith-based spaces are not neutral to some populations).
3. Provide refreshments, if possible, to increase a sense of comfort and being welcome.
4. If you are conducting a virtual session, make sure you send a link to participants several days ahead of time. Only record a session with permission and to support note taking and erase all recordings after the notes have been submitted.
5. Have someone with you that can take notes (on a flipchart for participants to see whenever possible)

⁵ If you don't have a consent form, one can be created for you.

6. Share the list of crisis services provided at the end with participants.
7. Consider accessibility challenges such as persons with disabilities, parents needing childcare, etc.

Facilitating the Consultation

Consultations may be one on one interviews or focus groups. Below is an agenda/ script that is meant to support you. However, please rely on your own style and creativity. This is NOT meant to box you in.

Kenora CSWB Community Consultations/Stakeholder Interviews Agenda (90 minutes maximum)

1. Welcome (Introduce yourself and your note taker and your connection to the Advisory Committee).
2. Land acknowledgement.
3. Introductions of participants
 - a. For professional groups name and organization
 - b. For persons with lived and living experiences first name only (allow them to skip)
4. Opening remarks (the remarks below are suggestions for you to adjust to your audience **but please don't skip the ethical considerations**)

Text

“The City of Kenora is developing a plan to increase the safety and well-being of everybody who lives here. Increasing community safety and well-being requires efforts from different areas in the city and the community to address issues like poverty, inequality, services for people who struggle with mental health or substance use, homelessness, disengagement from the community, violence against children, and other barriers.

As we develop the plan, we look at what currently exists and what people appreciate about their community. We will also identify challenges and needs that are not being met and finally we will talk about how those can be improved upon.

To help the City of Kenora understand what various groups and residents are experiencing we are hosting a series of consultations to hear diverse voices. This is an opportunity for you to share **your** insights and experiences as they relate to community safety and well-being. We ask everyone that we are meeting with the same questions.

- **Your participation is voluntary.**

- **You can choose not to respond to a question, and you can stop participating at any time.**
- **Everything you say will be anonymous. We will take notes and share them with the people who are writing the plan but in our reporting your name will not be associated with any of your responses.**

Our goal is to gain a better overall understanding of concerns related to well-being and safety in Kenora as well as find doable solutions. We can't promise that each recommendation will feature in the plan or that all concerns will be addressed, but we will do our best to make sure that your voice is heard and is being considered in the development of the plan.

A couple of ground rules might help us to move the conversation along:

- **Please help us ensure that everyone who wants to speak gets that opportunity and that no one voice dominates.**
- **Please help us keep *who says what* during the consultation confidential.**

Do you have any questions or concerns before we start?

The consultation is anticipated to not take more than 90 minutes in total".

End Text

The Consultation Questions

It is important that the questions are consistent across all consultations, but you can certainly leave room for input that you sense at the time is important to participants and which the questions don't get at. You can also use your knowledge of the data gathered so far to stimulate discussion. For example, you might point out that in the survey by far most respondents said they are prepared to support actions in their neighbourhood and then ask what those actions might look like.

The questions	Some potential prompts
What do you appreciate and enjoy about Kenora? What makes you feel safe? What promotes your well-being?	Locations Activities Programs Events Efforts by certain organizations or community leaders
In terms of your safety and well-being what concerns you in Kenora? What do you worry about?	Locations Times of day Actions taken by others. Things that they hear about and that worry them. Concerns for other populations (e.g., family, people they serve)
What are your ideas for improving community safety and well-being in Kenora? What can you contribute to community safety and well-being in Kenora?	This is often a challenging question because participants easily drift towards critiquing governments or (other) organizations and blaming people in power or blaming people at the margins. If that happens, try to redirect, and ask what the community can do or what specific organizations can engage in and above all what they (and their organization) can do. Have they heard of approaches that work? The more concrete the suggestions that you solicit, the better. What issue is the approach trying to address? How do they know it works? Which population is the approach for? What exactly needs to be done? What can THEY do that contributes to community safety and well-being? Are there unrealized opportunities that have not been implemented? Are there low hanging fruit?
As you thought about coming here today did you want to share something that we did not give you an opportunity to share?	This is where you can respond to some of the things that have been brought up to stimulate further thought. Or you can use the approach of “golden silence” and wait to see what rises to the top.

	Moments of silence in consultations are not bad they are just moments of silence. Quieter participants may just need a moment to gather their thoughts.
--	---

Wrap-up/Next Steps:

- Consider reflecting on a few things that you heard or some overall emerging themes.
- Thank them for their participation. Provide the option for them to leave contact information so they can be informed when the plan is being released (circulate a signup sheet).
- Ask if they know of others that should have been consulted and how they might be reached?
- Leave the door open to us adding consultations until the deadline of end of June 2024.
- Share with them next steps:
 - Over the summer all consultation data will be analyzed and compared to already gathered data.
 - In the fall, the Crime Prevention and Community Well-being Advisory Committee will review all data, determine emerging priorities and (whenever possible) designs actions.
 - The plan will be provided to Mayor and Council towards the end of the year for their endorsement upon which it will be released.
 - The plan will then be submitted to the Province of Ontario as per mandate.
 - The implementation of the plan is anticipated to start in January 2025 and be rolled out over three to four years with many opportunities for engagement.

Participants can keep in touch with developments between now and then via the city landing page: [Crime Prevention and Community Well-Being Advisory Committee - City of Kenora](#)

Adjournment:

Please ensure that if anyone showed signs of distress during the meeting that you stay behind and offer them the opportunity to debrief and provide them with support (including, if appropriate, the list of resources below).

Consultation notes

Notes should be as verbatim as possible without identifying participants. If you see a pattern of responses, it is ok to not repeat the wording but rather just check-mark how often it has been mentioned.

Appendix two: Overview of CSM project

Community Safety Monitoring (CSM) Research Brief

The purpose of this research is to assist with the development of a Canada wide community safety monitoring tool. Seeing as this project is centered in Canada, it is important that there is an explicit focus on Indigenous peoples as they are a unique part of the Canadian population. To develop this tool, we need to first determine indicators that can be used to monitor safety without perpetuating or causing harm to Indigenous populations or communities.

As such, we aim to work with Indigenous communities to identify indicators of safety from their perspective, which will directly inform the final community safety monitoring materials to be developed by the Canadian Centre for Safer Communities (CCFSC). We will engage with Indigenous communities to ensure that our research is done in an ethically responsible way. The results of this research will be used to inform the CCFSC safety monitoring tool and will be published for community use across Canada.

This research will be conducted through sharing circles, one on one interviews, or another method chosen by the community. For sharing circles, we aim to have about 6-9 participants and estimate that these circles will be about 2 hours long, but the timing will be flexible if need be. For interviews we aim to interview about 6 people and estimate that these will take about 1 hour each. This work will be done in a good way through genuine collaboration with communities. We also aim to ensure that this work is reciprocal; all data and results will be shared with the community, including the final product of the community safety monitor that can be used to enhance safety in the community.

This research is of interest to Public Safety Canada and Indigenous communities and can be used as a follow up on the safety plans which Public Safety Canada has previously developed with Indigenous communities. The monitoring tool developed can ultimately be used to monitor the progress of community safety plans to ensure that community safety is improving.

The sharing circles also lend themselves to gaining input into the development of community safety and Well-being Plans and can be incorporated into consultation efforts in the development of these plans.

Appendix three: Photo Voice Project overview and Flyer



Photo Voice Overview

What is a photo voice project?

Photo voice project is a participatory method used in social research and community development where individuals or groups use photography to capture images that represent their lived experiences, perspectives, and concerns. Participants are typically use smartphones to take photos of things that are meaningful. These photos are then used as prompts for discussion, storytelling, and advocacy. Through this process, participants can express their narratives, explore social issues, and amplify their voices within their communities.

What are the main goals of a photo voice project?

Photovoice has three main goals:

- (1) To help those who are often unheard gain a voice, enabling them to record and reflect on their experiences and their communities' conditions, both positive and negative.
- (2) To encourage critical consciousness. Through choosing, discussing, and reflecting on the photographs, the community can come to a clearer understanding of the circumstances and the economic, social, psychological, and political forces that shape their environment.
- (3) To bring about change that will improve conditions and enhance lives by reaching and influencing policy makers.

How might photo voice be used to create change?

There are several reasons why Photovoice can be a particularly powerful way to approach empowerment and advocacy.

- **The rewards of taking photographs are immediate.** A camera, especially a digital one, produces nearly instant results, thereby encouraging participants to continue.
 - **Photography is fun and creative.** Often, survival is the focus of people living in difficult circumstances. The opportunity to create art can be a powerful and fulfilling experience and can lead to viewing oneself in a different and more positive light. In addition, for many people, it opens the door to talent they didn't know they had.
 - **Taking photographs of familiar scenes and people can change participants' perceptions about their social and physical environment.** When they're forced to think about how they want to picture the scenes they're recording, participants themselves may start to see those scenes differently.
 - **Basic photography is easy to learn and accessible to almost everyone.** Anyone who can see and hold a camera, from children as young as four or five, to people with disabilities, to seniors, can take pictures. They may not be artistically excellent, but they will tell a story.
 - **"A picture is worth a thousand words."** Seeing what someone else sees is more powerful than being told about it. Effective advocacy conveys a need for change, and photos can almost always make a far better case than words alone.
 - **Images can be understood regardless of language, culture, or other factors.**
 - **Policy makers can't deny reality when it's staring them in the face.** It is often easy for policy makers to assume – or to claim – that not everyone has a meaningful contribution to make. Children and youth are most frequently discriminated against in this regard. When faced with photos policy makers must acknowledge the other reality.
-

What are the Stages of a photo voice approach?

1. **Planning and Preparation:** Define the objectives of the project, identify the participants, and secure necessary resources such as smart phones and incentives. Develop a timeline.
 2. **Participant Training:** Provide training to participants on photography techniques, ethical considerations, and the goals of the project. Empower them to use photography as a tool for expression and social change.
 3. **Photo Taking:** Participants are instructed to take photos that reflect their experiences, perspectives, and concerns. Encourage them to explore their communities and capture images that tell their stories. Encourage participants to submit their photos with a caption that explains it.
 4. **Selection:** Vet the photos submitted for meeting the guidelines.
 5. **Presentation:** Showcase the selected photos in exhibitions, presentations, or multimedia formats. Share the stories behind the images with a broader audience, including community members, policymakers, and stakeholders.
 6. **Reflection and Action:** Reflect on the insights gained from the project with policy makers.
 7. **Evaluation:** Evaluate the impact of the project by gathering feedback from participants and stakeholders. Assess how the photo voice project has contributed to raising awareness, building community connections, and fostering social change.
-

What do we need to consider in a photo voice project with children and youth

When conducting a photo voice project with children and youth, it's important to consider several factors to ensure their safety, well-being, and meaningful participation. Here are some key considerations:

1. **Informed Consent:** Obtain informed consent from both the participants and their parents or guardians, ensuring they understand the purpose of the project, how their photos will be used, and any potential risks involved.
 2. **Ethical Guidelines:** Adhere to ethical guidelines for working with children and youth, respecting their rights, privacy, and dignity throughout the project. Consider issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, and the use of sensitive imagery.
 3. **Participant Support:** Provide adequate support and guidance to participants, including training on photography techniques, ethical considerations, and digital literacy. Offer ongoing assistance and encouragement to ensure their engagement. .
 4. **Safety and Supervision:** Ensure the safety and supervision of children and youth during photo-taking activities, especially if they are exploring their communities independently. Establish clear guidelines for safe photography practices and provide adult supervision as needed.
 5. **Accessibility:** Make the project accessible to children and youth from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities or limited resources. Provide accommodations and support to ensure equitable participation for all participants.
 6. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Respect cultural norms, values, and perspectives when working with children and youth from different cultural backgrounds. Take into account their cultural context and experiences to avoid misinterpretation or unintended consequences.
 7. **Empowerment and Agency:** Empower children and youth to express themselves authentically through photography, allowing them to choose the subjects and themes that are meaningful to them. Foster their sense of agency and ownership over the project.
 8. **Feedback and Reflection:** Create opportunities for children and youth to provide feedback, reflect on their experiences, and actively participate in decision-making processes throughout the project. Encourage open dialogue and mutual respect among participants and facilitators.
 9. **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Build partnerships that enhance the project's impact and sustainability within the community.
 10. **Evaluation and Accountability:** Evaluate the outcomes and impact of the project, soliciting feedback from children, youth, and other stakeholders. Hold yourself accountable for upholding ethical standards and promoting the well-being of participants.
-

Here is a simple tutorial on photo voice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=muJo-0IEgkQ>

There are many more of this kind on the web.

Important things to instruct the participants with

We want to know from you how you see your community. We are especially interested in things you like about your community.

It is our hope to get as many photos as possible that we can share with the people who are responsible for writing a plan for Kenora.

Imagine you are telling a story of Kenora in pictures. Someone who has not been to Kenora may ask: What is it like living in Kenora? You can show them with an image, how you see our community.

But there are a few ground rules that we need you to respect so we can include your photo:

No selfies please! We cannot use photos that identify you and similarly if you take photos of others, they cannot be such that anyone can identify them either. It is likely best to focus on places and areas and objects.

While a photo is worth a thousand words, please submit your photo with a sentence or two that explains why you took the photo and what it says about the community.

We can only accept one photo per person. You may want to take several photos and then pick your favorite.

Logistics

You may want to have someone local who takes photos give some advice on good photography. There are some webcasts out there and the Canadian Center for Safer Communities did one, but I need to get their permission to share it with you.

Please don't forget about the permission slips as your agency needs them.

Include a clear outline of how participants can access the random draw for incentives.

Thank you!

AGES 12 TO 25

MY COMMUNITY, MY LENS

YOUTH PHOTO CONTEST



Brought to you by:



ENTER TO WIN ME!
\$300 VALUE

Show us what you love
about your community!

♥ Submit your photos at kenora.ca
by September 15, 2024



PLUS
BRANDED
ITEMS FROM
THE CITY
AND FIREFLY!

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