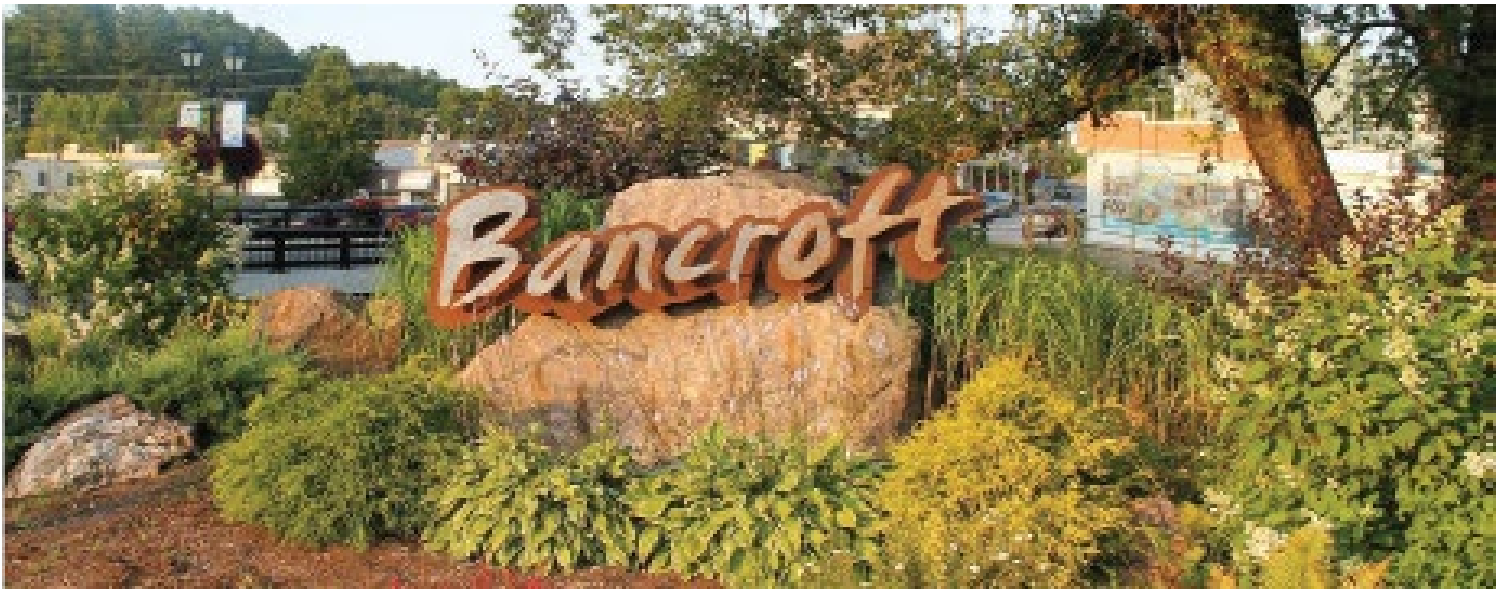




Our Shared Commitment

Town of Bancroft

Bancroft Community Safety and Well-being Plan



Approved By Council on April 10th, 2024.

Message from the Mayor

With this Plan, Council and I are united in striving to achieve safety and well-being for our local community. This being the first renewal of the Plan, we have developed upon the original by following these key principles:

- Success in maintaining Community Safety begins with improving the social networks that keep all constituents connected with each other, and connected with the supports and services that we all need access to when necessary;
- Safety and well-being are community-focused enterprises;
- Engagement and education are the most effective and efficient tools we have in improving the quality of life for our stakeholders.

Our Town is fortunate to have many committed and experienced human and social service professionals, representing a diverse range of agencies and organizations with even greater resources and experiences in their backgrounds. Implementation of this Plan will benefit from collaboration and information sharing between community agencies who are motivated to get involved with Bancroft's committee(s) and plan!

Our stakeholders in Bancroft are our greatest asset. Council, therefore, will do everything in its power to support any inquiries, consultations, or information sharing opportunities with them. We aim to become more familiar with the needs of the public by engaging stakeholders and have them become more familiar with us through outreach and engagement.

The purpose of this Plan is to build on these assets and community strengths to allow all who value Bancroft to live peacefully and healthily. Public awareness and wellness of every person in our community contributes to our collective well-being.

Council will continue to tirelessly advocate for vulnerable groups at upper levels of government to encourage more aid and resources be given to rural municipalities, including Bancroft. The safety and well-being of our Town is of high priority, and we are confident that by working together we can continue to improve for the benefit of all.

Signed: Paul Jenkins, Mayor

Executive Summary

This is the first update to our three-year Plan for safety and well-being within the Town of Bancroft. It results from a planning process that will next be renewed in 2027, and every three (3) years thereafter. While the broad goals of safety and well-being will remain constant for this Council as well as subsequent Councils, we know that the risk factors that can threaten those goals will change over time. Therefore, it is important to remain vigilant and responsive to the fluctuations of the ever-changing environment.

This renewed edition of a safety and well-being Plan, which continues to be entitled “Our Shared Commitment”, shines a light on various risk factors. The heart of this Plan is a process for tackling community problems through greater engagement. Many agencies and professionals in Bancroft and at our upper-tier levels have been tackling symptoms of these problems for years. Our Shared Commitment is designed to derive the value added of collaboration built on a foundation of experience. While all of our various levels of community agencies and governments will have differing levels of involvement, including the Town, we are all responsible for contributing to the safety and well-being of our own community.

The Town of Bancroft Council will continue to engage, share and empower our community to continue to connect and improve our communication with all those who are able to improve our Town and regional area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor.....	2
Executive Summary	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
Our Shared Commitment	5
The Town of Bancroft.....	5
Why is this Plan Important?	5
Socio-Economic Quick Facts	6
How Did We Get Started?.....	6
Strategies for Going Forward	7
Safety First Priorities	8
Our People Must Be Safe	9
Retail Property Security	9
Well-being Priorities	11
Social Determinants of Health	11
Well-being Priorities Being Addressed by Hastings County	13
Risk Mitigation	15
Communication and Transparency	15
Working Together	15
Co-ordination by Council.....	16
Laying Out the Work	17
Conclusion	17

Our Shared Commitment

All of the supporters of this Town of Bancroft plan share profound levels of commitment to the safety and well-being of all people, services, agencies, businesses, organizations, visitors, and neighbours of Bancroft. Additionally, all share in a commitment to achieving the goals of this plan equitably, transparently, sustainably, and collaboratively.

The Town of Bancroft

Bancroft is located in the heart of Ontario. Tucked away from the bustle of the big city but close enough to visit, the town is central to several mid-sized cities and approximately halfway between Toronto and Ottawa. Bancroft offers the tranquility of the Canadian Shield with all the amenities of a modern community and welcomes over 150,000 visitors annually from all over Canada and the world. It has an urban core that encompasses approximately ten percent of the incorporated area. The remaining 90 percent are largely undeveloped lands. The unique positioning of this urban center at the intersection of two major tourism transportation corridors which extend in all four directions, makes Bancroft a natural stop for the traveling public.

Bancroft has become the community of choice for many people who would like to leave the busy city life. Historically fueled by the mining and lumber industries, the region offers residents and visitors access to lakes, forests, parks, golf courses, theatres and museums, cultural and sporting events, recreation trails, well-established municipal services, K-12 and post-secondary education, modern health care facilities, and a thriving downtown core with ample opportunity for further economic development. With a regional population of more than 40,000 people, Bancroft is far more than a typical small town. The urban center performs a significant function as the local employment destination (in-commuting), but experiences only limited out-commuting. The in-commuting population contribute significantly to increased service demands on the Town.

Why is this Plan Important?

The Town of Bancroft is a unique regional hub, providing services to the residents of a large geographic area, encompassing seven municipalities of northern Hastings County, a sizeable seasonal population plus tourists, and portions of Haliburton and Renfrew Counties. The Town provides employment, education, retail shopping, and vital services to a much larger population than its own and sees a significant rise in daily visitors from May to September. The Town of Bancroft is the only urban center within the Bancroft Ontario Provincial Police Detachment area which encompasses eight municipalities and is the primary commercial service center for a significant regional population. With Bancroft hosting over 3,000 jobs, and an anticipated 3,600 by the time Our Shared Commitment receives another update, as well as an additional 150,000 visitors annually there is certainly a unique niche and market in this area which also lends itself to unique challenges!

Socio-Economic Quick Facts

- Hastings County is largely made up of older adults with 43% of the population being over 55 years old.
- A further 20% of the population under the age of 19.
- We anticipate a projected 2% population increase in the Town of Bancroft between 2023 and 2030.
- 48% of the population report no education or only a high school diploma;
- Household income is 38% lower than the provincial average.
- The Town of Bancroft's average wage is \$26.27 per hour with the provincial average being \$31.17 per hour, meaning we are 16% lower than the provincial average.
- 24% percent of the employed population are in part-time positions;
- 20% of youth (under 18) are living in low-income homes.
- 14% of our population self-identify as Metis or First Nations

These are just a few of the challenges this Bancroft community safety and well-being plan is designed to address.

How Did We Get Started?

In February 2013, Council of the Town of Bancroft unanimously passed a resolution declaring safety and well-being¹ a priority and set forth to develop a strategy to meet those goals. That same declaration was renewed by the new Council in April 2015. Town staff and members of Council, through a Policing Committee, undertook consultations with the County of Hastings, local human and social service providers, local businesses, the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and citizens from Bancroft and the region.

All of those consultations demonstrated interest and support for this effort. Additionally, they permitted the planning team to gather anecdotal information, social services data, and police calls for service data in order to discern some of the safety and well-being priorities on which this plan should focus – at least for the foreseeable future.

Now that we are at our first renewal, Our Shared Commitment will anchor all municipal safety and well-being policies, initiatives, and activities. It will help guide future

¹The Ontario Working Group on Collaborative Risk-driven Community Safety and Well-being has defined “community safety and well-being” as: Multi-sector, collaborative efforts to identify local priority risks and implement evidence-based collaborative strategies to address these risks and increase protective factors that will make the community safer and healthier for all.

municipal planning. Ultimately it is designed to stimulate higher levels of civic engagement and pride in the creation of a more positive and cohesive community that is thriving and growing. Specific goals for this current Plan are as follows:

- **Improved Access to Information:** Information sharing and transparency (Implementing tools such as newsletters)
- **Improved Engagement:** Receive more information from the public through stakeholder engagement and initiatives
- **Pinpoint the Source of Change:** Head advocacy for vulnerable groups through campaigns directed to upper levels of government who are the primary source for funding, direction and management of programs.

Strategies for Going Forward

The Town of Bancroft Council will need to take an active role in working with our community groups and stakeholders to achieve these goals. Our Shared Commitment will also inform other planning, policy, and programming initiatives of Council and municipal governance, e.g. public works initiatives and economic development planning. Once annually, Council will review a year of work toward these goals; and help re-direct community safety and well-being actions for the year ahead.

While Council is best situated to coordinate and plan for community safety and well-being through community partnerships, social policy, special programs, and other initiatives within Bancroft, it is important to acknowledge the regional context and its implications for what we do in the Town. For example, there is net in-commuter traffic every workday. Summertime sees a huge increase in traffic and trade on the streets of Bancroft as cottage owners and tourists from the entire region and beyond come here for products, services, and recreation. Our local Ontario Provincial Police detachment provides its services throughout the region and we are seeing changes in the way policing is managed in our community through the use of Boards.

Bancroft's community safety and well-being goals cannot be achieved by Council, or any other agency or organization, acting alone. While we look to other levels of government who have more direct sources of changes, through funding and programs means, we recognize that this is a **shared commitment**. It is based on the principles and practices of shared responsibility, respectful, and transparent relationships, and collaboration toward mutual ends. Therefore, Our Shared Commitment is predicated on the following four strategies for increasing safety and well-being for everyone in Bancroft:

- **Education and Public Awareness:** It is difficult to engage people in the safety and well-being enterprise if they are not sufficiently informed about the incidence

and prevalence of threats to safety and well-being; protective factors that can be put in place to deal with those threats; and other people, agencies, and community-based organizations that are collaborating to get good things done. Therefore, all work toward the goals of this Plan will be done openly and transparently through effective communication partnerships with local public media.

- **Community Partnerships:** Knowledge sharing, and effective communication are major pain points for all agencies. It can be difficult to see the broader picture and make an effort to break silos – however our success depends on it. Together with those agencies in our community who see and act on issues within the Town, we can make a stronger contribution through offering a platform for information sharing. We also have opportunities for feedback from our partners who can provide information on how we can better offer services to our community or what opportunities exist for change.
- **Public Policy and Social Programming:** It remains that both Town and County level councils will need to continue to invest in community safety and well-being by responding to emerging needs to initiate new (or adjust old) public policies to maximize their effects on safety and well-being. A key strategy for achieving the goals of this plan will be to support other agencies and organizations in obtaining resources and implementing programs that promote safety in our Town, where possible.
- **Risk Intervention and Mitigation:** Risk is inevitable. While we spend time, resources, and energy to prevent or mitigate difficult situations, we recognize that harm is possible, despite our best efforts. It remains a priority in Our Shared Commitment to better anticipate situations, triage them, and mount collaborative interventions that will mitigate them – thereby reducing the chances of harms being realized, or the demand for emergency responses from those agencies which specialize in them.

Safety First Priorities

Collaboration is defined by the Province, through their external and public facing supports as individuals, agencies or organizations, working together for a common purpose; acknowledging **shared responsibility** for reaching consensus in the interest of mutual outcomes; contributing complementary capabilities; willing to learn from each other; and benefiting from diverse perspectives, methods and approaches to common problems.

The key element is the identification of a common purpose. This can come by way of identification of groups and populations that are vulnerable to risk, implementation of strategies which protect vulnerable groups from those risks, and through informed

decision making and information empowerment of those groups. This section of Our Shared Commitment highlights some basic strategies.

Our People Must Be Safe

Many risk factors can make people unsafe. Traffic flow in the downtown core is one that constantly challenges municipal public works and the Ontario Provincial Police. Prioritization of the safety of our youth is always a concern, as is fire – whether it be in the home, business, or in our own backyard. Municipal governance, business owners, public agencies, and homeowners usually implement a safety-first strategy.

Through analytics provided by the Ontario Provincial Police, we have identified factors we see most often in calls-for-service (CFS). The top 6 reasons, accounting for a combined total of 20% or more of our calls for service are:

- Trespassing
- Domestic Disturbance
- Family and Neighbour Disputes
- Level 1 Assault (typically no weapon, or bodily harm)
- Theft under \$5,000

While the vast majority of these are not easily solved, we can use these statistics to drive what information, legislation, and advocacy needs to be done to improve our CFS and create a safer community for our families.

Retail Property Security

Deriving from our CFS information – we can see a significant amount of risk comes from thefts. In prior consultation with downtown core retailers, it was revealed that many suffer significant losses from theft of their products. One retailer reported that janitorial staff collected up to 30 empty blister packs every night after the store closed. Grocers reported losing high-end steaks and other expensive products. Ontario Provincial Police data confirmed these reports in previous plans; and police investigations showed that many of the stolen goods were traded in the southern part of the County to support individuals' addictions.

That observation leads us to acknowledge that threats to people's personal or property safety can be quite complex. For example, a store owner may be able to secure their products better; but there is not much they can do about the addictions that drive theft in the first place. That is a bigger and more complex problem; and it too must be dealt with. We will look at that in the next section of this plan. But for now, we will focus on making retail property as secure as possible; and reducing the demand for calls for emergency assistance to retailers.

Police data is not specific, but does indicate that the following retail property security issues are present:

- Theft;
- Fraud;
- Parking lot motor vehicle collisions;
- False alarms;
- Break and enters; and,
- Mischief.

The table which follows itemizes specific protective factors that are designed to deal with these safety risk factors identified above.

Protective Factors for Community Safety

Risks & Strategic Initiatives	Education and Public Awareness	Community Partnerships	Public Policy & Social Programming	Risk Intervention & Mitigation
Harms Against Persons: Landlord-Tenant Disputes Domestic or Family & Neighbour Disputes Bullying	Increase public awareness about: Types and frequency of domestic disputes and disturbances Sources of assistance and supports Relationship to other risk factors like addictions, mental health, and poverty	Source information from community partners which can be shared through social media channels. Find community partners who may be interested in providing information through widespread notices or campaigns to help families identify risk and mitigate issues before they occur.	Review amendments to property standards or discuss the opportunities that exist for rental property laws. Have the committee consult with police on ways to reduce repeat occurrences.	Strengthen by-laws which could cause sources of dispute through recommendations at a committee level Promote ongoing campaigning and discourse between the public and agencies

Retail Property Security:	Public awareness about the incidence of theft in the downtown core:	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) for retailers via the Ontario Provincial Police	Traffic reviews for parking lots	Committee recommended changes to signage and community feedback and consultation
Theft			Signage & sign by-laws	
Fraud				
Vehicle accidents	Types and frequencies	Store security training for floor staff	Routine inspections from our Fire Dept. or Building Dept. (as applicable)	Promote ongoing campaigning and discourse between the public and agencies
False alarms	Prevention initiatives		& engagement with the OPP	
Break & Enters	What to look for	Promotion of alarm systems: purchase, installation, maintenance, and use		
Mischief	Who to report to			
	Lock-it-or-lose-it			

Well-being Priorities

Social Determinants of Health

Safety is an important challenge and one we can meet with the application of controls like traffic control devices, signage, smoke alarms, lighting, public alerts, and advisories, etc. Well-being, on the other hand, is more challenging because it drives to the core, underlying, causes of risk factors, anti-social behaviour (like disputes and mischief), and crime (like shoplifting to support addictions). These underlying causes are known in the research as “social determinants of health”⁵ and they include such factors as: access to income; education; employment and job security; safe and healthy working conditions; early childhood development; food security; accessible, affordable, quality housing; social inclusion; cohesive social networks; and accessible health services.

Risk factors that threaten the social determinants of health – and hence the well-being of the people of Bancroft – include factors like poverty, addictions, sub-standard housing, and houselessness, etc. Priority well-being risk factors include:

- **Use & Abuse of Addictive Substance:** pharmaceuticals, alcohol and opiates; trafficking; and possession;
- **Mental Health:** depression, anger, and anxiety disorders;

- **Housing:** insufficient low-income housing stock; inaccessible low-income housing; sub-standard quality of housing; houselessness and near-houselessness; and,
- **Poverty:** underemployment and unemployment; poor access to income and social supports.

While the Town of Bancroft does not have the resources to address these risks, nor is our level of government the primary governing body for these risks, we will continue to inform constituents and amplify the work Hastings County is doing to address regional issues of addictions, mental health, housing, and poverty. We aim to work within our scope and scale but provide meaningful feedback and opportunities for collaboration with our County-level government.

Through changes to Policing Boards, though not explicitly a social determinant, does impact who and how governing bodies oversee policing in own local community. They contribute to their community's safety and well-being by providing communication, feedback, and monitoring tools to make sure the community can receive the appropriate policing it needs. It is also a valuable feedback tool which we can use to provide information and receive updates from various levels.

⁵ The Ontario Working Group on Collaborative, Risk-Driven Community Safety (OWG) has defined the “social determinants of health” as: Protective factors such as access to income, education, employment and job security, safe and healthy working conditions, early childhood development, food security, quality housing, social inclusion, cohesive social safety network, health services, and equal access to all of the qualities, conditions, and benefits of life without regard to any socio-demographic differences.

Well-being Priorities Being Addressed by Hastings County

- For Informational Purposes Only -

Risks & Strategic Initiatives	Education and Public Awareness	Community Partnerships	Public Policy & Social Programming	Risk Intervention & Mitigation
<p>Addictions:</p> <p>Pharmaceuticals, alcohol, opiates</p> <p>Trafficking</p> <p>Possession</p>	<p>Public awareness campaigns (partnership with public media and Hastings Prince Edward Public Health) re: drug safety:</p> <p>Disposal of unused drugs</p> <p>Paraphernalia in public spaces</p> <p>Prevention initiatives</p>		<p>Anti-addictions strategies</p> <p>-Advocacy</p> <p>-Promotion and increased access to treatment</p> <p>-Harm reduction</p> <p>-Early intervention and family supports</p> <p>-Enforcement</p>	<p>Protocols for emergency management, including “situation tables”</p> <p>CRISIS Response Team</p> <p>IMPACT Team</p>
<p>Mental health:</p> <p>Depression</p> <p>Anxiety</p> <p>Aggression</p>	<p>Public awareness about the value of:</p> <p>Nutrition and exercise</p> <p>Mental Health and awareness</p> <p>Promotion of 811 and similar services</p>	<p>Professionals screening and referral for addictions and mental health</p> <p>Organizing and hosting parenting education</p> <p>Increasing youth access to mentoring and recreation</p>	<p>Positive parenting training for first-time parents</p> <p>Youth mentoring</p> <p>Youth recreation</p>	<p>Protocols for emergency management, including “situation tables”</p> <p>CRISIS Response Team</p> <p>IMPACT Team</p>

<p>Housing:</p> <p>Insufficient low-income housing stock</p> <p>Affordability: rent, hydro, water</p> <p>Poor access to housing: information, qualifications, deposit</p> <p>Persons who are unhoused</p>	<p>Discussion and surveys of unhoused persons to learn about barriers to adequate housing</p> <p>Sustainable housing strategies</p> <p>Outreach and social programs</p>	<p>Social support agencies collaborate in reducing risks of harm and victimization associated with barriers to housing</p> <p>Inform policy decisions at a Provincial level</p> <p>Share research, data, and information on the nature and scope of the unhoused problem</p>	<p>Inform and advise on the development of favourable housing standards, programs, and by-laws.</p>	<p>Housing strategies, implementation of Provincial legislation and improvement of building processes and efficiencies</p>
<p>Poverty:</p> <p>Under-employment and Unemployment</p> <p>Malnutrition</p>	<p>Hastings Prince Edward Public Health bulletins and guides for nutrition and improvement of habits.</p>	<p>Social assistance and anti-poverty agencies discuss and improve gaps, overlaps, and inconsistencies in policies, programs, and resources</p> <p>Improving access to services and supports</p>	<p>Align County and Municipal economic development strategy and plans.</p>	

Risk Mitigation

“Risk mitigation” is a reference to measures taken to minimize the chances that a person, family or even location that is at severe risk of experiencing harms will do so.

The Government of Ontario defines risk mitigation as planning in the area of prevention involving proactively implementing evidence-based situational measures, policies or programs to reduce locally identified priority risks to community safety and well-being before they result in crime, victimization and/or harm.

Risk mitigation is a relatively new process for many Ontario municipalities. It is predicated on the notion that front-line workers from a lot of human and social service agencies can recognize when someone is particularly vulnerable to imminent risks and harms; and it encourages those front-line workers to collaborate in measures to reduce those risks. The net result of risk mitigation is fewer harms or victimization; and lower demand or costs for emergency response – both of which are primary goals of Our Shared Commitment.

The fifth column in the previous tables highlights risk mitigation strategies implemented through our upper-tier government at Hastings County. While several changes have been implemented over the past few years, it is evident that working in collaboration with our upper tier in a way which is sustainable for the residents of Bancroft should be prioritized. Bancroft has several alternative approaches to risk mitigation—many of which are effectively implemented and demonstrated throughout Ontario, however it remains that the vast majority of this work is to be completed, funded and maintained by our County.

It is also important to note that mitigation can be completed in a privacy-protected fashion within the constraints and permissions of current provincial privacy legislation. Ontario’s Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has declared that current legislation need not be a barrier to effective risk mitigation. Any risk mitigation strategy which Bancroft implements will maximize privacy protection.

Communication and Transparency

Column two of the previous tables highlights a lot of communication, education, and public awareness activities. The Town of Bancroft desires to engage citizens, businesses, agencies, and organizations to make everyone safer and healthier in Bancroft. As such, we are committed to an open and transparent communication strategy.

Working Together

The Town of Bancroft Council has declared their highest priority being the safety and well-being of all its citizens, businesses, organizations, tourists, and visitors. Council will devote its attention, priorities, and resources to this goal. But Council also recognizes that to be successful this must be a community enterprise

The Government of Ontario defines “collaboration” as individuals, agencies, or organizations, working together for a common purpose; acknowledging shared responsibility for reaching consensus in the interest of mutual outcomes; contributing complementary capabilities; willing to learn from each other; and benefiting from diverse perspectives, methods, and approaches to common problems.

Of course, that is easier said than done; especially in this day of differing enabling legislation, technical specialization, and competition among agencies for scarce public resources. Notwithstanding, Council remains committed to the principles of collaboration. Our intent is to derive success from collaboration that includes:

- Experience from community partnerships;
- Leadership and advocacy for the value of collaboration from those who have successfully done it;
- Knowledge of each other’s roles, responsibilities, resources, and limits in resources;
- Mutual respect among all agency frontline participants, and among their supervisors; and,
- Shared contact information and open access among frontline participants

Ultimately success in implementing Our Shared Commitment hinges on the success of all its agencies, organizations, businesses, citizens, and visitors in communicating effectively and using our existing resources and channels to allow change.

Co-ordination by Council

The Town of Bancroft Council recognizes that one of its unique capabilities and responsibilities in this enterprise is that of leveraging technical assistance, resources, and political support from the County of Hastings – and its entire affiliated human and social service providers.

The Town of Bancroft Community Safety and Well-being Committee will provide leadership and co-ordination for implementation of Our Shared Commitment. These responsibilities shall include (but not be limited to):

- Identifying, recruiting, and supporting community members as part of the committee;
- Supporting the creative efforts of community partners in engaging others through coordinating and liaising with other related initiatives that serve Bancroft residents and the broader region
- Synchronizing municipal plans, programs, activities and initiatives with safety and well-being priorities;
- Monitoring and evaluating challenges and progress

- Maintaining an open and transparent relationship with the businesses, organizations, and citizens of Bancroft about the work of Our Shared Commitment through an effective partnership with independent communicators and local public media; and,

In 2027, the Bancroft Community Safety and Well-being Committee will renew these planning efforts for another cycle.

Laying Out the Work

The key drivers of this plan will be the members of the Bancroft Community Safety and Well-being (BCSWB) Committee, constituents, and community agencies. Council's ongoing role will largely be limited to encouraging, aiding, and supporting the work of the BCSWB Committee. One or more members of municipal Staff will be designated as the conduit for channeling Council direction and support.

Council will endeavor to support agencies in obtaining financial resources by supporting grant applications through letters of support for related projects which aim to improve community safety and/or well-being.

Council's Community Safety and Well-being Committee will meet monthly—at which time it will be appropriate for members of Council to not only receive updates on the status of the BCSWB Committee, but also look for opportunities to strengthen and support their work; as well as facilitate broader communication between Council and the public. This Committee will also be the primary avenue for information about the status of the BCSWB Committee to the Town of Bancroft Council.

Conclusion

This plan lays the groundwork for undertaking a wide range of community and capacity building activities that will help to build a better Bancroft. Implementation of this Plan will benefit most from collaboration and a diverse range of agencies and organizations working together to shape a community of which we can all be proud.