



Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

2021 – 2025

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Community Profile	4
What is Community Safety and Well-Being?	5
Reason for Developing a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan	6
Planning Framework	7
Alignment with District of Muskoka Strategic Priorities	8
Consultation Strategy	8
Risk Factors Identified.....	9
Areas of Focus	12
Moving Forward: Implementation Plan	13

Acknowledgements

The District of Muskoka's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan was developed through the contributions of the following individuals and organizations:

John Klinck	District Chair
Graydon Smith	Mayor, Bracebridge
Paul Kelly	Mayor, Gravenhurst
Peter Koetzier	Mayor, Township of Georgian Bay
Phil Harding	Mayor, Township of Muskoka Lakes
Terry Glover	Mayor, Township of Lake of Bays
Nancy Alcock	Deputy Mayor, Huntsville
Steve Clement	Councillor, Chair Health Services Committee
Norm Barrette	Commissioner of Health Services
Jackie Mattice	Director, Programs (Housing Division)
Cheryl Faber	Director, Programs (Administration)
Lisa Marden	Director of Planning
Jeff McWilliam	Chief, Paramedic Services and Emergency Management
Darcy Medland	Commander, Community Paramedicine
Michelle Russell	Manager, Strategies and Initiatives
Heather Elliott	Manager, Children and Seniors Programs
Mark Misko	Director Engineering and Transportation
Christy Doyle	Director, Environmental and Watershed Programs
Kevin Boyle	Climate Change Coordinator
Michael Burton	Detachment Commander, Bracebridge OPP
John-Paul Graham	Detachment Commander, Huntsville OPP
Sam Bigley	Constable, OPP
Warden Germain	Beaver Creek Institution
Chief Medley	Muskoka Fire Services, Bracebridge
Chief Collins	Muskoka Fire Services, Huntsville/Lake of Bays
Chief Van Dam	Muskoka Fire Services, Georgian Bay
Chief Cayley	Muskoka Fire Services, Gravenhurst
Chief Murrell	Muskoka Fire Services, Muskoka Lakes
Natalie Bubela	CEO, Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC)
Wes Hahn	Director, Trillium Lakelands District School Board
Wade Durham	Chief Operating Officer, Ornge
Christian Melis	Investigations Manager, Ornge

The District of Muskoka's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan was developed through the contributions of the following individuals and organizations:

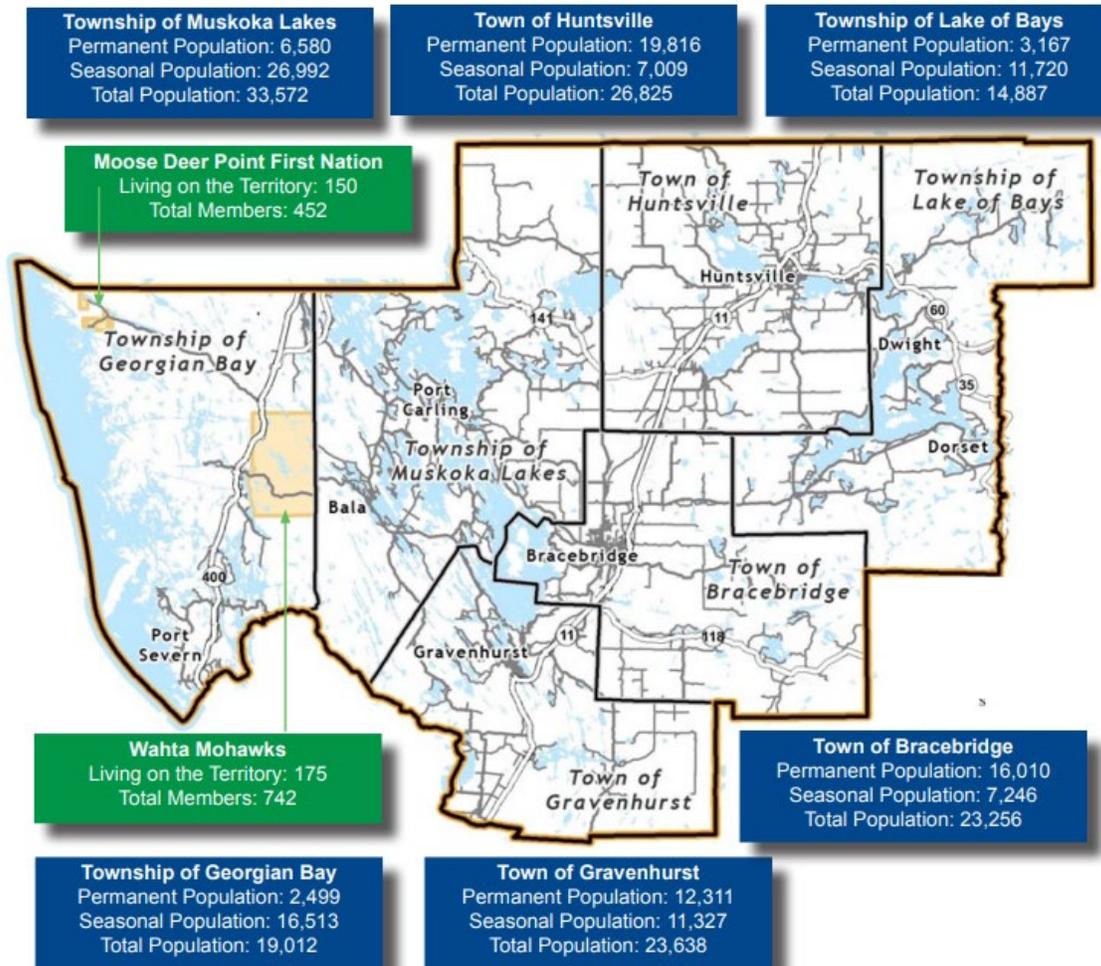
Algonquin Family Health Team
Alzheimer's Society Muskoka
Closing the Gap
Canadian Mental Health Association, Muskoka-Parry Sound
Cottage Country Family Health Team
Community Living Huntsville
Georgian Bay Association
HANDS the Family Help Network
Health Link
Honey Harbour Association
Lake of Bays Association
MacTier Food Bank
Manna Food Bank (Bracebridge)
MPS Sexual Assault Services
Muskoka and Area Ontario Health Team (MAOHT)
Muskoka Community Foundation
Muskoka Employment Partnership
Muskoka Lakes Association
Muskoka Victims' Services
North Muskoka Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic
Ryde Community Co-op
Salvation Army (Huntsville)
Muskoka Women's Advocacy Group

The District of Muskoka would also like to thank approximately 240 members of the community who either participated in a community input session or submitted feedback through an online survey.

Community Profile

The District of Muskoka spans over approximately 4,765 square kilometers and is comprised of six Area Municipalities – three Towns and three Townships - as well as two Indigenous Communities.

Muskoka is home to approximately 63,290 year-round residents and 83,310 seasonal residents. More than 3.2 million tourists visit the region each year. The influx of seasonal and tourist populations poses unique challenges and opportunities for the District, which were taken into account while developing the Plan.



“Permanent Population”: based on the Statistics Canada Census (2016). It includes totals for Moose Deer Point; Wahta Mohawk Territory is excluded because of an improper census count.

“Estimated Seasonal Population”: Data extracted from District of Muskoka 2017 Second Home Study

The [Economic Development and Community Profile \(2019\)](#) and [2021 District of Muskoka Fast Facts](#) report provide a snapshot of the region’s attributes and add context to the findings of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

What is Community Safety and Well-Being?

The Solicitor General defines community safety and well-being as:

“... the ideal state of a sustainable community where everyone is safe, has a sense of belonging, opportunities to participate and where individuals and families are able to meet their needs for education, health care, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.”

A Community Safety and Well-Being Plan is therefore a commitment to work towards improved social outcomes for residents by addressing local needs and risk factors. It should be a living document that is reviewed and amended in frequent intervals to:

- Support ongoing, collaborative relationships with community groups and service providers;
- Identify new and/or evolving needs and gaps in the community;
- Ensure action plans remain relevant and effective and amend action plans when community needs change;
- Support strategic decision making, system planning and resource allocation.

Municipalities are encouraged to leverage the strength of existing programs, services or agencies/organizations in the community and beyond to implement activities that are proven to achieve results and improve the lives of those they serve.

Reason for Developing a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Municipalities are required to develop and implement a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan as legislated by Bill 175, Safer Ontario Act (2018). This requirement came into effect to reduce the volume of calls fielded by police services for medically and/or socially complex needs that do not involve chargeable offences.

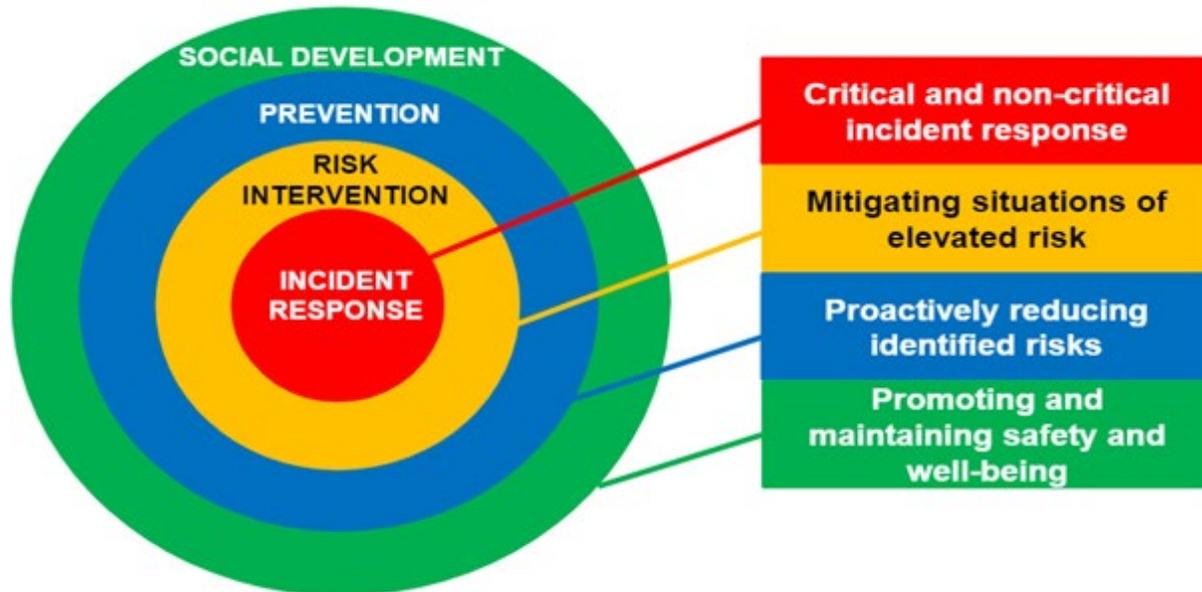
Municipalities must consult with various community stakeholders to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery is considered and that vulnerable residents receive “the right response, at the right time, and by the right service provider.”

Collaborative, inter-sectoral planning is essential for the development of a community safety and well-being plan because it encourages:

- Enhanced collaboration among sectors;
- Increased understanding of risk and vulnerable groups;
- Increased engagement of those with lived experience;
- Increased awareness and access to services;
- Transformation of service delivery;
- Better coordination of services for those with complex needs;
- Stronger families and healthy childhood development;
- Healthier, more productive individuals that positively contribute to the community;
- Enhanced feelings of safety and social inclusion;
- Identification of trends, gaps, priorities and successes through data sharing; and
- Reduced investment in, and reliance on, incident response.

Planning Framework

The goal of community safety and well-being planning is to examine and address the root cause of issues rather than managing symptoms. To support this outcome, the Ministry of the Solicitor General provided municipalities with a planning framework that outlines four areas of focus.



- 1. Social Development:** addressing underlying causes of social issues through upstream approaches that promote and maintain individual and community wellness. Strategies need to be put in place that target the root of these issues.
- 2. Prevention:** applying proactive strategies to known and identified risks that are likely to result in harm to individuals or communities if left unmitigated.
- 3. Risk Intervention:** identifying and responding to situations of acutely elevated risk and mobilizing immediate interventions before an emergency or crisis-driven response is required.
- 4. Incident response:** situations requiring immediate and reactionary responses, usually by first responders or other crisis-driven services.

The framework supports the development of strategies that are preventative as opposed to reactive to ensure services are delivered efficiently, effectively and sustainably.

Alignment with District of Muskoka Strategic Priorities

The District of Muskoka’s strategic vision is based on five priority areas intended to help manage the legacy of a healthy Muskoka by protecting the natural environment, driving a vibrant economy and enhancing the inclusiveness of its caring community.

The five priority areas are:

Priority Area	Goal
Natural Environment	Continue the stewardship of our natural environment - especially water and natural areas - so that they are protected for the values they provide including support for resilient, diverse ecosystems and a vibrant economy.
Governance	Provide responsive and efficient government by demonstrating leadership in transparency, excellence, accountability, fiscal responsibility, good governance, community engagement, and continuous improvement in our program and service delivery.
Economy	Drive a vibrant regional economy by collaborating with others to identify and take advantage of opportunities to create a positive business environment.
Infrastructure	In a fiscally responsible manner, provide safe and reliable public infrastructure systems to connect and support all communities across Muskoka.
Community	Ensure that all of Muskoka’s communities are complete, safe, inclusive, accessible, supportive and foster healthy living.

The risk factors and action plan associated with the District’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan are well aligned with the five priority areas and existing initiatives that are in various stages of implementation. Where possible, the Plan will reference these initiatives and provide associated updates as part of implementation reporting.

Consultation Strategy

The District of Muskoka relied on a variety of consultation methods to obtain feedback from as many community stakeholders as possible. These methods included:

- Key Informant Interviews** – 36 interviews were conducted including elected officials from each area municipality, emergency services, local school board and cottage associations. Interviews were requested with additional stakeholders but could not be accommodated during the consultation period due to scheduling limitations. These interviews will be conducted during implementation efforts to ensure actions are prioritized appropriately.

- **Focus Groups** – 4 conducted including representatives from primary care and each emergency service.
- **Community Input Sessions** – 2 virtual events hosted via Zoom.
- **Community Survey** – 234 responses received via the Engage Muskoka platform. Submissions capture the perspectives of various age cohorts and are reflective of both permanent and seasonal residents from all six area municipalities.
- **Service Provider Survey** – participation by 22 community providers
- **Client Experience Survey** – 17 responses received specific to patient satisfaction with service delivery and quality of care.
- **Youth Survey** – 4 responses received. Timing of survey coincided with back-to-school activities and is partly attributed to low response rate. Future updates of the Plan will aim to include a review of school board administered survey results related to safety and well-being within schools.

Various resources were referenced in addition to the consultation feedback when developing the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. Resources include, but are not limited to:

- existing strategies and community-based assets;
- local data provided by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, emergency service; providers and community support service providers;
- Muskoka GeoHub; and
- Statistics Canada.

Risk Factors Identified

Risk factors are conditions that reduce community safety and well-being because they put people at greater risk of harm. The identification of risk factors in Muskoka allows for the development of focused action plans that collectively form the District's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

The following risk factors were identified through consultation with stakeholders:

Area of Concern/Risk	# Stakeholders Identified Risk	Key Informants	Service Providers	Clients	Residents (Permanent)	Residents (Seasonal)	Youth*
1. Patient navigation and mental health/addiction services	6	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. Affordable housing	5	x	x	x	x		x
3. Affordable childcare	4	x	x	x	x		
4. Public transportation	4	x	x		x		x
5. Affordable and reliable internet access	4	x	x		x	x	
6. Income and food security	4	x	x		x		x
7. Stable employment opportunities and labour force	3	x			x		x
8. Water safety	3	x			x	x	
9. Lack of primary care physicians	3	x	x			x	
10. Fragmented services & infrastructure issues	2	x	x				
11. Environment/Climate Change	2	x				x	
12. Alcohol and/or drug use	2			x		x	
13. Homelessness	2		x	x			
14. Human trafficking	2	x	x				
15. Opioid overdoses	2	x	x				
16. Road safety for students walking to/from school	1						x

17. Services for gender-based violence	1		x				
18. Services for seniors	1			x			
19. Equity and inclusion	1					x	

* Youth category includes youth survey results and information gathered from child based service providers

Action plans are under development or in the process of being implemented for 11 of the 18 areas of concern identified above. Future updates of the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will reflect on the success of these initiatives and their impact on the community based on the goals identified.

The following table identifies the Area of Concern/Risk including the associated Action Plan or Proposed Action:

Area of Concern/Risk	Action Plan/Proposed Action
Patient navigation and mental health/addiction services	Muskoka and Area Ontario Health Team (MAOHT) - Patient Navigation Task Force
Affordable housing & Homelessness	District of Muskoka 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2020)
Affordable childcare	Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement (2022) allowing for \$10/day childcare. The District is navigating the logistics associated with the agreement and disbursement of funds to eligible participants The District continues to explore funding opportunities to increase affordable licensed child care spaces.
Public transportation	District of Muskoka 5-Year Transportation Needs Assessment and Growth and Sustainability Plan (2020)
Service fragmentation	Human Services Integration Review (2022)
Affordable and reliable internet access	Regional Broadband Strategy (2022)

Lack of primary care physicians	Recruitment efforts for all health services staff are being explored by the District, Muskoka and Area Ontario Health Team (MAOHT) and other community service providers
Environment/Climate Change	A New Leaf: Muskoka's Climate Strategy (2020)
Opioid overdoses	Community service providers partnering with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) to support the distribution of naloxone kits
Services for seniors	Muskoka Master Aging Plan (2016)
Equity and inclusion	IDEA Advisory Group (IAG) Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026

Areas of Focus

The District of Muskoka's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan will focus on four (4) areas of concern. They were selected based on:

- being identified by two or more stakeholder groups;
- synergy with initiatives already underway;
- synergy between the areas of concern selected;
- impact of implementation efforts on the community;
- ability to implement change in a reasonable timeframe;
- being foundational to the work required for the other risk factors identified.

The selected areas of concern are:

1. Affordable housing and homelessness

- Access to appropriate, affordable housing is fundamental to individual, family and community well-being and an important contributor to long-term community safety.
- Stabilizing the housing supply in Muskoka is fundamental to the success of all other areas of concern.

2. Patient navigation and mental health/addiction services

- Individuals with mental health and addiction issues are often unable to access sufficient and appropriate services and supports. Increased awareness and stigma reduction are required to reduce reactionary responses from the community and first responders.
- Historically this is an underfunded category that results in service gaps, long wait times or service provisions far from home.
- Patient navigation support is critical for supporting clients but also to prevent an overload on other more costly community services including the dispatch of first responders and use of hospital emergency rooms.

3. Stable employment opportunities and consistent labour force

- Stable employment and sufficient wages are essential to safety and well-being.
- Shortage of both qualified and unqualified labour force in Muskoka significantly impacts service offerings.

4. Service fragmentation

- Social services are often provided in a fragmented way resulting in an inefficient use of resources and reduced stakeholder satisfaction
- An internal focus on Human Service Integration at the District of Muskoka will serve as a first step toward system improvement.

Moving Forward: Implementation Plan

The District of Muskoka's plan establishes a framework for enhancing safety and well-being with the support of community stakeholders. As the Plan migrates from the planning to implementation phase, the District will:

- Identify strategies, establish outcomes and anticipated performance measures for all four planning areas related to the priority risk, including promoting and maintaining community safety and well-being, reducing identified risks, mitigating elevated risk situations and immediate response to urgent incidents;
- Engage community members from the vulnerable populations relevant to the priority risk to inform the development of the strategies in each area;
- Consult with the Muskoka Area Indigenous Leadership Table (MAILT);
- Establish an implementation plan for the strategies in each area which clearly identified roles, responsibilities, timelines, reporting relationships and requirements; and,
- Monitor the actions identified in the implementation plan, whether it is the creation, expansion and/or coordination of programs, training, services, etc.