

# SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL/PARTNERS IN ACTION

## FINAL REPORT: January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

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**VISION STATEMENT:** A safe, healthy and inclusive community in which to live, work and grow

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To identify and implement manageable solutions to social issues in the community by mobilizing community based action teams

**COMMITTEE COORDINATOR:** Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan

**COMMITTEE FUNDING SOURCE:** City of Vernon

**ACTION TEAM FUNDING SOURCES:** Provincial and Federal Government, Local Funders and Various Foundations

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Community Safety Office, Community Futures North Okanagan, Interior Health, Kindale Developmental Association, City of Vernon, Archway Society for Domestic Peace, Independent Living Vernon, Downtown Vernon Association, Restorative Justice Society, North Okanagan Youth and Family Services, Turning Points Collaborative, Upper Room Mission, United Way North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap, Nexus BC, Vernon and District Immigrant Services Society, Canadian Mental Health Association, Family Resource Centre, Vernon Native Housing Society, Chamber of Commerce, Community Living BC

**STRATEGIC GOALS:**

- Build awareness and understanding of social issues
- Work collaboratively to problem-solve areas of concern
- Develop resources/policies to address gaps
- Monitor and evaluate the Partners in Action model and outcomes
- Provide sustainability for the Partners in Action Committee

Action Team	Open/ Closed	Background/Activities	Outputs	Direct Outcomes	Updates/Follow Up
<b>Homelessness/Housing</b>					
COOL Team Update	Ongoing	The COOL team is a partnership between bylaw officers and outreach workers for a collaborative approach to addressing homeless camps. The COOL team follows a protocol where bylaw officers and outreach workers connect campers to services such as the Gateway Shelter, Upper Room Mission and Interior Health.	Annual census/survey of homeless population.  Protocol development and updates.	Due to the significant increase in absolute homelessness in the least few years, the COOL team has expanded their outreach and work closely to monitor the health and safety of camps/spaces.	The COOL Team continues to monitor/connect with people sleeping outside and to maintain communication between outreach workers and the Bylaw Department. The Fall census was completed on October 16, 2019 and a presentation was made to City Council in November 2019. For the first time, Vernon will receive funding to take part in BC Homeless Count in April 2020.

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Housing Action Team	Ongoing	The housing action team meets quarterly to review the housing inventory, identify gaps and explore opportunities. This provides the non-profit housing sector a chance to network, brainstorm and be strategic with plans for future affordable units.	Quarterly meetings.  Updated inventory.  Increased collaboration and partnership development.	Increased number of affordable units owned and managed by the non-profit sector.	<p>The housing non-profit sector is organized and prepared to apply to provincial and/or federal housing grants. Since 2018, local agencies have secured grants for 256 units of affordable housing (including the 98 units of modular housing which is staffed 24/7 with programs attached).</p> <p>The non-profit housing sector is now preparing for the next round of BC Housing funding, which may be announced as soon as the Spring of 2020. The main focus for the sector is to secure suitable sites (that are zoned and appropriate for the neighbourhood) as land is required in order to apply for the capital grants.</p> <p>The Social Planning Council met with City staff to review potential City owned land that could support future applications for affordable housing geared towards families, seniors and people with disabilities. The Social Planning Council has also been in contact with CMHC regarding federal land that could be suitable for affordable housing.</p>
Vernon as a Federally Funded Community	Open	The federal government has announced plans to expand the number of designated communities under <i>Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy</i> . Between four to six communities will be added across Canada. The initial <i>Call for Concepts</i> closed on March 8, 2019.	Application submitted to the initial Call for Concepts requesting that Vernon become a designated community.	<p>Access to federal funding in Vernon to address homelessness.</p> <p>More programs/ resources to address homelessness in Vernon.</p>	<p>The Social Planning Council applied to the Call for Concepts in the Spring of 2019 and Vernon was shortlisted for the program.</p> <p>A full application was submitted on September 20, 2019 with the federal government expected to respond in January 2020.</p>

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Housing Strategy	Open	The Social Planning Council secured \$50,000 from the federal government to hire a consultant to review and update both the Homelessness Strategy and the Attainable Housing Strategy (developed in tandem in 2007) in conjunction with the Partners in Action Committee and the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee.	Grant Secured.	Identify the successes and challenges of local housing strategies.  Provide recommendations for future actions based on identified gaps and current best practices.	The Social Planning Council, in conjunction with City of Vernon staff, hired Urban Matters to review both the Homelessness and Attainable Housing strategies. The final strategy was reviewed by Partners in Action and priorities/goals for 2019/20 have been set. Annette also met with the peer group VEPAD on May 27, 2019 for feedback on priorities.
Shower Action Team	Open	A lack of showers has been identified as a major gap in services for people sleeping outside on a regular basis. The impact on someone who is homeless is significant and affects both physical and mental health. The Shower Action Team is exploring short and long-term solutions.	Pilot project to be launched in late September.	Access to showers for people who are homeless.	<p><u>Short-Term Solution:</u> A five-month pilot project was launched in early October 2019 – mid-February 2020. The Cammy LaFleur Street Clinic is providing the promotion, coordination and supervision. Peer volunteers will assist the Street Clinic staff to manage the program.</p> <p>Recreation Services provided access to showers in the Priest Valley Arena in October, but the program moved to the former Gateway Shelter facility which is now the location for the Street Clinic.</p> <p><u>Long-term solution:</u> The Upper Room Mission is exploring options to install showers in their facility and provide access to their guests in the Spring 2020. Social Planning Council will assist the Upper Room Mission to research funding options.</p>

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<b>Harm Reduction/HART</b>					
Harm Reduction Team (HART)	Open	Vernon is one of sixteen designated communities to receive provincial funding to address the opioid crisis at the local level and support Community Action Teams (known locally as HART). The HART team is the advisory body for the implementation of the <i>Harm Reduction and Opioid Overdose Response Strategy</i> . Social Planning Council is the host organization.	Grant secured.  Launch of eight action teams since July 2018.  Launch of RCMP/OAT Pilot Project.	Reduce opioid deaths and overdoses.  Enhance access to treatment, recovery, social stabilization, and supports.  Reduce the community impacts of opioid addiction.  Strengthen culturally relevant supports and services for Indigenous peoples.  Reduce stigma and prevent opioid misuse.	The Social Planning Council received funding from the Community Action Initiative to host the HART team and develop the <i>Harm Reduction and Opioid Overdose Response Strategy</i> . The goal of the strategy is to reduce and prevent overdose deaths in Vernon. Details on the various HART action teams are outlined below.
RCMP/OAT Action Team	Open	The RCMP/OAT action team was created to provide supports and interventions in cells that will reduce opioid overdose deaths and also reduce crime committed due to opioid addiction.	RCMP are able to distribute naloxone and refer people to the OAT Clinic for treatment.	Reduce risk of opioid overdose.  Reduce crime by connecting opioid users to treatment and supports.	The Vernon RCMP Detachment is currently distributing naloxone from cells and referring people directly to OAT treatment services.  IH and the RCMP are now exploring the best way to provide OAT prescriptions directly from cells.  These interventions will not only save lives, they will also reduce criminal activity that can result from an addiction to illicit opioids.

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Folks on Spokes/ Community Clean Ups	Open	<p>This action team was created in response to concerns from downtown businesses about discarded needles and debris being found in alleyways.</p>	<p>Community partnership and sharing of resources.</p> <p>Launch of Folks on Spokes and weekly clean ups.</p>	<p>Reduce number of needles in public spaces.</p> <p>Provide support and information to local businesses.</p>	<p>The Sharps Action Team supported the Community Safety Office to develop the peer-based program Folks on Spokes which was launched in early April 2019.</p> <p>As of the end of August, 348 improperly discarded needles have been recovered, 100 large bags of garbage removed and 3 regular sized bags of cans/bottles have been recycled. This initiative works in conjunction with the Street Clinic’s weekly clean up program</p> <p>The City has applied to CAI funds to expand the program next year.</p>
Community Impact Action Team	Open	<p>Each of the action teams will have a role to play in providing life saving information and education to the public and helping to reduce stigma so that more people will feel comfortable seeking treatment and support (in particular, the hidden population that are housed and employed).</p> <p>While the Sharps Team will focus strictly on problem solving the issue of improperly discarded needles, the Community Impact Team will focus more widely on the ripple effect of the opioid crisis on individuals, families and employers.</p>	<p>Media releases, posters, social media.</p> <p>Presentations to community groups.</p> <p>Businesses taking part in the Naloxone Challenge.</p>	<p>Increased education, awareness and compassion regarding the opioid crisis.</p> <p>Increased community support of initiatives, policies and programs that address the opioid crisis.</p>	<p>Monthly naloxone training continues to be offered at the Okanagan Regional Library. The team continues to reach out to service groups, agencies and organizations that may benefit from the training.</p> <p>The Naloxone Challenge targets small and large employers in the area and encourages businesses to receive training/kits. Future plans may focus on restaurants/pubs and trades-based businesses.</p> <p>The team is working with StopOverdose BC and other sources to identify anti-stigma resources and supports that can be used at the local level. Funding was secured for a social media campaign that took place in the Summer of 2019.</p>

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Peer Recommendations	Open	<p>The main role of this action team was to get direct input from key target populations with lived experience in order to identify opportunities/priorities.</p> <p>The group was also tasked to develop an inventory of current resources and supports and create a resource guide that can be easily updated and used to promote services.</p>	<p>Focus groups of key stakeholders including: peers currently using opioids; peers in recovery; as well as family members.</p>	<p>Identify gaps/barriers in service.</p> <p>Provide support and resources to address gaps.</p> <p>Ensure people know where to access interventions, treatment and recovery programs.</p>	<p>The following projects were completed by August 31, 2019 as part of the implementation of peer recommendations:</p> <p>The Vernon Survival Guide was expanded to include services specific to the opioid crisis.</p> <p>CMHA developed curriculum to offer more family support groups in Vernon.</p> <p>Cammy Lefleur Street Clinic provided leadership training to peers with lived experience of opioid use in a series of workshops over the summer.</p>
Physician Engagement in Opioid Response	Open	<p>Research indicates that people receiving OAT treatment from their family physicians have better outcomes. It is important that local physicians have the latest data on the impact of the Opioid Crisis at the local level and are informed of new and upcoming programs and treatment.</p>	<p>Information session for local physicians with approximately 30 physicians in attendance.</p>	<p>Increase physician awareness of new and existing protocols resources, services and referral pathways.</p> <p>Baseline (and potentially an increase) in the number of OAT prescribers in Vernon.</p>	<p>HART partnered with the Shuswap North Okanagan Division of Family Practice in hosting an information and engagement session on the Opioid Crisis/HART on June 12, 2019. Session evaluations were positive, and interest was expressed for future engagement.</p>
Indigenous Recommendations	Open	<p>The role of this action team is to ensure that there is an Indigenous voice reflected in the strategy. An Indigenous consultant was hired to lead the audit and provide a final report/recommendations to the Cultural Audit Action Team.</p>	<p>Focus group of Indigenous peers.</p> <p>Individual interviews of Indigenous peers.</p>	<p>Identify cultural gaps/barriers in service.</p> <p>Identify resources and tools to address cultural gaps.</p>	<p>The following projects were completed by August 31, 2019 as part of the implementation of Indigenous peer recommendations:</p>

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			<p>Service provider survey to assess cultural sensitivity training opportunities.</p>	<p>Provide support and resources to address cultural gaps.</p> <p>Increase cultural capacity of services.</p> <p>Increase the number of culturally sensitive services.</p>	<p>Five Lunch and Learn Workshops for service providers with the theme: <i>Increase Your Effectiveness with Indigenous People</i>; 95 attendees with an average of 19 people per session.</p> <p>Two training sessions for Elders who would like to support Indigenous peers; 11 participants.</p> <p>Elder/peer workshops were hosted to create Indigenous “medicine” to be placed in harm reduction supplies (e.g. painted stone, card, feather); 63 attendees averaging 11 people per session.</p>
<b>Accessibility/Inclusiveness/Multiculturalism</b>					
<p>Local Immigration Partnership Council: Immigration and Settlement Strategy for Vernon</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>The final strategy document as well as supporting research reports are available at <a href="http://www.socialplanning.ca">www.socialplanning.ca</a></p>	<p>Community Survey on Immigration.</p> <p>Labour Market Report.</p> <p>Marketing Strategy.</p> <p>Vernon Immigration and Settlement Strategy.</p>	<p>Newcomers choose Vernon and remain in the community indefinitely.</p> <p>Newcomers participate in the local labour market, broader community and social networks.</p>	<p>Highlights from this quarter include:</p> <p>Ongoing promotion and updates of the “Moving to Vernon” webpage.</p> <p>Continued monthly stories in the Vernon Morning Star highlighting our Multicultural Champions Program and quarterly “Multicultural Meetups” between cultural groups and the arts/culture sector.</p> <p>Support is being provided to Community Futures North Okanagan as they develop a new program to recruit skilled Immigrants to Vernon under the federal pilot for Northern and Rural Immigration.</p>

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					Vernon was one of eleven communities across Canada to be chosen for the program. Members of the Local Immigration Partnership Council provided letters of support for the application.
“Respect Lives Here” Event	Open	The Province of BC provided funding to organize an event that celebrates diversity and promotes multiculturalism.	Series of stories that highlight the contributions of local multicultural champions.	Increased understanding and appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism in our community.	The new multicultural champions were announced at a launch event on March 23, 2019 at the Okanagan College Vernon Campus. Nominations for the 2020 multicultural champions are now completed.
Reconciliation Journey Team	Ongoing	The Partners in Action Committee is taking the time to learn more about First Nation history and culture and to reflect on the committee’s role in the Truth and Reconciliation process taking place in our nation.	Since 2016, Social Planning Council has co-hosted fifteen workshops open to service providers and/or the general public to assist with increased understanding of Indigenous culture.	Increased understanding of Truth and Reconciliation by non-Indigenous partners leading to actions that reflect our role and responsibility in the process.	We have called this a “journey team” as opposed to an action team as it is important to take our time with this process. The Indigenous peer recommendations from the Cultural Audit Team are the backbone for this initiative. The action team will continue to look for opportunities and funding to further the Truth and Reconciliation process at the local level.
<b>Evaluation of Partners in Action Committee</b>					
Indicator Updates	Ongoing	As part of the evaluation process, the Partners in Action Committee collect statistics from local partners as well as regional and national sources on an annual basis.	Indicator data tool on a wide range of topics.	Evaluation and monitoring of data guides informed decision making.	The data is used on an ongoing basis by the Partners in Action Committee to inform the discussion of social issues in the community and ways to address these problems/concerns.