

Whitehorse Emergency Shelter 2020-21 Community Safety Plan

Executive Summary



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“I think what we are working toward is something that will bring partners together to develop strategies to best serve the vulnerable people who use the Shelter, many of whom who have experienced trauma and victimization within their communities. This work will lead to a more complete understanding of the needs of this community, how everyone plays a role in its success and the relationships that need to be built and nurtured.”

A Core Group member

In 2018, the Yukon Department of Justice and Public Safety Canada established a partnership to adopt a culturally-based approach to addressing community safety issues in Indigenous communities. Public Safety Canada’s Community Safety Planning process, a key component of Canada’s and Yukon’s commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, supports these communities to identify the issues affecting the health and safety of their citizens, and then become active participants in developing holistic and culturally-based solutions.

Responding to safety concerns expressed by various stakeholders regarding the shelter, the Department of Justice partnered with Public Safety Canada in late 2019 to employ their safety planning process in the context of the Shelter. This reflects a unique application of Public Safety Canada’s process, given that the Shelter is not a community *per se*, but rather a stand-alone facility located in an urban setting.

In February 2020, a core working group (Core Group), initially comprised of representatives from stakeholder groups identified either as key service providers or groups directly impacted by the Shelter’s operations, was struck and a terms of reference developed. Stakeholders included the departments of Health & Social Services and Justice, the City of Whitehorse, Kwanlin Dün First Nation, Ta’an Kwäch’än Council, the Whitehorse Chamber of Commerce, Safe at Home, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, the RCMP, and the Downtown Residents Association.

As the Core Group worked through the process, they reviewed input collected from clients, local residents, neighbouring businesses, and NGOs during an extensive outreach effort. This input assisted the Core Group in exploring the degree to which the Shelter is, or is perceived to be, responding to the emerging needs, concerns and priorities as expressed by clients, service providers, and local residents and businesses. During their discussions, a number of key priorities began to emerge. In addition to ensuring the safety and security of Shelter clients, drop-in guests and staff, these priorities also reflect the need to enhance the Shelter’s strategic and operational governance, the importance of strengthening partnerships with local service providers, and the need for Shelter clients, local residents, and businesses to all reside in harmony. The group then identified a number of specific

goals and actions that, when implemented, are intended to further position the Shelter to balance the needs of a diverse group of stakeholders with the best interests of those requiring the range of services of the Shelter.

In Focus | Community Safety Priorities

- Ensuring the safety of Shelter clients, drop-in guests and staff.
- Enhancing the Shelter’s strategic and operational governance.
- Creating a safe and harmonious neighbourhood for Shelter clients, and neighbouring residents and businesses.
- Ensuring that clients can access culturally-based programs, services and other supports that identify and remove barriers to wellness, healing, education, employability, self-sufficiency, and cultural and community inclusion.