

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan: Performance Measurement Framework

Performance Measurement Framework Objective

To compile an initial list of safety and well-being indicators at the Ottawa-level that:

- capture the dimensions of safety and well-being that can be tracked over time
- are relevant to the priorities of the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) plan
- include aspects of safety and well-being that are of concern to Ottawa residents

CSWB plans are provincially legislated for municipalities across Ontario. Given the complexity and range of community issues addressed by the plans, they are intended to be multi-sectoral by involving municipal departments, community organizations, school boards, police forces, and local businesses.

Cross-sector involvement in advancing priorities has implications for evaluating the plan and attributing outcomes to the City of Ottawa. Accordingly, the measurement framework contains three data streams that are organized according to the City's sphere of influence (Figure 1):

1. **Ottawa Population indicators that reflect aspects of well-being:** Selected indicators will be tracked over time to measure changes across multiple dimensions of safety and well-being in Ottawa. Not all indicators presented under this measurement stream would be directly influenced by the City. Rather, the purpose of this level of measurement is to provide all sectors with publicly available information to plan programs, policies, funding requests, and resource allocation. The population indicators would also provide a frame of reference for the actions taken under the CSWB plan.
2. **Indicators that reflect City strategic priorities as well as expected outputs and outcomes for partnerships and engagement:** Progress across departmental strategic priorities related to CSWB would be measured using common indicators to monitor performance in each priority area. This could also include common indicators collected from agencies funded by the City under the Community Funding Framework.
3. **Indicators related to project evaluation:** To evaluate program evaluations for initiatives related to CSWB that are funded by the City or through grants and funding agreements where the City was the main or co-applicant. Research projects related to CSWB priority areas aim to build knowledge, inform actions, and support funding requests.

This document outlines the approach to tracking population indicators for safety and well-being in Ottawa over time.

Background

Ontario: Community safety and well-being plans

Between 2013 and 2016, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services in Ontario led consultations with stakeholders to develop a provincial approach to CSWB with the aim of delivering the

appropriate services to people when they need them. Municipalities in Ontario have a mandate to develop measurement approaches to CSWB and evaluate interventions deployed under their plans.¹

As stipulated in provincial guidelines, municipal plans should prioritize actions that address the root causes of community issues over incident-based responses. The goal of a CSWB plan is to:

“[...] achieve sustainable communities 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.”²

Through stakeholder engagement, the City of Ottawa identified 6 priority areas in its 2021-2031 CSWB plan:³

- Discrimination, marginalization and racism
- Financial security and poverty reduction
- Gender-based violence and violence against women
- Housing
- Integrated and simpler systems
- Mental health

Well-being measurement

‘Well-being’ refers to how people feel about their lives – the extent to which they experience satisfaction or happiness, can pursue personal development, exert control over their lives, have a sense of purpose, and develop positive relationships with others.^{4,5} Well-being is often measured using objective indicators of living conditions that quantify factors like unemployment, educational attainment, or income level. In addition, subjective measures provide information on how people feel about aspects of their lives that relate to well-being such as trust in institutions, experiences of discrimination, or perceived neighborhood safety.^{5,6} Excluding subjective well-being from policy development can threaten the legitimacy of social, political and economic systems.^{7,8,9} Recently published guidance on well-being measurement highlights the importance of incorporating both objective and subjective indicators to inform policies and programs.^{1,10} This lens informed the approach to indicator selection for well-being measurement in Ottawa at a population level.

¹ Government of Ontario. (2021). [Section 2 – The community safety and well-being planning framework](#).

² Government of Ontario. (2021). [Section 1 – Introduction](#).

³ Emergency and Protective Services Department (City of Ottawa). [Ottawa’s community safety and well-being plan 2021-2031](#).

⁴ Ruggeri K, et al. (2020) [Well-being is more than happiness and life satisfaction: a multidimensional analysis of 21 countries](#). *BMC Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*.

⁵ World Health Organization. (2022). [Promoting well-being](#).

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2018. [Health-related quality of life \(HRQOL\): Well-being concepts](#).

⁷ Stiglitz JE, Sen A, Fitoussi JP. (2009). [Report by the Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress](#).

⁸ Su Y. et al. (2022). [Trends and patterns of life satisfaction and its relationship with social support in Canada, 2009 to 2018](#). *Nature*, 12(9720).

⁹ OECD. 2018. [Beyond GDP: Measuring what counts for economic and social performance](#). OECD Publishing, Paris.

¹⁰ OECD. 2018. [For good measure: Advancing research on well-being metrics beyond GDP](#). OECD Publishing, Paris.

Approach to proposing indicators for safety and well-being measurement in Ottawa

To guide indicator selection, reviews were conducted to summarize recent work related to safety and well-being measurement in Canada, to describe key well-being frameworks used in Canada, and to provide an overview of the work already conducted under Ottawa's CSWB plan.

Of note, while the plan mentions 'safety' and 'well-being' separately, the literature generally views well-being as multi-dimensional with safety as one of those aspects.⁷ This is reflected in the summary of findings described below.

1. *Review of recent initiatives related to safety and well-being measurement in Canada*

Some key reports and initiatives have advanced the commitment to safety and well-being measurement in Canada:

- *Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (2008)* – The Commission's report highlighted the deficiencies of states' reliance on gross domestic product to summarize a country's economic and social progress. Instead, it called on a multi-dimensional approach to well-being measurement based on indicators related to material living standards, health, education, work, civic engagement, social connections, environment, economic insecurity, and personal safety. National statistics agencies were identified as key actors in the development of well-being indicators.⁷
- *Commitments to international well-being frameworks* – In 2015, the Government of Canada became a signatory state to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To support those obligations, Statistics Canada developed an indicator framework to track progress on the SDGs across multiple dimensions of well-being.¹¹ It has also made contributions to the Better Life Index¹² that was created after the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) launched its High-Level Expert Group on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress in 2013.^{9,10,13}
- *Quality of life strategy for Canada* – Canada's Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry – who also oversees Statistics Canada – was mandated in 2019 to support the Minister of Middle-Class Prosperity and the Associate Minister of Finance in their work to incorporate well-being into budget decisions and policies.¹³ In 2021, the Ministry of Finance in Canada released a federal strategy for incorporating well-being indicators into decision-making. The objective of the strategy was to adopt a broader perspective of well-being that recognizes non-economic aspects, the unequal distribution of opportunities and resources, and the importance of environmental sustainability.¹⁴ To advance the work in this area, Statistics Canada is currently undertaking a review of data collected across dimensions of well-being and seeking to develop new indicators to address gaps in measurement. Areas where well-being measurement gaps have been identified include:¹³

¹¹ Statistics Canada. (2021). [The Canadian indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals](#).

¹² OECD. 2020. [How's Life? 2020: Measuring well-being](#).

¹³ Sanmartin C., et al. (2021). [Moving forward on well-being \(quality of life\) measures in Canada](#). Statistics Canada.

¹⁴ Department of Finance (Canada). 2021. [Measuring what matters: Toward a quality of life strategy for Canada](#).

- Digitization
- Job quality
- Affordability and economic uncertainty
- Populism and social cohesion
- Neighborhoods, communities and built environment
- Environment and climate change

2. Review of existing well-being frameworks

The scope of this review was limited to:

- Frameworks that were based on data collected in Canada to leverage existing work produced in a similar context and assess indicator data availability
- Frameworks that incorporated objective and subjective measures of well-being

In total, four well-being frameworks were reviewed:

- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)¹¹
- Better Life Index (BLI) developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)¹²
- Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) from the University of Waterloo¹⁵
- Quality-of-life measurement strategy for Canada¹⁴

The frameworks varied from focusing on between-country comparisons (UN SDGs and OECD-BLI) to a within-country focus (CIW and Quality-of-Life strategy). They were all organized in terms of well-being domains, dimensions, and indicators. The UN SDGs was the only framework to contain commitments to goals and targets.

Despite differences in their intended purpose, similar domains of well-being were identified across frameworks. These included: governance (trust in institutions, safety and security), economic (financial security, income, employment, affordability), social (community belonging, loneliness, social support, norms and values), health (self-rated physical and mental health, life expectancy), and environment (access to clean water, greenhouse gas emissions, sustainability, public transportation, walkability).

All frameworks were developed at the national-level and therefore some indicators are less relevant for a municipality (eg. GDP or investment into research and development). Some tailoring of the indicator list would be needed to reflect municipal priorities.

3. Review of previous work conducted under the Ottawa CSWB plan

In the fall of 2019, the CSWB team undertook a population survey to obtain information from Ottawa residents about the community issues they thought were most important and raise public awareness about a CSWB plan for the city. Interviews with community stakeholders were also held to further inform CSWB planning.

A total of 1,677 people responded to the online survey. At the time, 18% of respondents were aware of the concept of a CSWB plan. Before the survey was launched, City staff identified 19 factors that influence CSWB. Those factors were then presented to survey respondents to identify the issues that

¹⁵ Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (University of Waterloo). 2016. [How are Canadians really doing? The 2016 CIW national report.](#)

were most important to them. The numbers in parentheses indicate the percentage of respondents who identified the issue as important. These included:¹⁶

- criminal activity (67%)
- street and gang violence (66%)
- mental health (61%)
- housing security (58%)
- physical health (55%)
- substance use (54%)
- employment (54%)
- education and skills (53%)
- mobility issues (52%)
- social environment (50%)

For both criminal activity and street gang violence, survey respondents tended to say they thought the problems were getting worse. Overall, community stakeholders emphasized the need to focus on root causes of crime and avoid an incident-response driven plan that relies on police intervention. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of the term ‘well-being’ in the naming of the CSWB plan:¹⁶

“I like that the Plan incorporates well-being and not just safety, as we know some of the root causes and challenges to safety are what might promote well-being. It will be great to work on a framework that addresses many different things. It will take many sectors and partners to help make safety and well-being possible.” – Stakeholder

Over half of respondents (55%) said they believed planning in relation to CSWB would be an efficient and effective use of resources that would ultimately benefit communities in Ottawa. Over a third (34%) felt that planning was a ‘paper exercise’ that would not lead to action.¹⁶

In 2020, work began on developing a data governance model for the CSWB plan. This covered details about processes for data collection, cleaning, and analysis as well as identifying the roles and responsibilities around data security, quality, operations, and knowledge.¹⁷ The project also highlighted data gaps for measuring CSWB by collecting and reviewing datasets from the City’s service areas and community partners. Overall, the data was deemed high-level but with limited ability to provide insights about CSWB. While some data gaps could be resolved through improvements to documentation practices among service providers, filling other gaps would require new sources of data.¹⁸

Next Steps

Findings from the well-being frameworks review emphasized the importance of a multi-dimensional approach to well-being measurement. This aligns with the intention of CSWB plans to address the root causes of community issues by prioritizing actions that target the social determinants of health and well-being.¹ Although there was some variation in the terminology used in each well-being framework, the following common domains were reflected: economic security, employment and opportunities, health, natural and built environment, social cohesion, safety, and governance.

¹⁶ Hill + Knowlton Strategies. 2019. Community Safety and Well-Being Plan: Resident and stakeholder feedback.

¹⁷ Avenai Consulting. 2020. Community Safety and Well-Being Plan: Data governance framework.

¹⁸ Avenai Consulting. 2020. Data gap analysis.

In 2023, staff will begin identifying indicators and reporting on the CSWB Performance Measurement framework. This will include leveraging existing partnership and expertise as part of a peer review process.