

Healthy Communities

Safety & Inclusion: 9-point Action Plan

1. Coordinated service delivery

End the silos – all relevant agencies and departments, at all levels, must work together

- Education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, supportive housing and law enforcement are integral components in a holistic approach.
- Police and outreach workers must work in tandem to get people the help they need.
- Municipal, federal and provincial roles need to be interconnected – not an excuse for deflecting responsibility.

2. Wrap-around services – not harm reduction alone

Stop treating harm reduction as an isolated focus

- Harm reduction facilities are inadequate – and ineffective – without the necessary wrap-around services to support them. Otherwise this is little more than harm *deferral*, creating a “revolving door” of repeat use.
- Without effective wrap-around services, not only do individuals not get the long-term help they need, harm reduction facilities become magnets for illegal activities and negatively impact experiences in the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The recognized four pillars of harm reduction services must *all* be in place:
 - Supervised consumption.
 - Partnership with law enforcement, to prevent exploitation of the vulnerable and keep the surrounding community safe.
 - Prevention and education programs, to keep usage from starting in the first place.
 - Access to treatment – detox and rehab facilities available when needed.

3. Relocate supervised injection sites near medical support facilities

Tourism and culture are *experiential*

- High traffic tourist areas are no place for supervised injection sites. They should be moved closer to where medical support is immediately available.
- Similarly, places such as hotels, while necessary as temporary shelter spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, are not a long-term solution. They should return to their original purpose.
- The ongoing success of downtown depends on a strong sense of safety and security for visitors, workers and residents.
- With arts and cultural spaces, hospitality, sports, theatres and other attractions, Downtown West is crucial to Toronto’s economic recovery. Image and perceptions matter.

4. Distribute support services across the GTA

Social services should not be concentrated in one area

- Intensive social service supports are disproportionately located in the downtown core. They should be decentralized, which would enable more stable delivery and ease the strain on downtown neighbourhoods.
- Social services – including supportive housing, and addiction and mental health facilities – should be equitably distributed across the Greater Toronto Area.

5. Objective, unbiased data

Establish consistent definitions, metrics and evaluation criteria

- Create an independent agency to compile, track and analyze data about street involvement, homelessness, drug use, crime.
- Eliminate confirmation bias and self-interested data collection.
- Base decisions and actions on neutral, empirical evidence.
- Show all the data – even when it's bad news.

6. Enforce the law

No exceptions for violent crime

- Regardless of an individual's situation, criminal and provincial offences must be prosecuted.
- Social services and law enforcement must work together – helping the vulnerable while targeting and prosecuting traffickers and gang-related crime.

7. Proportional resource allocation

Unique demands in Downtown West require targeted approaches

- Pre-pandemic, Downtown West had more foot traffic and activity than most other parts of Toronto – requiring more resources to maintain safety, security and cleanliness.
- COVID-19 was a major tipping point, exacerbating the need for proportionally higher resources.
- Economic recovery will radiate out from the city centre.
- Clarity is needed around Section 37 funds, to ensure timely decisions based on demonstrated economic and community priorities.
- Local BIAs and other community organizations should have direct input into resource allocation decisions.

8. Measure outcomes

Track investments, objectives and results

- All levels of government are contributing public funds toward community safety programs and initiatives, but these investments are piecemeal. They need to be more strategic, targeted and cohesive.
- Accountability is critical to ensure that investments address root causes and street-related issues.
- Specific outcomes need to be tracked on an individual basis – monitoring action taken for each individual, whether it has been effective and if further intervention is needed.
- Measuring inputs – money spent, staff time, meetings/consultations, number of outreach engagements – is meaningless without also tracking whether they make a positive difference.

9. Decisions based on reality, not ideology

Treat individuals as individuals, not symbols

- Provide help for those who need it and prosecute those who exploit them.
- Engage with communities to move forward inclusively, not focusing solely on the needs of one part of the population.
- Exercise duty of care for everyone.