REACH • UNDERSTANDING • CHANGE
BUILDING MOMENTUM

SMART on Crime
IN WATERLOO REGION

COMMUNITY REPORT 2010-2014
Four years ago, the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRCPC) launched “Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region - Getting to the Roots of Crime”, the 2010-2014 community plan. At the very heart of this plan was the idea that crime prevention is everyone’s business. Working together, the WRCPC, its partners and the broader community have had considerable success since 2010 in learning more about prevention that works and growing the momentum for addressing the root causes of crime. While we still have much to do and learn, there is no doubt that we are in a better position moving forward than when we started.

Preventing crime is not an easy task, nor is it a goal that can be achieved over the short-term or by any one person or organization alone. Rather, focused thinking and attention to crime prevention is something that needs to happen on an ongoing basis by all who live in this community. Prevention work is inevitably far reaching and must include all parts of the community from the grassroots to those in positions of decision making. Finally, it must maintain a focus on our children and youth as our future.

I encourage you to sign up as a Friend of Crime Prevention and become involved in shaping our future together. Thank you to all in Waterloo Region who give so freely of their time and energy towards a safe and healthy community now and in the years to come.

Ken Seiling
Regional Chair

As the Crown Attorney for Waterloo Region, I see everyday what happens in the lives of people when prevention opportunities have been missed. It has been my pleasure to work with my colleagues on WRCPC and with people from all walks of life in Waterloo Region to chart a course for being smart on crime, its roots and its consequences in a quest for community safety for all. We have come a long way since 2010 in engaging our community in a deeper understanding of root causes and in becoming engaged to make a difference, especially for those at the margins of our community.

Preventing victimization and crime, and indeed fear of crime, is central to a compassionate community. It can’t be done overnight. We need a strategic investment from all of us to ensure that the right to be safe is realized. I thank Regional Council and our extensive network of community partners for their commitment and courage to stay with the task. Much work remains to be done and we are up for the task.

William Wilson,
WRCPC Chair

Five years ago we came to our community and asked: Are we still relevant? If yes, what should be our focus for 2010-2014? We heard that in spite of declining crime rates, too many people are still affected by crime, victimization and fear of crime. We also heard that the social and financial burdens associated with crime continue to rise. With that, Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region was born and the idea emerged to make crime prevention through social development a household name (“like the blue box”).

The last four years have seen a formidable amount of work. From street gang prevention, to strategy developments, to a vibrant Friends network, to research, education, and training WRCPC has increased its reach within and beyond Waterloo Region. We have advanced the smart on crime approach. And we have learned a lot! But are we making a difference?

It has certainly been a pleasure and a privilege to be in service to our local community. Many of us share a passion for prevention and have a deep commitment to future generations. Looking back, there is much to celebrate. However, the connections between justice, community safety, well-being, and the social development work that ties them together are complex and often messy. The outcomes rarely point in a linear fashion back to where they may have originated, nor can anyone person or organization control them. The credit is always shared.

When crime prevention becomes more like a social movement than a programme, we will be closer to ‘success’. When good data, a compelling message and a call for action truly engage the whole community, sustainable change becomes a reality. And when prevention finally works no-one gets left behind. And that is a smart outcome to work for.

Christiane Sadeler,
Executive Director
On behalf of WRCPC staff
Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region 2010-2014: Evaluation Summary Report

The Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council brings crime prevention through addressing root causes into everyday awareness. Everyone can contribute to the health and the safety of our community. With its sights set on creating a social movement to be smart on crime, WRCPC seeks to reach more and more people to generate greater public understanding and to create a deeper commitment to prevention.

In 2009, the Crime Prevention Council, in consultation with the community, developed a four year plan called Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region: 2010 – 2014. This plan sought to establish a sound foundation for an approach to community safety that is SMART and oriented on local needs and capacities.

Smart on Crime in Waterloo Region 2010-2014: Evaluation Summary Report

SMART ON CRIME PRIORITY DIRECTIONS & GOALS

- **RESEARCH & INQUIRY**: By 2014, crime prevention research and findings inform public policy development, programming and services within our community and beyond.
- **EDUCATION & LEARNING**: By 2014, the key principles and messages of crime prevention are commonly understood and shared by our community.
- **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**: By 2014, a collaborative leadership approach is relied on as an effective model for social change oriented crime prevention within our community and beyond.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN**: By 2014, the WRCPC governance is redeveloped to establish the best foundation for social change oriented crime prevention.

The evaluation shows that the Smart on Crime plan has been gaining momentum. Specifically the evaluation measured the following areas of impact:

- Reach
- Understanding
- Change

The work is complex. It takes collaboration, commitment and courage. And those are not easily measured. Nonetheless, through mapping networks and analyzing connections, the evaluation revealed that, in Waterloo Region, the contributions to crime prevention through social development are formidable. There has been considerable growth in addressing the root causes of crime as a smart investment in the well-being of our community, now and in the future.

WRCPC has taken the idea of partnerships up a notch by establishing the Friends of Crime Prevention network. Council also re-designed its own governance to maximize subject matter expertise by moving to a sector leadership model.

This evaluation summary tells the story of some of Council’s achievements and challenges in the smart on crime approach, provides insights into the lessons learned and makes recommendations for the next phase of actions. It is but a snapshot of a community with a long-standing commitment to community safety and prevention.

“We are inspired to work for social justice and positive change by addressing the root causes of crime.”
REACH
What is the reach of the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council?

In 2012/2013 the evaluators studied the reach that Council members and partners have in the community. This social network analysis was very telling about the capacity of individuals and organizations to create change not only in their connection to Council but also in their own spheres of influence. It exceeded expectations.

The reach of WRCPC at that time extended to a network of 79 partners who are agencies, organizations or individuals, representing seven major development areas: 59% work in the Community/Social Services sector, followed by Academic (13%); Government (11%); Police (9%); Individuals (3%); Health (3%); Business (1%) and Arts (1%). The engagement of people and organizations that use their influence, expertise and resources extends the reach of WRCPC significantly. It also speaks to the role of WRCPC as a backbone organization.

Through mobilizing supports the WRCPC reaches a large audience – local, provincial and national – with limited resources. Existing partner networks, the Friends of Crime Prevention network, research and education activities, as well as social media play a vital role in these developments.

SUCCESS STORY: THINK CAMPAIGN

In 2013 the THINK campaign was launched based on best knowledge of child and youth development. The goal was to encourage respectful and responsible digital citizenship and the positive use of social media. The campaign was adopted by local school boards and rolled out to 170 schools across the region, reaching 100,000 students.

THINK encouraged students to ask five key questions before using social media or texting to ensure positive messaging. The global relevance and simplicity of this campaign resonated with communities across Canada and beyond. Organizations as far away as Hawaii, New York and the U.K., have requested to use the THINK campaign and to emulate this approach.

WHAT THE EVALUATION tells us about Reach

- WRCPC is reaching progressively diverse groups through novel engagement opportunities.
- The large network of partners includes key decision makers with a high degree of influence and connectivity.
- When Smart on Crime began implementation in 2010, more people wanted to be at the WRCPC table than could be reasonably accommodated. The Friends of Crime Prevention initiative is a great way to harness this community interest and passion.
- The framework for sector roundtables advances the work exponentially beyond the WRCPC table.

"The Friends program brings new people together in a non-threatening way. The message is that we can all be part of coming to the table in different ways."
UNDERSTANDING
Has WRCPC had an impact on the awareness of smart approaches for community safety and well-being?

Any understanding of the root causes of crime in the local context was always shared with opportunities for action. Many WRCPC activities fall under two Smart on Crime priority directions:

EDUCATION & LEARNING
Events and activities that invite people to make connections with others that are working in crime prevention are vital for creating sustainable change. The public role of WRCPC has increased as a result of these engagement efforts and has further advanced this unique government community partnership.

RESEARCH & INQUIRY
Research and reports increase understanding of the root causes of crime as well as the willingness to use that understanding. Of those surveyed that read WRCPC research or reports, 68% shared the material and findings with others, broadening the understanding of root causes beyond what Council could accomplish on its own.

WRCPC was always clear in its goal that education and research, in and of itself, is not enough. The goal, through shifting awareness, is to change behaviour.

WHAT THE EVALUATION tells us about understanding

- The Smart on Crime message resonates with the community of Waterloo Region and increases community dialogue and uptake on prevention opportunities
- It is important to make strategic choices for focused research topics. Research for the sake of research is never enough.
- For research to have an even greater impact there needs to be more uptake of the findings by key decision makers.
- WRCPC’s approach to collaborative leadership continues to be a core strength.
- WRCPC is a backbone and capacity building organization. To facilitate collective impact means doing with not for.

“‘Root cause’ is now part of our language (in Waterloo Region).”

“...it is only through people working together on common issues that we will see sustainable change.”
SUCCESS STORY: VOLUNTEER TODAY

WRCPC’s Violence Prevention Committee determined six goals to tackle the complex task of preventing violence in a growing urban center. One of the goals was based in the experience that all too frequently children in the child welfare system end up in the justice system because of the cumulative risk factors in their lives. These “crossover children” come at a formidable cost to community and society. Above all, their opportunities for a successful, bright future are exceedingly low. This remains the case throughout their lifetime. A literature review and analysis of local trends led to the research report From One System to Another: Crossover Children in Waterloo Region (2012). The study has been picked up extensively by services including those outside of our community. The report highlighted, among other things, the need for adult mentors in the lives of ALL children.

In 2013, WRCPC launched Volunteer Today, a campaign to encourage adults in Waterloo Region to contribute to the lives of children through mentorship in the areas of literacy, nutrition, arts, recreation, and safe and caring homes. The one-year campaign was designed in close collaboration with community partners and caught the attention of local broadcast, print and outdoor media that provided in-kind support to the tune of $260,000. Anecdotally, we learned that volunteering with children and youth and requests for information about foster parenting increased during the campaign.
There is increased readiness for a Smart on Crime approach in Waterloo Region and beyond. Survey data and interviews point to cumulative positive change over time. Increased appreciation of evidence based decision making in crime prevention lead to individual changes which, in turn, can lead to broader systems change.

The WRCPC is viewed as a community based crime prevention best practice, nationally and internationally. Efforts have been made to share the work from within Waterloo Region, making WRCPC a model in its emphasis on collaboration and engagement.

**CHANGE INFLUENCERS (2010-2014):**

- **InREACH Street Gang Prevention** project is leading to significant changes in thinking about how to effectively work with marginalized youth.
- **Friends of Crime Prevention** are passionate and keen to learn more and be involved. Their reach is extensive and they have many skills and connections to bring to the task. This network has created new opportunities for WRCPC to formalize ties to the community, dig deeper and stand tall. The energy behind the network speaks clearly to the early stages of developing a movement for change.
- The WRCPC’s leadership in the National Municipal Network (Canada) amplifies the collective voice and potential to impact federal and other decision making.

**WHAT THE EVALUATION tells us about change**

- Collaborative and strategic leadership is hard work. Never underestimate the value of good process.
- The Friends of Crime Prevention initiative is helping to grow community engagement to new levels.
- WRCPC will need to be strategic about how to reach the leaders that follow the leaders, which includes being strategic about its use of limited resources.
- Sustainable change is developmental and incremental not linear.

“We have created a culture of change.”
SUCCESS STORY: inREACH

When federal funding for a pilot street gang prevention project of the WRCPC ran out, the Region of Waterloo stepped up to bridge the gap. The goal was to secure additional resources during that time for youth at the margins in Waterloo Region. It soon became obvious that such resources would likely not be coming in the form of direct funding. Not discouraged by these developments WRCPC started to broadly share the results from the project evaluation in a community report “Sharing our Story: Lessons Learned from the inREACH Experience” and utilized a Friends of Crime Prevention meeting to bring together over 120 people to talk about next steps in engaging marginalized youth.

But sometimes life happens while we make the best laid plans. Two communities approached WRCPC for support with significant challenges with youth in their areas. These youth are disengaged, don’t appear to feel that they “belong” and, as a result, create a sense of insecurity and fear. WRCPC met with stakeholders in these neighbourhoods and has been finding resources to support focused youth outreach efforts while continuing to develop the broader strategy for all youth in Waterloo Region. The former Look Deeper campaign, which challenged everyone to look below the surface of youth behaviour by reminding us that “appearance are just skin deep”, seems poised to make a return as part of a larger strategic approach. Thus, we learn as we take action if we stay grounded in our values and pay attention to community experiences.

SUCCESS STORY: WATERLOO REGION INTEGRATED DRUGS STRATEGY (WRIDS)

WRPC community engagement staff was frequently called into neighbourhoods as a result of public display of problematic substance use. After a while it became obvious that dealing with this on a neighbourhood to neighbourhood basis was futile and WRCPC directed staff to investigate broader policy options. In 2009 a Task Force with over 26 members was brought together, as a sub-committee of Council, to review research and comment on the connection between substance use, crime and public disorder. The Task Force engaged in a broad-based community consultation that led to the development of the Waterloo Region Integrated Drugs Strategy (WRIDS). Simultaneously with this work, WRCPC staff and volunteers hosted In The Mind’s Eye Film + Forum events to increase understanding about problematic substance use and opportunities for prevention.

The WRIDS was released to the community in 2011 and immediately led to multiple actions including original research into the barriers to calling 911, overdose prevention training, and calls for improved opioid safety. Outside resources to augment WRCPC efforts were formidable including extensive media attention. Regional Council adopted part of the strategy in its own strategic plan and Public Health provided significant support for its implementation. In 2014 WRCPC secured three year Trillium funding which was provided to a local community partner to more deeply root future implementation efforts in the community.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMART ON CRIME 2015-2018

The Crime Prevention Council is well positioned to further advance the connections and the passion for change as a driving force for being Smart on Crime. Strategic choices need to be made to ensure that innovation in the next Smart on Crime phase (2015-2018) is complemented by what we already know is working well. We need to delve deeper not broader. The following recommendations from the evaluation speak to this need for a new balance:

- Leave room and capacity to engage in unexpected opportunities.
- Continue with a developmental approach.
- Continue to make data accessible to broad audiences through using a variety of formats.
- Continue to reach people and organizations through concrete opportunities for collaboration.
- Continue to work at the provincial and national level.

- Target activities to reach new audiences.
- Enhance reach into rural communities.
- Draw in the next wave of Friends of Crime Prevention and encourage them to be leaders for change.
- Fully implement the sector leaders approach as intended to further mobilize partners in crime prevention beyond WRCPC.
- Develop a strategy to strengthen WRCPC’s role as a backbone organization for collaborative action in Waterloo Region.
- Define some key indicators for Smart on Crime 2015-2018 that can help to illustrate the impact of the smart approach more clearly.
- Live out the Collaboration Value Statement developed by WRCPC in 2014
“Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.” (A. Einstein)

The evaluation illustrated three key trends:

- The most significant resource in all human service endeavours is people.
- Growing the Friends program one person at a time leads to greater engagement than aiming for high numbers. Relationship building is central to the work of creating greater social momentum.
- Reports and educational materials are broadly picked up and go, at times, on unanticipated journeys of influence.
Being and feeling safe is a right and not a privilege. But preventing crime and fear of crime is not an easy task, nor can it be achieved by any one person or organization alone. For nearly 20 years the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRCPC) has engaged the community in efforts that increase community safety for all residents of Waterloo Region.

WRCPC, represented by close to 30 sector leaders, works collaboratively to address the root causes of crime through engagement, public education, policy development, research, planning and support of local action.

ABOUT COUNCIL

Front Row: Michael Haffner, Doug Thiel, Mary Zilney, John Shewchuk, Sue Weare, Irene O’Toole, Laurie Strome, Frank Johnson, Jane Mitchell, Felix Munger, Judith Lodi, Andrew Jackson, Mark Pancer

Middle Row: Peter Ringrose, Christine Bird, Marla Pender, Barry Cull, Joe-Ann McComb

Back Row: Bill Davidson, Chris Cowie, Nancy Kinsman, Don Roth, Lisa Doran

“Recognize complexity
Accept uncertainty
Embrace possibility
Trust community
Proceed with humanity”

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