

# Safe Community ready to submit business plan

By MAGGIE RIOPELLE  
Senior Staff Reporter

Would you like to make Welland a safer place?

Well, that's the concept behind the Welland Safe Community Partnership.

The steering committee, with the help of the volunteers on the subcommittees, has finished its business plan. The plan sets out specific goals and objectives, both in the short and long-term.

Once the plan is approved by the Safe Community Foundation, Welland will be designated as a Safe Community.

So what benefits come with such a title? Well firstly, the subcommittees will be working on various initiatives to enhance safety and promotion of injury prevention.

The ultimate goal is the make the community a safer place to live, work, and play.

By making the community a safer place, it is also a great way to promote the community and encourage people and businesses to relocate.

As well, businesses in the community will receive a break on their WSIB premiums, once the community receives its designation.

"To be designated, you need a business plan," explained Coun. Pat Chiochio, co-chair of the WSCP. "From there we can start to encourage more partnerships and move ahead with our goals and objectives."

There are three subcommittees that have been making progress including the Wellness and Prevention, Workplace Safety, Safe Neighbourhoods, and Marketing sub-committee.

At this point, there has not been a lot of progress with the Seniors Sub-Committee, as the committee is seeking more representation from seniors on the committee.

So what types of goals are in the plan?

Community stakeholders from a variety of employment, education, government, and social agencies have come together in support of this partnership.

Through the work of the

volunteers involved with the partnership, the plan has set out a direction for the committees, which includes a continued review of injury data and programs from employers and other sources in order to deliver prevention programs that meet the needs of the community.

"This is a community initiative being driven by the hard work of volunteers. We want this initiative to continue for many years to come, but the success of this partnership depends on the support of community members. We are seeking additional volunteers interested in making their community a safer place," added Coun. Chiochio.

The goal of these various safety programs is to reduce fatal and non-fatal occupational and non-occupational injuries.

The Workplace Safety Sub-Committee is focused on small and medium sized businesses and senior high school students who may be entering the workforce with a goal of reducing work related injuries and illnesses.

"Our sub-committee has been most impressive," commented Bill Auchterlonie, chair of the Workplace Safety sub-committee. "We managed to attract one member with experience in two safe community partnerships. If we are able to achieve our goals, we already know this partnership will be a real success."

The Wellness and Prevention sub-committee hopes to raise awareness on wellness and injury prevention in the community, with a goal to encourage small businesses to participate in the Health Living Workplace Award program.

"We feel it is an integral part of this initiative," Joanne MacLeod, chair, added. "We want to make people aware and provide information. We want to engage community partners."

"We believe the Wellness and Prevention sub-committee is the only one in Canada (under the Safe Community Partnership



The Safe Community Initiative steering committee members are from left in back: Marcel Turpin, Karen Walsh, Bill Auchterlonie, Mario Geremia, Frank Adamson, Joanne MacLeod, and Tracy MacDonald. In front from left are co-chairs Pat Chiochio and Rick Demers.

program)," Rick Demers, steering committee co-chair said.

As for the Safe Neighbourhoods sub-committee, they have a goal to educate drivers and make the roads safer.

The sub-committee plans to reduce the driving related injuries where speed is a factor by 10 per cent.

As well, the committee hopes to establish a database of traffic-related injuries for the City of Welland as one of the long-term goals.

"We wanted the Safe Community Partnership committees to make their goals attainable," added Coun. Chiochio.

"I think we will be able to meet our goals. We will also evaluate how the sub-committees are progressing on their goals on a regular basis."

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is just one of the many partners involved with the initiative.

"We are always interested in creating partnerships with the city or business community," said Mario Geremia, representing the school board and steering committee member.

"With 10 schools, we are always looking at enhancing the safety of students. We want to provide information and bring information back to the students."

As well, the Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce also has a representative on the committee.

"The chamber is happy to see the community is joining forces, it will help to make the downtown safer and businesses safer and that's a win-win situation," said Marcel Turpin, Chamber representative.

Niagara Health Systems is one of the newest partners,



Co-chairs Coun. Pat Chiochio, left, and Rick Demers, reviewed the business plan at a meeting on Monday, November 1. The rest of the steering committee reviewed the document and discussed it at their meeting on Wednesday, November 3.

and Tracy MacDonald has decided to join the effort.

"Niagara Health Systems realizes the importance of health promotion. There is no better way to get involved than to become a partner in an initiative like this," she said.

The Niagara Children's Safety Village also become involved.

"Obviously the whole goal of the village is to keep kids safe," said Frank Adamson, safety village. "We have the police, fire and paramedics at the village and while it is a regional program, it is located in Welland at the Niagara College campus. I hope this will set partnerships and it will take off across the region."

As for the final committee, the Marketing sub-committee, their goal will

be to find new partners who can become involved in this initiative.

"Our goal is to recruit partners," explained Carla Stout, marketing chair. "We are not necessarily calling corporations or community organizations. We will be looking at financial sponsors, as well as provincial and federal funding."

The committee will be seeking support from small and medium sized businesses. Sponsorship and new partners, she added, doesn't just mean financial donations.

"Certainly we will be looking for money, but businesses can give their time, energy and in kind donations," she added. "We are also trying to get the word out about this initiative and garner more community buy-in."

Mrs. Stout wasn't born in Welland, she continued, but she feels this initiative is important in that it will benefit children, adults, and seniors alike.

"I'm from Vancouver and I moved to Welland seven years ago. I have two sons," she continued. "Safe Communities is building a better place for my kids to grow up in."

Whether you are a business person, mother, retiree, or young person, the Safe Community Partnership will in some way touch every member of the community, she said.

"I really think this is a great initiative and it will survive any term of council because it is a community initiative. We hope people will get involved and see the merit of this partnership."

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