



RESEARCH REPORT

Addressing Street Party Culture at Dalhousie University

Prepared by Inspiring Communities for Dalhousie University, June 2022

Last updated September 12, 2022

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Introduction and Recommendations

The full list of ideas for Dalhousie to engage with in moving forward addressing Street Party Culture begins on page 17 of this document and is based on all sources of information: research, interviews, attendees at the community strategies' lab, and other jurisdictions' reports. This is a short summary of those ideas.

Potential steps forward:

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Continue the collective impact process

- Engage students, maintain regular contact with neighbors and other stakeholders, and formalize the collective impact process (assign a backbone team). Continue to invite the missing stakeholders. Support neighbours in formalizing a neighbourhood group to strengthen their presence in the process.

Improve ongoing communication with all stakeholders

- Build on current communication efforts by developing a shared communications plan that connects administration and students with the neighborhood and engages service stakeholders including health, police and HRM bylaws. Find a workable structure for a two-way dialogue space.

Provide new and expanded alternatives to draw some energy from Big Parties

- Dalhousie should engage departments, students, societies, DSU, Residence, and wider community partners to host more activities particularly around the trouble periods (fall, St. Patrick's Day).

Engage the academic community at Dalhousie and peer universities in solution-building

- Engage students and Schools/ Faculties through competitions, courses, Dal Policy Labs and multi-university policy labs; and engage researchers in exploring the aspects of high-risk street party culture growing across the country and the ways it might be addressed.

Leverage position to advocate for change among other stakeholders

- Use Dalhousie's position in the community to bring other stakeholders onboard.

Practical & Tactical Suggestions

- More waste receptacles, portable toilets, cheap food and better communication as practical ways to mitigate damage.

Background

Large unsanctioned street parties are a growing issue in communities across the country over the last few years. In terms of mitigation, there is no short-term fix, nor is there a single solution. This complex issue requires sustained cooperation aimed at addressing the root causes of high-risk party culture and exacerbating factors such as social media; and finding alternative ways for students to feel connected to each other and their community.

Large unsanctioned street parties have emerged as a growing concern over the last few years at Dalhousie. In 2017, a giant street party in the residential community surrounding Dalhousie received media attention. The 2017 party was reported as having 2000-3000 attendees; police estimated 1,200 to 1,500 people. Many of these were wearing Dalhousie gear. Twenty-three people were arrested. In 2021, during the pandemic, another street party was covered by the news media, with CBC reporting “hundreds” of students, and a police news release mentioning “*thousands*”. Ten people were arrested, and more were fined under public health provisions.

Community members have organized and expressed concerns about personal safety, illegal drinking and substance use, property damage, anti-social behaviour, noise and garbage as a result of these large gatherings as well as regular house parties around these events.

Inspiring Communities has been engaged by Dalhousie University as an independent third party to facilitate a Community Strategies Lab and undertake community-based participatory research in support of developing a Collective Impact approach to the challenge posed by street parties.

Scope

Through conducting community-based participatory research (CBPR) we aimed to increase all stakeholders' awareness of unsanctioned street parties, and identify possible areas for realistic, accessible solutions for Dalhousie and key stakeholders to adopt.

As a piece of a longer-term plan to address street party culture, this research report focuses mainly on the local context of the neighbourhood surrounding Dalhousie. We did also search literature and media for general background on street parties and their causes. This research is not intended to be a complete, comprehensive, in depth analysis of street party culture, university traditions, social norms around drinking, nor urban planning in Halifax. What we gathered was sufficient to lend context to the local information we collected through the survey and interviews.

Approach and Methods

We began with an academic literature search and a media scan to get an overarching picture of the situation. We sought out information from other jurisdictions. We wanted to deeply understand the contributing factors in the local context, so in partnership with Dalhousie staff, we developed a survey intended to capture community residents' (neighbours') responses, which was distributed by Dal to the neighbourhood. We followed up with interviews with neighbours, security, HRM staff, police and the DSU president to better understand the perspectives of these key stakeholders.

Academic Research and Literature Review

The literature review revealed this to be an area largely unexplored. The research in the Waterloo Mayor's Task Force indicated the same finding¹. A 2015 article explored the effect location had on binge drinking among students in California on six campuses, finding that larger party size at outdoor parties was positively correlated with drinking to intoxication and the presence of a keg made excess drinking more likely.² A 2011 article notes that students who self-identify as a 'partier' experience more binge drinking harms, but this self-concept attenuates negative feelings from this.³

Explorations have begun into the effect COVID has had on students' pro-social and anti-social behaviours, including a study from the Netherlands examining student smoking, binge drinking and cannabis use pre- and post-first COVID pandemic lockdown.⁴ Future explorations might directly examine connections between COVID lockdowns, substance use and extreme transgressive behaviours like street parties.

One article explored the use of social media as a harm reduction measure during a sanctioned street festival, indicating a possible silver lining for this tool whose use is often implicated as a causal or amplifying factor in large gatherings.⁵

¹ On pg 41 of this document, under the heading "Academic Research": <https://events.waterloo.ca/meetings/Detail/2019-09-09-1430-Committee-of-the-Whole-Meeting/efa93ffa-4b95-430a-8a57-aabf00f1f670>

² Marzell, M., Bavarian, N., Paschall, M.J. et al. Party Characteristics, Drinking Settings, and College Students' Risk of Intoxication: A Multi-Campus Study. *J Primary Prevent* 36, 247–258 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10935-015-0393-4>

³ Summar Reslan, Karen K. Saules, Alisha Serras, "Partier" self-concept mediates the relationship between college student binge drinking and related adverse consequences, *Addictive Behaviors*, Volume 36, Issue 8, 2011, Pages 855-860, ISSN 0306-4603, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2011.03.018>.

⁴ van Hooijdonk, Kirsten J.M., Milagros Rubio, Sterre S.H. Simons, Tirza H.J. van Noorden, Maartje Luijten, Sabine A.E. Geurts, and Jacqueline M. Vink. 2022. "Student-, Study- and COVID-19-Related Predictors of Students' Smoking, Binge Drinking and Cannabis Use before and during the Initial COVID-19 Lockdown in The Netherlands" *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 2: 812. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19020812>

⁵ Emerging adults' use of alcohol and social networking sites during a large street festival: A real-time interview study, Jennifer M. Whitehill, Megan A. Pumper and Megan A. Moreno, Whitehill et al. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy* (2015) 10:21 DOI 10.1186/s13011-015-0016-3

Other jurisdictions

Queens

One report we were fortunate to obtain is a preliminary report from a Student Policy Innovation Lab organized at Queen's University to address Queen's Homecoming, which has been beset with large unsanctioned street parties. Similar to a Collective Impact approach, Policy Innovation Labs aim to consult and engage collaboratively a large diverse set of stakeholders, with an outcome focused on public policy / governance implications.

The recommendations of this report are listed in Appendix A with suggestions for how they might apply to Dalhousie's context.

Waterloo

In Waterloo, a task force addressing "Large Street Gatherings" was convened by the municipality, as an extension of the Town and Gown Committee, in 2018. Participants were drawn from Wilfred Laurier, University of Waterloo, Conestoga College, and municipal and emergency services. The group submitted an interim report in 2019 and a final report in 2020, based on a multipronged research approach, including academic research, world cafe and interviews and several surveys including a pre- and post-survey of attendees at a large street gathering. The latter grouped 12 recommendations under four themes: Operational Excellence, Culture Change, Community Impact and Ongoing Initiatives. The recommendations were developed from a set of four identified key problems (Public Safety, Reputational Risk, Cost, and Crowd Behaviour), through employing key decision criteria, which were:

1. The approach enhances community & personal safety
2. The approach creates peer-driven culture change
3. The approach is cost-effective, financially sustainable, and operationally feasible
4. The approach yields positive outcomes for stakeholders collectively.

The Waterloo recommendations are listed in Appendix A, along with reflections on the Dalhousie context.

UBCO

The University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus (about 8500 students) in the early 2000s developed a reputation for wild street parties⁶. A 2014 Kelowna News article analyses how this trend developed and how it ultimately changed. The factors the article lists as contributing to a party culture developing include: a mandate to increase population, which led to lenient academic entry

⁶ Nixon, Dave. Where'd the wild things go? The rise and fall of UBCO as a party school, InfoNews.ca, October 12, 2014. <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/whered-the-wild-things-go-the-rise-and-fall-of-ubco-as-a-party-school/it13730>

requirements and students being added faster than physical and social infrastructure could be scaled to accommodate; large number of first year students, too young to legally drink; remote (out-of-town) location; campus was marketed as a “lifestyle destination” which appealed to students who were intent on partying.

The outcome was like the unsanctioned street parties described at Dalhousie and elsewhere. Dave Nixon, the author of the article, writes, “On any weekend (the warm ones at least) you could walk out of a rez room and immediately be swept up in a swarm of woo-girls and fist-pumping beer-shotgunning bros, who all milled about the buildings meeting new people. They jumped off ledges and balconies; climbed gazebos; and navigated the police, security, and RAs who all posed a threat to their freedom of underage and/or public drinking. [...] Usually it was these student-run, unsanctioned events that drew you in with the promise of the most fun, but even some of the legitimate parties became notorious.”

In 2008 a large-scale police campaign dampened a lot of the partying, although the article notes, “The party scene wasn’t to be broken so easily though, and it continued over the next two years as major dorm and street parties remained active for at least the first two months of the school year, culminating in final big events on Halloween in which students would mill on the street in costume (and often in character).”

In September of 2011, a violent stabbing incident on campus saw three people injured and eight people charged. It was later discovered that the offenders were not students, but following this incident, more permanent culture change began to take hold. Students reported that the administration and campus security ‘cracked down’.

Media Scan

Media scanning revealed coverage of the 2017 and 2021 street parties, showing a significant shift in tone. The 2021 party occurred during COVID, adding an extra component of heightened anxiety for the neighbours. The 2017 party was reported as having 2000-3000 attendees; police estimated 1,200 to 1,500 people. 23 people were arrested. In 2021, CBC reported “hundreds” of students, and a police news release mentioned “thousands”. Ten people were arrested and fined under public health provisions.

Insights

Some possible reasons for the partying behaviour - 2021:

- “Self-control is like a battery. We have to recharge the battery,” said [psychologist Dayna] Lee-Baggley. “At this point of the pandemic, there are no frontal lobes anywhere. We are all exhausted.”
- “On the one hand, I think it was irresponsible given the current situation,” said (graduate student) McCann. However, McCann understands why some behaved in such a manner. “A lot of these younger students obviously missed out on a lot of things over the last couple years”.⁷

⁷ These 2 points from <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/campus-and-community-react-to-dalhousie-street-party-1.5602233>

- "It feels pretty good to be in a large group of people and get back to normal"
- "getting students together to meet after a year of online schooling was important, but she agreed that it should not have been on the street."
- "We've been shut down for a year now," she said. "Most of us didn't have a good first-year experience so now that the majority of Nova Scotia is double vaxxed we deserve to have a little bit of benefits."⁸
- "He says that could be partially due to the double cohort of students attending university this year." [students who may have held off attending in 2020 due to COVID and the students who would ordinarily be arriving⁹]

Some possible reasons for the partying behaviour - 2017:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/police-shut-down-dalhousie-university-homecoming-parties-1.4355247>

- "We're all in it for the team spirit. Basically it's a pep rally. It's all about being ... one group, a whole," said Neville. "We chose this area where there seems to be a lot of students. It seemed like now would be a better time to make noise as opposed to at night. So I don't know. During the day, you would think you wouldn't get fined for partying."
- "Homecoming is meant to be so much more than students consuming excessive alcohol," said Leadbetter. "There's an opportunity to be part of community events like our hockey game, the football games, it's a great opportunity to show Dal spirit and Dal pride. This is not the way to go about that."¹⁰

In 2017, in response to binge drinking incidents across the country, Dalhousie and other universities implemented a no-alcohol in residence policy during Orientation week. They explained that they would only be using disciplinary tools of 'education' and 'restorative justice,' not seeking punitive measures for those who transgressed. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dal-takes-harm-reduction-approach-to-curb-campus-drinking-1.4267098>

Reactions ranged:

- "It kind of makes people consider that, 'Maybe I shouldn't be drinking too much,'" said Callahan.
- "It will kind of encourage students to go off of campus where they can't be as closely monitored by people in residence," said Chambers. "A lot of students are coming here, they're drinking for

⁸ These 3 points from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/street-party-halifax-covid-restrictions-police-dalhousie-1.6189860>

⁹ From www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/news/crackdown-may-follow-after-street-party-in-halifax-larch-street-area-100638686/

¹⁰ Sporting events in our culture, especially collegiate sports, are well-documented as correlated with drinking behaviours. See: Inebriation at sporting events is a problem, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171221123156.htm>; Hook 'Em Horns and Heavy Drinking: Alcohol Use and Collegiate Sports, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2527738/>; Sporting Events and the Use of Alcohol by University Students: Managing the Risks, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233605605_Sporting_Events_and_the_Use_of_Alcohol_by_University_Students_Managing_the_Risks etc.

the first time and they don't really know how to drink properly, so if they're in an area where they can seek out help it's more conducive to their overall safety."

- In an October 2021 opinion piece, past DSU president Maddie Stinson said this: "What many universities are yet to realize is that bans on alcohol don't make it less likely that students will drink and be drunk. They just make students more likely to end up in dangerous situations without support. Residence alcohol bans mean that an over-intoxicated student can't seek help without fear of repercussions. These policies teach students that their intrigue and desire to party and test out alcohol are wrong and deserving of discipline."

Based on media reports, these were the 2017 repercussions:

- 1 - underage drinking (\$150)
- 1- open liquor (\$467.50)
- 11- failing to use a sidewalk (\$151.25)
- 6 - public intoxication (\$134)
- 2 - violating a noise bylaw and disturbing neighbours (\$467).
- 4 people attended court to respond to a summary offence ticket for permitting drunkenness in their home.
- 23 students, including one youth, arrested
 - 6 for being intoxicated in a public place
 - 17 for breaching the peace.

2021 repercussions:

April 2021 (house party)

- 22 summary offence tickets (\$1,000 each) for over-limit gatherings during COVID

September 2021 Homecoming

- 9 men and 1 woman arrested for public intoxication
- "numerous" tickets issued for possession of open liquor
- Plan to go to zero tolerance policy in the future: "He [councillor Mason] said they had been trying to go with an educate-and-warn-and-then-enforce model but will now have to look at ticketing and arresting people the minute they cross into public space and break the law."
- University code of conduct sanctions

Social media

Part of our mandate was to explore the influence of social media.

Canadian Party Life (CPL) is a for-profit entity that recruits and pays local students to organize parties and gain followers. They have been expanding their efforts across the country with different universities, and growing partnerships to offer event/club/alcohol promotions specifically to campuses. They have recently announced a new partnership with Bounce promotions: a ticketing app for events.

CPL (and other accounts like it) has been implicated by Dalhousie staff and media as being influential in cultivating a “party competition” among university students, essentially using the idea of ‘social media challenges’ to encourage students to post content that will raise their school higher in CPL’s ‘party school’ rankings. While the main account was relatively quiet during the early part of the COVID pandemic, the @dalpartylife local account contains videos and photos from the 2021 party showing large crowds, and people jumping into the crowd from heights.

Encouragement (paid or otherwise) is one effect of social media relevant to this issue. Social media also provides an easy way to swiftly spread information about party locations or change of venue. It can make students who might not be directly connected to others aware of parties breaking out and incentivize them to explore or investigate. Social media is effective at building an ‘attention economy’ where a certain kind of person might enjoy the social accolades, attention, and dopamine rewards from having controversial or provocative posts liked, shared, and commented on.

Social media can also make neighbors, police and administrators more aware of who is responsible and what is happening. It may prolong or exacerbate community reaction by inviting comments from people far removed from the geographic location of a street party.

Survey

The project team undertook research specific to the context (in and around Dalhousie university). A survey was distributed by door-to-door drop card in the neighborhood as well as through an email distribution to a community list. It was open from March 28 through May 6, 2022. The survey introduction noted that there would be a separate engagement for students in the fall.

There were 183 completed responses among 269 stored responses (some people chose not to fully complete the survey, but all partial responses are included in the data). Respondents identified themselves as residents/community members (95%), university faculty/staff (12%), landlords (7%) and ‘other’ (6%).

The most frequently named streets that respondents lived on were Larch, Preston, Walnut, Edward, Cornwall, Chestnut, Vernon, Henry, Jennings and South. Most (77%) live in a house, with 9% inhabiting a rented unit in a house and 7% an apartment building. 42% of respondents have lived in the neighbourhood 10 years or more, with 41% living in the area from 0-5 years. Respondents cited the age groups that made up their household as falling 53% in the age 55 and up range; 29% falling within the 40-55 age range, 26% aged 25-40, 22% being 12 or younger and 21% being typical university age, 18-25. Just 35 respondents (15%) indicated that they rented part of their home or a separate property in the area to students.

Top three **benefits** of living in an urban university neighbourhood were identified as:

- Central Location
- Amenities (cultural, athletic, green spaces, etc)

- Convenience

Top three **challenges** of living in a university neighbourhood were identified as:

- Noise
- Garbage
- Parking

Property damage is next on the list, although in interviews, it was more often noted than parking, which was not mentioned. In the “other” section, several comments specifically indicate disrespect and abusive behaviour. Three mention rental building upkeep or (absent) landlords. Three mention police, and two of those specify over policing.

Seventy percent of those who responded to the question agreed or strongly agreed that “students bring vibrancy to my neighbourhood.” An equal number agreed or strongly agreed that students bring diversity.

Sixty-two percent who responded to the question agreed or strongly agreed that students bring disruption.

Participants welcome students into their neighbourhood (71% agree or strongly agree), and there is no strong agreement that there are too many students in the neighbourhood, although a small majority agree there are more students than there used to be.

Participants were asked to rank who was **most responsible** for adult student behaviour. The overall feeling was that most responsibility rested with individual students and their peers (by a significant margin), police and the university. Community members and local elected officials were identified as having the least. In between were student government, municipality / by-law officers and landlords.

The following question asked which of these groups had the **most capacity and influence to educate** students on legal repercussions, neighbourhood norms and expectations. The University was ranked strongly as the most influential, with student government, individual students/peers, landlords and police following in rank. Again, community members and elected officials were strongly perceived as having the least influence.

People were asked to describe the impact student party culture has had in their area. The common themes among the responses were:

- Property Damage/Theft;
- Secretions (vomit, urine, faeces);
- Garbage (including broken glass and used condoms);
- Safety concerns;
- Noise;
- Location (Jennings St);

- Substance use / abuse - Legal & Illegal;
- Homecoming, St Patrick's Day; and
- the Dal “dry campus rules” factor.

Assaults, illegal fires, pellet guns and windows being shot out, threatening behaviour, public masturbation, drunk people trying residents’ doors, and “bad attitudes” are all reported, indicating people feel unsafe. One commenter called the consistent aggressive partying behaviour “bullying” robbing them of the peaceful use of their own home. Several commenters cite frustration with police approach as being ineffectual. One reports police officers joining in drinking games and taking selfies with students. Dalhousie is described as not “holding themselves to account”. Many cite that this is a problem escalating in intensity, particularly over the last 5-10 years: the impacts are becoming worse.

Respondents’ reaction in the event of a party was to

- call police (58%);
- speak to the students (37%) and
- call 3-1-1 for HRM By-laws (30%).

Among the 26% who chose ‘other’, most popular were calling the landlord and neighbours. Slightly fewer (25%) called their elected official.

Half of the survey participants who responded felt that street parties should be abolished (35% strongly agreed and another 15% agreed). To the statement “street parties are okay if they don’t get out of hand”, respondents were balanced (43% agree to 44% disagree). The same balanced ratio was seen in response to “street parties should be formalized and managed by authorities.”

Participants acknowledged to a significant extent (73%) that street parties are not representative of all university students. Most disagreed or strongly disagreed (60%) that Halifax is a “drinking city”.

Forty-five percent agree that street parties have spread COVID-19, while 23% neither agree nor disagree. Forty percent of respondents agreed that COVID restrictions had exacerbated the street parties, versus 35% who did not agree and 21% who neither agreed nor disagreed.

A significant number (65%) disagreed with the statements “street parties are a rite of passage for students”, and “street parties are a legitimate way for students to socialize.” (59%)

Half agreed that "street parties would not happen if there were more things to do on campus" versus 25% who disagreed. Over 75% agreed that street parties take emergency resources away from other emergencies.

Participants believe that parties can be stopped – 67% disagreed with “they can’t be stopped.” They believe this can happen in the near term – 63% disagreed with the statement that addressing them

would take years. Most recognize that these happen across the country, and that the students attending are not only Dalhousie students.

Asked to indicate which potential risks were essential to mitigate, residents strongly indicated that these were all essential, albeit in this order:

- Death or injury
- Alcohol or substance overdose
- Sexual assault or sexualized violence
- Property damage
- Impact on quality of life/community safety in neighbourhood

Asked to indicate which of the suggestions to address and mitigate street parties were very important, residents responded in this declining order of importance:

- Post-party clean up
- Police fines and arrests
- Sanctions through the student code of conduct
- Harm reduction education (alcohol, substance, sexualized violence, injury)
- Social media monitoring
- Door-to-door engagement and education
- Blocking off streets

Most indicated they were not aware of efforts undertaken by community partners to address street parties, nor to encourage safe student behaviours.

Other Comments

The last question of the survey asked for “other comments” and these were legion. These have been analysed for themes, with highlights below. Bolding indicates there were multiple responses conveying this message:

Dalhousie’s Role

- **Dal needs to be more accountable, it’s their responsibility**
- **More controlled opportunities for students to socialize on campus, suggestion of the field**
- **A perceived “dry campus” as the reason students drink elsewhere, which leads to unsafe conditions**
- **Expel or academically punish students that party, it’s a privilege to learn. Student code of conduct needs to be stricter.**
- President's comments are important
- Perception that SMU is doing a better job of regulation and communication
- It’s embarrassing for Dal / street parties treated as a PR issue.

- Email communications from Dal asking the students to have a safe weekend are ineffective – students don't read them
- "Read the room" when sending out letters asking for donations
- Lack of culture at Dal

The issues

- **Off-campus but still reflective of the university**
- **Current efforts are failing**
- **Anti-social behaviour, no regard for community members (disrespect)**
- **Insufficient consequences**
- References to vulgarity, rap music being misogynistic and complaints about marijuana smell
- Reference to the area as a ghetto
- Students from Ontario as the issue
- Lack of assistance/ interference from landlords for upkeep - garbage, snow removal etc.
- Monroe Day as an issue
- Police aren't doing enough
- Mainly 1st and 2nd year students
- Speeding drivers
- Overnight winter parking
- Leniency because they are students

Potential solutions

- Idea- make it a DSU event to incorporate community in a less risky way, and less rude behaviour from students if being monitored?
- **Landlords need to take more responsibility**
- Move parties to on campus or at the presidents' house on Oxford
- Block off the street, set up a stage
- More tickets, punishments
- Education on substance intake
- Sunday morning clean-up should be a thing
- By law enforcement
- Responsibility of the two convenience stores?
- Focus on preventative measures
- Close Howe Hall main doors in the evening
- Mardi Gras street party solution (ie, police crackdown, what worked for Mardi Gras?)
- Neighbourhood community service requirements
- Refer to other schools for solutions
- Collaborative effort of Dal, community, police, DSU, by-laws
- Require permits

Miscellaneous

- One mention of parties not being bad here, but in Wolfville they are worse
- “Rite of passage”
- This is performative
- Not all are for a total ban
- Making a bigger deal out of this than it needs to be
- Students bring life, vitality and a workforce

Interviews

Along with the survey, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders. We conducted 13 interviews:

- 2 with Dalhousie security
- 1 with Dalhousie student union
- 1 with a researcher working with Queens
- 3 with representatives from HRM (Public Safety and By-Laws)
- 1 with HPD
- 5 with community residents / neighbours.

Some of these interviews were informational in nature - for instance, the last HRM interview was to learn more about a proposed new rentals bylaw that will have implications for dealing with absentee landlords. Some were to explore important viewpoints - DSU, security, HPD. All helped draw a more complex and complete picture of the narratives that had begun to emerge during the survey.

Community Narratives around Street Party Culture at Dalhousie

Dalhousie isn't doing enough

- Dalhousie is not taking sufficient responsibility for bringing students into the community and for their behaviours in community.
- Dalhousie isn't offering enough structured sanctioned activities to engage students, and they are forbidding them to drink on campus, thus forcing the students to create their own events.
- Dalhousie isn't taking this issue seriously; they are treating it like a PR exercise.
- Dalhousie isn't holding students accountable by applying adequate sanctions.
- Dalhousie stopped paying for extra police and they should have continued.
- Dalhousie isn't communicating sufficiently with the community.

The students responsible for the parties are a type:

- Coming from Ontario / Calgary
- Wealthy family, entitled
- Toxic masculinity
- White privilege

- Competitive and influenced by social media (Canadian Party Life, challenges)

Police aren't doing enough

- Police are going easy on these students.
- Police are not enforcing laws with the same zeal they have been known to apply in other situations, with other communities (ie, protestors, Black youth).
- Police should crack down on parties earlier and harder.
- Police should issue more fines and arrest more people.
- Police were more proactive and effective in the past.

The neighbourhood is changing for the worse.

- Students are more disrespectful and behave worse than in the past.
- More houses are being bought and converted to apartments / student houses.
- Developers are tearing down houses and the neighbourhood is losing character.
- Landlords are allowing houses to become rundown.
- There are now two late night pizza shops in what was predominantly a quiet residential neighbourhood.
- I moved here knowing it was a university neighbourhood, but it has gotten so much worse I may have to sell.

*Things are getting worse overall: **Student perception***

- Looking through the archives of the DSU, we notice that there has always been a 'party culture' but in the past it was more spread out the year. The parties were smaller but more frequent, and not only more tolerated but expected.
- Pop culture has built up expectations of a particular kind of 'university experience'
- Students in the past did not have to deal with pandemic, the constant stress of climate change anxiety, there is more economic pressure (students told "sometimes you have to work four jobs to pay for school tuition" - patronizing)
- Degrees used to carry status, prestige; now they are table stakes to participate in the economy, meaning there are more of us competing for opportunities.
- Students lack trust in the university / administration sparks rebellion.
- Quiet nihilism

*Things are getting worse overall: **Neighbor perception***

- Students are less respectful
- There is more property damage
- Feel more fear
- Large out of control parties are new
- More absent / unaccountable landlords
- Changing makeup of neighborhoods - fewer single-family homes
- Less police presence

"It's not just parties"

- More neighbours commented on the day-to-day annoyances: broken glass, litter, noise, trash, vulgarity, smell of weed.
- Neighbours mentioned students smoking off campus grounds when smoking was no longer permitted on campus – a correlation, “shifting the problem into community.”
- Too many students stuffed into houses, unsafe.
- Issues like fires, students doing stunts for social media clout, pellet guns firing off.

Potential steps forward:

An exhaustive list of ideas developed from the event is contained in the *Harvest from Community Strategies Lab* document. These ideas are also enfolded here, along with suggestions stemming from the research and based on recommendations in Waterloo and Queens.

Continue the process

- Continue the process with student engagement.
- Consider ways to reach “The Type” -- the students most responsible for these parties. Options suggested have been a paid informant / interview opportunity, and/or engaging a third party that might better reach this crowd. HRM described engaging the Youth Project for a similar arms-length outreach into youth communities that did not want to engage.
- In fall, plan to do a pre- and post-event survey of students around Homecoming
- Repair relationships among and between Dal and students.
- Consult with Recruitment to see how they can support change efforts.
- Facilitate opportunities for students and neighbors to connect
 - To work on understanding each other and developing common norms
 - To build tolerance
 - The work is “all year round”. Not just around high-risk events.
- Consult other institutions without a ‘party culture’ to find factors of difference (ie, NSCC).
- Maintain regular contact with stakeholders and formalize the collective impact process (assign a backbone team). Continue to invite the missing stakeholders (see below, “Leverage....”)

Improve ongoing communication with all stakeholders

- Interviews and survey results indicate that Dalhousie should develop a robust communications plan that connects administration and students with the neighborhood and engages service stakeholders including health, police and HRM bylaws. This is an essential component of collective impact and going forward will be an important part of addressing unsanctioned street parties and rebuilding trust and relationships
- Reiterate senior administration commitment to authentic neighborhood engagement as often as possible.

- Increase communication with students and neighbors to dispel myths and promote collaboration
- Find a workable structure for a roundtable for neighbours/ residents' forum. Important that this be a two-way dialogue space. A newsletter will not serve.
- Coordinate planning for 'trouble spots' (ie, Homecoming, Monroe Day and Saint Patrick's Day) with stakeholders such as police, fire, emergency services, bylaws, public health, and so on.
- Release information about events & consequences in aggregate form regularly and publicly.
- Ensure stakeholders know where to find information about Dalhousie's collective impact process and how to reach someone.

Provide alternatives to draw some energy from Big Parties

- Having Dalhousie host more activities was suggested regularly by residents, in both the interviews and the survey, as well as the DSU suggesting their feeling that student involvement in planning these is key. The Queen's report deals explicitly with the caveat that students **MUST** be involved in planning alternative events to increase the likelihood of appealing to students; as well as the importance of this being just one step in an overall process to avoid the concern of students starting the party after the sanctioned events.
- Empower and support students (DSU/societies) to plan novel, varied on-campus and other student events
- Dalhousie community to offer more events on campus (engage societies, programs, etc to host smaller events?)
- Explore off campus events around trouble times that could be coordinated with other partners.

Engage the academic community at Dalhousie in solution-building

- Host Policy Lab (with Dr. Lori Turnbull) - find more ways to tap into student / research community wisdom
- Explore opportunities to create thesis projects (planning, MPA, health promotion, etc)
- **COMPULSORY CREDIT COURSE** (credit / bonus):
 - Similar to academic integrity
 - On community behaviour / respect
 - STFX has implemented something similar
 - "Just make it happen" - steamroll barriers
 - Make it **REQUIRED** to register for second year (+ bonus points)
 - Neighbors could teach it / guest speak in modules
 - Could be done online before arriving
- Dalhousie: Sponsor **academic research** into party culture / influences / solutions
- Explore interdisciplinary challenges (academic competitions)

Leverage position to advocate for change among stakeholders

- Consider taking action on student housing (advocacy, investing in more, etc)
- Advocacy to Mayor / province on formation of task force on issues
- Advocate with the community for new approaches to public safety.

- Advocacy and research to support a better understanding of Nova Scotia’s drinking culture and reputation.
- Work with the neighbors and HRM to develop a common vision of the future of the neighborhood.
- Advocate for proactive bylaw enforcement.
- Proactively reach out to the “MIA” stakeholders and continue to work on relationships: HRM staff; Councillors; more neighbors; EHS / Fire; Other HRM Universities; Party influencers (frats, CPL, etc). This may mean uncomfortable conversations. Ensure that senior administrators are leading and staff are supported.

Miscellaneous Practical & Tactical Suggestions

- Make more waste receptacles available in the neighbourhood.
- Provide portable toilets during peak times.
- Don’t send info to students via emails. (Long, text-heavy emails are not effective... explore video, university app, social media, texting).
- Update the web pages that inform students about their rights & responsibilities vis a vis community relations. Update content AND format of presenting.
- Ensure cheap food is available at large drinking events.

Appendix A

Recommendations from other jurisdictions

Queens	
Recommendations	Reflections in Dalhousie context
<u>Recommendation #1: Structured Events During Queen's Homecoming</u>	Having Dalhousie host more activities was suggested regularly by residents, in both the interviews and the survey, as well as the DSU suggesting their feeling that student involvement in planning these is key. The Queen's report deals explicitly with the caveat that students MUST be involved in planning alternative events to increase the likelihood of appealing to students; as well as the importance of this being just one step in an overall process to avoid the concern of students starting the party after the sanctioned events.
<u>Recommendation #2: Expanding the Queen's University Task Force</u>	Creating a council or task force would be a way of formalizing and reinforcing Dalhousie's commitment to this issue.
<u>Recommendation #3: Creating a roundtable with all the stakeholders to prepare for Homecoming</u>	Creating a roundtable to include the key stakeholders such as neighbors, businesses, law enforcement, Dalhousie staff and security, could provide ongoing energy and direction for the ongoing collective impact and collaboration efforts Dalhousie undertakes.
<u>Recommendation #4: Expand the number of waste receptacles available to students</u>	This is a practical logistical step to mitigate the aftermath of large parties. Judging from the feedback of residents, installing a number of portable toilets strategically throughout the neighbourhood in the early fall might be a welcomed measure.
<u>Recommendation #5: Strengthening Police-Student relationships</u>	This may not be an applicable step with the strength of the Dalhousie security force as

	intermediaries who have the trust and ear of students and meet regularly with law enforcement.
<u>Recommendation #6: Standardization of University’s Code of Conduct application in all universities</u>	Queen’s recommendation of this as a cross-university network approach is intriguing, if beyond the scope of this report. In challenging some of the exacerbating factors like influential social media, a cross-university approach could be beneficial.
<u>Recommendation #7: Queen’s University should continue the PIL on resolving the issues surrounding Homecoming</u>	Dalhousie professor Lori Turnbull has indicated interest in hosting a similar Policy Innovation Lab around the issue of unsanctioned street parties at Dalhousie. Similarly to a task force, engaging with Dalhousie’s academic faculty in responding to this challenge would indicate the depth of Dalhousie’s commitment, while spotlighting many of the excellent resources at the school that may help resolve it.

Waterloo

Recommendations	Reflections in Dalhousie context
<p><u>Recommendation 1: Operational Excellence</u> Continue and enhance progressive coordinated planning for unsanctioned street gatherings, with a focus on decreasing crowd sizes and reducing risks to public safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by the Waterloo Regional Police Service and the City of Waterloo, continue with, and expand where possible, the use of successful pilot initiatives and other innovative crowd management strategies to reduce crowd size and density. • All post-secondary institutions in the Region should participate in the coordinated operational planning process. 	<p>Dalhousie security convene meetings of emergency services and other stakeholders currently.</p> <p>The Waterloo approach is police-led which, considering the Dalhousie context, support among students for the Defund the Police movement, and challenges in public perception that HPD are working on, may not work in this instance.</p> <p>A coordinated approach with the other large universities in the city may be desirable, though other institutions may benefit from the perception of this as a ‘Dalhousie’ problem.</p>

<p><u>Recommendation 2: Culture Change</u> Currently, St. Patrick’s Day and Ezra Homecoming generate the street parties. These street gatherings are seen as entitlements for young adults, or a rite-of-passage. These celebratory days need to shift focus toward responsible celebration, community wellness and involvement of social not-for-profits such that street parties are not expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should recognize that their students attend these street gatherings, and that their students also invite friends from out of town. In conjunction with Recommendations 3 & 4, engagement with the student bodies should occur to eliminate the expectation for a street gathering, with a focus on responsible celebration via sanctioned events (such as WLU’s sanctioned homecoming events) or at private residences and licensed establishments. ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should undertake a campaign to further educate attendees on the harmful impacts of large street gathering and abuse of alcohol and other substances. ● WLU should engage its current students and alumni on what Ezra Homecoming should and should not entail. While not sanctioned by the University, there is currently an expectation by participants that Homecoming will lead to a street gathering. WLU should take steps to end this expectation for its students and alumni. ● WLU should share the outcomes of their Homecoming review with the Town & Gown Committee. 	<p>Culture change will be a necessary step in long term shifting of behaviour. Not only the small-scale culture of a set of entitled students, but Halifax’s drinking culture have been implicated as possibly contributing to causality.</p> <p>From the <i>Alternative Approaches to Public Intoxication</i> report to HRM Council, June 29, 2021:</p> <p><i>“Nova Scotia—Halifax in particular—has a relatively high rate of heavy drinking: 22.7%, compared to 19.3% in Canada. Cultural norms around drinking are well established, embedded in Halifax’s legacy as a port town, and dominant military and university cultures, the problems of which were emphasized by Dr. Clairemont in his roundtable report on violence in the HRM. A recent study by the Canadian Institute of Substance Use Research gave the province a score of F in an evaluation of its alcohol policies. The costs of alcohol weigh heavily on all of our economic, social, health and criminal justice systems in Nova Scotia, accounting for 37.3% of overall costs, and above the Canadian average.¹⁰ In terms of criminal justice costs (policing, courts, and corrections), Nova Scotia ranks 3rd of all provinces and territories in costs of alcohol per person, costing each Nova Scotian \$264/year.”</i></p> <p>For this reason, a wider community strategy in addressing culture is prudent, particularly around the celebration of St. Patrick’s Day.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should seek opportunities to engage social not-for-profits and community-oriented organizations during events such as St Patrick’s Day, Homecoming and Orientation, with a lens on attendees learning from and potentially giving back to such groups. ● WLU should seek opportunities to hold wellness fairs around events such as Homecoming. ● Waterloo Mayor should host an annual meeting of post-secondary school Presidents to discuss large street gatherings. ● Waterloo Mayor should engage local school board Trustees to discuss large street gatherings. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 3: Institutional Culture</u> Post-secondary institutions need to shift the party culture to one of community respect, even when celebrating events on campus, in private residences, or in licensed establishments. Existing Strategic Plans within respective institutions should guide this work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led by WLU, UW and Conestoga College, internal engagement should occur that focuses on responsible ways to celebrate events. This engagement should be direct, multi-faceted, and have a goal of reaching as many students as possible on an annual basis. ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should ensure mechanisms exist to effectively deal with negative student behaviours that may arise from attending these large gatherings. ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should review existing operations to ensure no 	<p>Dalhousie has many of these structures in place: a robust policy to address alcohol use on campus leading with harm reduction, a student code of conduct and a range of disciplinary tools to apply.</p> <p>It is worth reviewing what existing structures may be indirectly supporting street party culture. This will be a process of continuous improvement.</p>

<p>actions are indirectly supporting street party culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLU should continue operational review of Homecoming that reduces desirability of street parties specifically with respect to Homecoming but also incorporating concepts that could be applied to St Patrick’s Day and Orientation. ● Post-secondary and secondary school institutions should strengthen messaging (including student orientation messaging) around being a responsible community member. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 4 - Student Solutions</u></p> <p>A comprehensive, multi-institutional program is needed to allow students to further identify and implement solutions to meeting the goal of no street gatherings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College should formalize programs that actively engage students to further identify and implement solutions that meet the task force’s goal. These could include multidisciplinary problem-solving events, Pitch Competitions, course projects, case competitions and other events/activities that seek student involvement in creating implementable solutions. ● Each institution should actively support implementation of student-led/created solutions through coordination with other stakeholders and report back to the Town and Gown Committee on their student engagement activities and resulting programs. 	<p>Student-led solutions could be supported through DSU as well as encouraging academic study such as a Policy Lab engaging MPA, architecture, planning, public health or other schools within the university.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 5 – Reduce the Financial Burden</u></p>	<p>Dalhousie has in the past funded extra policing in the area without seeing sufficient desirable outcomes to, in their views, justify the costs. Could this tactic be reimplemented as a piece of a</p>

Post-secondary institutions and their student bodies need to engage with emergency responders to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the taxpayer costs to manage street gatherings.

- Emergency responders and other agencies that are incurring significant costs should engage directly with WLU, UW and Conestoga College, to explore opportunities to reduce these ongoing costs.
- WLU, UW and Conestoga College, as well as their student associations, should provide direct and/or in-kind support toward the communications and other plans to reduce costs (see recommendation # 10).
- A joint event budgeting process involving the City of Waterloo and local postsecondary institutions should be used to find efficiencies in procurement and asset deployment.
- Led by the Waterloo Regional Police Service and in partnership with local postsecondary institutions, a review should be conducted to determine the most cost efficient and effective manner of deploying police, university and private event security services.
- As a short term funding mechanism, the City should continue to lobby the province to increase heads and beds allocations. As post-secondary institutions do not pay local property taxes, but rather the Province provides municipalities with a \$75/student “Heads and Beds” allocation, this Heads and Beds funding allocation, which has not changed in 30 years, should be increased to recognize the significant costs these gatherings place on local taxpayers. The task force understands that costs will

larger strategic action?

<p>likely increase in the short term, as operational teams seek to further manage crowds. This is particularly relevant for St Patrick’s Day events, given the uncertainty around crowd growth for this event. The task force anticipates that the reduction of costs, particularly around Ezra Homecoming, will help to offset the increased costs for emergency responder budgets.</p>	
<p><u>Recommendation 6 - Advocacy</u> A systematic, multi-partner advocacy strategy at a provincial level must be utilized to promote the cessation of a street gathering at all times of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognizing the ongoing work of stakeholder professional associations, each stakeholder should advocate with their peers at a provincial level to emphasize the need to end large unsanctioned gatherings, through implementation of best practices and new change initiatives/trends. ● The City should engage with the Ontario Town and Gown Association in order to harmonize approaches in applicable Ontario municipalities. ● The City should engage with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and other municipalities on legislative improvement sought (see recommendation #7 below). ● WLU and UW should engage with the Council of Ontario Universities in order to harmonize approaches across Ontario’s University system. ● Conestoga College should engage with the Colleges of Ontario in order to 	<p>It was suggested during interviews that Dalhousie University has a strong position from which to advocate with the municipality and province to protect the neighborhood and support students in achieving secure, affordable housing which, it was felt, would help ultimately address the issues associated with large, unsanctioned street parties.</p> <p>A Policy Lab may signpost other ways that advocacy could be used as a tool in addressing</p>

<p>harmonize approaches and/or share best practices across Ontario’s College system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WRPS should continue to engage with the Ontario Chiefs of Police to share best practices regarding operational approaches. ● WLU, UW and Conestoga College student unions should engage with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the College Student Alliance to share best practices. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 7 - Legislative Improvements</u></p> <p>The City needs to lobby the province for changes that will enhance municipal enforcement’s capabilities during operations. Overall impacts associated with large street gatherings should be considered when advancing legislative and community safety provisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led by the City, the province should be lobbied on a range of matters to provide municipal enforcement with enhanced tools to effectively enforce City by-laws. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing municipalities with the authority to create community safety zones during designated times, which would provide for increased fines for certain types of by-law violations associated with street gatherings. ○ Seek powers to allow for municipal by-laws to place an onus on a person, being charged with a by-law violation, to produce valid personal identification for the purposes of the by-law charge being commenced. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increasing the legislative tools available to collect on defaulted municipal by-law fines, in order to provide for an increased measure of accountability ● The City of Waterloo should look at enhancements to its public nuisance regulations to provide for a process whereby house parties can be registered beforehand, to support a safer environment for celebrations. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 8 - Change the Built Form</u> The City and WLU should explore the opportunity to replan/redesign the Ezra/Bricker neighbourhood as a mixed-use, predominantly institutional area, with a pedestrian focus. There may be potential for the public road network to be closed through this redesign.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During the City’s next Official Plan Review (launching in 2020), the City should engage with WLU and other landowners on the desirability of allowing institutional growth in the Ezra/Bricker neighbourhood. ● WLU should consider diversifying the neighbourhood, and broadening the housing stock to include non-students and mature students. 	<p>This is interesting, and suggestions related to zoning, the makeup of the neighborhood and changes related to development were woven into our interviews.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 9 - Landlord Education</u> Landlords on and adjacent to Ezra Avenue should be provided material on methods to manage overcrowding during peak days, both inside and outside of their buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The City should educate landowners and other stakeholders on the unique risks from overcrowding on peak days, and the 	<p>The role that landlords play in this situation has been hinted at but not fully examined. If landlords can be identified and prove willing, their engagement could possibly improve the ‘party house’ situation significantly.</p>

<p>benefits of using fencing during these peak days to control their property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WLU and private landlords should collaborate on joint fence procurement around peak days. ○ The City should host an annual landlord information session on responsibilities regarding crowding, parties and property maintenance. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 10 - Comprehensive Communications Plan</u></p> <p>A multi-faceted, comprehensive communications plan is needed that targets all relevant audiences, includes peer-to-peer messaging on risks to attending street gatherings, and features an influencer campaign to maximize its reach. Communications will be embedded within all other recommendations, and will be a key tool to integrate all activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led by the City, a communication plan should be developed and implemented that adequately responds to students' current attitudes towards large street gatherings (e.g. "rite of passage", Fear of Missing Out, safety of the event, larger crowds are better etc.). The communications plan should target students, alumni, parents, local school boards as well as non-locals. A particular focus should be placed on using peer-to-peer messaging in a way that uses influencers, is authentic, focused on motivations for Gen Z, and highlights the impacts of attending. ● WLU and UW should take a leadership role in engaging the Council of Ontario Universities on provincial messaging. 	<p>Interviews and survey results indicate that Dalhousie should develop a robust communications plan that connects administration and students with the neighborhood and engages service stakeholders including health, police and HRM bylaws.</p> <p>This is an essential component of collective impact and going forward will be an important part of addressing unsanctioned street parties and rebuilding trust and relationships.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conestoga College should take a leadership role in engaging Colleges of Ontario on provincial messaging. ● Messaging coming from hospitals and paramedics should be leveraged, as this messaging is impactful and authentic. 	
<p><u>Recommendation 11 - Ongoing Collaboration</u> Taskforce partners will be needed as key implementers. Ongoing collaboration at least until the street gatherings cease, should be expected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led by the Town & Gown Committee, ongoing collaboration should occur with task force partners. As identified in this report, partners should be key implementers of recommendations. 	<p>This is an essential component in successful collective impact.</p> <p>Establishing a roundtable of residents to provide a forum for community concerns and discussion of impacts, and a roundtable of service provider stakeholders to meet, strategize and share resources around addressing large unsanctioned parties could be effective steps in maintaining momentum.</p>
<p><u>Recommendation 12 - Measuring Outcomes</u> Use empirical research to determine the efficacy of our efforts, including whether motivations to attend are shifting, the trajectory of attendance and costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led by the Town & Gown Committee, implementation of these recommendations should be monitored on an annual basis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report to City Council and other governing bodies on a not less than annual basis. ● Led by the Town & Gown Committee, opportunities to partner with academic institutions/professors/researchers should be sought to undertake rigorous academic research regarding the underlying motivations for attendance, and opportunities to influence those motivations. 	<p>Establishing a process to measure results would be powerful.</p> <p>A pre- and post-Homecoming event survey of students would be a valuable step in gathering intelligence during the student consultation process in the fall and might provide a useful baseline for a go-forward measurement.</p>

Appendix B

Dalhousie alcohol policy

https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/dept/university_secretariat/policy-repository/University%20Alcohol%20Policy%20rev%20Aug%202021.pdf