

# **SASKATOON BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS**

**2021 Community Conversations Report**

**September 2021**

## **Table of Contents**

3	Introduction
4	Feedback on Community Safety Challenges
8	Saskatoon Police Service Values
10	Ideas on How We Can All Contribute to Creating a Culture of Community Safety
15	Comments from the Saskatoon Police Service
18	List of Participants

## Introduction

The Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners, in its role as a conduit between the public and the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS), hosted a series of conversations with various groups in the community to solicit feedback and ideas for consideration by the Board in its future strategic planning. Due to COVID-19, the community conversations were held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

Invited participants represented the following groups:

- Business Groups
- Diversity Groups
- Front Line Service Groups
- Indigenous Groups
- Service Clubs and Seniors Groups
- Community Associations
- Newcomer Groups & Cultural Associations
- Groups Who Work with Youth

Twelve sessions were held over a two-month period (June 10 to August 10, 2021). The sessions were hosted by members of the Commission, and each session was attended by at least one member of the Saskatoon Police Service in an executive or leadership position. A formal script was used in each session to ensure consistency in messaging and obtaining feedback.

The sessions used a roundtable format; conversation topics included the following questions:  
#1: What is the biggest challenge facing your community/neighbourhood when it comes to public safety?  
#2: What are the top policing values you would like to see created and/or strengthened in our community?  
#3: How can your organization contribute to strengthening a culture of community safety in Saskatoon?

Representatives from 61 organizations participated in the sessions. Individuals unable to attend a planned session were provided with a link to an online survey which asked the same questions. A total of 19 individuals completed the survey online.

This report includes a summary of what was heard during the sessions. The online responses are included separately within each question area. Comments made by the Saskatoon Police Service are also provided in this report. The report will be used by the Board in its future strategic planning work.

## Public Safety Challenges

### QUESTION #1: What are the biggest challenges facing your community/neighbourhood when it comes to public safety?

Theme #1: We are seeing an increase in social issues which may be leading to decreased community safety; people who require social services are having difficulty accessing help.

- Social issues include poverty and food insecurity, lack of adequate and affordable housing, mental health and addictions, use of dangerous drugs.
- These issues are creating a lack of choice for people and creating desperate situations for some. People have nowhere to go, and they are feeling disadvantaged and vulnerable; they are afraid and intimidated to ask for help.
- The needs of individuals facing these circumstances are intensifying, there is greater addiction and trauma, increased overdoses and deaths.
- Access to services is not keeping up; there is no 24/7/365 coordinated outreach service for people to access services.
- Where there are services that exist, accessibility is complex and difficult, particularly for those suffering from mental health and/or addiction; there is also a lack of awareness and knowledge of resources available in the community.
- Some front-line service providers are struggling to provide resources and are turning people away; they are fatigued and some feel at a loss as to how to help people effectively. Some feel responsible to protect the personal safety of clients as some visits to front-line service organizations are solely to seek out a safe place to hide.
- There is a desperate need for more neighbourhood locations/centres for people to go, with programs that can help them.
- COVID-19 had a negative impact on access to mental health services which could lead to decreased community safety.
- Lack of stable housing is an issue for people being released from custody; they have nowhere to go.
- The recent shut down of some properties increased homelessness; people have nowhere to go and no one to speak for them; the transient situation is increasing, and these people need to be cared for.
- More investment should be made in the community-based-organizations that already exist, rather than creating programs that must share limited funds.
- A 24/7 facility is needed where youth can access positive programming and mentorship.
- People who work with youth require more training to help them address their challenges, and places where we can send them to obtain the help they need.
- A safe community cares for its people and ensures that resources are available and accessible, we are not caring for our people. Rather, by not providing services we are keeping the cycle going. Some people are living in survival mode and joining gangs to achieve a sense of belonging. We need to have a more caring community and to better support our most vulnerable.
- There may not be a good understanding of how the police can help ensure community safety in low rental areas of the City; the SPS Crime Free Multi-Housing Program which provides certification to multi-family housing landlords to reduce property crime is not providing the value it once did.
- There is a general awareness among groups that these are all issues that cannot be solved by the police, yet the police must deal with the issues/crimes that are resulting. More effort must be placed on addressing these social issues in our community.

Theme #2: Gangs and drugs are becoming more prevalent, especially crystal meth.

- The increasing drug trade in Saskatoon is resulting in more gangs and gang houses, addiction, weapons on the streets, needles, and drug use in public places, etc. These are all leading to more crime in our communities.
- Youth who are at risk (those living with violence, drug use or abuse in their homes) have nowhere to go and nothing to do, which could lead to their joining gangs (out of need for security) or indulging in dangerous activities out of boredom.

Theme #3: Property crimes and theft are increasing.

- Graffiti, break and enters, vandalism, and property and vehicle theft seem to be increasing in some neighbourhoods, particularly in garages and back alleys; are all contributing to the perception that a community or neighbourhood is unsafe.

Theme #4: Poor infrastructure is leading to increased criminal activity.

- Lack of street lighting, poor property maintenance, lack of beautification efforts, cleanliness and street sweeping, and lack of pavement in well-used back allies could all be leading to more criminal activity in areas like 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Sutherland, and Broadway.
- Traffic calming is needed in areas like Sutherland (crosswalks, lights, etc.). Other neighbourhoods report high speeding rates (Confederation, Stonebridge).
- Pedestrian tunnels do not feel safe and criminal activity is occurring in them.

Theme #5: A lack of police presence in many neighbourhoods is leading to decreased community safety.

- In general, there is a desire for more police presence in all neighbourhoods. More proactive outreach (community policing), an increased level of patrol, and more focus on police officers building relationships with the community would help deter crime.
- The current system whereby officers are rotated on a regular basis does not allow sufficient time for an officer to get to know his/her community, and to build adequate relationships with community members and business owners.
- Downtown safety is an issue that needs to be addressed. However, a negative public perception of public safety, particularly in the downtown area, may be contributing to a wider community perception that our city is unsafe, when that may not be the case. It is important that we quantify what is happening and where so that perceptions are based on truth, rather than rumour.
- Greater police presence could help with traffic safety issues in various communities (Stonebridge, Kensington, Sutherland, Confederation) and areas like Kinsmen Park where there is loitering.
- While most students on campus report feeling safe during the day, only 1/5<sup>th</sup> say they feel safe during the night; a closer working relationship between SPS and campus security could improve this.

Theme #6: Greater education and training is needed in policing to appropriately respond to and interact effectively with some groups in the community.

- While it is acknowledged there are some positive relationships between the SPS and the LGBTQ2+ community, these diverse groups feel that in general, there needs to be greater education, apathy, sensitivity, and understanding of the community.
- Some diverse groups feel racism toward the LGBTQ2+ community exists in Saskatoon, and this is resulting in under-reporting of hate crimes toward these community members. (TransSask provided information to demonstrate there is limited data on hate crime related

to gender minority communities, and on a national basis, verbal harassment, sexual harassment, physical intimidation and threats and violence are high in the LGBTQ2+ community). They would like funding to be able to properly study and report the data so that this issue is taken more seriously.

- Some groups who work with youth feel there is systemic racism in the SPS when it comes to both Indigenous people and youth, and there is little understanding among the SPS of intergenerational trauma and its impact on people and families.

Theme #7: As Saskatoon's population becomes more culturally diverse, so too should the SPS workforce. In addition, a greater general understanding of diversity is needed.

- While there is some cultural diversity in the SPS workforce, every culture should be represented on the force in some way, not necessarily on the street, but at HQ as well.
- Increased cultural diversity training would help officers learn how to deal with refugees who are traumatized and vulnerable, and women, particularly Muslim and Asian women who have an ingrained fear of the police and what the outcomes of calling the police would be.
- Hate crimes are increasing, people of colour and some newcomers feel vulnerable, making them victims of crime.
- There is growing "islamophobia" and racism in general in Saskatoon. Resources are needed to address racism and create cultural awareness; more community engagement is needed.
- Diversity on campus has increased significantly and the campus demographic has changed.
- There is an acknowledgement within the community that newcomer groups require more education regarding Canadian law and societal/behavioural norms associated with gender-based violence.

Theme #8: Lack of trust and confidence in policing can lead to decreased safety.

- There is a lack of trust in the police among some groups including newcomers, diverse groups and youth, and for many, calling the police is not an option they trust for help. They feel they will be judged.
- Some youth feel there is a stigma within the police and the community that youth are inherently dangerous; this needs to be addressed.
- Over policing in the inner core of the city is leading to a greater lack of trust among youth.
- For some groups, there is a perception the police do not always enforce the law when they could; this decreases the confidence of business owners in the police in some communities.
- There is some hesitancy to call police because people do not believe the police will respond; there is also some fear the resulting action taken by police may be more than what is needed which sometimes leads to lack of reporting.
- Trust would increase if, as a community, more action were taken on truth and reconciliation, and if more effort was made to understand youth and work with them on their terms.
- Trust would increase if there were greater acknowledgement of the historical power imbalances that currently exist and if action were taken to address these imbalances.

Theme #9: Communication between SPS and the public, and some groups could be enhanced.

- Engaging with communications centre/dispatch can be frustrating and more care should be taken to ensure professionalism, to listen and help assure people when they are fearful.
- It is acknowledged that there are many good partnership and programs that are working well, but communication between SPS and front-line service groups can always improve.
- Communication between Community Associations and SPS could be improved. Some associations have good relationships with Community Liaison Officers; others are not aware of the service these officers can provide them.

## Online Responses:

- Increases in impaired driving and dangerous driving make our community unsafe.
- Break and enters and thefts from residences in increasing East College Park, moreso since displacement of those lodged centrally have been moved to other lodgings in the east area. The individuals have drug addictions and commit these crimes to support their behaviour.
- More drug houses in the area.
- Concern of an individual who believes there is a drug house across the street from him which makes him feel very unsafe.
- Police are handling way too many types of calls - I am not comfortable calling police in many situations and there does not seem to be a clear, safe alternative.
- Anti-social behaviours and our collective inability to view ourselves as a part of a larger, diverse, and changing community.
- There is a huge gap in finding resources for mental health and addiction. Within this gap there are many people who have fallen through the cracks and are living on the street. That being said, the lack of resources is not a police issue, but they are a safety issue for our vulnerable population and sometimes for those who come in contact with this demographic.
- No one single issue – no major issue. Some drugs, some homelessness, some vandalism, some poverty – probably all related! Mail is sometimes taken from home mailboxes.
- Those in poverty and homeless are at risk of violence and other harms.
- Lack of participation by the community itself. People seem to want police to do everything, but they cannot and we, the community needs to step up and do our part.... ALL of us.
- Increasing vagrancy, public defecation, graffiti, panhandling & drug use increasing. COVID has made these worse.
- Downtown is overrun with people with aggressive behaviour.
- Impaired driving is a community safety issue.

## Policing Values

**What are the top policing values you would like to see created and/or strengthened in our community? *Current SPS values include honesty, integrity, compassion, fairness, commitment, respect, and professionalism.***

*The top policing values most mentioned include, however these could all be strengthened:*

- Respect
- Compassion
- Professionalism

*New values and/or activities that could enhance existing values:*

- Accountability
- Ethics
- Increase education and awareness of diverse groups and cultures, trauma informed training
- Empathy
- Honesty
- Respect for human dignity should be at the forefront in every police interaction
- Focus more on prevention, “gentle policing”, proactive outreach, visibility, build relationships with community members, particularly youth; have a mindset “de-escalation”
- Protect and Serve
- Humility
- Listening
- Lead by example, demonstrate leadership in supporting minority and diverse communities to help build community trust and respect
- Patience for all
- Commitment
- Transparency
- Diversity
- Enhance education mentoring within the SPS so young officers learn better values
- Enhance communication in all areas; engage more with residents, community associations, diverse groups, cultural associations, and business owners
- Maintain consistency in enforcement and response to enhance credibility and trust
- Trust can only be built through investing in relationships
- Be curious to learn and change
- Define current core values so officers understand what they mean (for examples, “respect members of our community when we approach them, and when they approach us”).

### **Online responses:**

- Improvement in relations with Indigenous peoples but which goes both ways. It seems no matter what SPS do, it ends up being criticized with everyone taking their complaint public through the media and SPS ending up in bad light. Good things done by SPS need to be made known.
- Community engagement and diversity awareness
- Empathic real human services compared to cold "professional" services. Police are human first and as soon as I have a professional cop - it makes me think of a robo-cop...and I see it. There is one thing to have pride, it's another thing to be empathic and show humility. It wins over the people you are serving.

- Police officers that are mature in age and utilize their authority in a restrained manner
- Seeing themselves as servants, not as individuals exercising power over others. Too often see stops occur where police are threatening/behaving threateningly to vulnerable individuals.
- Preventative measures for safety and investing in mental health supports.
- I think with the community officers already in place making those connections with the vulnerable population the relationships are being mended. The police are being seen as helpful and caring, not so much as something to fear. I am not naïve and realize there are still huge problems, but I have noticed a difference in the day-to-day interactions with the police and those who are living on the street.
- Greater emphasis on understanding the causes of, particularly, petty crime (as above) and working with other agencies to find solutions beyond incarceration. less use of force more humane approach to policing.
- Police are not social workers.
- Police traveling back alleys on a regular basis. When this question was asked during the meeting (by at least 3 people) it was repeatedly not answered.
- Harm reduction and decriminalizing drug possession for personal use. Ongoing collaboration with community based and Indigenous led organizations.
- Partnerships....working with other people, organizations, groups without being the lead.
- A more visible presence & crack down on loitering, public drinking & drug use. Make people feel safe again and more comfortable walking downtown at night.
- Respect for basic human rights and respect for the Canadian Charter.
- Impartiality and equal support in all situations. Some incidents seem to have not been taken seriously (re-occurring events, known individuals). There need to be better solutions to avoid these re-occurring scenarios (long-term support for individuals in need).
- Understanding mental illness and addictions.
- Increased presence of police officers, especially at night.
- Stopping crime.

## **Strengthening our Culture of Community Safety**

**How can your organization contribute to strengthening a culture of community safety in Saskatoon?**

### **Ideas from Business Groups:**

- Make low-income housing more attractive and safer by enhancing the current screening process for low-income housing applications; however, this will highlight the “hard to house” individuals who are already vulnerable and marginalized. There needs to be a plan to provide stable housing to these individuals (government partnership).
- Create satellite foodbanks across the city to decrease density at the downtown foodbank.
- Continue to utilize the Little Chief Police Station and include and support officers working in that area so there is more of a police presence.
- Continue advocating with the province for resources to address issues that are contributing to crime. Help build bridges between the SPS and the business community by assisting in the development of resource materials to share.
- Aid in creating a group to convene to focus on the business needs when it comes to addressing policing issues. Get back to talking more about business attraction and incentives to attract businesses.
- Advocate for more funding for police to expand much-needed programs and for funding for social services (health, justice, social services). Distribute information on behalf of the SPS regarding rights of business owners in protecting their property, when and how to best utilize police services, who to call.
- Increase our own beautification efforts in our communities. Contribute to keeping our neighbourhoods clean and tidy to help deter crime.
- Do whatever we can to help build up a sense of community.
- Work with the City to strengthen bylaws regarding street use.

### **Ideas from Community Associations:**

- Educate our staff on what to do when they see something suspicious (EG. Landlords, contractors who go into homes to do work, people who work in underground parkades, etc., Airbnb's)
- Increase our communication with Community Liaison Officers in our communities so we can build better relationships with them and work together more (enhance our neighbourhood watch programs, etc.)
- Encourage our communities to be neighbourly to get to know their immediate neighbours and watch out for each other.
- Include more information on public safety in our community newsletters.
- Communicate to our associations the importance of reporting, even if they don't get an immediate result, it is still important to track so that we know where the police officers are needed and where the problems really are. You might not make a difference today, but you may tomorrow.
- Continue to promote and encourage high density housing so that more people are around, more people use parks and public spaces, more people are out, there would be less crime.
- Do more to promote better lighting to make yards safer.
- Engage more with the SPS to build bridges, particularly its Crime Prevention through Environment Design program.

- We could disseminate information on behalf of the SPS – when and why to call police.
- We could work with SPS to clean up graffiti.
- We would be interested in partnering with others on initiatives to provide things for kids to do, putting in skating rinks, basketball courts, a community centre.
- SPS could attend our community events and tell us what we should work on most to decrease crime in our communities.
- People would benefit from knowing that there is some diversity on the SPS.

#### **Ideas from Diversity Groups:**

- Continue to offer peer support, mental health programming, and one-on-one connection to resources to those who need it in our community (on campus).
- Work with the SPS to help providing training to their officers so they can better understand members of marginalized communities (LGBTQS2).
- Continue to support and advocate for our LGBTQS2 communities, and to advocate for the proper funding to be able to do this work.
- Open the door to working with others and the SPS on the LGBTQS2 acronym and keep the conversation on this going.

#### **Ideas from Indigenous Groups:**

- Waneskewin is a gathering place for people of all ages and is a place for healing. We could help strengthen the RAP Program by offering youth participants an opportunity to come to Waneskewin to learn about the land.
- Waneskewin could connect with the Hotel Association to develop both proactive and reactive programs that offer healing and alternative programming.
- White Buffalo Youth Lodge could work with the SPS (through *Sawêyihotân*) to re-establish the SOAR program which mentors youth, and the food security program post COVID-19. Funding partner could be the Dakota Dunes Economic Development Corporation.
- STC could help investigate funding for the Strengthening Families Program – through Jordan's Principle funding, potentially through the STC.

#### **Ideas from Front Line Service Groups:**

- Provide more training for our staff around mental health. With appropriate funding, try to house individuals separately in our shelters, if possible, to decrease incidents, and find ways to fund more temporary, but stable, housing options for people who need a place to stabilize.
- Continue providing a safe place for people to go or just come in and just sit down for a minute. Being open, accessible, and welcoming does contribute to public safety in sense that people have another place to go; people get triggered when they feel unwelcome.
- Continue to help connect people with the services they need.
- Continue to have an open dialogue SPS so we can support each other's work better.
- Continue to monitor our properties for evidence of criminal behaviour, or mental health issues that need attention.
- Share data with the SPS and work with SPS units so we all have more information.
- Educate our staff on when to call police to attend a situation and build a good relationship with the new Alternative Response Officers.

- Continue our goal of finding additional space so we can decrease density, which decreases incidents.
- Work to communicate more as an agency and find out where we have common ground with other agencies – work toward a 24/7/365 approach to outreach and response.
- Continue to provide a safe space within the community where members are accepted, loved, encouraged, and supported physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, provide information on services people can access, and advocate for people in need. We can collaborate more with SPS and have officers come in for coffee with our visitors to decrease the “us versus them mentality” that currently exists.
- Continue to offer housing options and help people know how to report a crime they may have information about.
- Could look at creating a partnership with SPS for 211 calls (free, confidential, service that connects individuals to human services in the province by telephone, text, or online chat.)
- Find ways to collaborate more with the SPS, particularly the Strengthening Families Program.
- Continue to work closely with SPS to strengthen Operation Runaway; aim for better engagement.
- Share more information with SPS – use data to help support individuals, not hurt them.
- Increase our de-escalation and trauma informed training for our crisis counsellors; continue some of the practices in providing an interagency response that were learned through COVID-19.
- Expand our services to include more supportive housing for women and children as the need in this area is increasing.
- Contribute to improving homelessness by continuing to challenge agencies and their systems so there is legitimacy and accountability
- We need to look at providing food security in safer ways; our facilities are full too often and the environment is not always controlled.
- We could implement more rules regarding use of public washrooms; one person per washroom has helped with safety and security.
- Help the situation by conducting research on issues.
- Continue to provide naloxone training and kits, agitation protocol, and trauma informed practice.
- Use metal detectors to identify weapons in facilities.
- Continue to improve our partnerships with the community.

#### **Ideas from Seniors and Service Clubs:**

- Continue our focus on restorative justice and our work in being a champion for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Continue working with our partners in schools to support children and their families to repair trust and open lines of communication to enhance relationships.
- Continue working to reduce and eliminate family/child poverty through a poverty reduction partnership.
- Continue to support school councillors, provide lunches at some of our inner-city schools and in Mount Royal, and supplying iPad so that kids have another reason to go to school.
- Continue our Rally Program which is a leadership program where kids 12-17 years are grouped in a camp setting to work on their leadership skills.
- We would love to work with the SPS to see if there is anything we can do to expand the RAP program into every high school (it's a financial issue).

### **Ideas from Newcomer Groups and Cultural Associations:**

- We can help with education, welcome and orientation programming (to provide sense of culture, purpose, capabilities, connection and resourcefulness). All of these would contribute to a culture of community safety.
- All of our organizations could continue to work as a team using our community liaison programming model.
- Strengthening our relationship with SPS and their cultural liaison position.
- Create more connections with schools through their resource officers to aid in our work with families.
- Help other organizations learn how to break down barriers with newcomers.
- Become a SPS volunteer to gain more cultural awareness.
- Work with SPS to help newcomers learn what is expected of them in Canadian society.
- Invite the SPS to interact with our youth and kids – this is good for newcomers to see.
- Encourage more police training in cultural competency training and insight into newcomers.

### **Ideas from Groups Who Work with Youth:**

- A group that works with youth is working to expand its operating hours and bringing on mental health supports and working with the Okihtcitawak Patrol Group (OPG) so they can be open evenings 7 days a week, so youth have somewhere to be. Further, could the board commit to community safety by building a 24/7 facility for youth, so they have a safe place to go at all times.
- Could officers be assigned to individual organizations to work on building relationships with youth? It would be crucial to have officers in place who youth would trust.
- We are working to restore Indigenous rights and by doing so, we are giving back to the community. We are working to abandon colonial structures, and the idea that others have the inherent right to speak for youth. We are encouraging youth to advocate for what they deserve and to use us for what they need.
- We could work with the city and police to revive a Child and Youth Friendly Saskatoon program from many years ago, whereby city buses marked with a sticker would pick up children who felt they were in danger and take them to a safe place.
- We could participate in creating a youth advisory council where youth could actively engage and take part in providing their input and feedback on decision-making that affects youth.
- We will continue to participate in police and board engagement, and these should occur on an on-going basis, at least quarterly, if not more frequently.

### **Online Responses:**

- Continuing with Citizen Patrol. Encouraging our residents to report all suspicious activity to aid SPS in connecting crimes and solving them.
- Share community experiences and make suggestions for improvement.
- Better communication and real engagement with Indigenous women and black and coloured women, 2SLGBTQ+. As well, policy and procedures updated by Indigenous (always first) and black and coloured women, 2SLGBTQ+lens. Strengthening and increasing of civilian staff within PACT - more responses at the level required. Addressing the internal cultural values of policing in Saskatoon - 'thin blue line' that should be ripped from the vocabulary of every police officer given the history of that line. Most officers don't even the true racist

history of that line. It also creates a 'us/them' mentality - which usually results in any problem.

- Hire police officers that have integrity. I'm tired of officers that are hired because of nepotism or because they have an "in", or because they meet some equity targets. The SPS force is quite dysfunctional and hiring those who are immature and do not have personal values or respect for others should not be in charge of enforcing the law upon others. Personally, I do not think you should hire anyone under the age of 30.
- I would personally like to talk to one-on one, if possible, call 306 382 2501 (BILL).
- Being in the community, being outside, getting to know neighbours.
- Call out racism and misogyny.
- I personally would like to see a bigger awareness and understanding of all the police service has to offer from the PACT team to the community officers; for the community to understand that the police are an understanding presence and support for those of us working on the frontlines with the vulnerable population. Building those trust relationships with the community will foster the relationships that will begin to create the community safety.
- More info re: "Community Police Academy", "Community Watch", "Community Liaison Officers" and "Community Support Program". Can a member of the police force join our board? An off-duty police officer would go a long way to making the police feel like part of the community.
- By having SCAN expanded in our community. It's no use arresting someone when they go back to the community and keep running the gang or drug house.
- By being diligent in our neighbourhoods on reporting any criminal activity.
- Encourage and advocate for a social/ health response to addictions rather than a police/ Criminal justice response.
- I can do my part by keeping my home safe, interacting with my neighbours, helping with my community association and perhaps volunteering for a role if one comes up
- Try to report any mischief, damage to property & dangerous behavior that you see.
- Defund the Saskatoon police. Hold the police accountable.
- Keeping an eye out for others and reach out when help is needed.
- I report what I see...it's just too bad we don't get feedback about what will be done with the info...I still see the drug deals going down.
- Pay taxes.

## Comments from the Saskatoon Police Service

Throughout the sessions, the SPS had an opportunity to respond to some of the participants comments. While the list of comments below is not intended to be a fulsome list of all of SPS's programs and services related to community safety, it does provide a broad picture of many initiatives that are in place, and some future ideas being looked at by the SPS.

- The SPS has training in place to learn about the Indigenous community in general, however they are planning to conduct an engagement strategy with local Indigenous groups so they can learn more about the local Indigenous community and their wants and needs.
- The SPS is hiring an executive position to focus on diversity and inclusion. The individual will be examining policies and overall and day-to-day practices and they impact they are having on Indigenous people.
- The SPS Strengthening Families Program will end soon due to lack of funding. They are trying to find a partner or another program that can undertake this valuable work.
- There is a desire to return to some programs that engage Indigenous youth that have ended due to various circumstances. For example, Northern canoe trips with officers and youth.
- SPS wishes to re-engage with Saskatoon Tribal Council to work together to ensure Indigenous youth do not get “stuck in the system” for minor criminal charges. They recognize that once you are in the system, it is sometimes difficult to get out.
- The partnership with Sawêyihotân will allow SPS to re-frame what police should be doing in the community. It is increasingly being recognized that a realignment of services is needed, and there are some duties police are doing that would be best done by others.
- The SPS also partners with the Okihtcitawak Patrol Group (OPG) to address and identify problems with a view to realignment.
- The PACT team is an example of realignment. The goal is to increase this program.
- Competition for funding is great – it really does hinder working together and being able to make a difference.
- The SPS has a Graffiti Reduction strategy; it can be found on the City of Saskatoon website.
- There would be interest on the part of SPS to conduct a “mapping exercise” which would visually demonstrate what services are provided, where and when. This would help us in our planning and could enhance our services.
- The SPS recognize that over-policing can be damaging and provided an example of “gentle policing”; in Pleasant Hill there is a community mobilization unit. The officers working in the unit are focused on non-enforcement contact, like attending bike fairs, visiting schools and just being present in the community. The SPS does not have the number of officers they need so they need to place people where they will be the most effective.
- We would like to see more community policing, it's our priority, however we must respond to serious issues, like increasing issues due to crystal meth and fentanyl and addictions in general. We are trying to do more to address drug trafficking.
- The SPS is working with its partners at Saskatoon Fire and Protective Services to identify properties that have been slums as these are areas where crime can fester. Having housing standards really helps in this regard as it makes the issue a preventative one.
- The SPS is pleased the Board is hosting these sessions. They are helping to connect people for future work together.
- Communications in general is always something the SPS is working to improve. Sometimes breakdowns occur right at the front line with our communications centre, and that is something we will be exploring – training people to communicate what our response is going

to be and why. We could also benefit from learning how to better draw information out of people during a call. We want the community to feel comfortable in calling us and to know that their call is important, regardless of the action that is taken right at that time, or not. It is disheartening to hear people don't want to report petty theft, break-ins. We may not attend that call for service, but we have an online reporting system. Very important for us to receive those reports as it tells us where resources should be dedicated in the future. That's how we allocate resources.

- The SPS VICE unit is working hard to address trafficking of people. One example is examining online advertisements for sexual services. This is legal, but through this work, we're able to follow up with safety, the legality of services, etc.
- Given COVID-19, the SPS recognizes that Community Liaison services suffered. Every division has a Community Liaison Officer, Staff Sergeant and Inspector. Our expectation is that we should have an open line of community between our divisions and our Community Associations. That may work differently from on CA to the other, but its needed. Please feel free to invite us to attend a community meeting or ask us for information to include in your newsletters; we will make every effort possible to enhance these relationships moving forward. We could provide the neighbourhood COPPS teams with direction, connections, steer them where they need to go. When talking about CA meetings and potential information to add to your newsletters, we have community liaison officers, call one of the divisions to find out who that constable is; their job is to deal with specific CA's to deal with issues like speeding, etc. they will also attend CA meetings and do presentations – can ask them to attend and to present on 2-3 different topics, this is their job.
- We recognize that visibility and presence are important, as is using the laws we have available to address issues in the community. We are hopeful the new Alternative Response Officer program will help fill gaps we currently see in community policing.
- In the downtown area, over 16% of our calls are to the Lighthouse; we are trying to encourage the Lighthouse to sign a good neighbour agreement, and we know the difficulty in screening individuals for housing – this is a whole community and government issue, but we are working hard to try to do our part.
- We would also like to see a more walkable downtown; that alone provides a natural surveillance and encourages others to walk, creating density and increasing safety.
- One of our challenges is the nature of policing whereby people change roles every 3-5 years; while there are many benefits to this, sometimes it inhibits the building of strong relationships.
- The SPS does have proud members of the LGBTQ community in our service, but we know we need to learn more. We value your ongoing input and need it more forward. The SPS will be hiring a new position in diversity and inclusion soon and diversity groups are welcome to be involved in this process. We put on pride BBQ's with our partners in the LGBTQ2+ community and raising money for their association (OUT Saskatoon Pride Home for Youth). Will be looking at doing more of that in our social media feeds. Stats: just over 50% of membership were someone who identified to an equity group; 43% women (highest in western Canada). Saskatchewan women in policing (formed that group to promote diversity).
- The SPS is very grateful for the work being done by Community Associations and front-line service groups when it comes to community safety.
- The SPS Community Police Academy provides a 13-week course that gives community members an understanding of the SPS through information and education.

- The SPS is in regular contact with schools through its School Resource Unit; one of the goals is to develop positive relationship with youth and police. The SPS wants to see all kids have a positive interaction with police.
- SPS acknowledges there are serious issues with youth in our community from lack of affordable housing, poverty, mental health and addictions issues, lack of programming and safe places for youth to go, and this leads to youth entering gangs and engaging in criminal activity. We continue to advocate for funding to support youth.
- SPS acknowledges that policing has changed over the years and programs like the PACT team and the HUB are crucial in the creation and/or restoration of trust of the service.
- A youth advisory committee would be a good way to incorporate the voice of youth in our community.
- SPS has been working with EGADZ for many years and had success in areas like recognizing sex trade workers as victims and ending criminalization of women in the sex trade industry. We are learning from this and applying it to other areas like finding ways to work more closely with youth to gain their trust. We know that our younger officers need to work on building those relationships.
- The SPS is a supporter of the OPG and provides them with equipment and training.

#### Values:

- Fairness and respect are always part of SPS training. Officers are training to know they have a natural bias, and how to deal with that. The SPS wants to work with its community partners to enhance this training so that relationships with all groups in our community can be strengthened.
- Respectful policing and integrity is very important to us.
- We recognize that sometimes younger officers may not appreciate the value of words and conversations like these. But the older and more experienced we get, the more we understand, and with experience comes compassion.
- Humility is a great suggestion so thank you and thanks to all for attending – shows care for the police service in return.

## **Participants**

### **Business Groups**

- Broadway Business Improvement District
- Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce
- Riversdale Business Improvement District
- Saskatchewan Landlords Association
- Sutherland Business Improvement District
- 33<sup>rd</sup> Street Business Improvement District

### **Diversity Groups**

- OUTSaskatoon
- Saskatoon Pride
- USSU Pride Centre

### **Front Line Service Groups**

- Bridge on 20<sup>th</sup> Fellowship Centre
- Brief & Social Detox Unit (Mental Health and Addiction Services, SHA)
- CHEP Good Food Inc.
- Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City (CLASSIC Law)
- EGADZ
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan
- Family Service Saskatoon
- Friendship Inn
- John Howard Society
- Lighthouse Supported Living Centre
- Persons Living with Aids
- Prairie Harm Reduction
- Safe Community Action Alliance
- Salvation Army
- Saskatoon Community Clinic
- Saskatoon Foodbank
- Saskatoon Interval House
- Str8-Up
- Station 20 West
- SWITCH Saskatoon
- United Way of Saskatoon & Area
- YWCA

### **Indigenous Groups**

- Wanuskewin Heritage Park
- White Buffalo Youth Lodge

### **Service Clubs and Seniors Groups**

- Saskatoon Meewasin Rotary Club
- Saskatoon North Rotary Club

- Saskatoon Nutana Rotary Club

### **Community Associations**

- Adelaide Park/Churchill
- Avalon Community Association
- Hampton Village Community Association
- Hudson Bay/Mayfair/Woodlawn Community Associations
- King George Community Association
- Montgomery Place Community Association
- Mount Royal Community Association
- Nutana Community Association
- Pleasant Hill Community Association
- Riversdale Community Association
- Rosewood Community Association
- Queen Elizabeth/Exhibition/Haultain Community Association
- Varsity View Community Association

### **Newcomer Groups & Cultural Associations**

- City of Saskatoon
- Global Gathering Place
- Immigration Partnership Saskatoon
- International Women of Saskatoon
- Muslim Community
- Pakistan Canada Cultural Association
- Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies
- Saskatchewan Intercultural assoc.
- Saskatoon Open Door Society
- University of Saskatchewan

### **Groups Who Represent Youth**

- Chokecherry Studios
- Child and Youth Friendly Saskatoon

### **Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners**

Members of the Board of Police Commissioners hosted and/or attended to observe each of the community conversations:

- Commissioner Jo Custead (Chair)
- Commissioner Kearney Healy (Vice-Chair)
- Commissioner Mairin Loewen
- Commissioner Charlie Clark
- Commissioner Zach Jeffries
- Commissioner Brent Penner
- Commissioner Shirley Greyeyes

## **Saskatoon Police Service Participants**

Thank you to the members of the Saskatoon Police Service who observed the community conversations and answered questions of participants as required:

- Chief Troy Cooper
- Deputy Chief Mitch Yuzdepski
- Deputy Chief Randy Huisman
- Superintendent Cam McBride
- Inspector Darren Pringle
- Inspector Larry Vols
- Inspector Tonya Gresty
- Inspector Bair Pellerin
- Staff Sergeant Patrick Barbar
- Sergeant Lisa Nowosad