



THE BOARD OF POLICE COMMISSIONERS

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

June 8, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Honourable Paul Merriman
Minister of Health
Room 204, 2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK, S4S 0B3
he.minister@gov.sk.ca

Honourable Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services
Room 303, 2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK, S4S 0B3
ss.minister@gov.sk.ca

Honourable Everette Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Room 208, 2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, SK, S4S 0B3
ministerrhe@gov.sk.ca

Dear Honourable Merriman, Honourable Makowsky and Honourable Hindley,

Re: Urgent Need for Facilities and Supports for Individuals with Complex Needs

At its Regular Public Meeting on May 18, 2023, the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners received a report forwarded to it by the City of Saskatoon. The 2022 Annual Report of the Street Activity Subcommittee and Community Support Program highlighted a number of concerning trends that are impacting our community.

As you may be aware, the City of Saskatoon Street Activity Subcommittee oversees the Community Support Program and provides advice to City Council on issues relating to the CSP and on any community safety matters identified by the program. The CSP is comprised of five Community Support Officers (CSOs) and one Supervisor. CSOs provide year-round foot patrol and seasonal bicycle patrol to the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) of Downtown, Riversdale, and Broadway to promote well-being and safe streets for everyone.

In 2022, calls for outreach assistance surpassed all other calls for service. Outreach requests include housing issues, wellbeing checks, counselling, public safety, mental health, and medical assistance. Over the past two years the Community Support Program has observed and reported a significant increase in the number of people sleeping in building vestibules, encampments, public sidewalks, benches, and parks. About 14% of the total calls to the CSP (2,630 calls involving 3,105 people) required the assistance of the Saskatoon Police Service.

Valuable policing resources are currently being used to address the complex needs identified above. While we acknowledge police have a role to play in handling these types of calls, due to a lack of housing and facilities, officers are often left with no place to take people and they are ultimately released back into the community without any form of support.

The Board is aware of meetings currently taking place between City of Saskatoon and provincial officials regarding this situation, and that discussions regarding a coordinated approach to finding solutions and streamlining the development of more housing for people with complex needs are underway.

The Board wishes to stress the urgency of this work. Our community immediately requires additional stabilization beds. Alongside these facilities we need permanent supports to address the complex needs that so many individuals, children and families in our community are experiencing. We are concerned that another winter without these supports will further escalate these issues in our community.

The mission of the Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners is to strengthen the culture of community safety in Saskatoon. Working together in collaboration with all levels of government, service providers, and community organizations to address complex social issues in our community is one way we can enhance community safety. Together, we need to come up with long-term solutions such as additional service organization staff with expertise that can help to guide, heal and empower individuals to succeed.

The Police Board is willing to support any efforts to collaborate through the participation of the Saskatoon Police Service. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me at [REDACTED] if you wish to discuss this correspondence further.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Jyotsna (Jo) Custead, Chair
Saskatoon Board of Police Commissioners

cc: Police Chief Cooper, Saskatoon Police Service
Mayor Clark, City of Saskatoon
Adam Tittlemore, City Clerk, City of Saskatoon