



# SASKATOON POLICE SERVICE

**TO:** Shirley Greyeyes, Chairperson  
Board of Police Commissioners

**FROM:** David Haye  
Office of the Chief

**DATE:** 2024 February 05

**SUBJECT:** Saskatoon Police Service  
Traffic Unit and Combined Traffic Services Saskatchewan (Saskatoon)  
2023 Annual Reports

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## **ISSUE:**

The Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) works to provide safer roads by utilizing officers whose efforts are specifically focused on traffic safety. These officers are deployed in two Units: SPS Traffic, who work exclusively within city boundaries, and Combined Traffic Services Saskatchewan (CTSS), who work on provincial highways and within the boundaries of the City of Saskatoon. The goal of both Units is to reduce serious injuries and fatal collisions within Saskatoon and surrounding highways, through education and enforcement.

The attached annual reports highlight the variety of education and enforcement initiatives realized by these teams, as well as the collaboration with outside agencies undertaken to achieve these aims.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That this and the attached Traffic Unit and CTSS reports be received as information.

## **STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

The Traffic Unit and CTSS operate as a strategic priority under *Crime & Safety*, operationalized in the 2023 Business Plan as:

***Strategy:*** Ensure safe and efficient traffic flow within the city.

***Activity:*** Raise awareness and enhance communications regarding the purpose of traffic enforcement. Develop and implement targeted traffic safety initiatives that focus on areas of high traffic risk within Saskatoon which will improve road safety.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The SPS Traffic Unit is comprised of:

- 2 Sergeants and 18 Enforcement Constables;
- 2 Collision Analyst Detail Members and 2 Hit and Run Investigators;
- 1 Automated Speed Enforcement Officer and 1 Red Light Camera Officer

They operate four unmarked and three marked police cars as well as two marked motorcycles. Members from this Unit employ Mobile RADAR, Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), and Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) equipment in their duties.

Although traffic safety is one of the core functions of officers employed within the Patrol Bureau, the Traffic Unit leads our roadway safety effort by deploying officers who have specialized training in traffic enforcement and collision investigation. The focus of the Unit is to meet the Service's core function of creating safe traffic flow for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by focusing on driving behaviours which pose an increased risk to public safety. The mechanism to accomplish this is through attention to applicable roadway legislation, providing educational opportunities for roadway users and sanctions for unlawful roadway activity. Practically, this translates into enforcement efforts by Traffic Unit officers, supported by ancillary efforts from Patrol and Alternative Response Officers. Enforcement efforts deter drivers from committing traffic violations, which are the leading causes of collisions, which are in turn the leading cause of criminal deaths in Canada. These enforcement efforts, epitomized through a very visible "traffic stop", also provide a measure of reassurance to the non-offending motorist public that the SPS are out in the community addressing problematic driving behaviour, with a secondary effect of encouraging them to keep complying with the rules of the road.

The SPS Traffic Unit employs several layers of operational coordination to guide its education and enforcement efforts. The first layer, as mentioned above, involves *internal* collaboration amongst the various SPS Units in the pursuit of roadway safety. The first layer also includes a comprehensive degree of *external* collaboration with local, provincial, and national entities all coordinating strategies to reduce collisions, injuries, and fatalities. This collaboration manifests through organized, thematic enforcement efforts by the SPS and partner agencies. Thematic examples would include the "big four", which focuses on impaired driving, distracted driving, speeding, and not wearing a seatbelt; all critical to address since they form the leading causes of collisions and aggravating factors in injury severity.

The second layer, applying the collaborative themes, involves the utilization of a daily and monthly focus to guide on-road efforts and educational messaging. The big four offences identified above form the core of daily education and enforcement efforts. These take place on all roadways in the city, with special attention paid to roadway areas where our most vulnerable may be present. School zone enforcement is conducted with the use of Traffic, Patrol and School Resource Officers (SRO), however, members assigned to the Traffic Unit and CTSS are specifically assigned school zones to patrol rotationally on a monthly basis. The rotational assignment ensures schools receive a balance of enforcement through the school year.

Supplementing daily efforts in a very deliberate way, however, the Unit also has a monthly focus which mirrors the Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) traffic safety calendar. In addition to the critical four offences, the monthly focus prioritizes certain locations and things such as school and work zones, occupant safety and restraint systems, and licensing/registration compliance to name a few. The monthly focus also lets us set out a schedule for roadside checks throughout the entire year focused on impaired driving. This is done with the assistance of the alcohol and drug-testing vehicle. This specialized vehicle allows officers the ability to have a mobile site where alcohol and drug impaired testing can be conducted without having to return to Headquarters. This increases the efficiency and capacity of the operation.

### **Combined Traffic Services Saskatchewan**

The SPS CTSS contingent has 10 provincially funded positions comprised of:

- 1 Sergeant and 9 Constables;

They operate 3 marked and 2 unmarked police vehicles equipped with mobile RADAR, Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR), and Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR)

The Unit's 10 members operate in conjunction with, and when on provincial highways under the operational direction of, the Saskatchewan Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Central District Traffic Unit. It was created in 2014 from the recommendations of the provincial government's Special Committee on Traffic Safety. It recommended a greater police presence on our highways in order to provide enhanced traffic enforcement. The program's main objective is to help reduce serious injury and fatal collisions on Saskatchewan highways.

The CTSS/SPS members conduct roughly one third of their traffic safety enforcement activity within the boundaries of the City of Saskatoon; 2023 marked their tenth year of operation. They augment the staffing of the SPS Traffic Unit when conducting back-to-school education and enforcement programs, impaired driving blitzes, and assisting with provincial Selective Traffic Enforcement Projects (STEP). STEP are comprised of police officers from various agencies throughout the province who meet in different cities to conduct enforcement of specific offences. The STEP initiative is a partnership between law enforcement agencies and SGI. It is aimed at awareness, improving road safety and reducing injuries and fatalities on Saskatchewan roadways.

The assignment of SPS members to the CTSS Unit does not deplete resources from any other section or function of the Service. Rather, the CTSS Unit is a net addition to SPS personnel, paid for by the Government of Saskatchewan. As part of the arrangement, 33% of the CTSS/SPS' time is spent performing enforcement duties within city of Saskatoon boundaries as indicated above. The return on SPS participation with CTSS is that Saskatoon enjoys the added benefit of additional roadway policing at no additional cost.

## **CONCLUSION:**

As highlighted in the attached annual reports from the SPS Traffic Unit and CTSS, there was a great deal of road policing that occurred in 2023. The aggregate of these efforts by the SPS and partner agencies resulted in largely positive outcomes for the citizens of Saskatoon. Despite a still-too-high number of tragedies, the efforts by officers resulted in a continued decrease in collisions by almost eleven percent and a number of officers being recognized externally through awards for their commitment to roadway safety. This significant decrease in collision numbers and maintenance of proactive work output occurred in spite of the Traffic Unit and CTSS being pulled away at times to provide operational support to Patrol, and a series of challenges that saw staffing numbers fluctuate for both units throughout the year.

In 2024, there is still work to do. Deaths still occur on Saskatoon roadways and Saskatoon has not been immune to larger city trends like problematic car rallies in private commercial parking lots. Stunting, racing, and loud vehicles continue to be a concern of citizens during milder weather. Our operational focus on the “big four” will not subside, with distracted driving, aggressive driving, passenger restraints and impaired driving receiving continuous attention from us.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

2023 SPS Unit Traffic Annual Report  
2023 CTSS Annual Report

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