

Community Consultation Feedback

To support the development of the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) Strategic Plan, the SPS gathered feedback from more than 750 Saskatoon residents through:

- An online policing satisfaction survey open to the public on the SPS website in January to February 2025. This survey consisted of the same questions from a survey conducted by Advanis Inc. in January 2025. The online survey provided an opportunity for all Saskatoon residents to provide feedback on community safety in Saskatoon.
- In-person Community Consultation Meeting on February 27, 2025 where we held a facilitated discussion with community members on what is working and worrying with community safety. Approximately 120 people representing a cross-section of Saskatoon community stakeholders attended this meeting.
- Consultation with the Saskatoon Police Advisory Committee on Diversity (SPACOD) on March 4, 2025. The SPACOD is made up of a cross-section of local organizations and several SPS employees.
- Consultation with the Chief's Advisory Council (CAC) on March 18, 2025 on perceptions of community safety. The CAC is made up of local Indigenous and Métis Elders, the Chief of Police and numerous SPS officers from different levels of the service.

The community consultation feedback is summarized by what is perceived as working, worrying and what the priorities should be related to community safety.

Consultation at a Glance

Social issues of homelessness, poverty, and mental health and addiction were the connecting theme of community safety concerns. Residents expressed these issues are best addressed through collaboration between community partners and stakeholders, including the SPS.

On issues specific to the SPS, overall resident sentiment echoed that of Sir Robert Peel, "*The police are the public and the public are the police.*" Residents expressed that the SPS' contribution to community safety is best achieved by securing public trust through building relationships with community members and partners.



Quality of service provided by the SPS was a consistent theme across *Working, Worrying and Priorities*. Whether or not the SPS's service is working depends on the ability to deliver timely and thorough response from well-trained personnel who conduct themselves in a professional and personable manner.

What is working well with community safety in Saskatoon?

SPS SERVICE | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | PERSONNEL

For this question, residents' responses focused mainly on the SPS' role in community safety. The top three areas identified for how the SPS' efforts contribute to community safety are:

1. **SERVICE:** Over 20 units, programs and services were mentioned as working well. Responses indicated the **SPS' balanced approach to enforcement** enhances community safety. Most mentioned were:

- Alternative Response Officers (ARO)
- School Resource Officers (SRO)
- Police and Crisis Team (PACT)
- HUB

Residents also remarked on **officer visibility**. They appreciate seeing officers in their communities, not only for patrol and response, but for increased opportunities to build relationships with them.

Pleasant Hill: Huge benefit to on-foot officers interacting with community members; police being able to recognize community members and vice versa.

2. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION:** Residents stressed how important the SPS' engagement with the community has been to break down barriers, build relationships and foster trust and safety. Comments were made regarding the Service as a whole and the Community Engagement Division (CED)/Equity and Cultural Engagement Unit (ECEU) specifically. Positive remarks included:

- *Hosting and attending **events and educational sessions***
- *Fostering **relationships with newcomers, youth and the indigenous community***
- *Willingness to listen and **learn from community** members and partners*
- ***Communication** on various aspects of the SPS through multiple media streams*

A representative from the Friendship Inn illustrated the benefits of the SPS' efforts to engage with the community and partners. Six years ago, the SPS was not welcome in their facility. Today, after years of building trust, the Friendship Inn and the SPS have a strong and positive relationship.

3. **SPS PERSONNEL:** As the quality of the SPS' service and community engagement are dependent on SPS personnel, it stands to reason that SPS personnel are what is working best in how the SPS contributes to community safety. Comments specific to SPS personnel included:

- ***Professionalism: Officers are personable**, take concerns seriously and willing to take extra steps. A positive shift in attitude has also been noticed.*
- ***Training: Officers are trained** in understanding social issues, cultural differences and de-escalation. The updated recruit training was also noted.*
- ***Diversity:** Seeing themselves represented in the SPS contributes to community members' feelings of safety.*

One participant commented that relatives noticed an increased level of compassion by SPS personnel and that they are treating people with complex needs like friends.

What is worrying about community safety in Saskatoon?

CRIME | VULNERABLE PEOPLE | SPS SERVICE

For this question, residents' responses included social conditions in Saskatoon as well as the SPS in particular. The top three concerns about community safety in Saskatoon are:

1. **CRIME AND SAFETY:** Residents indicated public spaces including malls and transit do not feel safe and may keep community members from accessing needed services. Most discussed comments regarding crime and safety included:
 - Availability and **increasing potency and toxicity of drugs** and public consumption.
 - **Prevalence of weapons**, particularly bear spray and knives
 - **Property crime**— shoplifting, vandalism, bike thefts, mail theft, laundry room and common room break ins, binning
 - Increasing **gang violence** and gang youth recruitment
 - **Cybercrime/online fraud**

Increasing public drug use, especially after dark, increases fear.

2. **VULNERABLE PEOPLE:** Residents are concerned about persons experiencing homelessness and mental health and addiction issues, the lack of funding and resources to assist them and the challenge of connecting them to available resources. At the same time the visibility of these vulnerable people decreases the public's feeling of safety. Most discussed comments regarding vulnerable people included:
 - **Homelessness** number of homeless individuals is rising root cause not being addressed, freezing people, encampments, people sleeping in doorways, detention not appropriate, emergency rooms often only option
 - **Mental health/addiction** issues with a lack of resources and alternatives
 - **Youth** involvement in crime, drugs and gangs
 - **Elderly** exposed to financial abuse, elder scams

We cannot arrest ourselves out of poverty, mental health and addiction issues.

3. **SPS SERVICE:** Residents have concerns about the quality of the SPS' services and the capacity of the SPS to keep pace with the growing population and community needs. Most discussed comments included:
 - Inconsistent service and **negative interactions** with some SPS personnel
 - **Slow response time**, reactive policing
 - People **not reporting due to lack of trust in the SPS**, scared of retribution, are desensitized to crime or don't think anything can be done
 - **Ability of SPS to recruit and retain** quality personnel
 - **Focus on traffic enforcement** including accuracy of cannabis swabs, people feel targeted, concerns traffic enforcement means less resources for "real crime"

People lose confidence if they experience slow/inefficient SPS response.

What should the SPS prioritize to support community safety?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | SERVICE | PERSONNEL

For this question, residents indicated they would like to see the SPS continue to engage and build relationships with community members and partners and be adequately staffed with well trained personnel to do so. Residents' most mentioned priorities included:

1. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Residents want the SPS to continue and expand the good work they are doing through:
 - *Attending and **hosting events and educational presentations** including town halls, SPS programs and services, fraud prevention, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Hate Crimes*
 - ***Building relationships** with newcomers, the Indigenous community, youth, elders and businesses*
 - *Transparent and **robust communication** to the public: positive SPS stories, education*
 - *Find opportunities for officers to have more **casual interactions** with public during patrol and events*

Increase understanding of police work and what the community needs to know if they are victimized.

2. **SERVICE:** Residents' sentiments mirrors that of Chief McBride and they want to see the right people in the right place doing the right job. Most mentioned priorities were:
 - ***Visibility**– AROs, Community Liaison Officers (CLO), Bike officers, community policing/satellite stations, malls, Hot Spots, transit, public spaces, near shelters*
 - *Response- improve overall response time, **improve response and service** for low priority calls, quick cold weather response*
 - ***Balanced enforcement** – prioritize high risk offenders, use alternative measures/diversion when appropriate*

Both foot patrols and cars make people feel safer.

3. **PERSONNEL:** Residents indicated the quality of service and community engagement is dependent on the quantity and quality of the SPS' personnel. They would like the SPS to continue to prioritize its personnel through:
 - ***Continuous training**– trauma informed, cultural competency, SPS values, youth engagement, cybercrime, community supports, customer service, technology, current issues, disability awareness*
 - *Staffing– **increase sworn and civilian**, retain experienced officers, diversity in hiring*
 - ***Wellness**– mental health supports, morale, self-care*

Educate officers on individual service and discretion and not a one-size fits all approach.



APPENDIX: Saskatoon Residents' Suggestions

Saskatoon residents provided many suggestions which are listed below. While we may not be able to address every recommendation, we have begun to implement ones that we have prioritized, are in our mandate and believe will have the biggest impact on community safety.

Personnel

- Mental health and wellbeing support for SPS staff
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Strategic Outcome 3.1: Enhancing the well-being of our people*
- SPS officers be representative of community
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Strategic Outcome 4.1: Enhanced recruitment and retention of employees*
- More AROs; expand ARO program; recruit retired members for ARO positions
- More SROs
- More Bike officers
- Increase Interpersonal Violence Team
- Have a Kookum in the lobby to make people feel welcome
- Create civilian positions to liaise with community groups
- More PACT teams/ youth PACT for high school
- Increased respect from recruits when elders are instructing.

Service

- Increase warrant enforcement
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Initiative 1.1.2 Pilot a Warrant Enforcement Unit*
- Increase administrative support
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Initiative 4.1.2 Evaluate staffing needs across the organization to support increased operational police activity*
- Proactive policing in Hot Spots
 - *Addressed in 2024 Business Plan with the rollout of the Community Mobilization Unit*
- Advocate for bylaws regarding bear spray
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Initiative 1.2.3: Collaborate with key stakeholders to identify ways to regulate bear spray in our community*
- Streamline reporting process; Provide reporting accessibility for people with disabilities e.g. it can be hard to hand write reports
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Initiative 8.1.1: Identify and assess technology options for efficient and effective community interaction and investigation*
- Surveillance and safety through CPTED
- Increase Air Support Unit presence in the north end
- Increase North end patrol
- Have SROs do safety events
- Armed transit security/plain clothes officers on buses/bus blitzes
- Have safe spaces in the SPS lobby to accommodate traumatized people
- Community liaison for 33rd St Businesses/ foot patrol for 33rd St businesses
- Community policing/satellite stations
- Enhance investigative support through expansion of legal team for operational legal counsel
- Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to triage calls/Use AI to detect crime
- Traffic enforcement: cell phones
- Have another agency take over traffic enforcement



Community Engagement and Communication

- Consult and partner with businesses for theft prevention
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan under Initiative 1.1.4: Develop collaborative partnerships with key stakeholders to address retail crime and its impact on public safety*
- Increase education and awareness about what police are doing: social media, presentations
- Increase education about SPS programs and services including AROs, Crime Free Multi-housing, Victim Services, reporting
- Increase education and communication about domestic violence, hate crime, fraud prevention
- Increase communication about positive work done by the SPS
- Educate public on how they can contribute to public safety e.g. CPTED
- Communicate what behavior public can expect from police and the rights of the public
- When the SPS is presenting, make sure residents can hear them
- Town Halls
- Clarify violence in press releases e.g. gang on gang, youth targeting youth
- Regular community consultations
- Programs to divert youth from gangs
- Arrange with business owners and community associations to hold people accountable for crimes against properties
- Work with communities to establish crime watch/block parent programs
- Events at the SPS

Training

- Increase understanding of Indigenous experience and history
 - *Addressed in [An Action Plan to Advance the Saskatoon Police Service's Journey Towards TRTI](#)*
- Continuous training
 - *Addressed in 2025 Business Plan, Strategic Outcome 3.2: Training for employees on policing best practices, wellness and leadership*
- Provide officers with cybercrime training and retain them
- Disability awareness

Funding

- Transparency of SPS budget allocation
- Advocate for funding from province and feds

Advocacy

- Redistribute proceeds of crime to community agencies
- Find solution to "Catch and Release" system