

Community Support Program

Program Review January 2015 to June 30, 2018

Introduction

On July 9, 2012, the Community Support Program (CSP) began providing highly visible and accessible uniform patrols in the three city centre Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) comprising Downtown, Riversdale, and Broadway. This report provides information generated by the program over a 3.5 year period, including January 1, 2015, to June 30, 2018. This incorporates the data ascertained since the last administrative update to City Council.

Highlights and Challenges

Calls from businesses have steadily increased since inception of the CSP, and they now exceed the patrol calls, which initially were the highest percentage of calls for service. Businesses are utilizing the program to report safety concerns and CSP officers are responding by increasing patrols and overall presence (at peak times of concerns whenever possible); collaborating with businesses; and referring to the SPS and other relevant agencies as required.

Overall, the program is being recognized on the street and in the community as a credible program, delivering community support and contributing to safer streets by aiding in identifying potential long-term solutions based on firsthand experience. As the program establishes permanency plans, collaborative work with the Street Activity Steering Committee (SASC) continues to evaluate and provide a service that offers businesses, the public and vulnerable people the support that best suits the City of Saskatoon.

In August of 2016 the CSP hired a sixth CSO by shifting some numbers in the budget. Efficiencies improved with the extra team member and the Supervisor's partner is now also able to assist with covering days missed from holidays, vacancies, and sick or injured employees. This has resulted in an increase in patrol time, which influences productivity and success of the program. Increasing visibility and coverage, the ability to complete more business information, and more officers working on additional job duties have all contributed to the improved statistics for the 2015-2018 reporting period.

On July 12th, 2017 the CSP celebrated a milestone as it turned the page on its first five years of operation. The CSP hosted a community celebration that saw representation from many of the organizations and individuals that we serve, including the businesses, service providers, members of the SASC, and vulnerable people. Invited delegates did speeches to honour the program and staff and five years of service plaques were awarded to three team members, followed by coffee and dainties.

Finally, one of the most difficult tasks involves capturing an accurate portrayal of what the program accomplishes. Work is continually being done to improve reporting procedures and statistical data. The database became operational in October of 2014, and since that time, data from January 2013 to present has been entered into the system. Work continues to be done to improve the information collected to identify trends that occur, highlight individuals or

groups of individuals that may require attention, produce data tables that can display specific types of information as requested, and improve the type of data collected.

Table 1 – Calls for Service

	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Jan – Jun)	TOTAL
Number of occurrences	1685	1873	2047	1315	6,920
Individuals served	2314	2382	2554	1904	9,154
Involvement					
Business	1359	1489	1703	1490	6,041
Community	975	756	589	392	2,712
Vulnerable Person*	2011	2199	2355	1812	8,377
Call Origin					
Office	1287	1465	1344	931	5,027
Patrol	578	525	420	249	1,772
Police Dispatch	311	231	200	89	831
Self-initiated	123	138	77	40	378
Follow-up	15	23	6	6	50
Outcome					
Successful*	1612	1731	1452	976	5,771
Could not locate	477	410	394	223	1,504
Not able to assist**	225	241	201	116	783
Bylaw					
Information	805	1097	1030	483	3,415
Warned	84	74	65	51	274
Ticketed	28	30	49	41	148

*Vulnerable Person involves an individual who is at risk of abuse or harm due to life circumstances—i.e., underage, homeless, physical disability, mental illness, and addictions;

**Successful includes identifying specific issue that exist at the time, assessing the scenario and assisting the individual(s) the supports they need (i.e. housing or shelter, mental health concerns, nutrition, transportation, etc.);

***Not able to assist includes a call in which an individual refuses service, Police or other services providers are in attendance, there is concurrent calls.

Table 2 – Calls Attended & Action Taken

Call Type	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Jan-Jun)	TOTAL
Addictions	986	1058	1087	815	3,946
Suspicious Person	215	418	529	321	1,559
Disturbance	550	389	448	337	1,724
Bylaw	39	149	193	89	646
Outreach	43	47	206	219	425
Mediation	190	71	62	47	223
Criminal	-	-	17	46	63
Other	291	250	12	30	568
Referrals					
On scene/immediate*	1017	877	790	702	3,386
Independent**	335	247	318	303	1,203
Organization					
City Police	347	425	391	218	1,381
CSP	99	115	128	74	416
Ambulance	75	86	79	37	277
Larson House	97	224	106	77	504
Lighthouse Shelter	54	43	24	42	163
Lighthouse Stabilization	199	165	257	184	805
Lighthouse transport	317	360	266	175	1,118
Salvation Army	25	24	14	19	82
Mobile Crisis	32	29	13	19	93
MSS Income Security	21	37	27	22	107
Transit Services	33	65	51	42	191
Other	103	184	116	92	495

* On scene/immediate referrals are contacts made directly on scene to assist an individual(s) with immediate needs;

**An independent referral occurs when staff recommends information about a service provider or contact information about the CSP to follow-up with after a call for service is completed, the referral is made with the understanding that the initiative is to be taken by the client.

Table 3 – Patrol Statistics

Patrol Statistics	2015	2016	2017	2018 (Jan-Jun)	TOTAL
Directions	172	179	179	92	622
Business information	113	138	66	49	366
Program information	313	290	376	368	1,347
Business connection	749	986	1337	1831	4,903
Connections	6537	7166	8720	5063	27,486
New person	-	184	95	49	328
Needles	-	437	190	152	779
Other	127	151	132	67	477

**New Persons – This statistical data started being gathered in November of 2015 and reported on January 2016 when the CSP team noticed a large influx of new faces that we were encountering in our job role;*

***Needles – The CSP tracked needle pickup since inception of the program and the required documents were submitted to the City of Saskatoon but it wasn't until 2016 when the new persons increased and this aligned with a rise in the number of needles so both numbers started to be reported publicly.*

Statistical Analysis

In all cases, except patrol calls, the data for occurrences went up. Despite the absolute number of patrol calls decreasing, the percentage of the total represented 22% of the total calls attended. This changing number of patrol calls can be attributed to the increase in calls for service that were generated as office calls, which contributed to 64% of the total calls attended. Additionally, with more calls to attend, there is less time for patrol calls and self-initiated calls encountered when individuals approach the CSP staff.

Over the three year reporting period, the CSP staff increased the focus on business connections, as well as bylaw enforcement. As a result, office calls increased to 64% of total calls compared to 51% for the previous 2 years.

In addition to the statistical data above, the CSP officers are also involved in numerous additional encounters that contribute to the availability of the program. Officers have the ability to enforce and provide information on six City of Saskatoon bylaws including:

- The Parks Bylaw
- The Bicycle Bylaw
- The Panhandling Bylaw
- The Waste Bylaw
- The Spitting, Urinating and Defecating Bylaw
- Part IV and Part VI of The Traffic Bylaw (dealing with skateboards and pedestrians)

Table 1 shows a 14% increase in the number of bylaw call types that were reported. It is believed that the increase can partly be attributed to increased efforts to inform the general public and businesses about the program, as well as an increased effort by CSP staff to enforce municipal bylaws.

All other call types saw an increase in numbers with the exception of calls to a disturbance. These increases support information that indicate a trend towards an increase in aggressive panhandling, panhandling in groups, and drinking in public. These trends were monitored by the CSP. Businesses were consulted and encouraged to call, the concerns were reported to Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) for information and assistance, and this data was reported to the Street Activity Steering Committee.

When it comes to assisting an individual(s) on a call, there are a number of service providers that the CSP either collaborate with while on call or refer individual(s) to as required. As illustrated in Table 2, there were 3,386 immediate referrals made on scene and 1,203 referrals that were recommended for follow-up for the individual(s) on their own.

The CSP dealt with a total of 9,154 individuals, and of those interactions, 3,386 or 37% required on scene assistance. In addition, CSOs provided detailed information to 13% of the individuals, suggesting potential supports and directing them to follow-up and get the continued care they need. The CSP dealt with 5,768 or 63% of the total number individuals encountered without the assistance of any other service provider.

Additional duties of the CSP officers consist of giving directions, supporting the general public, providing business information, dealing with safety concerns, engaging and providing a safe and enjoyable street experience for everyone, as well as interacting and building trust with people on the street. Table 3 below is a breakdown of the additional contributions that the CSP has made within the three BIDs, in addition to the occurrences that were dealt with.

- The above statistics are tracked and calculated on a daily basis while on regular patrol duty.
- Since the inception of the program, patrol statistics were added to better represent the work being done by the CSP officers.
- The category of business connections refers to contact with businesses in the three BIDs to maintain regular contact and ensure awareness of the program is maintained.

Public

One of the main objectives of the program is to provide highly visible and uniformed foot patrol presence. This was a recommendation that flowed from the findings of the 2011 Street Activity Baseline Study around safety and the perceptions of safety in each BID. Regular foot patrols occur in teams of two from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday and Saturday, and 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Wednesday to Friday. The goal is to reach each of the three BIDs a minimum of one time per scheduled 10-hour shift. Depending on call volume, each BID typically receives coverage by each patrol team at least once per day. The average patrol time was 215 hours per month by 2017, and has consistently gone up year over year since the program commenced.

Table 3 shows the variety of interactions with the public that contribute to both the perception of safety and prevention of unsafe behaviour. Many of the interactions involve a simple greeting but can range in scope from providing directions and business information to deterring negative and in some cases, illegal activity. Officers strive to maintain an approachable demeanour in an effort to assist anyone in the BIDs, or direct them to the appropriate resource.

While on patrol, officers are aware of their surroundings and encounter unique circumstances that require intervention. Some examples include assisting individuals with a disability issue navigate a safe crossing, reporting traffic signals that are not working, reporting animal concerns, preventing potential altercations, and assessing child welfare concerns. There are often involvements that are not considered “typical” and staff work hard to support all and direct them to the proper resources, which ensures people do not fall through the cracks. Many people that experience contact in a unique circumstance often do so because of the uniformed approachable appearance and they are typically appreciative and often inquire about the program.

The following are examples of comments that were shared with the CSOs while in the community:

- *“Nice to see you out here, it’s about time”* – Customer of a local business
- *“Having you out here is a good thing. People doing bad things scatter when they see you coming”* – Community member
- *“I feel safe knowing you’re around”* – Employee with a service provider
- *“We already notice a difference. You guys do a good job”* – Local business, while making reference to a decrease in the number of individuals that wander in and cause a disturbance in their business
- *“You do good work”* – Lawyer in the community
- *“We need more of you guys”* – Community member(s)
- *“Needed you guys”; “commendable what you do”; “we need your help... the Police need your help”* – Business Employee
- *“We appreciate it; the program really works”* – Business owner, Riversdale BID
- *“Just seeing you around is a good thing; makes people think twice”* – Community member, Downtown
- *“I saw you on TV. Community Support its needed, brave of you guys to be out here. Winnipeg has this, was wondering when Saskatoon would get this”* – Young male, Downtown and Riversdale resident
- *“Do you stay outside most of the day? It’s appreciated.”* – Midtown Plaza employee, Downtown
- *“The crowd that hangs out at this location is not around as much anymore.” “Nice to see you out here, at least no one is around”* – Two comments of customers/residents outside of a local business in reference to a location known for loitering concerns
- *“Good job, thank you”* – Community member, Downtown who witnessed officers engage a group to prevent jaywalking
- *“Great work. You stopped me for jaywalking before and were polite about it, and I have never done that again.”* - Community member, Downtown

Business

The program liaises with local businesses in the Downtown, Broadway, and Riversdale BIDs to identify issues and collaborate to generate solutions. Over the reporting period, officers attended 6,041 calls where businesses were involved in the occurrence ranging from reporting information for a call to more actively engaging in the call. Involvement ranged from calling to report a concern, signalling officers while they are out on patrol to assist with a situation, providing information regarding an occurrence before or after it is concluded, and requesting involvement for mediation with a customer demonstrating behavioral concerns. When reasonable, and if available, officers may provide limited information regarding the outcome of a call to ensure the business understands what action was taken.

Officers make contact with businesses on a continuous basis to gather information from them regarding concerns and issues they experience. Every effort is made to understand when concerns tend to occur and the nature of the concern so that patrols

can be concentrated around the issue and/or area. Frequently patrolling and having a visible uniformed presence when concerns peak has proven to deter, and over time, reduce unwanted behaviors that have been identified. This is often seen with reports regarding suspicious behavior, intoxicated persons, and groups of people loitering.

Typically businesses contact the program by phone or engage the officers while on foot patrol to assist them with a situation that is in progress. Over the two-year reporting period, officers attended 5,027 calls for service made directly to the 306-382-6935 number for reports of an occurrence. Calls for service are also received from the public, however, the majority of calls come from businesses calling the main phone line. Regular business connections, experience in dealing with the CSP on calls before, and new printed material that came out over the 3.5 year reporting period all contributed to a steady increase in calls for service from businesses.

Another service that the CSP provides to businesses is mediation for situations that arise on their premises. These have included intoxicated persons, people causing a disturbance with employees or clients of a particular business, or concerns with mental illness situations. The businesses would prefer to have an individual access their business but feel that terms and conditions need to be agreed to before that can occur. End results may include agreements with a timeframe that outline a period where the person is prohibited to access the business, an understanding by both parties about the expected behavior and the consequence if they act against the terms, or assisting the business in getting someone to leave the premises without incident. In addition, the fact that the program has been in operation for six years now has allowed more people to hear about and understand the program and learn how to contact officers.

Vulnerable Persons

The third group that the program is involved with is assisting vulnerable people. Since inception, dealing with people in vulnerable situations has accounted for the majority of involvements for the program. Of the 9,154 people served, 8,377 individuals or groups of individuals are seen as vulnerable to conditions that put them at risk of being unsafe. Officers interact and work to build trust with people on the street. As a result, officers have matched people's needs with the appropriate service. After connecting people to a service, officers offer support as people transition through personal, social, and medical involvements.

Early on, the CSP identified concerns about vulnerable people who were being dealt with by both SPS and the CSP officers. Many of the individuals did not require police intervention, and it was important to strengthen the communication with the SPS. The 'most active person case meetings; were scheduled to ensure that an individual experiencing social needs, dealing with addictions issues, living with a mental illness or a medical condition, and required support, was better served by the CSP.

The program also identifies trends or patterns that are observed as a result of the familiarity of the people and the areas patrolled. Trends beginning to be identified through patrol observations include increased calls for service to particular areas,

geographical information from mapping, and/or repeated call types or a rise in concerning behaviours. These trends are monitored by the CSP, businesses are encouraged to call when a concern exists and/or share specific information about the activity and when it occurs, and concerns are reported to SPS for information and assistance.

Finally, the CSP also collaborates with numerous service providers to assist an individual or groups of individuals that exhibit ongoing inappropriate behaviour and generate repeated calls for service to the program.

At the start of the program, there were many challenges that CSP officers encountered. The main ones were barriers to appropriate transportation and a lack of access to services for individuals with addictions. In response to this concern, Saskatoon Transit Service was contacted by the CSP to discuss the opportunity of utilizing transit services as a supplementary service if appropriate. Furthermore, a local service provider introduced an outreach team that transports vulnerable people to a safe place. There was also an additional 38 bed spaces created at an existing facility to complement the limited bed space of 13 for Saskatoon city wide.

Benefits of these additions include safe and appropriate transportation for intoxicated persons, improved call times for CSP officers, and diverting calls that do not require police assistance. These services have been informed by service providers as well as the work of the CSP. Ultimately, adding these appropriate resources have allowed the CSP to attend more calls for service. Calls for service are up by 362 calls or 7%, from 2015 to 2017 and are on course to increase again in 2018.

Events and Committee Meetings

Officers attend events that are relevant to program operations, business, safety, and public attendance in large numbers. The following list includes examples of events that CSOs attended either to patrol or participate:

- Homeless count (June 22, 2015 & April 18, 2018)
- PotashCorp Fireworks Festival
- SPS Community Consultation
- DTN YXE Experience Downtown Sidewalk Sale
- Broadway Street Fair
- Salvation Army Kettle Kickoff at Midtown Plaza
- SPS Community & Volunteer Appreciation Event
- Shop the Neighbourhoods event in all three BIDs
- Food Truck Wars
- Culture Days in Riversdale
- SPS Community BBQ
- Waterfront Art Show

- Poverty Awareness Week – attended events in the BID areas
- Rock 102 FM Show & Shine
- Civic Pancake Breakfast
- Bicycle Scavenger Hunt
- The Fringe Festival
- Delivered Volunteer Safety Presentation for the 2015 Homeless count
- Taste of Saskatchewan
- SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival
- Community BBQ Station 20 West
- Pride Week activities – attended events in the BID areas
- Grand opening events for businesses that start up with the BIDs
- Victim Services open house
- YXE Food Festival
- Cold Weather Strategy meeting
- What's up with Housing and Homelessness Saskatoon event at Station 20 West
- Saskatoon Exhibition Parade

The CSP Supervisor has representation on the following committees and regular contact with the following groups:

- Street Activity Steering Committee
- Service Provider Group
- Safe Community Action Alliance (SCAA)
- Subgroups: Crystal Meth Working Group & Statistics Working Group
- City Center Street Issues Group
- Cold Weather Strategy Advisory Committee
- 2015 & 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) Homelessness Count Advisory Committee
- Most active persons case conferencing with SPS
- Cooperative Policing
- Housing First
- The Lighthouse Stabilization Unit

September 5, 2018
 Lesley Prefontaine, Supervisor
 Community Support Program