

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

TO: Darlene Brander, Chairperson
Board of Police Commissioners

FROM: Troy Cooper
Chief of Police

DATE: 2019 June 5

SUBJECT: Research on Supervised Consumption for Saskatoon

FILE #: 2,011

ISSUE:

Subsequent to the Board of Police Commissioners meeting in May, a request was made for information pertaining to the work that has been done in preparation for Saskatoon's first Supervised Consumption Site (SCS), should the application be approved.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the information be received.

DISCUSSION:

Aids Saskatoon has submitted an application for a federal exemption, for the purpose of opening a supervised consumption site, at 1516 20th Street West. The Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) was asked to assist in the application for this exemption by providing a baseline study of crime in the area including and surrounding the proposed site. A letter was submitted to Aids Saskatoon on April 30, 2019, which includes the statistical analysis requested. A copy of the letter is attached to this report as Appendix A.

The Saskatoon Police Service is also being relied upon as a subject matter expert with regard to community safety and the prevention of victimization. The Executive Director of Aids Saskatoon, Jason Mercredi, recognizes that the police need to play a significant role in terms of public safety. As such, the SPS has been invited into several levels of consultation to provide advice regarding potential criminal activities, seized drugs, staff education, and community impact. Currently, Inspector McBride has been assigned as the liaison between the SPS and Aids Saskatoon as it pertains to the SCS. Aids Saskatoon has created a Community Safety Advisory Collaborative that includes members of the community, business, health, and the SPS (Insp. McBride). The purpose of this group is to consider potential and real impacts on the community and to work collaboratively to prevent issues before or as they arise.

Another initiative in process is to rally neighborhood partners who have a security or patrol based mandate, in order to discuss specific responsibilities as it pertains to the area surrounding the site. This group includes Saskatchewan Health Authority Security from St Paul's Hospital, Okihtcitawak Patrol Group, Community Support Officers and the Saskatoon Police Service. Maintaining a close working relationship and understanding what defined role each group will play, will ensure an effective collaborative effort.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

In order to fully understand the role of a safe consumption site within a harm reduction model and the role of police within that model, Inspector McBride, accompanied by two members of the Okihtcitawak Patrol Group, toured four safe consumption sites in Alberta. At each location, members of the corresponding police service and safe consumption site staff provided a tour of the facility and valuable insight regarding their facilities, programs and the role police have played. The following is a brief overview of the site visits.

ARCHES - Lethbridge

On May 11th a tour was arranged by the Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) and the Executive Director of ARCHES Supervised Safe Consumption Site. This is the busiest site in Canada with an average of 673 site visits per day. This site was built in an area that did not historically have a concentration of injection drug users present. In the first year, the immediate community experienced significant negative effects, including discarded needles, loitering, property crime, homelessness, public intoxication by drug and property damage.

In cooperation with the City of Lethbridge, community volunteers, hired staff and the local business people, they have eliminated much of the public concern. There is a focus on cleanliness, community education, volunteer patrols and strong relationships with the LPS. The site has full time security paid for by government funding. In general, the site has 60% provincial, 30% federal and 10% municipal funding.

In order to mitigate the real and perceived issues several initiatives have been undertaken. The LPS doubled their Downtown Patrol Team from four to eight members. There is a community outreach team that patrols the area encouraging those who consume drugs to use the facility. There are neighborhood patrols that clean up garbage, collect needles and prevent loitering. There are also community consultation meetings and public education opportunities.

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre – Calgary

On May 12th a tour was arranged by the Calgary Police Service (CPS) and the Manager of the Safeworks supervised injection site. This site handles approximately 200 visits per day. This site was opened in a pre-existing medical health center; however the clientele of the center did not include a high population of injection drug users. For this reason, the community didn't know how to cope with the new population, and those using the site didn't understand how to be a good neighbor within their new neighborhood.

The media published numerous articles about the increase in many types of crime. They also documented a significant deterioration of the community, with garbage, property, needles and homeless individuals all over the place. On the day of the tour, the street was clean, the park across the street was empty, and other than a few “street people”, the neighborhood seemed reasonably normal.

According to staff and police, the site opened with a very large disconnect between the police and the site. The site was viewed as a sanctuary, and the police were unwelcome within it. In fact, some of the first staff allowed and even promoted the selling of illicit drugs within the facility, proven when members of the CPS purchased drugs from a staff member of the facility. Through relationship building and staff turnover, a mutual understanding regarding policy and

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

procedure has created a much better environment, and much of the public outcry seems to be subsiding. The site is staffed with fully uniformed Alberta Health Services security staff. The facility is fully funded by Alberta Health Services. There are three security staff on duty at all times. The CPS has added 10 patrol members to the area, patrolling the area surrounding the Sheldon M Chumir Centre.

In their most recent report, the CPS reports that the addition of extra, dedicated patrol officers, has resulted in a significant decrease in crime and disorder.

Boyle Street Community Services – Edmonton

On May 13th a tour was arranged of two supervised consumption sites by the Edmonton Police Service (EPS). The two sites are one block apart. The first is contained within the Boyle Street Community Services building. This building has been a gathering point for homeless and injection drug users for many years. The sidewalk and street around the facility were filthy, strewn with garbage and discarded property. There were people sleeping on the sidewalks under tarps and cardboard. Contrary to the other sites, the community reports no change, because the people using the site have always been there.

This site has the lowest reported use of those toured, with an average number of approximately 70 daily visits. This number is low because Edmonton has four safe consumption sites to choose from and it is only open during daytime hours. The staff at the site has a very good relationship with the police. Both groups seem to understand the role each plays, and are respectful of one another. There is no security staff on site. There is no augmented police response.

George Spady Shelter – Edmonton

This safe consumption site is built within the George Spady Shelter, which is similar to the Salvation Army residence in Saskatoon. This site is only open during the night, and is designed to service those who stay at the shelter. They can see up to 200 visits per day, and is very busy with 4 to 5 staff on duty at any given time. They too have an excellent working relationship with the police. There is no security staff on site.

From August 27th to 31st, Inspector McBride will accompany a small number of delegates from Saskatoon to the Dr. Peter's Center and Insite SCS facilities in Vancouver. The purpose of the visit is to explore the differences in the way each site is operated. They are reported to be markedly different, in that the Dr. Peter's Center reports very little effect on the community, while the community serviced by the Insite facility has well documented and significant crime and victimization issues. There seems to be many lessons available from these sites.

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. Communication is key. Understanding the role of each organization and the individual members is vital to a good working relationship.
2. Policing must be “business as usual”. There cannot be a perception that the police have abandoned the site and the area surrounding it.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

3. Consultation is important. Bringing in all the stakeholders and having regular meetings will ensure everyone is being heard and concerns are being addressed.
4. The police need education and sound policies to ensure each member understands the philosophy of harm reduction and the role police play within that framework.
5. The police need to focus on reducing crime and victimization outside the site. The internal site operations and the safety of their staff and clients is the responsibility of the site. Police will intervene when called upon, but only where necessary.
6. Since the proposed staffing model within the site does not include security, there may be increased strain on Central Division resources, in a time that they are already over-tasked. A proactive, short term staffing augmentation should be considered, to ensure a seamless start up. One extra two member car per shift should be considered to mitigate any potential issues. All four sites attended had no strategy in place prior to opening. The social and criminal issues that began after opening took months to settle due to a lack of pre-planning.
7. An immediate plea for federal and provincial funding is necessary to ensure adequate policing resources are available. The Calgary Police Service attributes a recent decrease in crime and disorder to an augmentation of their general patrols to the area of the SCS.

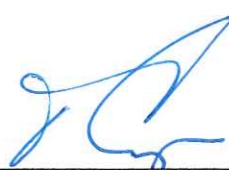
CONCLUSION:

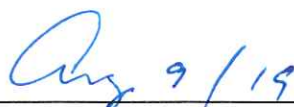
Using the lessons learned from other agencies, the Saskatoon Police Service will develop a plan for dealing with a potential negative impact on the community surrounding the proposed safe consumption site. In addition, strong relationships and mutual understanding will be a key focus as the site is approved and operating.

Written by: **Cameron McBride**
Inspector, Central Division

Approved by: **Randy Huisman**
Superintendent, Patrol

Mark Chatterbok
Deputy Chief, Operations

Submitted by: 
Troy Cooper
Chief of Police

Dated: 

Appendix A



Confidential

April 26, 2019

AIDS Saskatoon,

The Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) believes in the philosophy of harm reduction, and meeting the needs of those in our community who are struggling with mental health and addictions. As such, we also hold the same position of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, by supporting a Safe Consumption Site, as long as one of the main focal points is to direct clients to additional services. With this as our baseline, the SPS will work with Aids Saskatoon, to research and develop best practice, as it pertains to public safety and the prevention of victimization.

In order to assist AIDS Saskatoon with the public consultation and application process, the SPS has undertaken to develop a baseline for crime in the vicinity of 1516 20th Street West, the proposed location for the Safe Consumption Site. In order to fully understand and compare these statistics, we looked further, and have provided statistics that document the specific building location, a 250 meter buffer around the location, Pleasant Hill as a neighborhood, and finally the City of Saskatoon as a whole. It is believed that having a broader knowledge of crime trends will allow a better understanding regarding whether an increase or decrease in crime is a general or focused trend.

The attached report is an examination of several different types of crime and disorder. The template is similar to the statistics that the Calgary Police Service has been using, as they also monitor the effects at the Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre and their Supervised Consumption Site. This will enable police and partners to examine cause and affect relationships as they pertain to individual strategies used by each jurisdiction.

Another integral part of the research process for the SPS, is to try and develop an understanding of potential and expected risks associated to the opening of a Safe Consumption Site. In order to best understand and predict what the Saskatoon experience may be, several police agencies across Canada were surveyed for information. Information was received from London, Niagara (St Catharines), Hamilton, Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge. A very brief summary of their experience follows:

1. In some locations there has been a significant increase in crime, but with the exception of Calgary, there is little to no statistical documentation or evidence to unequivocally blame the SCS.
2. With the exception of Calgary, there are no baseline statistics to compare pre and post SCS data.

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

3. Lethbridge Police Service reports a significant increase in calls for service, including theft, loitering, littering, trespassing and mischief.
4. Calgary and Lethbridge have added members to their Patrol numbers in order to deal with the increased calls for service. Edmonton added 40 members to offset calls for service generated by their new arena, therefore had enough police presence to offset any additional strain on resources caused by the SCS.
5. Communication, relationships and strategic planning are cited as being lacking in many cases.

In order to be prepared for a SCS opening, the SPS is working towards a plan that will ensure that public order and safety are minimally affected. Using the lessons learned by other agencies through trial and error, the SPS will prepare for the worst, while anticipating the best. It is recognized that solid partnerships need to be in place between the SPS and our partners in the community. It is vital that the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Community Support Officers, and OKIHTCITAWAK Patrol Group, build an effective relationship in order to minimize potential negative effects on the community.

Finally, the SPS recognize that it is critical that AIDS Saskatoon have well defined plans and training to effectively deal with the clientele both inside and within close proximity of their SCS. Plans including security, personal safety, seized drugs, weapons, medical emergencies and many others must be fully developed and implemented prior to the opening of the site. This also needs to include a commitment to work closely with the SPS, incorporating their expertise into policies and procedures where prudent to do so.

Please feel free to use and share the statistics found within this document. Everything listed is deemed to be public information.

Cameron McBride
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DATE: March 28, 2019

TO: Inspector McBride

FROM: Planning and Compstat Section

REQUEST

The Saskatoon Police Service Planning & Research Section has been tasked with providing a report of the current crime trends in the area of the proposed Supervised Consumption Site (SCS) (1516 20th Street West). The report is to be provided to Aids Saskatoon and may be shared to other agencies. The Calgary Police Service provided a similar report regarding crime around their SCS. As such, this report was mirror to allow for future analysis.

METHODOLOGY

- A three year trend for Calls for Service and specific Occurrences for the area of 1516 20th Street West was provided.
- In addition, a 250m rectangular radius surrounding the site was also provided. A map of the area is provided below. In addition, stats for the Pleasant Hill neighborhood and City Wide were also provided.
- The report from the Calgary Police Service was reviewed and in attempt to copy this report specific calls for service and occurrences were pulled in order to determine the following proposed reporting topics:

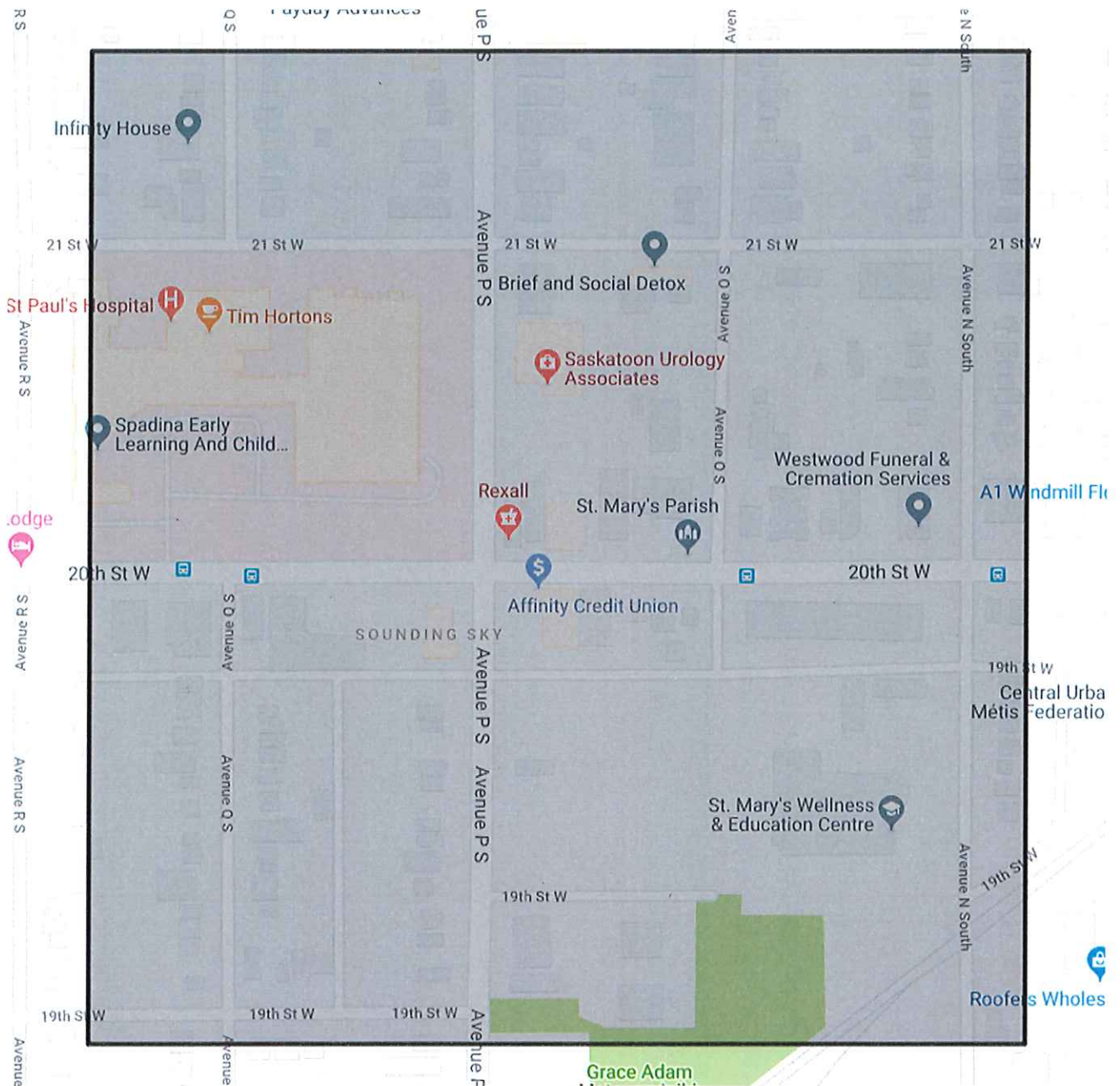
-Total Calls for Service
-Disorder Calls
-Drug Calls & Occurrences
-Violent Crime
-Property Crime & B&Es
-Vehicle Crime

- Stats were pulled in March 2019 from either the Crime Mapping Program or Cognos.

"PUBLIC AGENDA"

Results:

250m radius surrounding SCS:



“PUBLIC AGENDA”

Total Calls:

Total Calls				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th st W	7	7	5	1
250m Buffer	2,955	3,130	3,469	887
Pleasant Hill	9,029	8,858	9,829	2,211
City Wide	107,850	110,810	114,673	25,260

Disorder Calls:

Disorder Calls				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	3	4	0
250m Buffer	1,168	1,298	1,509	411
Pleasant Hill	3,064	3,172	3,723	813
City Wide	35,457	37,612	39,296	7,802

**Disorder calls include the following: suspicious person, suspicious vehicle, property damage, drunkenness, noise party, noise complaint, impaired driver, fire, indecent exposure, CDSA offence, disturbance, mental health, panhandling, street gang info, prostitution info, erratic driving.*

Drugs:

Drug Calls*				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	0	0	0
250m Buffer	42	34	55	4
Pleasant Hill	106	83	94	8
City Wide	760	669	607	75

**Drug calls for service include CDSA Offence 10-38*

Drug Offences*				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	0	0	0
250m Buffer	43	37	55	12
Pleasant Hill	148	131	147	29
City Wide	1,096	1,156	994	130

**Drug offences include the CDSA Offences*

Violent Crime:

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

<u>Violent Offences- Crimes Against the Person</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	1	1	0
250m Buffer	121	103	140	45
Pleasant Hill	416	441	445	114
City Wide	3,448	3,486	3,457	952

<u>Violent Calls</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	1	0	0
250m Buffer	128	124	138	35
Pleasant Hill	376	384	379	104
City Wide	2,680	2,754	2,807	639

**Violence calls include Assault (30/30P), Weapon (40), Sexual Assault (41/41P), Murder (42), Hostage (43), Death (45) and Robbery (46/46P)*

Property Crime & B&Es:

<u>Property Offences- Crimes Against the Property</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	4	3	0	1
250m Buffer	244	239	377	84
Pleasant Hill	756	803	959	192
City Wide	16,851	16,960	18,062	3,410

<u>Break Enter Occurrences-Res, Non-Res, Firearm</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	3	2	0	0
250m Buffer	36	46	52	15
Pleasant Hill	148	164	142	40
City Wide	2,301	2,538	2,647	499

<u>Break Enter Calls (10-20/P)</u>				

“PUBLIC AGENDA”

	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	3	2	0	0
250m Buffer	49	47	52	18
Pleasant Hill	251	250	252	52
City Wide	2,853	3,059	3,288	615

Vehicle Crime:

<u>Vehicle Crime</u>				
<u>Theft of Vehicles*</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	0	0	0
250m Buffer	14	13	18	4
Pleasant Hill	57	59	49	11
City Wide	1,268	1,143	1,029	236

<u>Theft from Vehicles</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	0	0	0	0
250m Buffer	17	24	60	13
Pleasant Hill	43	71	139	23
City Wide	2,628	2,753	3,169	576

<u>Vehicle Crime Calls*</u>				
	2016	2017	2018	YTD 2019 (Jan 1-Mar 31)
1516 20th St W	1	0	0	0
250m Buffer	37	26	49	6
Pleasant Hill	118	99	144	26
City Wide	2,463	2,234	2,211	441

**Theft of vehicle includes theft of vehicle and take w/out consent*

**Vehicle crime calls include Attempted Stolen Auto (60), Theft from Auto-P (63/P), Stolen Vehicle-(70/P)*