



The Manitoba Police Commission
La Commission de police du Manitoba

Ministerial Assignment

Winnipeg Downtown Safety Study Initial Report

November 17, 2019

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Executive Summary and Recommendations

Downtown safety is an issue that has affected Winnipeg for decades. The Manitoba Police Commission (MPC) has been asked by the Minister to consult with the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) and private sector stakeholders to identify and leverage ongoing work and to develop recommendations to make downtown Winnipeg a safer place for Manitoba families.

This work completed by the MPC is not a Downtown Safety Strategy. It is not the roadmap to public safety in Winnipeg's downtown because through research and consultation we discovered that ample work on downtown safety has already been undertaken and is currently underway. This report includes observations and comments from the general public and stakeholders working in downtown about what they see as concerns and issues preventing downtown safety and suggestions on the way forward.

Many organizations, both public and private, have made significant efforts and contributions to downtown safety programs and initiatives. The work is laudable but in past years these many programs and initiatives have not been well coordinated. There needs to be a more comprehensive understanding of the organizations actively committed to all aspects of downtown safety and a clear articulation of goals, objectives, and outcomes to ensure there is no overlap of services and finite financial resources are being efficiently and effectively spent to meet the many public safety and well being needs present in downtown Winnipeg.

Following is a list of preliminary recommendations, the MPC believes could contribute to downtown safety in Winnipeg and which may have applicability in other areas of the province that are experiencing similar public safety concerns. It is noted that True North and the City of Winnipeg are collaborating on a pilot project in the Sports Hospitality and Entertainment District (SHED) of Downtown Winnipeg that could provide very useful key learning strategies, tactics, and metrics. Furthermore, the City of Winnipeg has been chosen to participate in a learning program in conjunction with the Bloomberg/Harvard leadership program, and this could also provide a crucial turning point in determining optimal pathways for the allocation of resources.

Recommendations

Foot Patrols

1. Coordinate all foot patrols operating in the downtown to ensure that all areas receive adequate coverage to provide visibility and that patrol overlap is not occurring. Consider the use of additional vehicles, side by sides, golf carts, etc. to enable patrols to quickly cover the large footprint of the downtown. These vehicles need to be visible, with appropriate lights and communication equipment.
2. That the Block by Block Company or a similar company with expertise in foot patrol logistics, frequency and coverage be engaged to determine efficiencies in both the number of foot patrol needed and the number of passes or loops that need to be done in order to achieve appropriate visibility and a perception of safety for the general public.
3. If after further analysis it is determined that more foot patrol are needed, the provincial government could consider working with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize

funding to assist the BIZs to increase their foot patrol complement. It is further recommended that all foot patrol who are not police officers or cadets are subject to regulated training standards, similar to those undertaken by community safety officers.

4. It would seem at this time there are not enough foot patrol and that the public is not necessarily aware of the services foot patrol provide. Similar to the Minneapolis model, the foot patrol in Downtown Winnipeg serve a triage function connecting people to the right resource whether that be outreach/programming, fire paramedic service or police. If the public knew to contact the BIZ instead of 911 to conduct a wellness check, the impact on police and fire paramedic resources could potentially be reduced. Funding for more police foot patrol may eventually be necessary but should be put on hold until the public is made aware of the role that non-police foot patrol can play and to confirm if this alleviates any pressure on police.

CCTV Cameras

5. That the Manitoba Ombudsman Guidelines on the use of video surveillance be clarified to determine what, if any, role the Provincial Government might play or that current privacy legislation plays regarding the use of CCTV cameras or traffic cameras for investigative purposes. Based on our consultations, the MPC determined that the general public is of the view that you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy when you are in a public space. However, concerns were raised about the use of archived data, and that it be specifically limited to demonstrable investigative purposes.
6. That the Provincial Government explore the possibility of working with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to allow the WPS to purchase video analytic software for CCTV footage.
7. That the feasibility of establishing a similar video monitoring role as the DID Communication Centre for private security cameras be investigated for Winnipeg's downtown. Similar investments could potentially be investigated and made in other jurisdictions in Manitoba like Brandon or Thompson following successful implementation and outcome measurement.
8. If the purchase of additional cameras is deemed necessary or appropriate, that consideration be given to mobile units that could be relocated using smart policing tactics to hotspots in order to maximize their utility.

Lighting

9. That clarity is sought on what is the best practice or standard for lighting to achieve a sense of public safety.
10. As the existing program does not appear to be achieving the desired outcomes, that stakeholders (private sector, city, province) should develop or commission a lighting strategy inclusive of cost estimates to implement the strategy.

Communication Connectivity (Public and Private)

11. That the province work with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to support the establishment of a Safety Communications Centre for the Downtown.
12. That the province work with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to support the purchase and operation of a software solution like 24/7 Software (Smartphone Communications App) to assist with enhanced connectivity in Winnipeg's Downtown.

Stronger Enforcement of Panhandling Laws

13. That the province looks into amendments to the HTA with regard to panhandling, as some of the panhandling is occurring in or on the roadways and busy intersections. Any amendments to the HTA should be designed to augment the existing City of Winnipeg by-laws.
14. That the province coordinate with the City of Winnipeg to review the current Obstructive Solicitation By-law to consider potential amendments to address panhandling issues in downtown Winnipeg.
15. That the province support efforts to advance public education around panhandling and encourage public investing in organizations that support and provide to people suffering poverty and homelessness.

Better Coordination between Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)-Private Sector-Prosecutions

16. That the province continues to provide support to outreach organizations that will allow prosecutors options for sentencing rather than relying on in-custody solutions. This would include continuing to support effective community based restorative justice programs.
17. That the province explores the possibility of a "chronic offender" designation for offenders who continually accumulate new charges and choose to not avail themselves of treatment. Treatment in this context is intended as a health and well-being measure for both the accused and the general public. The intent is not to criminalize or penalize the accused further. This recommendation would necessitate a secure assessment/treatment facility that could be utilized for pre-charge diversion, post-charge bail support and post disposition sentencing options. See recommendation 25.

Community Engagement

18. That government works with municipalities to reallocate and prioritize funding to host town hall meetings on a quarterly basis on downtown safety concerns. These meetings would act as a recurring accountability mechanism to allow for ongoing assessment of safety/well-being programming and as a method of getting community input.
19. That government considers running a public education campaign highlighting how to be street smart and providing information about the programming available across the province.

Messaging should be multi-faceted and sustained and emphasis should be placed on the public taking ownership of public safety and being part of the solution. Consideration could also be given to ways to measure that the messaging is reaching the public.

Audit of Grant Funding for Services Operating in Downtown Winnipeg

20. That government in partnership with the City of Winnipeg immediately conducts an audit of grant funding agreements for community safety and well being related initiatives. The audit should consider grant criteria, processes, and practices, with a focus on outcomes, goals, and objectives. Current programming could then be evaluated against these criteria to ensure no overlap and to ensure deployment is able to meet front line needs.

Urban Tactical and Activation Initiatives

21. That government continues to support, through its grant process, “non-traditional” solutions, such as CPTED initiatives, to address downtown safety concerns.

Encouraging Critical Mass Downtown

22. That government continues to support the city in moving forward on initiatives that will help to make communities healthy and sustainable.

Downtown Safety Partnership

23. That government, once the MNP report and governance structure are unveiled, works alongside leadership partners to support or develop one or more elements presented in the framework.

Intoxicated Persons Detention Act

24. That government consider amending the IPDA to allow an alternate class of individuals to perform the functions currently assigned to a peace officer. It is also recommended that the province consider regulating training and standards for these individuals similar to that offered to Community Safety Officers.
25. Using the Community Wellness and Public Safety Alliance Proposal as a framework, that government continues to support and develop an effective approach to address intoxication and addiction issues across the province.

Health Services

26. That government continues to support and consider prioritizing or reallocating funding resources to health services, substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

Social Services

27. That government continues to support and consider prioritizing or reallocating funding resources to social services to address issues like homelessness and poverty.

Introduction

The issue of “safety” has affected the City of Winnipeg for decades. The common view of Winnipeg is that it is not a safe city. This view is particularly pronounced about Winnipeg’s downtown. If you ask the average Winnipegger, they will tell you that downtown Winnipeg is not safe. In 2017, the Winnipeg Police Service General Survey showed that 84% of Winnipeggers would feel unsafe walking downtown alone at night—including 90% of women. In an updated Winnipeg Police Service General Survey conducted in 2019, perceptions worsened with 88% of Winnipeggers now feeling unsafe walking downtown alone at night—including 95% of women.

The truth is Winnipeg’s crime rate on an annual basis is typically below those of Edmonton and Vancouver. In fact, the crime rate declined between 2010 and 2014 by 36%. Between 2015 and 2018, however, the crime rate had increased by 46% whereas all other major cities with the exception of Calgary have been seeing increases of 29% or less.

Knowing the crime rates have been increasing across the city and people’s perception of downtown was that it was unsafe, much work has been done to identify safety challenges in Winnipeg’s downtown and to work toward solutions. Some of these initiatives will be explored and highlighted later in this paper. Despite these downtown safety initiatives, the Winnipeg Police Service 2018 Annual Statistical report shows a 10% increase in violent crime and a 22% increase in property crime in downtown Winnipeg.

With perception of safety in the downtown at an all time low, crime rates in the downtown Winnipeg increasing and a mandate to improve safety in downtown Winnipeg, the Minister of Justice tasked the MPC to consult with the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Service, and private sector stakeholders to identify and leverage ongoing work and to develop recommendations to make downtown Winnipeg a safer place for Manitoba families.

The work of the MPC comes at a time of highlighted awareness of crime and tragedy in the city. As of the time of writing, Winnipeg has had 40 homicides in 2019 putting it on track to exceed its highest homicide rate ever in a calendar year, 41 in 2011.

The Minister asked the MPC to report back with a concise set of recommendations of actions and initiatives that will reduce crime and ensure that all Manitobans feel safe in downtown Winnipeg. The MPC was asked to consider the following measures:

- Increased foot patrols
- Use of closed circuit security cameras
- Improved lighting
- Communication connectivity
- Enforcement of panhandling laws
- Addressing chronic and high volume users of public resources
- Community engagement

The MPC was also directed to look at successful models in other jurisdictions, notably the Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District.

Past, Present and Ongoing Work

The first challenge the MPC faced when looking at what organizations are providing services downtown and what initiatives are taking place downtown was the definition of “downtown” itself. It seems that each organization has its own definition and none are the same. Sometimes the Exchange District, Theatre District, and Waterfront are considered part of Winnipeg’s downtown, sometimes they are not. The MPC took the position of looking at all initiatives and organizations who considered themselves to be working in the downtown, although, moving forward on a comprehensive “downtown safety strategy” will require a commonly accepted definition of downtown.

CentreVenture

Established in 1999, CentreVenture Development Corporation is an arms-length agency of the City of Winnipeg, whose mandate is to provide leadership in the planning, development, coordination, and implementation of projects and activities in the Downtown. CentreVenture expedites development in Winnipeg’s downtown by supporting private-public cooperation and innovative partnerships. The Corporation encourages new retail, entertainment, housing, and commercial ventures, along with public sector investment in public spaces, amenities, and services.

According to CentreVenture’s business plan, its priorities include: sustain efforts to promote downtown residential development and the continued growth of the downtown’s residential population and continue to support the emergence of the Sports Hospitality and Entertainment District (SHED) and facilitate new development within the district.

CentreVenture operates on the premise that the most successful strategy to make downtown safer is to ensure there are more people downtown—more people living, more people working and more people visiting downtown. Through its projects, CentreVenture aims to achieve this vision.

CentreVenture operates within approximately 10 acres in Winnipeg’s downtown that encompasses the entire Downtown BIZ, the entire Exchange BIZ and a small portion of the WestEnd BIZ. To date, CentreVenture has been involved in three major projects within its mandated boundaries. These include: Market Lands, the SHED and the Exchange Waterfront.

In the case of Market Lands, CentreVenture was instrumental and continues to be instrumental in the revitalization of this area that includes the redevelopment of the public safety building and civic parkade. The project includes plans for an Inclusive public space, a creative hub and a public market for food/retail kiosks. The neighbourhood in which Market Lands is proposed has undergone a residential renaissance over the last decade with historic buildings being converted to condominium and rental apartments, now housing over 3,000 new residents. The neighbourhood has also grown to include over 60 unique independent shops and over 50 homegrown eateries, pubs, coffee shops, brewers, and gourmet restaurants.

The Exchange District Waterfront strategy was launched by CentreVenture and the City of Winnipeg, beginning in 2000. At the time, access to the Red River in the Exchange District was characterized by gravel parking lots, the backs of warehouses and properties in a state of disrepair. Since the launch of the strategy, the neighbourhood has seen over \$250 million in private investment including nearly 500 new housing units, 12 vacant or derelict building conversions, and numerous new restaurant and hospitality concepts. The next phase of this strategy is underway with \$7.8 million invested in public realm

improvements throughout the neighbourhood through the Exchange Waterfront Neighbourhood Development Program, funded by the City of Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba through tax increment financing. This program is making investments in streetscaping, public art, safety measures, alternative transportation, heritage, and retail recruitment strategies. It is completing the Exchange Waterfront neighbourhood, attracting further housing and commercial development.

The SHED is an 11 block area surrounding the Bell MTS Place and the expanded RBC Convention Centre. It has undergone a significant transformation into a vibrant, mixed-use district that has capitalized on the increasing sports, hospitality and entertainment venues in the area. Over the long-term, the aim is that the increased activity and investment generated within The District will begin to radiate outwards to spur new development, redevelopment, and investment in new businesses and retailers in adjacent areas. Tax increment financing was used to finance public realm enhancements in The SHED.

Centreline

Created in support of the Winnipeg Police Service's (WPS) 2015-2019 strategic plan, Centreline is WPS's comprehensive downtown safety strategy. It was fueled by the WPS general survey response that the majority of people surveyed reported they would feel unsafe or very unsafe alone after dark in the downtown.

Centreline redefines police response to crime and disorder through applied methodologies and policing principles including; community engagement, public education through the media, crime analysis, evidence-based policing, problem oriented policing and proactive policing principles (Smart Policing Initiative).

To enhance downtown's livability, the strategy focusses on allocating 16 police officers for foot patrols along with one community support unit to patrol Centreline's geographic boundaries which are determined based on defined zones for data measurement. Centreline incorporates 12 "zones" which cover roughly the area with the following borders: York Avenue to the South, Central Park/Hargrave to the North, Osborne to the West and Main Street to the East. Police foot patrol officers focus on the areas within Centreline that have been identified as hotspots or areas in need of special attention. The determination of these hotspots is based on crime/disorder statistics and population density. The following have been deemed hotspots: Portage Place, Millennium Library, Graham Transit Corridor, the Skywalk System, Bell MTS Place, and True North Square. Other hotspot areas include the Ellice Zone and the York/Hargrave Zone.

The Centreline foot patrol is deployed in teams of 8 and works a combination of day and evening shifts. Due to the size of the staffing complement, there are gaps in coverage. WPS makes every effort to ensure maximal special event coverage during events at Bell MTS Place and the Burton Cummings Theatre. The police foot patrol contingent relies heavily on other stakeholders within the downtown to complement their efforts. WPS routinely works with the Downtown Winnipeg Biz (Watch Ambassadors, Community Homeless Assistance Team), property and security managers and public health inspectors. WPS is also active in the Downtown Security Network, a group that holds regular meetings and communicates regarding problem areas and persons within the downtown.

WPS also relies on the WPS cadets. The WPS cadets are part of the WPS and provide support to the police in the following four areas: 1) directing traffic, 2) securing crime scenes, 3) apprehension of persons under IPDA and 4) acting as a visible police presence.

The WPS currently has 9 CCTV cameras in operation in the downtown with approval and funding for up to 25 CCTV cameras. They face a few challenges with regards to cameras: 1) the Provincial Ombudsman's guidelines regarding the use of video surveillance cameras 2) the inability to access traffic cameras for investigative purposes and 3) the need for funding for video analytic software.

WPS uses a software program called TrackTik, which is also used by the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and True North Sports and Entertainment. TrackTik allows the WPS to monitor where foot patrol officers are spending the most time and enables coordination of foot patrols between the WPS, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and True North Sports and Entertainment.

There is currently no common radio connectivity between the WPS and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ watch.

The Winnipeg Community Wellness and Public Safety Alliance

The Winnipeg Community Wellness and Public Safety Alliance (the Alliance) is a group made up of business leaders, health officials, firefighters, and police officers. The Alliance commissioned a 141 page business plan which includes a proposal for a new facility to help combat addictions and to offer a wrap around approach to service provision for those individuals who are not well served by existing services. The business plan talks about a facility—a capital cost of \$39 million and ongoing annual operating costs of \$29 million. The new model is intended to work seamlessly with government and community service delivery entities to provide trauma informed, evidence-based, outcome focused services. It will allow for co-located services, connecting vulnerable and marginalized individuals who are primarily on the streets.

According to its business plan, the Centre will provide:

- Well-planned, integrated and comprehensive outreach with a focus on voluntary acceptance of help
- A drop-in centre that will provide individuals with a safe place to gather and a better connection to the services that can help them
- A continuum of services to assist individuals while they are in their addiction and as they explore recovery
- Coordinated resources through integration and co-location including medical, legal, housing, employment
- A Community Court will seek the best resolution for individuals with significant addictions and mental health issues.

Proactive outreach and voluntary acceptance of help are the critical pillars in this new model. The strategy would not be limited to downtown Winnipeg. The proposal calls for the creation of a 24/7 schedule to maximize coverage across the city. Another critical pillar is a diversion away from the traditional justice system. Protocols would need to be set out in consultation with the police, prosecutions and the courts to determine when police can make the decision not to arrest and detain in remand and instead transport to the new facility.

The strategy was conceptualized based on a non-profit organization or a special operating agency establishing the facility to ensure the organization has the flexibility to respond quickly to evolving needs.

Of note, the “Alliance Proposal” has been the subject of much discussion, consideration, and debate by stakeholders as to the form of its implementation in determining the best and most cost effective approach for downtown safety and wellness moving forward.

Downtown Safety Strategy Phase I

In December 2017, Winnipeg Municipal Council directed that funds from the Destination Marketing Reserve in support of a multi-year downtown safety strategy. A Downtown Safety Working Group was created including representatives of multiple city departments as well as representatives from Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, the Manitoba Hotel Association and the Winnipeg Committee for Safety. As a result of the engagement of the team members, as well as numerous other social and not-for-profit agencies, feedback was compiled into a multi-year downtown public safety strategy, comprised of five key elements including improvements to existing infrastructure and programs as well as new initiatives through technology.

In addition, in May 2018, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ hosted a Downtown Safety Summit where a vision for safety for all those who work, live, shop, learn and play in downtown was shared.

In July 2018 the Executive Policy Committee made recommendations to access the Destination Marketing Reserve to fund a multi-year downtown public safety strategy.

The following initiatives and corresponding funding were approved:

- Lighting Initiative
 - That up to \$300,000 over a 2 year period be used to create a Building Exterior Lighting Grant Program. Approved applicants would be granted up to \$5,000 to cover professional design consulting fees and the City would match up to \$10,000 in hard cost per exterior side of the building for eligible improvements.
- Community Safety Centre of Responsibility
 - That up to \$150,000 be used for consultant services to establish recommendations for the creation of a Community Safety Centre of Responsibility to promote the development of healthy, crime-free neighbourhoods in Winnipeg.
 - This city managed, permanently resources administrative structure would be tasked with identifying and promoting best practices in local, community-based crime prevention through social development, offering strategic program development and evaluation supports and acting as a forum for strategic stakeholder collaboration.
 - Initial work would include assessing the current state of crime prevention through social development programs and services that are being offered, identifying neighbourhoods and BIZ zones requiring safety strategies, leading an engagement process with community stakeholders to identify best practices in stakeholder collaboration, program evaluation, and program support resourcing.
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Upgrade
 - That up to \$150,000 be used to modernize and expand the Winnipeg Police Service Closed-Circuit Television Camera Program.
 - In 2008, the WPS implemented a CCTV program that included the installation of 9 public facing CCTV cameras strategically placed in high crime areas, primarily in the downtown. The program has been maintained but not upgraded over the past 11 years. Concurrently, the WPS maintains a close relationship with the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and its

Downtown Security Network (DSN). Within the DSN, businesses within the downtown willingly share their information about their CCTV systems. The City of Winnipeg Traffic Management Centre has also installed CCTV cameras for traffic management purposes throughout the city.

- Technology to Enhance Downtown Safety
 - That \$24,000 be used for a one-year TrackTik pilot project for the purchase of mobile software that will enhance communication and coordination between security and outreach workers throughout the downtown.
 - Under the pilot, the WPS initiated the use of smartphones with specific software called TrackTik, capable of tracking users in real time enabling coordination of efforts by strategically deploying resources for security tours, analysing patrol locations and times spent at hotspots allowing a data driven approach for future deployments
- Expanded Foot Patrol, Including SafeWalk Services
 - That up to \$375,000 be used for the expansion of the SafeWalk Program for an additional 8 staff through the Watch Ambassador, Exchange Patrol.
 - The program provides accompaniment to downtown workers, students, visitors and residents walking to their cars or bus stops alone in the evening.

City of Winnipeg Downtown Safety and Lighting Audit

In July 2018, EPC resolved that community stakeholders, including the WPS and Public Works, collaborate to identify the highest risk spaces that would benefit from enhanced public lighting.

In October 2018, a group of stakeholders toured downtown with the WPS and identified several areas that could benefit from additional or upgraded lighting. It is unclear if all of these lighting improvements have been made as some areas were privately owned.

Decommissioning of the Transit Shelter along Portage Avenue at Portage Place Mall

In July 2018, Winnipeg City Council voted unanimously to demolish the bus shelter located on Portage Avenue attached to the Portage Place mall, and rebuild with a new design. The Portage Place bus shelter was identified as hotspots for crime by the mall, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, and Winnipeg Police.

The actual demolition took place in July 2019. A new bus shelter, which has yet to be constructed, will not be attached to the shopping centre.

Community Safety Strategic Action Plan

Honouring a resolution made in July 2018, for a Community Safety Centre of Responsibility, in September 2019 the city of Winnipeg launched The Community Safety Strategic Action Plan of which the Community Safety Centre of Responsibility is a component.

The Community Safety Strategic Action Plan is a long-term vision document for Winnipeg that will make recommendations for new city community safety and wellbeing policy and for a new city-based community safety centre of responsibility.

The strategic action plan has the following objectives, each of which will require engagement with key community level and organizational level stakeholders in Winnipeg to:

- Assess the current legislative and policy environment regarding community safety and wellbeing in Winnipeg
- Assess existing City and community-based programs, services and initiatives that address community safety and wellbeing in Winnipeg
- Assess existing community safety and wellbeing collaboration methods, networks and best practices in Winnipeg, and to assess the City’s role in these networks as well as the community’s perspective on an ideal system for collaboration
- Assess existing community safety and wellbeing-related city grant funding criteria, process and practices to gather feedback from grant recipients regarding best practices
- Assess other jurisdictional community safety grant funding processes and practices, as well as models and practices related to community safety offices of responsibility
- Develop a strategic action plan to address future community safety and wellbeing planning in Winnipeg that includes the establishment of a permanent city-based centre of responsibility (outside of the Winnipeg Police Service) to support community safety stakeholder collaboration and provide direct/indirect resources for stakeholders in Winnipeg; and
- Identify funding options to support the implementation of the strategic action plan.

Currently, the city does not have a policy document or a strategic plan in place that represents an all-encompassing, multi-sectoral approach to addressing community safety and well being in Winnipeg. MNP Consulting has been retained to create this plan that will include an assessment of the current state of downtown safety. Stakeholder engagement is scheduled for the fall of 2019 with plan implementation scheduled for spring 2020.

Downtown Winnipeg BIZ

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has been in operation since 1989 and is the oldest of Winnipeg’s 16 business improvement zones. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ markets the city centre on behalf of 1,400 businesses and runs programs and provides services that target downtown image, cleanliness, safety, transportation, and parking. They also host events and promote downtown as a great place to work, shop and live. In addition, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is the spokesperson for their membership on continued downtown revitalization and enhancement of services.

Downtown Winnipeg BIZ management

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is directed by a management committee of 15 business owners/leaders and a representative from city hall. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ as the name implies focuses on downtown, not including the Exchange District area and not as far reaching as CentreVenture’s definition of “downtown”. With a staff of 22, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ provides programming in the following areas:

- Community Safety
- Image and Placemaking
- Cleanliness
- Transportation
- Business Development
- Events
- Marketing and Communications

- Homelessness Assistance
- Advocacy

Every retail/commercial/professional business in the downtown is a Downtown Winnipeg BIZ member. They provide the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ with a BIZ levy to support programming. Many non-BIZ levy partners contribute to the efforts of the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ by providing financial support, helping to develop and grow programs to make downtown a better place for those who visit.

Safety

Under their safety programming banner, the Downtown BIZ operates the Downtown Watch Ambassador program; downtown security network and hosts the downtown Winnipeg safety summit.

The Downtown Watch Ambassadors

Easily recognized in red and black, the Downtown Watch Ambassadors walk the streets from 8 am to midnight seven days a week, year round. This team patrols downtown offering directions, tourist information, first aid and assistance whenever needed. They also participate in community events and act as additional “eyes and ears” for the Winnipeg Police Service.

Ambassadors do not make arrests or carry weapons but have been trained in non-confrontational mediation techniques. Equipped with two-way radios, the Downtown Watch quickly report any criminal activity to the Winnipeg Police Service. There are currently 25 Watch Ambassadors and over 290 volunteers. In the summer, Ambassadors patrol the neighbourhood on bicycles. They also provide Safewalks to parked cars or bus stops during hours of operation.

Downtown Security Network (DSN)

The DSN is a Downtown Winnipeg BIZ led Winnipeg Police Service endorsed safety initiative connecting downtown business owners, property owners, and security teams with each other and with the police and Downtown Winnipeg BIZ. The DSN allows members to share resources and communicate immediately about safety issues in order to reduce crime and improve downtown safety. By joining the DSN, members know immediately when incidents occur, allowing the business to take added precautions to protect customers, staff, and property. Issues will also be communicated immediately to the police and the broader network, encouraging everyone to be alert.

Crime Awareness and Prevention Program (CAPP)

The CAPP aims to address retail theft and crime related to parking lots and parkades. Utilizing a solutions-oriented approach, CAPP focuses on crime prevention, problem identification, and problem solving. Education and training increased signage, site audits and the support of a CAPP specialist who will work directly with retailers, are just a few of the tactics of the program.

Community Homeless Assistance Team (CHAT)

The CHAT is dedicated to performing comprehensive outreach to individuals at-risk of, or experiencing homelessness in downtown Winnipeg. As the only service that has a regular presence on the downtown streets, CHAT Outreach Workers develop trusting relationships with the homeless community through front line interventions. The team is unique in their approach in that their relationships are built on the streets—at places where individuals are most comfortable and feel a sense of familiarity.

The CHAT plays a vital role in connecting the homelessness community with social agencies that: connect to permanent housing options, enhance wellness, provide additions and educational support and help find employment. CHAT outreach workers can be identified on the street by their name badges and will work in collaboration with other agencies in order to ensure a meaningful approach is employed that compliments all service provider efforts in supporting the homeless population.

Enviro Team

The Enviro Team helps keep the downtown clean and looking great. They pick up litter, water flowers, remove graffiti, remove posters and clean the downtown's sidewalks every day. Starting early every morning, sidewalks sweep and wash downtown, and in the winter, two snow plows clean major sidewalks of ice and light snow.

Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID)

DID Management

The Minneapolis Downtown Improvement District (DID) Project started in 2005 in response to chronic issues in the downtown relating to homelessness, addictions, mental illness, panhandling and associated criminal activity. The DID Project was initially determined to develop a safe zone based on a UK model using a camera system and a common radio channel for police and security to communicate to meet the intended project goals.

In 2007, Target Corporation, the largest employer in downtown Minneapolis, loaned one of their executives to lead the development and implementation of the DID model. Target's interest in the project was to oversee an improvement in downtown safety in response to a negative safety perception, the high violent crime rate in downtown Minneapolis and the assist the police who were asking for help.

The DID was designed as a private sector led initiative to ensure a safer, cleaner and greener zone which consisted of 120 square blocks of downtown Minneapolis. Funding for the DID is provided through a city administered business assessment based on gross business area and linear sidewalk or frontage area. Residential and non-profit business are exempt from the assessment. Funding for DID is approved through a city administered process on an annual basis. Funding is dependent on a business approval rating in so far as the objection rate to budget approval cannot meet or exceed 33% of assessed businesses. Since 2007 the business objection rate has not exceeded 11%.

The estimated 2020 budget for the Minneapolis DID is \$7.2M. The DID provides the following services:

- Safety Services
 - Ambassador and outreach patrol as eyes and ears to provide greeter/hospitality services and address aggressive behaviors.
- Livability and Outreach (50-90 ambassadors)
 - Police reserves, youth outreach, housing and treatment liaisons, liveability team, Downtown 100
- Clean
 - Litter, trash and recycling programs
 - Greening and public realm
 - Public area maintenance including snow removal

The DID has a well developed CCTV camera program, communication program encompassing the ambassador and outreach teams as well as corporate security throughout the downtown area that is linked through common radio channel and roll call program. DID also has an active crime prevention through activation program including environmental design initiatives and engagement that has an influence on the development of supportive municipal public policy.

DID Livability and Outreach Teams

The DID is founded upon ensuring a welcoming hospitable environment in Downtown Minneapolis. The DID Ambassador Teams meet several functions: safety – clean spaces – green initiatives. The livability teams interconnect with outreach workers from St. Stephen’s which is an organization dedicated to assisting homeless persons with their needs and to improve their situations. Livability also works with the Youth Link as well as other programs and services to meet the spectrum of needs.

The Ambassador Teams patrol the streets of the 120 block DID zone to offer assistance to all persons and in particular provide help and guidance to the marginalized population and those most in need. The patrol teams routinely provide wellness checks on persons found sleeping, loitering or panhandling to provide alternatives and to inform where services can be gained to meet their daily living requirements. Most commonly the Ambassadors provide directions, soliciting taxis and giving referrals for restaurants and hotels in the DID zone. The Ambassador Teams ensure that all public spaces are well kept, free of garbage and that any and all graffiti tags are immediately removed to promote the perception of safety and security. The Ambassador Teams work from 7 am until 11 pm and are currently piloting a later shift until 4 am on weekends.

The Ambassador Teams are linked via radio to the DID Command Centre as well as to private security agencies. Ambassador calls requiring police attendance are routed through usual means. The Ambassadors enjoy close relationships with the Minneapolis PD and private security throughout the DID zone.

The Minneapolis Central Library also employs an outreach coordinator who works daily with homeless persons to ensure that the Library Complex provides programming in line with the homeless subgroup. In fact, the Library has a Homeless Persons Advisory Board that includes homeless persons as part of the decision making group. The Advisory Board has made significant programming changes to benefit the homeless community including business hours that meet the shelter needs of the homeless throughout the week and on weekends. In addition, the Central Library holds special events like movie nights for homeless people that often include the provision of lunch and coffee. The core vision of the Library is one of inclusiveness to ensure that all members of the public have access to publicly funded resources and services that meet their specific needs.

The Library Outreach Coordinator summed up the position and perspective of the Central Library in noting that the role of public services needs to be redefined in response to the changing needs of the public – “respect and help are delivered by inclusiveness, not by exclusion”.

Downtown Safety Partners

The DID Downtown Safety Partners consists of an actively involved group of organizations that guides the operations of the DID. The group includes: Metro Transit Police, Minneapolis Police Department (Precinct Inspector & Crime Prevention Specialist), Prosecutions Attorney, DID Communications Directors, DID Director of Safety Initiatives.

The Downtown Safety Partners enables a collaborative public safety approach to delivering downtown safety. The success of the DID is due to the group being committed to focusing on a common goal but contributing through separate roles. The added resources of the DID Outreach and the linked private security team provides a force multiplier to the resources that provide services to downtown and enable the effort to work at the speed of business. The key to the DID model is the well built trust relationships between partners.

Downtown 100 Court Watch (recently renamed to Strategic Justice Partnership)

The chronic offender strategy group consists of Hennepin County Prosecutions (represented by a paralegal worker), a specially assigned Downtown Prosecutor, Minneapolis Police Department (Inspector and Crime Prevention Specialist), Probation Services, DID Outreach, and the Minneapolis Central Library Security Lead. The DID funds the Downtown Prosecutor and the Probation Supervisor for the determined DT100 list of chronic offenders.

The group of partners uses its knowledge of the downtown and its relationships with the offender group to annually determine a top 100 list of repeat offenders based on police and system contacts. The list once formed becomes the exclusive domain and focus of the Downtown Prosecutor and the strategy group to track in order to determine the best options for help. The group acts as a hub table of sorts and operates as a harm reduction model to provide case management and planning for the top 100 offenders. Incarceration is the last alternative the group considers to address the ongoing issues of the individuals on the list.

The chronic offender strategy group meets once a month to consider the top 100 offenders with a view to mitigating ongoing issues and reducing the overall impact on city services to the benefit of downtown safety and the individuals involved.

DID Safety Communications Center

The DID Communications Center is embedded within the Minneapolis Police Service First Precinct office facility. The DID Communications Center operates daily from 7 am until 11 pm and is currently piloting a later shift until 4 am on weekends. The DID Communications Center is staffed by a Director and three staff that work to maintain communications with the DID Livability and Outreach Ambassadors patrolling the streets, 65 private security contractors in the DID, and monitor 136 public and privately owned cameras that are located throughout the DID zone.

The DID Communications Center has an awareness of the First Precinct call for service queue but must report any request for police attendance through customary means (i.e.: by telephone to police non emergency operators or 911).

The DID Communications Center shares camera capture data and information from DID Ambassadors and Outreach Agencies in real time to ensure timely response to events, situations or problems occurring anywhere within the DID zone.

Downtown Safety Partnership

In addition to its work on a Community Safety Strategic Action Plan, the City of Winnipeg in collaboration with True North Sports and Entertainment have entered into a partnership to work on piloting an as yet unnamed public safety and wellness model for the Sports, Hospitality, and Entertainment District (SHED).

The model would be loosely based on the Minneapolis DID. Work has just begun on this initiative.

Downtown Prosecutions/Community Prosecutions Program

Winnipeg's Community Prosecutions Program was established as the first Community Prosecutions Program in Canada in 2005. Community Prosecution is founded on the idea that prosecutors have a responsibility to not only prosecute offenders but to address community concerns through direct involvement with the public and agencies designed to address public safety problems, present crime and improve public confidence in the justice system.

In the past, the role of the Downtown Community Prosecutor has focused on the prosecution of chronic offenders in the downtown area and upon building relationships with downtown community stakeholders. The program also monitored the prosecution of prostitution related offences in Winnipeg, offences against Winnipeg Transit Drivers, graffiti and offences occurring at downtown institutions such as the Millennium Library and the University of Winnipeg. The program eventually expanded with the addition of a second Community Prosecutor responsible for the North End.

The role of the Community Prosecutor is to seek innovative and responsible approaches to the causes and conditions that bring criminal offenders repeatedly in conflict with the law, and where possible, promote strategies to address recidivism. This includes the efficient application of existing resources such as Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court, FAS Court, and Mental Health Court. It also involves using untapped existing local community resources to be responsive to community needs. Community Prosecutors work closely with Probation Services and service providers within the community to find appropriate resources to help these offenders.

In 2015, as part of the Criminal Justice Modernization Strategy, in an effort to alleviate prosecution backlogs, Manitoba Crown Prosecutions moved from a file ownership model to a shared ownership model. As part of this shift in policy and procedure, the Intensive Case Assessment Process Unit (ICAP) was created. ICAP helps to ensure an early, integrated and consistent approach to matters that come into the criminal justice system. The goal is to provide an initial assessment of cases as soon as charges are laid and identify matters that are less serious and can be resolved in less time.

While the Downtown Community Prosecutor position still exists, is still responsible for the oversight of all charges of obtaining or communicating to obtain the sexual services of a person and still maintains relationships with various downtown community stakeholders and the Winnipeg Police Service, particularly the police foot patrol unit and the Counter Exploitation Unit, the position is considered another one of the 17 other Crown Prosecutors in ICAP, who similarly work toward creative solutions to deal with charges in the most expedient manner in a way that will benefit the individual facing those charges.

Consultations

General Public

In order to ensure broad consultation on the issue of public safety, the Manitoba Police Commission decided to consult the public on their ideas to improve public safety in Downtown Winnipeg. On October 1, 2019, the news release attached in Appendix I was released by the MPC. As a result of the release, the Executive Director of the MPC conducted three media interviews about the MPC's mandate and about why public input was being sought. The MPC received 174 responses to its question to the public:

What is the one piece of advice you would give to the Manitoba Police Commission that will help them with their recommendations to make downtown Winnipeg safer?

The responses were varied however did highlight a number of common themes. Note, many respondents did not limit their advice to one recommendation, as such the number of responses will total more than 174. The themes were as follows:

Policing Themes

1. Increased foot patrol*/officers walking the beat: 33 responses
2. More police visibility: 15 responses
3. Hire more police: 7 responses
4. More enforcement of laws/by-laws: 14 responses (panhandling mentioned specifically in 9 additional responses)
5. Re-opening of a community police office downtown: 4 responses

*Foot patrol is not limited to police. It may include cadets, ambassadors or security

Health and Social Service Themes

1. More services for people in general: 10 responses
2. More drop-in spaces for people, specifically homeless: 9 responses
3. Improved/Increased Mental Health Services: 6 responses
4. Improved/Increased Drug Resources (specifically detox facilities/beds): 19 responses
5. Creation of safe injection site: 10 responses
6. Improved/Increased Housing Resources: 24 responses
7. More outreach services in general: 7 responses

Environmental Themes

1. Improved lighting: 9 responses
2. More cameras/CCTV: 12 responses
3. More people downtown: 12 responses
4. More/Easier parking: 3 responses
5. Increased cleaning efforts: 3 responses
6. Install panic buttons: 3 responses

Other

1. Built/Establish better relationships between stakeholders: 8 response
2. Public Education: 3 responses
3. Curfew for youth: 2 responses

It was obvious from the responses received that all who responded were passionate about downtown safety. A handful of the responses received were very poignant and were outliers to typical responses. The following are some quotes from these responses edited slightly to maintain anonymity and for length.

“I am a 74 year old woman. I love living downtown and have never felt unsafe. I walk through Portage Place several times a week. Yes I meet panhandlers and I suspect homeless people. I have NEVER felt concerned for my safety. Today as I sit in my toasty apartment and watch the snow fall, I wonder where some people will find warmth today. My fridge and freezer are well stocked with food. However did some of us get some lucky? And it is luck, since many homeless people used to have homes, cars, warm clothing and food. Somehow, we have to help others see that these unfortunate people and their wishes need to be respected.”

“The solutions are varied and in many cases extremely difficult to introduce into the community. Crime prevention isn’t just the preview [sic] of the Police department, it needs full support and an action strategy from the “community” that it being targeted”

“I don’t really believe there is a point focusing on making one area of the city safety without looking a big picture problems. I think that the police working closely with community outreach programs as well as every level of government to come up with a cohesive plan to address the absolute bonders drug and poverty problem is the first step.”

“Who are we trying to make downtown Winnipeg safe for? Those who need stable, clean safe housing before they could begin to fix their personal problems, not after? As individuals , did you ever lack the money to rent housing or buy food, while trying to make yourself presentable? If you want homelessness, and the violence and drug abuse associated with it to disappear, providing permanent housing HAS to come first NOT second.”

“Research has shown that additional lighting and CCTV cameras does [sic] not make an area safer. We need to develop urban strategies and planning policies that draw on both men and women’s experience as users of city spaces. I feel that a lot of the unsafeness [sic] comes down to the design of the street or walkway itself. Looking at the type and colour of lighting used, the frequency of doorways or alley ways, frequency of people on the street and such.”

“Downtown” Stakeholders

In addition to soliciting feedback from the general public, the MPC also sought input from 28 downtown stakeholders in the form of a survey attached in Appendix II. The MPC received responses and held meetings with a total of 14 of these stakeholders. The following is a list of the stakeholders contacted by the MPC and a thematic summary of the stakeholder input.

Stakeholders

- Building Owners and Managers Association of Manitoba
- CentreVenture Development Corporation
- Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg Inc.
- Downtown Winnipeg Biz
- Economic Development Winnipeg
- Bear Clan Patrol Inc.
- University of Winnipeg
- Metis Justice Institute, Manitoba Metis Federation
- Mayor’s Indigenous Advisory Circle
- Motorola Solutions Canada Inc.

- The Exchange District Biz
- The Forks North Portage Partnership
- Main Street Project
- Manitoba Hotel Association
- RBC Convention Centre
- Siloam Mission
- Winnipeg Police Board
- Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce
- Gardaworld Protective Services
- Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
- True North Sports and Entertainment
- City of Winnipeg
- Meyers Norris Penny (MNP) LLP
- Winnipeg Police Service
- Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries
- Winnipeg Public Library
- West End Biz
- End Homelessness Winnipeg

Foot Patrols

- More visibility of officers or other security resources contribute to feelings of safety.
- Need a physical safety presence such as a staffed kiosk, something similar to the public toilets.
- Cadets augment police foot patrols but it is not enough to make a visible difference.
- Increase the profile and visibility of cadets.
- The Biz patrols are less intimidating than more formal resources and are seen as being keen helpers rather than enforcers.
- Increase efficiency within WPS by providing support services by way of private security to allow officers to concentrate on core duties.
- There are currently no WPS foot patrols operating in the Exchange District. We would welcome their presence to improve perceptions of safety.
- Cadets are rarely present in the Exchange District.
- Added private security would go a long way towards reducing crime and perceptions of safety.
- We believe the current complement is a deterrent, though we are not certain if present resources are enough to drastically improve the perceptions of safety in the downtown.
- Downtown Biz patrols are a visible presence in the downtown, and their presence is effective in improving perceptions of safety.
- The WPS resource complement is sufficient, however, deployment of these officers needs to be proportional to when people are coming downtown and include locations outside the immediate SHED area.
- We need to increase the visible presence of law enforcement by adding even more foot patrols.
- More has to be down in the hours after midnight, especially around areas where people are parking their cars.
- The role of these cadets should be reviewed and expanded if feasible. The public continually hears that there aren't enough officers on patrol.

- Better coordination of efforts and resources is needed between the various providers of security services downtown.
- A heavy police presence also makes some feel unsafe. However, the most important point is that addressing the actual safety concerns as opposed to perceptions of safety needs to be the emphasis of any further investment.
- I would use foot patrols in more specific areas and at a later time. The downtown feels quite safe during the day.
- Private security seems site specific. They also seem heavy handed and old school.
- Relationship based policing is the key.
- Outreach is disarming.
- Private security needs a better training regimen.

Closed Circuit Security Cameras

- They are helpful but they do have to be monitored in order to deter criminal activity.
- We do not believe that CCTV cameras in public spaces deter crime effectively.
- When individuals are out in a public area, safety takes precedence over privacy.
- It can be an effective investigative tool but applying public funds to police operated CCTV cameras is fiscally irresponsible and functionally ineffective.
- CCTV cameras are both invasive and opaque in their operation, with the result that there is no accountability for how they may be used.
- One locations of cameras become known they are less of a deterrent as the perpetrator just changes locations.
- We would prefer the presence of visible law enforcement over cameras. Cameras may assist in catching criminals, but if the system doesn't deal with them appropriately they become repeat offenders. Also, because the CCTV network is at times not working cohesively, the effectiveness of the cameras is reduced.
- There needs to be better coordination between police and business owners when it comes to accessing and acting upon the footage captured on these cameras. Some operators feel that they don't get attention from law enforcement until it suits law enforcement.
- Deterrence efforts have little effect as people do not set out to get caught or do not care if they do. However, the cameras may very well provide visual evidence than can help after a crime has been committed.
- Cameras do not deter crime but only address if once it has happened, investment in these systems should be minimal.
- I believe cameras are a deterrent. Saying that they are only effective after the crime has happened.
- Cameras provide a conscious deterrent effect.

Improved Lighting

- Parking lots and lanes to these areas; areas around facilities that are commonly in operations through the evening need better lighting.
- Parkades, surface parking lot, back lanes and businesses that operate 24 hours, such as hotels need better lighting.

- Lighting is important. However, it does not appear that the uptake on the grant program has been very strong. Perhaps the program should be re-examined. Or, given the limited resources that are available, perhaps it would be better to direct funds to other areas such as increased police presence.
- Better lighting should not be used to attempt to make public space less welcoming for people experiencing homelessness who may decide to create their own communities and shelters.
- I believe lighting is a small portion of overall safety. Arena or sports lighting can sometime negatively increase the perception of safety is done wrong.
- Lighting should be looked at but is not the only answer.
- The more vulnerable population needs lighting for safety.

Improved Communication Connectivity

- Need to ensure better and more direct communication with WPS in real time.
- Needs to be real time, need to be able to reach police, the folks carrying out the various security functions need to know how they are connected.
- Need to design and operate a unified management platform to ensure a quick continuum from electronic security and monitoring to quick time response in many diversified areas of intervention.
- Communication between Exchange District Biz foot patrols and the WPS and various private security tends to be dependent on specific individuals, situations, and on a perceived as-needed basis.
- We would certainly benefit from more briefings and regular communication regarding activity from the WPS perspective and private security in the Exchange.
- An appropriate network of communication throughout the downtown sites can be beneficial to improving the perception of safety.
- If everyone is talking to each other we can collectively spot trends or hot spots.

Stronger Enforcement of Panhandling Laws

- People are afraid of panhandlers. It reduces the dignity of our city.
- We do not believe the bylaw is being adequately enforced. However, we believe that additional WPS foot patrols taking a community-policing approach would be more effective than pure enforcement.
- Aggressive panhandling creates a level of friction that dissuades first time or infrequent visitors.
- We are uncertain how this bylaw is being complied with/managed in the downtown. We believe that to a certain degree panhandling is a factor in dissuading people from visiting or living downtown.
- An agency could be created to develop a strategy to deal with panhandling. There has to be a better plan than just moving panhandlers from one corner to the next. Optically, panhandling can make people feel unsafe.
- It does appear to have an impact on tourism.
- It does not make sense to fine someone when their ability to pay is limited. Should enforcement be necessary, it should only be the WPS.
- I have never had a negative experience with a panhandler.

- In the last number of years, there have been multiple incidents where panhandlers walking on the medians at the intersection of Main Street and Higgins Avenue have fallen into traffic and have been hurt and/or killed.
- When political leadership uses it as a means of instilling fear that may have a negative effect. If the general public does not want any panhandling then they should support real poverty elimination strategies.
- I believe that panhandling is a perception issue as opposed to a crime issue.
- The city of Winnipeg Bylaw Officers' role needs to be expanded to include enforcement of the Obstructive Solicitation Act.
- Suburbanites are uncomfortable with panhandlers and street people. Saying that the priority for the police should be the real crime.
- There should be a public campaign to encourage the public not to give money to panhandlers but instead to provide their donations to programming that supports those in need.

Addressing Prolific Offenders

- The province runs Safer Communities and Neighborhoods (SCAN) – maybe a SCAN type operation could be struck for chronic offenders
- This is a provincial government effort, more education, and publication.
- Funding resources to deal with root causes are not within the direct control of municipal government.
- Collaboration with and expansion of social programming that currently exists.
- Until the root causes of downtown crime are addressed, restorative justice is potentially a short term solution.
- Government needs to meaningfully and consistently commit to poverty reduction through anti-oppression and harm reduction models.
- Government can also fully commit to problem solving courts such as the mental health and drug courts.
- Enforcement alone does not work. The social conditions are the drivers of crime. The government should focus its resources to better address poverty.
- Chronic offenders need to be treated differently. This is a policing issue.
- General societal issues need to be enhanced and are beyond the scope of the police. We need to be careful in asking the police to do things they shouldn't be doing and are not trained to do. We need to strengthen more appropriate kinds of agencies.
- Government should focus on helping people live downtown. They should help private entrepreneurs on projects that enhance the liveability of downtown. More people 24 hours a day go along way in the perception of safety.
- We need to be tougher on chronic offenders that cause harm to others.

Expanding Community Engagement

- WPS needs better relationship building, dedicated downtown program.
- Foot patrols (WPS or private entities) as a visible presence are an effective deterrent. We often hear from businesses, residents, and visitors that the neighborhood feels safer when they are

around. There are few instances of public intoxication, aggressive panhandling and other behaviours that people find intimidating.

- For the WPS, being seen walking around in areas that are perceived as unsafe would also help immensely. By walking around, they can actually talk to people and build relationships. This is both preventative and can yield intelligence.
- We believe further increasing presence as well as further fostering relationships with the community in the downtown will improve perceptions of security.
- We suggest a more visible police presence, a more united front to fight crime and more coordinated use of resources.
- I think the Safewalk program is fine however we are treating the symptom as opposed to the root cause.
- Advertising is not prevalent enough for the majority of people to be aware of these programs and for those who are, wait times are often long to the point where people are not willing to wait.
- The police should be focused on crime and others should be focused on a downtown that is populated.

Other Comments & Recommendations

- The most successful strategy to make downtown safer is to ensure there are more people downtown – more people living, more people working, and more people visiting downtown.
- Work with the City of Winnipeg and CentreVenture to target the use of tax increment financing to encourage the redevelopment of underutilized and derelict downtown properties to grow the 24 hour residential population and grow downtown tourism.
- Under the discretion provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs in the City of Winnipeg Charter Act, require that the upcoming approval of Plan Winnipeg is condition on the plan including specific, impactful, and measureable targets to increase redevelopment in the downtown in the commercial and residential sectors.
- We understand that the most effective deterrent to crime is increased street level activity through the presence of people and lighting. Applying basic Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles such as Natural Access Control, Natural Surveillance, and Activity Support are far more effective than CCTV cameras.
- Higher levels of street level activity due to more events, more shops, services and restaurants, and a growing residential population in the area are the biggest factors contributing to safety and perceptions of safety.
- Hotels in Winnipeg are obligated to collect an accommodation tax from their guests. In July 2018, the City of Winnipeg approved funding from the accommodation tax funds to put toward a Downtown Safety Strategy. It goes without saying that hotels are very interested in how this money is being allocated.
- It should also include data on how people in poverty are also made more likely to be victims of crime as opposed to the prevailing view that they are all criminals.
- The political leadership needs to always be mindful of how it chooses to portray the downtown so as not to stoke unsubstantiated fear.
- The Millennium Library is a prime example of a failed policy. People were racially profiled.

City of Winnipeg Councillors

The MPC wrote to each of the city of Winnipeg's 15 elected representatives asking if they would like to meet with the MPC to discuss their ideas for downtown safety in Winnipeg. Meetings took place with a total of six city councillors during the course of consultations. The following is a brief summation of comments provided during these meetings.

- The issue of safety is beyond downtown – in fact, downtown is not that unsafe – but issues of safety are more acute in other areas of the city such as the North End and Point Douglas.
- The safety issues are a symptom. Rising violence – Winnipeg is sick.
- Need a better balance between infrastructure and social spending.
- Community is our children and how they are raised.
- Need to streamline NGO and social supports providers for consistency and efficiency – can be affected by community engagement
- Need community service facilities to engage youth – need to manage gaps to support transient youth populations moving to Winnipeg.
- Issue of profile and perception of Winnipeg downtown safety for the average citizen – issue requires more than a policing response.
- Need to attend to social issues meaningfully.
- Downtown problems are city wide concerns – citizens want to take advantage of amenities in the downtown.
- Panhandling is a threat to the senior population.
- There is a disconnect between crime and reported crime which undermines the ability to collect and analyze data to respond appropriately. Social responsibility and ownerships impacts deterrence.
- Not doing enough publicly funded non police work in downtown.
- Suburban perspective is that people don't want to come downtown because people don't feel safe downtown.
- Based on other city experience, CCTV cameras provide a perception of safety and make people feel safer.
- Downtown safety issues have to be addressed through their root causes and social causes.
- The NGO and support services sector currently has no outcome measures and there is overlap between services.
- More lighting is required in Winnipeg's Downtown particularly in parking lot areas.
- Street lighting in Winnipeg currently has a budget of \$12-\$13 million annually – but lighting programs are divided into street lighting and building lighting which is overseen by a different committee which may result in some disconnects.
- CCTV camera surveillance – privacy is not an issue.
- Panhandling – it is not illegal to be poor.
- City has no meaningful budget to attack root causes such as poverty and housing.
- The downtown is not unsafe but you have to be aware. The problem is mostly perception which is driven by media and social media.
- Currently, we are not dealing with the root causes and programs are pushing people (from downtown) into the shoulder communities.
- Poverty does not mean you are or will be a criminal.

- Need to provide opportunities for youth.
- Need to invest in recreation and leisure programming with outreach.
- Neighborhoods and individuals are required to solve the issues, not just the police. It is everybody's responsibility to make sure that neighborhoods are safe.
- Need legislation to permit tiered policing. Need to have the right people responding to issues and incidents, not just police.
- Need to invest and support 24/7 staffed safe spaces for mental health issues and women.
- Need to address legislation like IPDA to assist police.
- The issue is of the visible poor make people feel unsafe. Need to manage the stigma for persons suffering from poverty. Need to ensure services meet all needs.
- The competition for funding amongst social agencies requires a coherent strategy.
- Need housing and end homelessness. Need transitional housing and stop gaps to prevent people from losing their housing.
- Need to address lighting and crime prevention through environmental design programs.
- Need more cameras but also need resources to monitor and respond.
- Need to end segregationist practices to ensure that everyone is safe in our community.
- Nothing for us without us – need to include all communities in solutions.

Evaluation of Current Downtown Initiatives and Recommendations

Foot patrols

There are currently multiple entities conducting foot patrols “downtown”. Each one of the BIZs operating in the downtown, Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, Exchange BIZ, and WestEnd BIZ have foot patrols offering directions, first aid, and assistance. Additional financial resources were provided by the City of Winnipeg to the three BIZ partners to enhance their SafeWalk programs that see ambassadors walk individuals to their cars or bus stops between 8 am to midnight Monday through Sunday. The Winnipeg Police cadets are present in the downtown conducting neighbourhood foot patrol. As part of Centreline strategy, 16 foot patrol officers from Division 11 patrol the downtown on a daily basis during the day and in the evenings. They do not cover overnights and there are gaps during major downtown events.

It was clear based on the general public's feedback and feedback from stakeholders, that in order to achieve a perception of safety that there needed to be a greater critical mass of foot patrol resources but that these resources need not exclusively be police officers. While police are needed to be able to respond to criminal incidents, anyone conducting a foot patrol in uniform increases the perception of safety. Police indicate that they would like to increase their foot patrol complement to be able to have foot patrol officers on duty 24/7 downtown. To be able to achieve this, the Chief of the WPS states that WPS would need to increase the current staffing complement to 22.

While patrols between the various entities are somewhat coordinated through TrackTik, partners have shared there have been limitations in using this software making it unclear if the current complement of foot patrollers is sufficient in numbers and is being sufficiently coordinated to optimize safety.

Minneapolis DID uses a US based company called Block by Block that specializes in providing safety, cleaning, hospitality, and outreach services for downtown improvement districts. Minneapolis DID shared that Block by Block has assisted them in determining the staffing complement they need in order to create visibility. They analyse how many blocks can be covered during a patrol shift and determine the number

of loops that need to be completed in order to achieve visibility and thus a perception of safety by the general public.

Recommendation 1: Coordinate all foot patrols operating in the downtown to ensure that all areas receive adequate coverage to provide visibility and that patrol overlap is not occurring. Consider the use of additional vehicles, side by sides, golf carts, etc. to enable patrols to quickly cover the large footprint of the downtown. These vehicles need to be visible, with appropriate lights and communication equipment.

Recommendation 2: That the Block by Block Company or a similar company with expertise in foot patrol logistics, frequency and coverage be engaged to determine efficiencies in both the number of foot patrol needed and the number of passes or loops that need to be done in order to achieve appropriate visibility and a perception of safety for the general public.

Recommendation 3: If after further analysis it is determined that more foot patrol are needed, the provincial government could consider working with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to assist the BIZs to increase their foot patrol complement. It is further recommended that all foot patrols who are not police officers or cadets are subject to regulated training standards, similar to those undertaken by community safety officers.

Recommendation 4: It would seem at this time there are not enough foot patrol and that the public is not necessarily aware of the services foot patrol provide. Similar to the Minneapolis model, the foot patrol in Downtown Winnipeg serve a triage function connecting people to the right resource whether that be outreach/programming, fire paramedic service or police. If the public knew to contact the BIZ instead of 911 to conduct a wellness check, the impact on police and fire paramedic resources could potentially be reduced. Funding for more police foot patrol may eventually be necessary but should be put on hold until the public is made aware of the role that non-police foot patrol can play and to confirm if this alleviates any pressure on police.

CCTV Cameras

The theory behind the use of security cameras or CCTV cameras is that they will deter potential offenders, alert police to dangerous situations, generate evidence to help identify suspects and witnesses, and foster the perception safety, encouraging people to use public spaces.

The WPS has had 9 public facing CCTV cameras in use in the downtown since 2008 and has recently received funding and approval for up to 25. In addition through the Downtown Safety Network, businesses in the downtown area have been encouraged to register the existence of their public facing CCTV cameras so that Winnipeg Police are aware of their existence and may request access in the event of a crime taking place.

The Manitoba Ombudsman's Guidelines on the use of video surveillance provide for a very risk adverse approach to the use of the CCTV cameras in public places and have impacted the WPS's ability to use the

currently existing traffic cameras for investigative purposes. The WPS shared that investigations using CCTV would be enhanced through the purchase of video analytic software.

The research that exists about monitoring CCTV cameras in order to prevent crime indicates it has little effect on reducing crime. CCTV is more effective when directed against specific types of crime. It is effective at reducing theft of and from vehicles but has no impact on levels of violent crime. (College of Policing, The effects of CCTV on Crime: What works briefing). In another study conducted in the US of three jurisdictions using surveillance to reduce crime. Researchers found that in some areas crime fell and in others, it remained unchanged. Much of the success or failure depended on how the system was set up and monitored and how each city balanced privacy and security. Once jurisdiction saturated its downtown with cameras and assigned police to monitor live feeds around the clock; another jurisdiction installed an extensive wireless network of cameras and allowed access to all officers; the last jurisdiction placed a few cameras strategically in high-crime areas and restricted live monitoring. Overall, the cameras when actively monitored were effective at reducing crime. However, the programs were costly, in the multi millions of dollars to purchase, maintain and upgrade cameras, and to have people monitor the cameras and to store all of the resulting camera footage. (Lavigne, Nancy G., et al: Evaluating the Use of Public Surveillance Cameras for Crime Control and Prevention).

In Minneapolis, the Minneapolis DID have established the DID Communications Center. In addition to acting as the communications hub between DID ambassadors and security contractors throughout the downtown, the DID Communications Centre monitors 136 public and privately owned cameras located throughout the DID zone.

Given the mixed review, CCTV cameras and monitoring should not be the primary focus for improving downtown safety but rather a supplemental measure when other programs and supports are in place.

Recommendation 5: That the Manitoba Ombudsman Guidelines on the use of video surveillance be clarified to determine what, if any, role the Provincial Government might play or that current privacy legislation plays regarding the use of CCTV cameras or traffic cameras for investigative purposes. Based on our consultations, the MPC determined that the general public is of the view that you do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy when you are in a public space. However, concerns were raised about the use of archived data, and that it be specifically limited to demonstrable investigative purposes.

Recommendation 6: That the Provincial Government explore the possibility of working with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to allow the WPS to purchase video analytic software for CCTV footage.

Recommendation 7: That the feasibility of establishing a similar video monitoring role as the DID Communication Centre for private security cameras be investigated for Winnipeg's downtown. Similar investments could potentially be investigated and made in other jurisdictions in Manitoba like Brandon or Thompson following successful implementation and outcome measurement.

Recommendation 8: If the purchase of additional cameras is deemed necessary or appropriate, that consideration be given to mobile units that could be relocated using smart policing tactics to hotspots in order to maximize their utility.

Lighting

Lighting plays a huge role in terms of increasing perceptions and feelings of safety. Both the general public and stakeholders identified lighting as being key to downtown safety.

The City of Winnipeg conducted a lighting audit in conjunction with the Winnipeg Police Service and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ in the fall of 2018. Despite being a joint audit and review there were differing opinions as to whether the lighting was sufficient in the downtown. A number of locations were identified for potential improvement, some public, some private. Many of the public spaces have already had lighting improvements made to them. The city shares that it would like to further expand public lighting along the riverbank and from the waterfront to the Forks to enhance safety.

In 2018, the City of Winnipeg also created and Building Exterior Lighting Grant Program a two year program that would provide funding support for professional lighting design fees and matching funds of up to \$10,000 in hard cost for lighting on each of the exterior sides of buildings. Uptake on the program has been limited due to a number of factors such as cumbersome administrative requirements and the need for building owners, and not business owners mandated to make application for funding. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ has heard from their membership that a simplified process for funding would be preferable. They recommend hiring a lighting consultant, much like what was done for the Portage Avenue Lighting Master Plan in 2007. For that plan, a lighting designer was commissioned to develop a plan based on the prescribed space. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is currently in the second phase of the project where it is advocating for funding from the government and working with building owners to make the vision a reality. The plan provides a blueprint on how others can install lighting on different types of buildings, historic or modern as well as City light standards and even what buildings are suitable for video screens. A similar process could be explored for the “downtown” with a template in place to apply for grant funding should a business owner wish to uptake grant monies and install lighting. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ is of the opinion that an increased incentive and enhanced coordination and a broader lighting strategy could have a greater impact.

Recommendation 9: That clarity be sought on what is the best practice or standard for lighting to achieve a sense of public safety.

Recommendation 10: As the existing program does not appear to be achieving the desired outcomes, that stakeholders (private sector, city, province) should develop or commission a lighting strategy inclusive of cost estimates to implement the strategy.

Communication connectivity (public and private)

The Winnipeg Police Service and other stakeholders in the downtown (private security, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, Main Street Project) are not currently on a common communication platform. Downtown Watch Ambassadors and the outreach team rely heavily on two way radios and cell phones to maintain connectivity.

The Minneapolis DID faced a similar connectivity issue in their jurisdiction. The system implemented in Minneapolis needed to improve collaborative efforts with multiple social service organizations that provide street outreach in the downtown; it needed to create real-time communication between street outreach and the DID Safety Communications Centre; and, it needed to provide real-time trend analysis and reporting. Using 24/7 Software and cell phones, Outreach Ambassadors can enter incidents or engagements using the Communicator App, the DID Safety Communication Centre can then dispatch incidents to outreach via the Communicator App on their cell phone. The use of this platform has enabled the Minneapolis DID to improve coordination, real-time communication, and situational awareness for outreach efforts in their downtown.

The Minneapolis DID has also established a RadioLINK security Group. The RadioLINK Security Group links all of the private security partners in the downtown to the DID Safety Communications Centre, Minneapolis Police Officers and outreach teams via a common radio channel.

Recommendation 11: That the province work with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to support the establishment of a Safety Communications Centre for the Downtown.

Recommendation 12: That the province work with the City of Winnipeg to reallocate and prioritize funding to support the purchase and operation of a software solution like 24/7 Software (Smartphone Communications App) to assist with enhanced connectivity in Winnipeg's Downtown.

Stronger enforcement of panhandling laws

The United States Supreme Court has struck down many panhandling laws claiming any laws against panhandling other than aggressive panhandling violate first amendment protection on the freedom of speech. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms has a similar right under section 2 which provides the fundamental freedom of freedom of expression. Panhandling by-laws have also been challenged under Section 15 of the Charter (the equality provision) and 7 (life, liberty, and security of the person and the right to not be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice).

Panhandling is a difficult issue to tackle. Panhandling can run the gamut anywhere from visible poverty to a criminal code offence if actions become assaultive. At best, it is a by-law infraction and unless certain criteria are met, it may not even be that. Panhandling is a public nuisance and greatly effects people's perception of safety; however, in some instances, it is more that, namely when panhandlers are approaching people in moving vehicles on our roadways.

Winnipeg's current legislation includes The Obstructive Solicitation By-law which states that: No person shall solicit in a manner that causes an obstruction. Cause and obstruction is defined under a) in the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street.

Past iterations of Winnipeg's "panhandling by-law" were more stringent. However, in 2000, the City of Winnipeg faced a court challenge of the old panhandling law by an anti-poverty group. The city received legal advice they would lose the challenge in court and as a result modified their by-law.

Even if the panhandling action is deemed to be contrary to The Obstructive Solicitation By-law there is the issue of enforcement. Bylaw enforcement involves the services of a Ticket (Ticket Information or

Summon) on an offender. The likely outcome of a panhandling conviction is a fine. Those who are panhandling for money generally have little or no means to pay a fine.

Police officers and Community Safety Officers (if designated) have the ability to enforce provincial laws, like the *Highway Traffic Act* (HTA). Under the HTA there is a section of Pedestrians' Rights and Duties listed. There is the possibility of amending this provincial legislation to address solicitation at intersections. This may also allow stronger penalties than fines.

To sum up, enhancing the by-laws and placing more restrictions on panhandling in the by-law risks a Charter Challenge, stronger enforcement of the current by-law will have little effect due to those being ticketed not having the ability to pay.

A more effective strategy for dealing with panhandling could be to create a public education and awareness program that addresses the implications and impacts of providing money to panhandlers.

Recommendation 13: That the province looks into amendments to the HTA with regard to panhandling, as some of the panhandling is occurring in or on the roadways and busy intersections. Any amendments to the HTA should be designed to augment the existing City of Winnipeg by-laws.

Recommendation 14: That the province coordinates with the City of Winnipeg to review the current Obstructive Solicitation By-law to consider potential amendments to address panhandling issues in downtown Winnipeg.

Recommendation 15: That the province support efforts to advance public education around panhandling and encourage public investing in organizations that support and provide to people suffering poverty and homelessness.

Better coordination between WPS – Private Sector – Prosecutions with respect to chronic and prolific offenders (consumers of public services)

The Minneapolis DID model includes a Downtown Safety Partners Committee and a Downtown 100 Court Watch program where partners meet on a regular basis to identify and discuss trends and issues in real time relative to the established client group.

Through the Justice Modernization Strategy and through ICAP's community prosecutor, there is already great coordination between police, the private sector, and prosecutions. ICAP maintains a detailed prosecutions database that tracks previous Crown involvement with the accused. There are regular meetings taking place between the WPS, Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and the Community Prosecutor. All partners are aware of who the chronic offenders are in the area and the community prosecutor is aware of the community resources that are available that could be accessed or where referrals can be made.

Prosecutors are limited in terms of the options available to them. They must look at the charge an accused is facing in isolation of any other charges they faced in the past when determining whether it is in the public interest to prosecute. If they feel there is enough there to prosecute and get a conviction they then

only have three real options available to them: a request for probation, custody, the imposition of a fine or agreeing to a stay of proceedings if the offender participates or completes programming.

Prosecution shared that many offenders are choosing custody instead of treatment because the expectations placed on them through specialized courts or programming are more rigorous than simply serving a short custodial sentence. In other words, some individuals do not want or are not willing to do the work required to get help.

An interesting experiment would be to see if it would be possible to introduce the notion of a “chronic offender” into sentencing considerations. If individuals are truly not wanting or willing to explore treatment and instead choose to do short periods of incarceration, it would be interesting to explore the possibility of eliminating that choice for them. This would involve establishing a “chronic offender designation” where an individual has been shown to commit a certain number of offences under the influence of drugs or due to mental health issues and has in the past has not availed themselves of community resources being confined to residential treatment for a period of time. A model like the one proposed by the Winnipeg Community Wellness and Public Safety Alliance elevated to a secure facility could be used. Admittedly this model may require a lobby of the federal government for Criminal Code amendments.

More rigorous prosecution is not the solution that will make downtown safer. Prosecutions and their downtown safety partners are already doing the work being accomplished by the Minneapolis Downtown Safety Partners and through their Downtown 100 Court Watch Program. Manitoba Prosecutions are arguably doing more than the DID Model, as they are not simply focussing their efforts on the top 100 offenders. Every accused who goes through ICAP is benefiting from creative, customized solutions that are aimed at getting offenders linked with appropriate services and avoiding custody, when appropriate, and preventing them from re-offending.

A large part of the Minneapolis DID project's success has been due to their relationship building. Trust, respect, and partnership were evident between the partners. All of the partners freely admitted the relationships and partnerships they have make their jobs easier and that they can't see doing their jobs without their partners. Time, transparency and openness to doing the right thing have led to the success of the Minneapolis DID Model.

Recommendation 16: That the province continues to provide support to outreach organizations that will allow prosecutors options for sentencing rather than relying on in-custody solutions. This would include continuing to support effective community based restorative justice programs.

Recommendation 17: That the province explores the possibility of a “chronic offender” designation for offenders who continually accumulate new charges and choose to not avail themselves of treatment. Treatment in this context is intended as a health and well-being measure for both the accused and the general public. The intent is not to criminalize or penalize the accused further. This recommendation would necessitate a secure assessment/treatment facility that could be utilized for pre-charge diversion, post-charge bail support and post disposition sentencing options. See recommendation 25.

Community engagement

This is the one area that might have the greatest impact on downtown safety. There has been and continues to be a lot of great work going on in the downtown to promote and encourage safety. Based on feedback received from the general public, it is evident that people are somewhat aware of what is available in terms of services but not to the extent to which they exist.

Community partners including various levels of government and police should consider hosting town halls to regularly engage and inform the public about what services are available downtown and what is trending in terms of safety. This initiative could be elevated to a province wide initiative.

Public education could include information on what people can do to keep themselves safe and how they can be part of the solution either through gaining knowledge and understanding about the societal factors that are driving public safety like poverty, homelessness, drug addition and mental health issues, by providing support in the form of time or finances to those organizations who are providing services downtown to help people, whether it be directing them to find someplace to sleep or walking them to their car or a bus stop after work or a Jets game.

Recommendation 18: That government works with municipalities to reallocate and prioritize funding to host town hall meetings on a quarterly basis on downtown safety concerns. These meetings would act as a recurring accountability mechanism to allow for ongoing assessment of safety/well-being programming and as a method of getting community input.

Recommendation 19: That government considers running a public education campaign highlighting how to be street smart and providing information about the programming available across the province. Messaging should be multi-faceted and sustained and emphasis should be placed on the public taking ownership of public safety and being part of the solution. Consideration could also be given to ways to measure that the messaging is reaching the public.

Audit of Grant Funding for Services Operating in Downtown Winnipeg

While there is much work being done by the City of Winnipeg and its public and private partners, it seems much of it is ad hoc and without being tied to a single comprehensive strategy. There is no real knowledge of exactly what services are provided, how these services are being funded, if the funding is being assessed at appropriate levels to support front line service and if there are any gaps in service that need to be addressed.

Case in point, the plethora of work that has been done by the City of Winnipeg. There are many initiatives dating back years like OurWinnipeg, Winnipeg Police's Centerline initiative, the Downtown Safety and Lighting Audit, Community Safety Strategic Action Plan, Community Safety Centre of Responsibility, etc. These are all great initiatives that have benefits for public safety; however, they were/are being presented and implemented in a piece meal fashion.

The City of Winnipeg is in the process of having a Community Safety Strategic Action Plan drafted on their behalf by MNP. Part of the scope of that project is to assess existing community safety and wellbeing-related city grant funding criteria, process and practices to gather feedback from grant recipients

regarding best practices. The provincial government should support this work and follow suit with an audit on the programs they fund and work with the city to determine overlap and gaps.

The MPC has also recently become aware of the city's involvement in an initiative being run by Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Business School and Bloomberg Philanthropies whereby the city selects an issue to be examined in a key practice area. The city has chosen cross-boundary collaboration in an attempt to reduce the extent to which police officers are dispatched in response to calls for service that are not criminal in nature. This is an excellent opportunity to work with the city on examining programming, service overlap, funding, and gaps.

Recommendation 20: That government in partnership with the City of Winnipeg immediately conducts an audit of grant funding agreements for community safety and well being related initiatives. The audit should consider grant criteria, processes, and practices, with a focus on outcomes, goals, and objectives. Current programming could then be evaluated against these criteria to ensure no overlap and to ensure deployment is able to meet front line needs.

Urban Tactical and Activation Initiatives

As mentioned above, much of Minneapolis DID's success has been due to healthy partnerships. Minneapolis has also seen great success in its contribution to downtown safety through crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) initiatives. By working with the city, Metro transit and other partners, Minneapolis DID has been able to erect aesthetically pleasing fencing in an area that was proving to be a safety concern due to bar goers walking in the path of street cars, they've landscaped an area under an art installation that was being used as a support structure for a tent tarp and they've moved a transit shelter from a corner to a mid block location so that it is not longer a prime location for drug transactions to take place. All of these changes are small but impactful and could not have taken place quickly and relatively easily without the relationships that had been forged between partners.

The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ already does some work in terms of CPTED and activism (most recently the mini golf greens located in front of Downtown Winnipeg BIZ member's establishments) but could do more. As one of our public respondents who self identified as a graphic designer said: "I feel that a lot of the unsafeness [sic] comes down to the design of the street or walkway itself. Looking at the type and colour of lighting used, the frequency of doorways or alley ways, frequency of people on the street and such."

Recommendation 21: That government continues to support, through its grant process, "non-traditional" solutions, such as CPTED initiatives, to address downtown safety concerns.

Encouraging Critical Mass Downtown

As the old adage says "there is safety in numbers". Both the stakeholders and the general public highlighted the fact that in other cities where the downtown is populated at all hours there isn't the same perception of feeling unsafe.

Over the last several decades, partners such as CentreVenture have been encouraging working toward establishing economic development and urban housing options in the downtown. The city needs to

continue to move forward on strategies like OurWinnipeg, a 25-year vision for the entire city that positions Winnipeg, including the downtown for sustainable growth.

Recommendation 22: That government continues to support the city in moving forward on initiatives that will help to make communities healthy and sustainable.

Downtown Safety Partnership

While only at its beginning phases, the Downtown Safety Partnership intends to take the successful and appropriate parts of the Minneapolis DID model and bring them to life in downtown Winnipeg.

Mark Chipman and True North Sports and Entertainment have stepped up, much like Target Corporation did in Minneapolis, and have taken the reigns to develop a coordinated downtown Winnipeg safety solution. In partnership with the City of Winnipeg, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ and through work to be completed by MNP, True North Sports and Entertainment is planning a tailor made Winnipeg solution to perceived gaps in the downtown safety landscape. It is anticipated that the resulting product will present a cohesive Winnipeg downtown safety strategy complete with strong governance and leadership structure.

A Director of Security Initiatives has been hired by True North and will work to bring the model MNP creates to life. Work has just begun on this initiative and it is recommended that the provincial government provide its support to this initiative.

Recommendation 23: That government, once the MNP report and governance structure are unveiled, works alongside leadership partners to support or develop one or more elements presented in the framework.

Intoxicated Persons Detention Act

In addition to panhandling, the presence of intoxicated persons in the downtown was cited as a factor that influenced safety and perception of safety. Under the provincial *Intoxicated Persons Detention Act (IPDA)* where a peace officer finds a person who is intoxicated in a public place, he may take that person into custody. The peace officer is then obligated to take the person to a detoxification centre where s/he will remain until they are deemed are no longer a danger to themselves or others and will not cause a nuisance.

The requirement that an intoxicated person must be taken into custody by a peace officer limits who can address the nuisance caused by an intoxicated person. Legislative change stating that an intoxicated person may be detained by any person designated by the Minister in a Ministerial Regulation would allow members of the downtown watch, private security or a newly formed entity under the downtown safety partnership to fulfill this function.

In the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Association has through agreement has negotiated to ensure that IPDA responsibilities be the sole responsibility of Winnipeg Police Service Officers and Cadets.

The only designated detoxification centre in the city of Winnipeg is the Main Street Project. There are critics of the Main Street Project and how it addresses detoxification and question why it continues to be the only detoxification centre supported for the city of Winnipeg.

Recommendation 24: That government consider amending the IPDA to allow an alternate class of individuals to perform the functions currently assigned to a peace officer. It is also recommended that the province consider regulating training and standards for these individuals similar to that offered to Community Safety Officers.

Recommendation 25: Using the Community Wellness and Public Safety Alliance Proposal as a framework, that government continues to support and develop an effective approach to address intoxication and addiction issues across the province.

Health Services

Two of the issues brought up most often in our consultations as factors to improve downtown safety were access and existence to drug treatment and mental health resources.

Both the public and stakeholders realized that drug addictions and mental health issues are driving the downtown safety issue and felt that more government support and resources for these two health related issues would improve downtown safety.

Many stakeholders pointed to the need for vans that could provide mobile health supports in the form of various health providers (doctors, nurses, paramedics, dentists), mental health practitioners (psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses) and outreach workers to be able to provide referrals to needed non-health related support services.

Recommendation 26: That government continues to support and consider prioritizing or reallocating funding resources to health services, substance abuse treatment and mental health services.

Social Services

Social supports are also needed. Homelessness and poverty were also identified as issues that needed to be addressed to achieve safety downtown. The Downtown Winnipeg BIZ's CHAT program was often held out as an outreach program doing good work that could benefit from additional supports and funding.

Demand for programs that travel around in vans to check on the homeless during extreme weather conditions was also highlighted as a valuable resource that could use more support.

Finally, there was more than one recommendation for a drop-in for people who are homeless to be able to access so that they would have somewhere to keep warm and a place to go during the day after the shelters close.

A tour of Minneapolis' Public Library demonstrated how a shift in perspective and seeing the homeless as part of the community who deserve equal access to community resources instead of a dangerous problem that needs to be addressed with metal detectors and bag searches goes a long way to improving the perception of safety.

Recommendation 27: That government continues to support and consider prioritizing or reallocating funding resources to social services to address issues like homelessness and poverty.

Conclusion

The MPC study activities included: an inventory and review of past and current work, visiting the Minneapolis DID Model and hearing feedback from the public and key stakeholders which has evidenced there are definite safety and wellness concerns in downtown Winnipeg.

The general findings of this study do not point to a policing issue. Police definitely have a role to play in a downtown safety strategy but they should not be the lead agency.

To improve both the perception and actual public safety in downtown Winnipeg, a downtown safety strategy must focus on community health and wellness. Focus on getting people well and cared for and safety will follow.

Appendix I

September 18, 2019

PROVINCE TAKING ACTION TO ADDRESS SAFETY IN DOWNTOWN WINNIPEG

Manitoba Police Commission Tasked with Providing Recommendations: Cullen

The Manitoba government has asked the Manitoba Police Commission to consult with the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) and private-sector stakeholders to provide recommendations on how to improve safety in downtown Winnipeg, Justice Minister Cliff Cullen announced today.

“No Manitoban should feel unsafe taking their family to a Jets game or walking to their car at night,” said Cullen. “I am asking the Manitoba Police Commission to report back with a concise set of recommendations for actions and initiatives to reduce crime and ensure all Manitobans feel safe in downtown Winnipeg.”

The minister noted that while some progress on crime has been made, WPS data shows violent crime in downtown Winnipeg increased by 10 per cent last year, a 36 per cent increase over the five-year average. Property crime is also up by 22 per cent in the area, a 47 per cent increase over the five-year average.

A WPS survey from 2017 showed 84 per cent of Winnipeggers would feel unsafe walking downtown alone at night including 90 per cent of women.

The commission has been asked to provide an initial report to government by Nov.17, which will include recommendations for action and advice on the role of government, including regulatory roles, respective provincial, municipal and private funding responsibilities, and program monitoring to strengthen safety in downtown Winnipeg.

To read the letter to the Manitoba Police Commission, visit:
<https://gov.mb.ca/government/proactivedisclosure/index.html>.

The Manitoba Police Commission provides civilian input on police services and the conduct of police officers, which can include providing advice to the minister, consulting with the public, providing support to municipal police boards and overseeing the civilian monitor program, which observes independent investigations of police officers.

For more information about the role of the commission, visit www.mbpolicecom.ca.

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Appendix II

Manitoba Police Commission – Downtown Safety Questionnaire

On September 19, 2019, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General tasked the Manitoba Police Commission with recommending new actions and initiatives to reduce crime and ensure that all Manitobans can feel safe in downtown Winnipeg.

Significant work has already been done to identify downtown safety challenges and work toward solutions. In November 2016, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) released its Centreline Downtown Safety Strategy, with a mission to “enhance citizen safety and wellness by reducing crime and disorder in downtown Winnipeg.”

The centrepiece of the strategy is the deployment of the WPS Division 11 Foot Patrol Unit full-time within the centreline area, which encompasses the majority of downtown Winnipeg, including the entirety of the city’s Sports, Hospitality and Entertainment District. The full-time complement deployed in the centreline area includes 16 WPS officers, supported by Division 11 General Patrol, Community Support Unit, and Division Crime Unit.

On July 19, 2018, Winnipeg’s city council approved funding from the Destination Marketing Reserve to improve safety in the downtown, including establishing a Building Exterior Lighting Program, creating a Community Safety Centre of Responsibility, expanding the WPS closed circuit television program, acquiring new software to enhance communication between the WPS and other security personnel, and expanding the SafeWalk Program. The city also invested in the decommissioning of the Portage Place Shopping Center bus shelter, which was identified as a crime hotspot by the WPS.

Despite these downtown safety initiatives, the WPS 2018 Annual Statistical Report shows a 10% increase in violent crime and a 22% increase in property crime in the downtown Portage Avenue Districts. In 2017, the WPS General Survey showed that 84% of Winnipeggers would feel unsafe walking downtown alone at night – including 90% of women.

In December 2015, the WPS partnered with the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ on a business member survey. The results showed that public intoxication, street people, and aggressive panhandlers were considered some of the most serious issues among businesses surveyed.

The Minister has tasked the Manitoba Police Commission with helping to address these ongoing crime and public safety challenges in downtown Winnipeg. Please review the following and answer the questions below.

Increased downtown foot patrols

As part of the Centreline Downtown Safety Strategy, the WPS has deployed 16 foot patrols in the downtown. The WPS also operates a cadet program of up to 40 youth per intake that respond to calls in the downtown area.

These foot patrols are augmented by 26 Downtown Watch Ambassadors and 2 Exchange BIZ Patrols. Downtown Watch Ambassadors and Exchange BIZ Patrols act as additional “eyes and ears” in downtown

Winnipeg. They do not make arrests or carry weapons, but have been trained in non-confrontational mediation techniques.

All patrols are trained to quickly alert the WPS about any suspected criminal activity. They also operate the SafeWalk program, whereby patrols escort individuals to their vehicles in the evening (4:00-11:30 pm). In addition to these patrols, downtown Winnipeg is also served by a variety of private security personnel contracted by area businesses.

As part of the city's 2018 investments in downtown safety, these patrols were enhanced with four additional Watch Ambassadors and two Exchange BIZ Patrols to help operate their respective SafeWalk programs.

1. Does the current WPS resource complement for foot patrols in downtown Winnipeg appear to be enough to reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety in the downtown?
2. Do you think that the WPS auxiliary cadets are helping augment the WPS foot patrol presence in downtown Winnipeg? How could the role of the cadets be expanded to improve public safety?
3. How could the Downtown BIZ and Exchange BIZ patrols be more effective in improving perceptions of safety in the downtown?
4. What is your experience with private security personnel in downtown Winnipeg? What more could they do to reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety in the downtown?

Closed circuit security cameras

In 2008, the WPS implemented its Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) program, which included the installation of nine CCTV cameras in high crime areas. According to the City of Winnipeg Public Service, the program has been maintained over the last 10 years, but was never upgraded or expanded. In July, 2018, city council committed \$150,000 to upgrade and expand the use of the cameras.

As part of Centreline, the WPS also operates a Surveillance Camera Registration Program – a voluntary program whereby citizens and businesses can register the location of their fixed security cameras with the WPS so that they can access surveillance information otherwise unknown to investigators.

1. Do you think CCTV cameras are effective at deterring crime?
2. What is the appropriate balance between police operated CCTV cameras and privately owned/operated cameras?
3. Were you aware of the Surveillance Camera Registration Program? If so, do you believe it has been effective?
4. Do you have privacy concerns with regard to expanding the use of CCTV cameras in downtown Winnipeg?

Improved lighting

Between 2014 and 2017, 23 downtown properties received grants from CentreVenture toward façade improvements that included lighting. In July 2018, city council approved \$300,000 for a Building Exterior Lighting Grant Program, which would provide \$5,000 to cover professional design consulting fees and up to \$10,000 to match costs for improvements to the exterior of buildings. The grants are structured such that they would not exceed 50% of the cost of eligible projects. All proposals must fulfill design objectives

set out by the city – however, public safety is not the sole consideration in determining eligibility for the grants.

An additional \$250,000 was allocated to enhance public lighting in downtown spaces that have been identified as highest risk for crime.

1. Would you feel safer walking alone downtown after dark if lighting was improved?
2. What areas of the downtown do you think would experience a reduction in crime if lighting was improved or enhanced?
3. Should government prioritize the enhancement of public lighting or provide more grants to enhanced lighting from private homes and business establishments in downtown Winnipeg?

Improved communication connectivity

In July, 2018, the city invested \$24,000 in a pilot project intended to improve coordination and communication between security and outreach workers in the downtown. The investment was made in TrackTik, mobile software that allows for better communication and coordination between security and outreach workers throughout the downtown.

1. In your experience, do the WPS, BIZ patrols and private security adequately communicate with one another?
2. Can you provide an example of an experience where enhanced communication between law enforcement and security personnel would have produced better public safety outcomes?

Stronger enforcement of aggressive panhandling laws

While the City of Winnipeg's current Obstructive Solicitation Bylaw is relatively strong, it is rarely enforced. According to the WPS, there were six citations issued under the bylaw in 2017 and one citation issued in 2016. The bylaw prohibits panhandling in a way that "causes an obstruction," which is defined as:

- (a) in the course of solicitation, to obstruct or impede the convenient passage of any pedestrian or vehicular traffic in a street;
- (b) to continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that person has made a negative response to the solicitation;
- (c) to verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian in the course of or following a solicitation;
- (d) to physically approach and solicit from a pedestrian as a member of a group of three or more persons;
or
- (e) to solicit a captive audience.

A captive audience is defined as:

- (a) a person who is using, waiting to use, or departing from an automated teller machine, a bank or credit union;
- (b) a person who is using, waiting to use, or departing from a public pay telephone;
- (c) a person who is waiting at a public transit stop or taxi stand;

(d) a person who is in or on a public transit vehicle;

(e) a person who is in an elevator;

(f) a person who is in an area of the downtown pedestrian walkway system designated in red on the map attached as Schedule “A” or in an area designated on the map as a future designated walkway once it is constructed and becomes part of the walkway system;

(g) a person who is in the process of getting in, out of, on or off a vehicle, or who is in a parking lot;

(h) a person who is seated in an outdoor area of a restaurant or bar in which food or beverages are being served.

1. In your experience, is the city’s panhandling bylaw being adequately complied with or enforced in the downtown?
2. Given that the WPS has limited resources and must respond to serious crimes, is there a better way to ensure that the city’s panhandling bylaw is adequately complied with and enforced in the downtown?
3. In your experience, how much does aggressive panhandling dissuade people from visiting or living in downtown Winnipeg?

Addressing prolific offenders

Centreline commits the WPS to partner with a community prosecutor from the Manitoba Prosecution Service to “identify chronic offenders and develop the best solution for the offender while balancing the needs of the community.”

The downtown community prosecutor was established in 2005 to focus on the prosecution of chronic offenders in downtown Winnipeg. Community prosecution is founded on the idea that prosecutors have a responsibility to not only prosecute offenders but also to address community concerns through direct involvement with the public and agencies designed to enhance public safety and prevent crime.

The downtown community prosecutor uses their discretion in combination with their specialized knowledge of options to bring a restorative justice approach in appropriate cases, which can help the individual to reduce their involvement with the formal criminal justice system. Reducing chronic offenders’ criminal behavior can benefit the community through less crime and reduce the number of times a chronic offender may be incarcerated on an ongoing basis.

1. Do you believe that a restorative justice approach is effective when it comes to chronic offenders in the downtown?
2. How can government more effectively address the root causes of chronic offender behaviour in the downtown?
3. Should government focus its resources on targeting chronic offenders for stronger enforcement action in downtown Winnipeg? How could government do that more effectively?

Expanding community engagement

The WPS is involved in multiple partnerships in downtown Winnipeg, including through the Inter-Departmental Problem Property Committee and the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ Safety Committee. It engages in regular town halls and information sessions about its programs and initiatives.

1. Do you think that existing public safety resources, such as the SafeWalk program, are adequately advertised and used by Winnipeggers in the downtown?
2. How can the WPS or other organizations improve relationships with the community to reduce crime and improve perceptions of safety in the downtown?