

CALGARY FIRE DEPARTMENT

What Calgary Fire Department (CFD) has done to support public safety in response to social disorder

Trends:

CFD works closely with other City services including the Calgary Police Service, Calgary 9-1-1, Bylaw Education & Compliance and Neighbourhood Supports, as well as external partners such as Alberta Health Services and social service agencies when anticipating and responding to the changing needs of our community including the recent spike in social disorder calls.

In 2018, CFD saw an increase in social disorder calls within walking distance of Sheldon Chumir, responding to over 200 incidents of social disorder within 750 m of Sheldon Chumir in 2018, a significant increase of 29% over 2017.

City-wide, CFD also averaged 52 calls per month related to requests for needle pick-ups in the past 24 months, totaling over 1,200 responses.

In comparison, in 2018, CFD responded to more than 1,500 calls related to opioid use, up 37% since 2018.

Other calls potentially related to addictions and social disorder increased in 2018 by 26%, including calls for patients exhibiting abnormal behaviour and calls related to possible overdoses.

In addition, CFD is committed to begin tracking incidents related to methamphetamines to see the affect it is having on our services.

What is CFD currently Doing about it?

For the past 20 years, CFD has maintained and monitored 22 needle drop boxes throughout the downtown core and at other high-risk locations where needle use is prevalent.

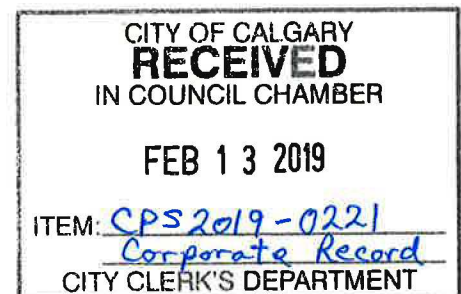
CFD also continues to respond to needle debris on public property or needles that pose safety risk on private property (school yards and playgrounds).

The Department has committed to continue to work with partners such as the Operational Activities Coordination Team, AHS, 9-1-1 and Neighbourhood Supports on an as-needed basis to provide both qualitative and quantitative incident data about our experience with social disorder in the community.

As an example of a partnership, CFD obtained the nasal spray Naloxone and trained our fire crews to administer it to opioid overdose patients as a result of the Fentanyl crisis. CFD partnered with AHS on this unique program and made it available for other emergency services departments in the province and throughout Canada.

The current status of the actions taken to support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis?

In January 2019, Alpha House launched their Needle Response Team. The needle response team will respond to needles on public and private property Monday-Friday 0800-1800.



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The City of Calgary and Alpha House are also sharing information on common needle debris locations to allow the Needle Response Team to proactively locate and dispose of needle debris.

CFD is currently developing a needle-box tracking program to understand frequency of use and disposal requirements. This will allow better decision making regarding the effectiveness of needle boxes and the disposal system in the future. Information is collected from a number of stakeholders regarding improper disposals and calls for needle pick-ups, and from time to time CFD adjusts the locations of the drop boxes.

The Operational Activities Coordination Team (multi-business working group addressing social disorder issues), CFD and City IT are also working in conjunction to more effectively manage needle boxes within The City, using information from the Edmonton Smart Needle program. It is anticipated that real-time tracking of needle box use would allow better understanding of where needle boxes are required and efficiencies in disposing of them.

Actions Calgary Fire Department would like to take to further support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

There are no current plans to expand the Fire Department's program. It is our experience that even with a drop box nearby, improper disposals and debris will still be discarded in the general area and we have noticed a general decline in the usage of needle boxes year-over-year.

When the program was implemented, it met the demands of a small user group. It appears to no longer meet the broader requirements to suppress improper disposal of needles and associated debris. However, CFD will continue to maintain the existing boxes until a more sustainable or scalable solution is found.

As part of investigating a scalable solution, CFD is currently evaluating the corporate needle box program and looking to collaborate with partners and external contractors on the future maintenance of this program.

Providing CFD staff with appropriate safety practices and training increases the safety of our firefighters and enables them to provide quality service to Calgarians. CFD will invest in specialized training for its members to recognize and interact with people presenting mental health issues based on best practice training for protective services (TEMPO: Training and Education about Mental Illness for Police Organizations).

CFD is also currently working on a program to train responders on interacting with citizens who are currently using methamphetamines, as well as responding to incidents at potential meth labs.

VICTORIA PARK BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of Committee. My name is David Low and I am with the Victoria Park Business Improvement Area.

For the last 13 years, I have been studying the effects of uses such as supervised consumption sites and emergency shelters on the public realm.

Where we find ourselves today was being formally signalled by businesses and residents in the spring of 2018. Something was very wrong, yet concerns and warning signs were formally dismissed. Worse, the rhetorical device of “we are saving lives” was being used at every turn to instill doubt, guilt, and anxiety over saying anything critical.

Good public health policy should not be crafted by rhetoric, value signaling, or claims in the media. It needs to be based on facts, evidence and data. Yes, supervised consumption is well proven, but it is not benign, there are serious consequences and impacts that need to be considered and balanced.

In the spring of 2018 a palpable change in the behaviour and demographic in and around Central Memorial park was noticed. Open drug use and alcohol has always been a factor in the park, but the scale and intensity spiked after the SCS opened. This ultimately resulted in contract security being needed to monitor the public washrooms.

A fundamental principle in human behaviour is that disenfranchised people, when given a safe space, will naturally want to stay close to and orbit around that space, will act in an entitled manner outside the space and become territorial around the space. The social licence for how people interpret and use public space needs to be more fully considered and explored in this instance.

Provision, the restaurant in Central Memorial Park began to feel the impacts in the spring of 2018 and by mid-summer had to discontinue their lunch service as a result of the social disorder. They persevered until the end of 2018 and are now **closed**, their future uncertain. Provision was the proverbial canary in the coal mine, and now they sadly may not see another summer.

Swastikas, often associated with “speed tribes” and elements of methamphetamine culture began to appear in the park.

Food trucks, a mainstay in the park, were no longer vying for spots first thing in the morning and anecdotally, were not doing as well as in the past.

One of the saddest things was the decrease in the numbers of children in the park. It was a highlight of my career to see how the park had been transformed and used by the

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daycares and kids groups, and on a nice summer day the fountains would be chalk full. Last summer, the park was unusually quiet.

Businesses began having to issue a do not intervene policy for shoplifting, there was an increasing misuse of washrooms, property damage from attempted break in's, needle debris, staff reporting increasing incidents of being threatened or intimidated. It is now generally accepted that working alone is not safe.

Businesses and residents are scared to talk publicly because of fear of being labelled as insensitive or uncompassionate in the midst of the crisis. Yet their lives and livelihoods are being seriously affected.

Residential concerns and complaints started coming to the BIA office, ranging from simple property damage, trespassing, needle debris, open consumption of drugs, to serious (and multiple) incidents involving the use of human feces as a weapon.

Insanity has been defined as doing the same things over and over again and expecting a different result.

Getting better at yanking drowning people out of a river and not being able to do something with them after that is not a long term solution. As hard as it is, we have to go up river and start doing the work of prevention.

We need to:

Establish a real and integrated addictions strategy that focuses on primary prevention and equal value treatment opportunities.

Define the problem, part of the problem may be we are trying to stuff a square peg in a round hole. Finding a bigger hammer or pretending it fits or taping it into place won't work.

What to do becomes easier once you really understand what needs to be done.

Learn and get smarter.

Last Thursday, I was in Lethbridge meeting with the Executive Director of ARCHES, their supervised consumption site.

My visit was only supposed to be an hour and a half with the shelter manager. Instead it was 4 and a half hours with their executive director and at one point I had to stop the conversation and just say "thank you so, so much for this". We were have a very fulsome, mutually informative almost peer to peer conversation. That has not happened here.

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It was a valuable trip because with nearly double the visits, ARCHES is managing their situation infinitely better than we are in almost every respect. They understand they cannot be successful without real community support and buy in. Their communications are real, responsive and genuine. They have solid performance measures and metrics and share those. They have taken a genuine "be a good neighbor" approach. Their influence and control does not stop at their doors, they are proactive in maintaining public safety and minimizing impacts.

After visiting Lethbridge I can confidently state that a reset of the Chumir needs to occur, the experiment reviewed, failure points examined, and an honest evaluation of its feasibility undertaken with all parties and stakeholders. The experiment is so contaminated now, that it is impossible to really tell what variables are influencing what outcomes.

Some examples – how many needles are being distributed vs. collected? ARCHES could tell me that. That is a mystery in Calgary.

There is an absence of any real relationships. There is no person to call, there is only an anonymous e-mail that sometimes gets answered. I don't have any one's cell over at the Chumir, and as a member of their community liaison committee, I still have unanswered e-mails and I have not once had a one-on-one conversation with anyone from the SCS.

Why can ARCHES have security arrangements with its neighbours, and the Chumir says they can't do anything past our property line.

There are about a dozen more physical, operational and management related items I could share.

A reset needs to occur.

Your first move in a crisis is never the best or most effective. It's a reaction. We have reacted, now it is time to evaluate that action and reset. Reset with genuine collaboration. Reset with open and honest communication.

Thank you for the opportunity to present on behalf of the Victoria Park Business Improvement Area.

BELTLINE NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Beltline Neighbourhood Association's understanding of the current status of public safety in response to social disorder in Centre City:

Safety concerns from residents and businesses adjacent the Sheldon Chumir Health Centre due to the increased number of methamphetamine users visiting the SCS.

Increased crime in the immediate (250m radius) area and the Centre City as reported in the CPS's 2018 Statistical Overview dated January 24, 2019.

Increased litter and medical debris from drug users in the area.

There appear to be operational gaps between City departments, Police, Fire, AHS and the Province that have negatively impacted the situation awareness and overall coordination to respond to concerns raised.

Working group chaired by BNA and AHS is an effort to provide monthly opportunity for residents and businesses to table issues, share information between stakeholders and work together to find solutions, however, is ultimately limited in its ability to implement solutions that would require additional municipal or provincial funding.

Actions Beltline Neighbourhood Association would like to see taken to further support public safety in response to social disorder in Centre City:

The BNA supports the Notice of Motion C2019-0123 and requests prompt action all 12 points.

The BNA requests that this committee and the Calgary Police Service further explore the benefits of re-establishing a Centre City Police Station to better serve the Beltline, Downtown and Centre City communities now impacted by significantly increasing crime rates.

The BNA requests that the City work with AHS and the Province to address the urgent need for a strategy to respond to the rise in methamphetamine use in Calgary.

More opportunities for community engagement and capacity building for residents around mental health and addictions.

CALGARY POLICE SERVICE

Good morning Chair, Councillors.

Let me start off by saying that this will be hard to address in a five-minute speech and I look forward to further discussion.

From my understanding I am here today to address questions specifically around what police have done, and will do, to address the crime and social disorder in and around the supervised consumption site.

Proactively, we have been involved in more than 12 committees since the opioid crisis came to bear on our city in 2015. In addition, our Community Resource Officers and management team at District 1 have been actively engaged on a daily basis with both the community and the site management teams to stay connected every step of the way.

By the end of last summer, we heard increasing complaints from the community, although our data didn't reflect what we were hearing at the time. In response we:

- we worked with our community partners to facilitate the ask in June 2018 for increased DOAP team presence and needle pickup
- we adjusted the schedules and deployment of our Beat Teams in August, Patrol Teams in September and Bike teams in December
- And we began the Daylight Initiative in December 2018 to address the proliferation of meth in our city.

Throughout all of this we also needed to balance the needs of the rest of the core.

- In Aug/Sept of 2018, we initiated targeted enforcement in the Olympic Plaza/City Hall/Stephen Ave corridors.
- During the same time period we also implemented a pilot Beat team, staffed by officers from other districts to help us address other hot spot locations in the core.
- In Nov. 2018, we launched the Mobile Outreach Community Police Station (MCOPS).

In January, the crime and social disorder report was completed. As you have seen, it paralleled what the community has been telling us, along with our own observations. Our officers have witnessed first-hand the troubling behaviour demonstrated by individuals in the area who have consumed meth.

We do not criminalize addiction. We support harm reduction and would encourage our partners to continue their work on increasing capacity on the treatment side of the spectrum.

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However, we have a mandate to ensure public safety, both for the community and for the clients of SCS. We will continue to focus our enforcement efforts on those who prey on the vulnerable.

What we see now is a new normal and we all must adapt. Until we can find treatment solutions for addiction, we must find a way to keep people from dying, while minimizing the impact on our surrounding communities. We are committed to doing our part, but we are only one piece of this puzzle.

We are confident we can address the crime issues in the area in a short time. In fact, our preliminary January data is showing XYZ. The question is one of sustainability and the ripple effect of pulling resources away from other high-needs areas.

I believe my time is almost up so I will leave you with this:

There isn't a tool on an officer's duty belt that can address the complex social issues of mental health, addictions, homelessness or unemployment.

Thank you.

ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

What Alberta Health Services has done to support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

At AHS our mandate is to save lives and provide health care services. The most important work we do with this population is to meet people where they're at and connect them to services

At the supervised consumption service, we refer clients to a variety of AHS and community-based programs to support their health:

- Addictions Counsellor - onsite 3x per week for 4 hours

- Social Worker - available daily

- The Opioid Dependency Program at the Sheldon Chumir, Detox at Renfrew

- Primary Care - CUPS, the Alex, Community Paramedic Team, Urgent Care

- DOAP/Alpha House

- Adult Addiction Services

- AHS ID Program

- AISH

- Food Services

- On site STI, Hep C, HIV testing and treatment, and vaccinations

- Palliative Care team for the homeless

We have made over >400 referrals

Connection to care helps people get better and contributes to public safety

Staff, client and community safety

AHS Protective Services on site 24/7

- We have increased patrols in and around the SCS

We have put up signage clearly outlining site rules and expectations. We have also designated shopping cart spaces on the sidewalk to ensure space for foot traffic.

We provide suspensions as necessary for inappropriate behaviour with follow up and behavioural care plans

Other initiatives

We were part of the initial collaboration b/w Alpha House, the City and CPS that resulted in funding from the Ministry for the Alpha House Needle Response Team. AHS Safeworks provides the Team with the sharps containers and incinerates them free of charge.

Every needle used at the SCS stays at the SCS and is disposed of safely. At the Sheldon Chumir, AHS has installed mailbox style needle collection bins. There are also needle disposal boxes in all of the public bathrooms in the Sheldon Chumir. We hand out personal sharps containers to clients and provide education on safe disposal

AHS has established an SCS Community Liaison Committee. The Committee has met twice and meetings will continue monthly. We are grateful to Peter Oliver for co-chairing. Membership includes people with lived experience, CPS, the

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City, local residents, and local businesses including David Low from the Victoria Park BIA, and the owner of Provision

The current status of the actions taken to support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

We continue to work closely with CPS. Inspector Davison, the CPS District 1 Commander, has been incredibly helpful in communicating the law enforcement perspective and working with us on shared initiatives. The CPS and AHS Legal Teams are currently working on a shared framework for our staff to work together. The next Community Liaison meeting will be on Feb 26. The planned agenda is to review the CPS police report, introduce the 4th street BIA representative, and invite an update from Zev with Ctr Wooley's Office

SCS Program Leadership is in weekly communication with the DOAP team. We will provide the DOAP team an orientation at SCS to help familiarize them with the work we do and build relationships.

We are working with city administration and the CFD on coordinated guidance and messaging for the public re: needle pickup

We have a supportive relationship with the First Baptist Church across the street. AHS Safeworks provides the Church with sharps containers and training. The Church is providing AHS Safeworks with space for special events for clients. For example, they hosted our 1 year anniversary celebration last week.

Actions Alberta Health Services would like to take to further support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

We will continue to improve integration with AHS and community-based programs.

Working with our partners at Addictions and Mental Health to ensure access to additional supports

A decision has been made to have Protective Services on-site 24/7 on an ongoing basis and funding has been secured to support this.

We will continue to train our staff to work in collaboration and partnership with CPS

We would like to connect our peer outreach workers with the DOAP team to help educate businesses about non-violent crisis intervention, establishing productive relationships with people who use drugs to promote safety, and provide contacts for helpful community resources.

In Public Health we look upstream at the Social Determinants of Health.

Homelessness is a major driver of methamphetamine use for many of our clients as many don't feel safe enough to sleep. It's also crucial to create connections and community for clients, and this involves combatting stigma. We look forward to working with all of our partners and the community on addressing these fundamental issues.

CALGARY ALPHA HOUSE SOCIETY

What has Alpha House done to support public safety in response to social disorder in Centre City

Since 1981, Alpha House has provided front line services for men and women affected by alcohol and other drug dependencies

Alpha House offers a continuum of programs including shelter, detox, outreach and housing

Both our shelter and detox programs respond to the needs of vulnerable individuals affected by substance use at the street level and offer diversion away from unnecessary CPS, EMS and Bylaw responses when this type of intervention is not required.

The shelter and DOAP programs increase the immediate safety of street involved individuals, reduce crisis and connect them to resources that would improve health and living conditions.

The current status of the actions taken to support public safety in response to social disorder in Centre City

The DOAP Team operates 24/7 with two vans on the road during peak times (3-11pm). During the peak time one van is focused on calls in the City Centre and the second van responds to calls across the city. (over 21,000 transports conducted in 2018)

The DOAP team has broadened its reach with new partnerships including a Transit Team (2018), a Needle Debris Response Team and has 2 new teams for early 2019; one in the Beltline and the second in Calgary Downtown and East Village (in partnership with Calgary Downtown association)

In January, 2019 our new Needle Debris Response Team launched a needle debris phone line for the public and initiated training on safe needle debris collection and Engaging with Vulnerable Populations training for businesses, schools and partner agencies. In the month of January the team collected 850 needles. Twelve percent of needles were discovered via phone line and 88% were discovered through proactive sweeps by staff. The Needle response team provided training sessions on safe needle disposal 23 times and conducted 3 sessions on Engaging with Vulnerable Populations. Overall, outreach capacity through the DOAP team in the city centre in 2019 will be expanding by 14 staff, doubling Alpha House's capacity, and 3 new programs.

Actions Alpha House would like to take to further support public safety in response to social disorder in Centre City

Expanded DOAP teams will continue to work with community members, agencies and partners to support better outcomes for vulnerable persons in the downtown

Through the use of Data and mapping, the team can focus on higher needs areas through proactive outreach

Partner with SCS, BIA and Community association, CPS to focus on better outcomes for individuals affected by addiction and mental health in the Beltline and alleviate community concerns

Continue to respond too, and address immediate safety of people

Focus on long term solutions (ie. Housing) for vulnerable individuals presenting with complex issues in the community

CORPORATE SECURITY

What Corporate Security has done to support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

Increased security guard mobile patrols

Corporate Security, security guards, conduct regular patrols of the area in and around Central Memorial Park. Our security guards do mobile patrols and report any noticeable illegitimate use of the park and surrounding areas to Calgary Police Service (CPS). Corporate Security conducts patrols of this nature at most City facilities and parks, especially within the inner-city area.

The patrols include a physical walk of the park and collection of any harmful paraphernalia, such as needles and syringes.

Utilizing the limited CCTV coverage

In addition to the security guard mobile patrols, Corporate Security's Integrated Security Centre, is located here at the Municipal Building, and monitors the CCTV cameras within Central Memorial Park.

There are currently two cameras to monitor and report any illegitimate behavior to Calgary Police Service (CPS).

The current status of the actions taken to support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

Monitor CCTV

Our Integrated Security Centre employees continue to remotely monitor CCTV cameras in and around Central Memorial Park, as well as other inner-city parks which have seen an increase in security related issues. The parks are a focus for surveillance.

Security guard mobile patrols

Corporate Security has increased the number of security guard mobile patrols in the highly affected areas to have a visible presence and to report any issues to Calgary Police Service (CPS) for a response.

Actions Corporate Security would like to take to further support public safety in response to the mental health and addictions crisis

Corporate Security will initiate a full Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review of Central Memorial Park and its surrounding areas. The surrounding areas include; the Calgary Public Library and Haultain School. The Parks Foundation is a tenant inside the Haultain School, who has also reported an increase in drug paraphernalia in and around their premise.

Improve Security surveillance capabilities

Corporate Security would like to conduct a detailed review of security systems that are currently operational in the affected area. This type of detailed security review aims to

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develop recommendations to improve and upgrade the aging technology at the site. With newer technology, we will be able to gain greater CCTV coverage of the park and its surrounding area, which would allow us to remotely monitor more effectively and action a response from Calgary Police Service (CPS) faster.

This security review will look at network connectivity, CCTV provisions, potential for help phones (as part of the Public Safety Network) and PA systems.

Provide increased security guard presence

Corporate Security would like to review the current security guard coverage at the adjacent library and work with Calgary Public Libraries to look at the potential sharing of security guard resources. This could enable Corporate Security to conduct more security guard patrols of the park as well as provide 'Safe Walk' services to City employees from their place of work to their vehicles.