

Mayor Fougere and Council,

Re: Community Safety and Wellbeing & Civilian Representation on the Board of Police Commissioners

My name is Jim Elliott, Chairperson of the Al Ritchie Community Association. We are situated south of Victoria Avenue and east of Winnipeg Street extending to the Wascana Park on the south and the Ring Road to the east. There is a small part of this area east of McDonald Street and south of Arcola Avenue and Broadway Avenue that is another sister association, the Boothill Community Association.

On the question of more civilian members on the Board of Police Commissioners, we are in favour of this change. It will give the public some additional assurances that there is sufficient public oversight and more eyes on what happens within this city and how their views and concerns may be represented and expressed in the administration of the Regina Police Commission and through them, the Regina Police Service.

Community safety and wellbeing is important to the residents of the Al Ritchie Community Association. In the past, we were part of a pilot community policing model that is still operating in the inner city of Regina. We housed one of the two stations in the city facilities, right next door to our community association offices. We met regularly with staff to review crime statistics for our area and got to be aware of some of the activities used in our area to make our streets and homes safer. Since then and more recently, we have initiated a community patrol in some measure modelled around the White Pony Lodge of the North Central community. We go out weekly walking the streets and alleys monitoring and checking for graffiti, drug paraphernalia and other safety issues.

Part of our mandate and interest in this topic has been the utilization of community programming to replace or push out those behaviours that do not make our community safer or increase our wellbeing. These programs happen all year long. We also work on many of the social determinants of health. We operate a family wellness centre for families with children under six years of age. We provide a second chance clothing shop with used clothing and household items free of charge. We do an annual cleanup of our community to help limit garbage but also allow individuals to remove items that they may not be able to afford to dispose of themselves. We operate a "summer jam" program during the months of July and August for children over the summer holidays. We have two community garden plots for our residents to grow their own food at reasonable

costs. We supervise two outdoor ice rinks during the winter. We cooperate with our inner city community associations on zone wide programming. We work with many partners that are working with at risk individuals, families and children.

But this does not necessarily get to the point where we are having those problems lessen or disappear. We know that there are some that are driven city wide or are symptoms of provincial, national or international circumstances. Housing or the lack thereof is but one example that shows up in our community. Rents still increase with the increase in rental unit numbers. Wages or assistance has not been going up to cover off the needs of the family or individual hit with inflation or other costs. Once you get out of the employment workplace, it become ever harder to get back in with the march of technology or changes in skill needs. Opportunities that might solve some problems are out of reach. Many, many organizations are putting forward programs to either lessen the impacts or help to deal with some of the social determinants.

One recent example of this that worked on the premise that if our children are provided with the best supports and given the right encouragement and help, they would in time grow the community out of those problems of safety, risky behaviours and crime and would in time provide mentorship, models of strength and leadership in our community. This is what is called asset building, developed by the Search Institute (www.search-institute.org), initiated in the past by our YMCA through the Alliance of Asset Champions. The action determined that each child has the potential for 40 Assets and that as the numbers in each child got more than half (20+), those risky behaviours and problems would begin to decrease, their school achievements would increase and they would do better overall. When assessed, we were like most communities in North America, having most of our children averaging around that 20 point.

This is but one example of where working from the bottom up allows us to diminish over time the likelihood of parameters like gang recruitment, risky behaviours or problem neighbourhoods.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Elliott, Chairperson
Al Ritchie Community Association