

**Red Deer RCMP
Downtown Patrol Unit**

A little bit about myself:

- I am currently on my 18th year with the RCMP;
- I have been in Red Deer for the past eleven years;
- Three years with Red Deer ALERT and three years on the watch as a Corporal and a Road Supervisor;
- The past five years, I have been in charge of the Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit, a unit assigned to patrol the downtown core for the City of Red Deer;
- I have just promoted to Sergeant in Leduc where I will be in charge of a watch.

A little bit about the City of Red Deer:

- An estimated population in 2024 is 110,423;
- The downtown core is approximately six blocks wide and approximately 10 blocks long although our zone of responsibility is much bigger;
- Like many urban centers in Alberta, the city has seen a rise in the number of homeless and those associated to the vulnerable populations with last estimates from Safe Harbour, our homeless shelter, indicating that over 300 people utilize their services each day;
- When I first arrived in Red Deer in 2013, the Mats Program as it was called then operated a 28 bed shelter along with a daytime “warming shelter” (a skid shack that was set up in the same parking lot as the Mats Program);

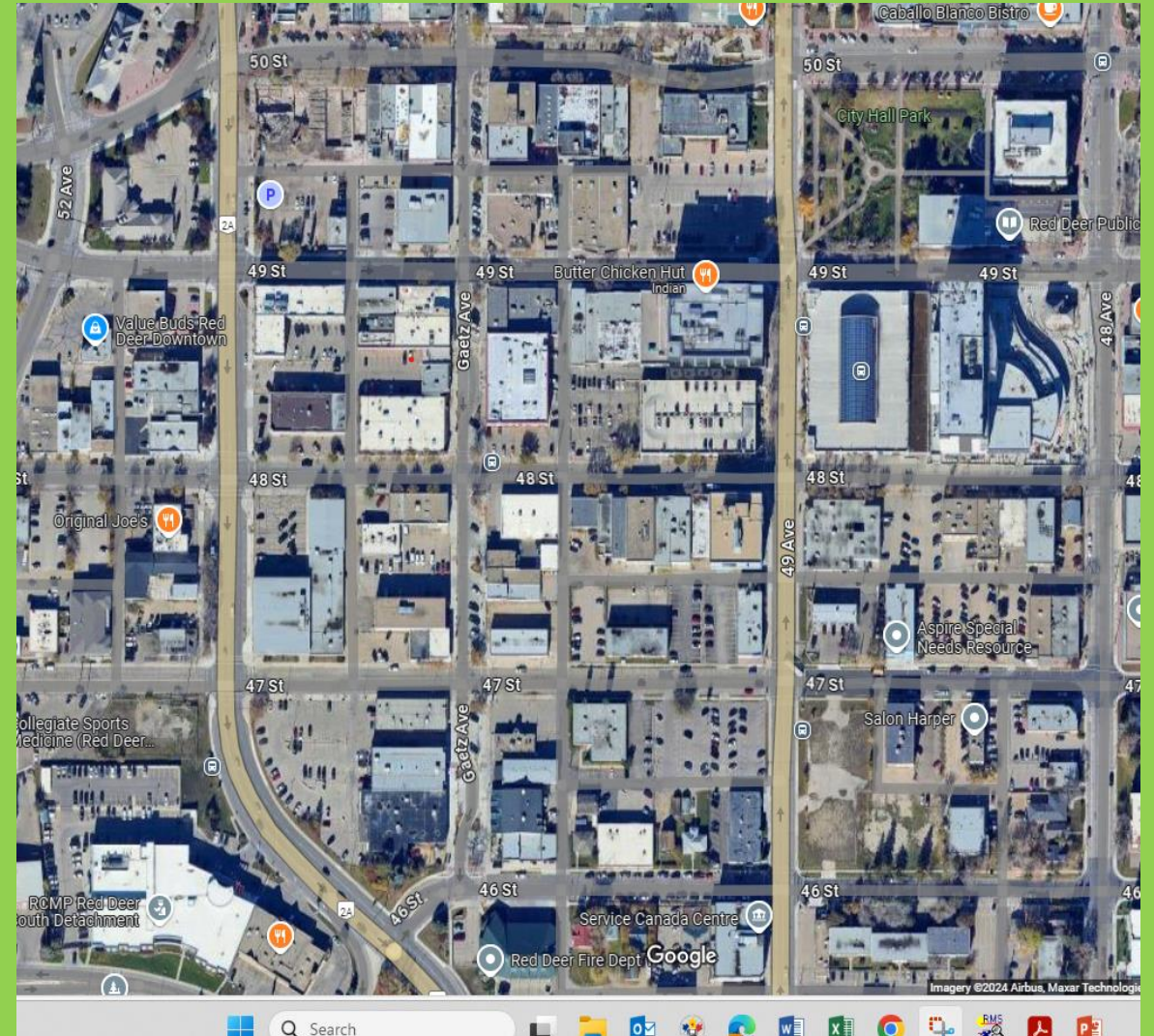
A little bit about the City of Red Deer:

- Today, there is Safe Harbour and the Mustard Seed for those seeking shelter although the Mustard Seed is for those that do not have any addictions;
- There currently is an Overdose Prevention site here in Red Deer although it has seen a decrease in usage simply because Alberta Health Services was given control last year and they do not allow inhalation of drugs, only drugs by injection;
- There are two rehab centers for addiction here in Red Deer including the Provincial facility at the north end of Red Deer and the Dream Center in the downtown core
- Turning Point is a harm reduction service that also provides a wide range of programming to members of the vulnerable population in Red Deer.

A little history:

- In 2013, I was a member of the Red Deer ALERT team, and we were asked by the Red Deer RCMP OIC to conduct overt patrols in the downtown core as there started to be a criminal element presence hanging around the Potters Hands Soup Kitchen and a couple of other trouble locations;
- Back then, it was common to find crack cocaine, crystal meth, heroin, and “fake oxys, or greenies” on the street;
- Today that has changed as we are seeing predominately fentanyl and fentanyl laced products and some meth.

City of Red Deer Downtown Core





Safe Harbour Shelter, 5346 53 Avenue









Potters Hands Soup Kitchen



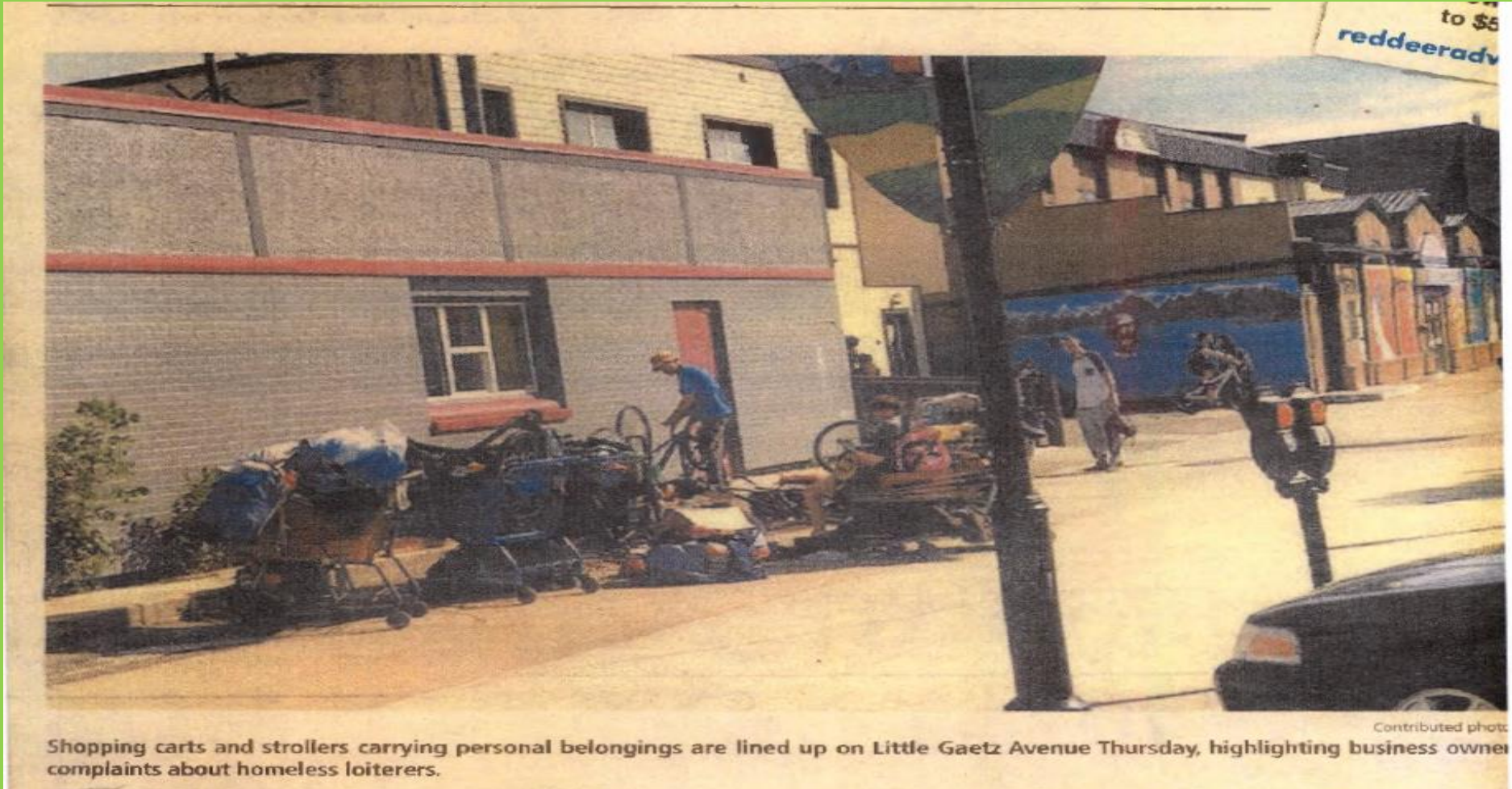


Turning Point Harm Reduction, 4611 50 Ave





The Red Deer Advocate, September 8, 2018



Shopping carts and strollers carrying personal belongings are lined up on Little Gaetz Avenue Thursday, highlighting business owners' complaints about homeless loiterers.

Contributed photo

Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- The unit was created in 2018 and was modelled after the CPS BEAT/Mountain Bike Teams;
- The initial mandate was to be a high visibility police presence in the downtown core focusing on social disorder type calls for service utilizing mountain bike, but also foot and Segway patrols;
- Types of social disorder calls for service included suspicious person complaints, public nuisance, public intox, causing a disturbance, loitering, etc.;
- But was predominately used as more of a community support team with some overt enforcement.

Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- In 2018, the unit initially consisted of four members of the RCMP, a fully marked RCMP van, four mountain bikes and two Segways;
- Today, the unit includes a Corporal NCO in charge of the unit and five members of the RCMP, two City of Red Deer Community Peace officers (CPO's), three fully marked police vehicles and two CPO vehicles, seven mountain bikes, and two Segways

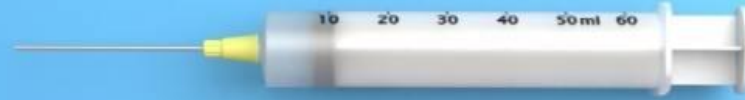
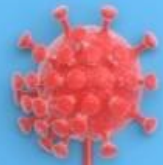






Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- I was named the first NCO/ic of the Red Deer RCMP Beat team in September of 2019 and the name was changed to the Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit;
- I modified the unit's mandate to still include the community engagement work that they were doing, and to also conduct overt and proactive patrols of our zone of responsibility to enforce the City of Red Deer Bylaws, Provincial Statutes, and Criminal Code offences.



COVID-19



Shopping carts and strollers carrying personal belongings are lined up on Little Gaetz Avenue Thursday, highlighting business owners' complaints about homeless loiterers.

Contributed photo

Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- In 2021, we conducted 2219 investigations with 65% of them being self generated;
- Arrested 784 individuals and with 493 Criminal Code charges;
- 1716 arrest warrants were executed totalling 2372 charges;
- 1061 violation tickets were issued;
- Seven firearms, five replicas, and two conducted energy weapons were seized;
- 1037 grams or 37 ounces of illicit drugs were taken off the street.

CPO's Attached to the Downtown Patrol Unit

- In 2022, the Red Deer RCMP detachment was one of four RCMP Detachments to take part in a Provincial pilot project to examine the use of Community Peace Officers working with the RCMP;
- Two City of Red Deer CPO's were amalgamated with the Downtown Patrol Unit and were given authorities by the Provincial Solicitor General to investigate Criminal Code offenses including Theft Under \$5000 and Mischief Under \$5000, as long as they were not in progress;
- The CPO's brought with them not only their knowledge of the City of Red Deer Bylaws, but also their abilities to utilize other city departments such as the Parks Department to help clean up camps.

CPO's Attached to the Downtown Patrol Unit

- I created a three day training program in which the CPO's are taught all about investigating these two Criminal Code offenses including conducting an investigation from start to finish including mens rea and actus reus, arrest and release procedure, search and seizure, the collection of evidence, obtaining statements, etc.;
- Over the past two years, I have trained five CPO's, with four working with the unit;
- Along with their other CPO duties, they have investigated approximately 213 Criminal Code investigations over the past two years.

Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- In 2022, we conducted 3909 investigations with 62% of them being self generated;
- Arrested 581 individuals and with 423 Criminal Code charges laid;
- 1077 arrest warrants were executed totalling 1512 charges;
- 1731 violation tickets were issued;
- 2 firearms, three replicas, and one conducted energy weapon were seized;
- 372.75 grams or 13.3 ounces of illicit drugs were taken off the street.;
- In the fall of 2022, the K Division RCMP examined the possibility of creating similar teams to the Downtown Patrol Unit in other urban centers such as Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray because of our success.

Red Deer RCMP Downtown Patrol Unit

- In 2023, we conducted 2814 investigations with 58% of them being self generated;
- Arrested 590 individuals and with 157 Criminal Code charges laid;
- 715 arrest warrants were executed totalling 1192 charges;
- 1148 violation tickets were issued;
- one firearm, four replicas, and one conducted energy weapon were seized;
- 918 grams or 32 ounces of illicit drugs were taken off the street;
- 2471 referrals were completed to assist those to find supports.

A great arrest!!

On September 7, 2024, EPS were conducting proactive enforcement at the Coliseum LRT station when they noted a male suspect breaking multiple bike equipment bylaws. After several demands for his ID, police advised the male that he was under arrest. The male resisted before he was successfully apprehended.

Police located a loaded rifle with a sawed off barrel, multiple rounds of ammunition and over \$1000 of fentanyl and methamphetamine. The male was charged with eight weapons and drug related charges.

Enforcement Action: Provincial Statutes

- Section 113(1)(a) Traffic Safety Act – ride bicycle with fewer than one headlamp at night
- Section 113(1)(b) Traffic Safety Act - ride bicycle w/o at least one red tail lamp at night
- Section 113(2) Traffic Safety Act – ride bicycle without brakes
- Section 3(1)(a)(i) Trespass To Premises - Trespassing

Enforcement Action: City of Red Deer Bylaws

- Section 25 of the Community Standards Bylaw- placing graffiti on property;
- Section 3(a) of the Fire Permit Bylaw – burn waste on lands without a permit;
- Section 5(b) Parks and Public Facilities – camping in a non-designated area;

Success.....? Did it work?

- We developed long lasting relationships with our external partners and city agencies and worked closely with them to help all involved from members of the vulnerable population to the businesses impacted;
- We worked closely with our downtown businesses and coordinated our efforts with them, utilizing CPTED to make improvements if needed;
- We worked with other units such as our PACT teams and our VODP teams to assist those living on the street;

Success.....? How do you measure success?

- Members of the Downtown Patrol Unit, built relationships with the vulnerable population, with a mutual respect for each other, and it was those relationships that allowed the team to be at its best;
- During the Covid year of 2020, we saw the impact and change in the dynamic on the downtown core with my unit's absence due to the unit shifting to cover our frontline members;
- Over the three year period of 2021, 2022, and 2023, we say declines total number of investigations, in the number of people arrested, Criminal Code charges laid and the amount of arrest warrants executed;

Success.....? How do you measure success?

- Our overt and proactive style allowed the businesses that make up the City of Red Deer downtown core and those that use the downtown to see a strong police presence, a visible police presence, and sometimes, that's all it takes to make everyone happy.
- In some instances, we worked with loved ones in order to help those most vulnerable transition off the street (also realizing that they need to want to leave their life on the streets for it to be a total success);
- Realizing that we, police officers cannot “charge” our way out of the current situation, but, by working with other partners and agencies, make it better for all that utilize the City of Red Deer downtown core.

Contact information:

Dwayne Hanusich

dwayne.hanusich@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

cell: 403-392-5449