

Compilation of Research on the Vancouver Downtown Community Court 2008 to 2012

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Introduction and Overview

The Downtown Community Court (DCC) opened officially in Vancouver in September 2008. It was created in response to a recommendation of the BC Justice Review Task Force and its Street Crime Working Group. The DCC was established as a partnership of 14 agencies to integrate services and supports: the Ministry of Attorney General, the Ministry Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Provincial Court of British Columbia, and a number of health and social services agencies (Downtown Community Court website).

This document constitutes a compilation of the research undertaken by the Simon Fraser University Research Team since the beginning (in the summer of 2006 and ending August 2012) on various aspects of the Downtown Community Court (DCC). The compilation contains six separate reports and their associated summaries (all previously submitted). A reading of this introductory framework should not replace a close consideration of the reports themselves.

The focused research reports forms part of a comprehensive evaluation of the DCC. The results of each of the studies provide insight into the DCC implementation and its operations through the perceptions of the DCC staff, other community stakeholders, and the DCC participants themselves at different points in time in that process (thus, this is termed “process” research). The results are helpful for identifying challenges to the DCC from which changes can be and have been made and for identifying strengths from which to build further DCC processes and programming.

Two other obvious components to a comprehensive court evaluation include an examination of court efficiencies and recidivism rates, especially in comparison with traditional courts . Court efficiencies examine how work in the court is processed, especially as that occurs in a timely manner or not. With recidivism rates, the question is whether the unique features of a problem-solving court, such as a community court is, resolves the reoffending issue for offenders more effectively or not. Those questions are not the focus of these reports as such studies are currently being undertaken by other researchers.

Prior to the section discussing the process evaluation reports themselves, the Background section below first describes the planning for the overall evaluation as well as laying out the actual court process undertaken for the DCC clients.

Background

In the summer of 2006, a proposed framework for the evaluation of a community court which was to be opened the following year in downtown Vancouver was submitted to the Secretariat for Criminal Justice Reform in Victoria, the Executive Agency for the project. Over that fall and early 2007, a revised and expanded framework was developed in conjunction with an Advisory Group which had been struck for that purpose. It was made up of lead representatives from health, the courts and corrections, plus court staff, including the dedicated Judge. The goals for the court were established by consensus through this meeting process.

Downtown Community Court Goals:

1. To create a more efficient court, by reducing the time from charge to conviction;

2. To provide an integrated model that includes the services required to address the needs of offenders;
3. To Increase offender accountability to reduce recidivism; and,
4. To increase public confidence in the court system.

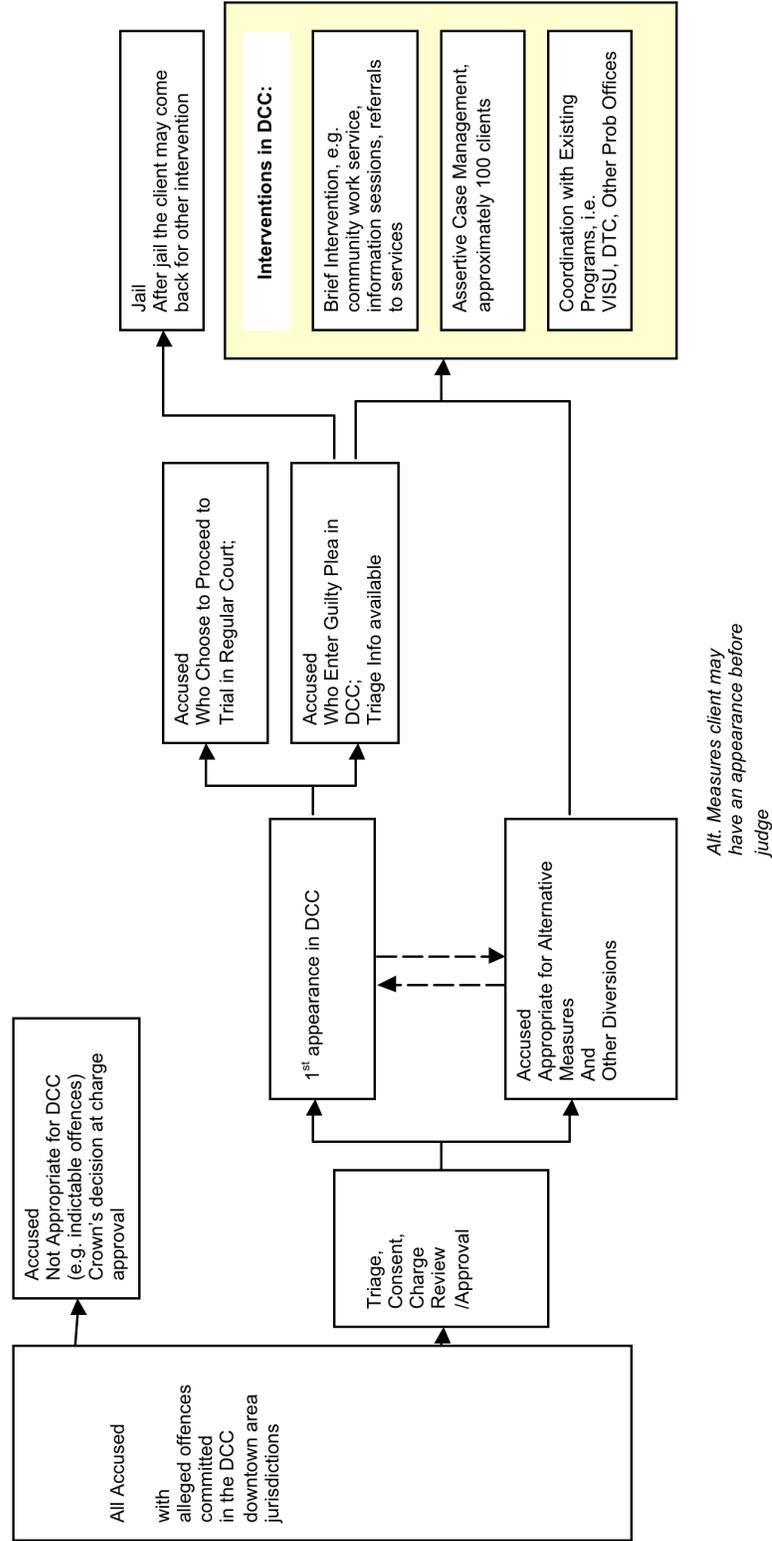
The team also met with the coordinator and the dedicated Crown and other court staff separately to gather an enormous amount of information on the proposed community court process itself. Many other meetings followed and led to the creation by the SFU team of a logic model to accompany the framework (see the original Logic Model in Appendix 1 – it was further refined over time to include the data sources and timelines). The model broke down the evaluation into process and outcome activities for each of the articulated goals and objectives for the Downtown Community Court – as those had emerged through the Advisory Group process. Again, agreement by consensus was reached on the logic model articulation of the above.

The client flow chart on the following page describes the processing of alleged offenders through the DCC at the time of the first interim report completed by the SFU team (late 2008). That process had the dedicated Crown first review the files early in the morning to assess appropriateness of cases for the DCC, moving those so deemed appropriate to discussion in the Triage meeting which convened shortly afterward with all of the Triage team members. A determination of the needs for alleged offenders was made by those Triage team representatives from housing, substance abuse service providers, mental health and health service providers, plus the two lawyers, and representatives from police and corrections. Cases then proceeded to court appearances for those who agreed to plead guilty and were found appropriate for the DCC – primarily those with charges for summary or hybrid offenses, with exception for some drug offenses which were dealt with by the Federal Crown¹.

Court related activities in which five of the SFU research team engaged, in order to get a sense of how the DCC client flow operated, were courtroom session and Triage meeting observations and the shadowing of the dedicated Provincial Crown and the dedicated Federal Crown (dedicated Defence counsel was not yet in place). All five of us undertook the court observations informally but two of our researchers did systematic court observations and noted their observations (one in significant detail) over a sampling of days in the courtroom, including both morning and afternoon sessions.

¹ Similarly, the Seattle Community Court requires all defendants once a guilty plea is entered – to undergo an assessment of social service needs to make initial contact with a social service provider, including performing brief periods of community service (Center for Court Innovation, Community Courts: The Research Literature, 2011).

DCC Client Flow – 2008



The Reports²

The first SFU report, entitled, “*Downtown Community Court Research: Interim Report, December, 2008*” was completed at the point of the opening of the court and into its first weeks of operation. It speaks to the initial perceptions and expectations of those directly involved in the creation of the court as well as those of other key stakeholders in the justice system. Thus it basically assessed the perceptions and attitudes of the DCC staff members, the dedicated Judge, the dedicated Crown, probation officers, as well as administrative members of the DCC. Others surveyed or interviewed included health and other social service providers and non-DCC Justice system representatives, such as Provincial Court judges (4) and Crown and Defense lawyers (8). Members of the DCC Steering Committee and the DCC Social Service Working Group were also interviewed. Overall, eighty-five individuals were interviewed or participated in focus groups. As well, quantitative data were supplied by Court Services and the DCC staff on the first weeks’ operations.

The report provided a foundation for the subsequent reports that followed, including a consideration of issues relating to data acquisition and the goals of the evaluation. Most of the interviews and focus groups took place prior to and shortly after the DCC officially opened its doors for operation. Therefore many of the findings of this first report must be considered in the reality of the DCC being a new initiative. In the beginning stages of implementation, there are many important process-based challenges that need to be addressed. From a systems analysis standpoint, this is often termed the “warm-up” phase of a system. As such, the analyses presented in the first report should be regarded as exploratory.

Speculative beginnings. As might be expected, there were speculative opinions provided about the court at its startup. The goals perceived to be inherent to the court’s creation included those officially articulated (as above) but as well others were described, such as “to develop an alternative approach with community accountability that incorporates principles of restorative justice” and “to show the public that the government is responding to public concerns regarding crime and disorder”.

1. Potential strengths. Some of the positive responses indicated were: that the DCC would have a more immediate response to criminal behavior, more immediate access to resources; resources would all be in one building thus facilitating more accountability for offenders, and, in dealing with fewer offenders, the DCC personnel would become more familiar with repeat offenders and their needs (“(t)here will be less time spent on law and

² Process evaluations describe the implementation of the community court. They normally address two issues: the planned mechanisms and activities needed to achieve its goals (e.g., our Logic Model), and, the determination of the perceptions of key stakeholders in how it is achieving those goals. The six process evaluation reports compiled in this report were completed in a manner consistent with those undertaken for community court assessments elsewhere. The other assessments also relied upon community stakeholder survey, court staff interviews, and offender interviews and surveys, supplemented by courtroom observations (Center for Court Innovation, Community Courts: The Research Literature, 2011)

more time on their welfare and their ability to survive without being in conflict with the law”).

2. Potential challenges. Among the challenges perceived for the new court were: workload of court staff, especially Crown and Judges; sufficient resources to provide services determined to be needed by clients; private defence counsel’s involvement in/commitment to the DCC process; and evolving clarifications regarding roles and responsibilities of DCC actors. The resources issue (that being that the DCC would be resource-rich) prompted one interviewee to comment, “(t)hey could have just had those resources at 222 Main and opened a court right there.”

The second report, completed in February 2009, entitled, “*Downtown Community Court Staff Survey Summary: Opinions and Perceptions Four Months after the DCC Opening*”, focuses on the perceptions of DCC staff members four months after the opening of the DCC. The survey was distributed to 43 DCC staff members and covered issues in relation to the functioning, operation, processes, roles and role conflicts and challenges in the DCC during its initial months of operation. Since staff are responsible for implementing the policies and procedures of the DCC on a daily basis, their perceptions and opinions about those operations are important. Again, as with the Interim Report, the sampling of opinion occurred a relatively short time after the opening of the court, but initial operations were in place.

1. Potential strengths. Positive responses included comments about the court running smoothly and being more consistent than traditional court; that court orders are faster; and the feeling that the court is a vast improvement over provincial court and is close to its mandate.

2. Potential challenges. Less positive comments related to the feeling that there were too many adjournments and the DCC was too much like regular court; that government interference in DCC’s operations seemed to be occurring; and that additional services for offenders were needed. Another less positive response was about a perceived friction existing between partner agencies. Also a concern was raised about appropriate offender accountability not being as possible in DCC – more focus on the offender’s needs; less on justice.

The third report, completed in August 2011, entitled, “*Vancouver Downtown Community Court Staff Survey II: Opinions and Perceptions Two and One-half Years after Opening*”, is a survey of DCC staff members after two and a half years of DCC operation. The intent of this study is to 1) compare the opinions and perceptions about the Downtown Community Court by its staff members two and one half years after the opening of the court with the opinions and perceptions of staff recorded four months after its opening in September 2008, and 2) summarize the primary issues identified by staff at two different points in time.

In this third report, which primarily used the same questions employed in the first staff survey instrument, several of the same issues emerged that were also identified in the 2009 staff survey. Certainly the need for additional service availability for offenders was seen to be similar in both surveys, as was the need for better communication amongst staff and/or agencies to deal with conflicts. As well the issue of offender accountability

arose in both surveys – the perception that the DCC is a lenient court appears to be one cause for that concern.

The following are key findings that resulted from the second staff survey:

Efficiency. Many staff members perceive an increase in the volume of court appearances and believe this is mostly related to a high number of breaches. In the 2008 survey, the DCC was perceived to be quicker at processing clients than Main Street court; however, in the 2011 survey, staff generally felt there was no difference. Some pointed to cost-effectiveness of the court as an issue, particularly noting the additional resources the court received relative to its effectiveness.

Workload. Many staff observed that the workload at the DCC is too high. As a result, the stress level is also high. These staff members believe they spend a large portion of their time in court and on administrative tasks, leaving only a small amount of time for offender management and service provision. Several noted the need for changes in that regard.

Offender outcomes. Many staff members noted the high number of returning offenders and saw the court as a revolving door. The possible high number of breaches is viewed as an indicator that the community court process is not effective in addressing offending behaviour. Some staff members perceive the DCC to be too lenient, particularly regarding breach behaviour, and that there is a need for greater offender accountability.

Access to services. Some staff feel that there is a need for an increase in certain types of services for offenders, particularly drug treatment and rehabilitation services and permanent housing outside of the Downtown Eastside. The types of individuals attending the DCC tend to be those with multiple needs and criminogenic behaviours. When one goal of the DCC is to reduce recidivism, the integration of services of these people and the commitment of the staff were also considered important innovations in service delivery and monitoring to achieve that goal.

Operational integration. Generally, staff indicate that collaboration and communication among team members is functioning much more smoothly and team members work together more effectively than in 2008 when the court first opened.

Engagement with community and service providers. Some respondents noted that although much effort is made to engage the community and community service providers, it is an ongoing challenge. One respondent noted that the community advisory board has not been established although it was originally intended (this group has more recently been created).

Security. Staff generally feel that building security is too intrusive. This creates a barrier to the development of trusting relationships between staff and clients who face multiple challenges.

Work in progress. Many respondents feel proud to be part of the DCC but view the court as a work in progress.

The fourth report, entitled, “*Survey of Downtown Community Service Agency Representatives*”, was completed in August 2011 and is a survey of the perceptions of community group members affiliated with the DCC. Thirty community service agency

representatives completed either an online survey, a hard copy of the online survey, or participated in a focus group. The survey and focus group questions covered areas such as the concept of the DCC, operational challenges, information sharing, collaboration among agencies and the DCC and their views on the offender-focused elements of the DCC process.

These organizations work directly with the court or work with clients of the DCC in the community. It is therefore important to capture their perspectives because the DCC focuses upon collaboration, integration, and connectivity to the community.

The following are key findings that resulted from the community service representative surveys and focus group:

Continued support for the vision and goals. Representatives from the community service agencies are generally supportive of the original vision of the community court in Vancouver and many agree that the court makes an important contribution to the community and that offenders are benefiting from the initiative.

Implementation of the vision. Some community service representatives, who indicated that they were initially very supportive of the DCC, are now concerned that the DCC is not operating as it was intended some stakeholders are not as committed to the value and quality of the court as was true earlier. Finally, the creation of effective partnerships was thought to be an on-going effort.

Integration of service agencies in the DCC. Community service agency representatives feel that they do not have enough opportunity to collaborate with DCC staff. The triage intake process at the DCC favours the involvement of justice staff and there is not enough agency participation. As a result, some service agency representatives feel distanced from the decision making process within the DCC, which may impact future engagement with clients.

Long-term offender support and services. Many community service representatives feel that longer-term goals for offenders and improved access to services would be appropriate. They noted that aside from the relatively small number of clients involved with the intensive case management stream, services stop when offenders' court obligations conclude. Many of these offenders have multiple, ongoing needs, and would benefit from ongoing support.

Keeping offenders accountable and supporting them. Some community service representatives noted that members of the public are frustrated with the DCC because it is seen as a lenient court. On the other hand, some believe that offenders would benefit from a more supportive, service-oriented focus that is less punitive.

Information about the court's impacts. Although court outcomes have not yet been evaluated, many respondents perceive that the DCC has positive outcomes for offenders. However, some noted that there is not enough feedback back to the community and community agencies about the actual outcomes for the offenders, and that the court is not transparent about its impact.

Vision of the DCC. Overall, most community service representatives are supportive of the vision of the DCC and its potential, but note the operational challenges in realizing it.

The fifth report, entitled “*Downtown Community Court Phase I Participant Survey: Final Report*”, was completed in August 2010 and is a study of DCC participants who had experienced the DCC process. It included 196 DCC participants and, in a brief survey, focused on their backgrounds, their perceptions of the DCC process, the reasons they elected to participate in the DCC process, and their perceptions of the DCC process in comparison to the traditional court process.

Since these individuals constitute the “clientele” of the DCC, it is important to gain an understanding of their perceptions of the DCC process in terms of its policy objectives, that is, do they feel they are being fairly dealt with, do they choose the DCC to get help; what challenges do their needs bring to the court, e.g., substance abuse, mental health problems, etc.; and, how does the DCC compare to their experiences in other courts?

The following are key findings that resulted from the Phase I participant survey:

Demographics. There were 87% male and 14% female participants; 55% were Caucasian and 22% Aboriginal participants; a median age of 38; an unusually high percentage of educated participants (about 90% with a Grade 9 or higher grade completion); 76% were single and 76% who were unemployed, As well, 58% reported living at a fixed address in the last six months.

Offence Type. Nearly two-thirds of the participants’ offences fell into a generic “property” offence category. Other offences were from categories such as minor drug-related offences, breaches/failing to comply with a court order, shoplifting, mischief, and uttering threats.

Perceived treatment. Most felt they were treated fairly by the judge, the defence, the probation officer (with 93% agreement for each court actor) with the Crown receiving 77% agreement. The front staff and sheriffs were seen to treat the participants courteously (94% and 64% respectively).

Comparison with other Courts. Comparison with other courts’ speed in processing cases, resulted in 85% of the participants feeling that their DCC case was resolved more quickly. In addition 89% were satisfied with how their case was resolved and 85% were satisfied with the length of time it took to resolve their case.

Additional challenges that brought them to the community court. Three theme areas emerged: 1) addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse (most frequently mentioned); 2) mental and physical health problems more generally, such as depression, anger problems, head injuries, etc.; and 3) financial and social challenges, such as homelessness; lack of available work and income, and limitations of living allowance.

The sixth report, entitled, “*Downtown Community Court Participant Survey II*”, was completed in January 2012 and is an in-depth study of 44 DCC participants who were part of a relatively small program at the court, the Case Management Program (CMP). One of the goals of the DCC is to reduce crime in the catchment area by addressing the criminogenic needs of chronic offenders. It is these participants in CMP who tend to have the most disadvantageous backgrounds. The study included only those participants who

had been in the program for a minimum of 90 days and involved in-depth interviews on a broad range of topics.

It focused on a detailed account of their backgrounds, their past offenders and drug use, the CMP process and associated challenges, their views on the DCC staff, the improvements to their quality of life since being involved with the CMP and the impact of the CMP on their future offending and associated behavior. While not directly comparable to the Phase I Participant Survey discussed above, the same three themes of challenges faced for the participants did emerge between the two studies, that is, addictions, mental and physical health problems more generally, and financial and social challenges.

The following are key findings that resulted from the Phase II participant interviews:

Demographics. Most of the participants were male (73%), Caucasian (43%), about a fifth had completed high school and most were single. The average age of the sample was 36 years of age and their median age at first conviction was 17.

Offence Type. The CMP participants were sentenced to community corrections' supervision for a variety of property offences and a small number of violent offenses and the administration of justice offenses, such as breaches. Minor theft under \$5000 convictions constitute the majority of offense types, with 15% falling into a more serious range of offending. The participants reported a mean of 34 past convictions. Thus the label of a chronic offender seems to be appropriate for the CMP supervised offenders.

Impact of CMP program after 90 days. Since they were already on income assistance (IA), little changed for the participants with regard to IA dependence from their life prior to involvement in CMP and about the same rate of unemployment continued. There was a reduced usage of alcohol and drugs and accommodation was markedly better in that fewer were in shelters and/or friends'/relatives' homes, and more living in standard housing.

Self-reported criminal behavior. About two-thirds declined to respond to questions about criminal activity while in the CMP program. For those who did respond, the indication was that the criminal activity remained at about the same level of seriousness as occurred prior to CMP involvement, but 93% reported there was less of the criminal activity than previously.

Self-reported positive outcomes. A majority of participants reported positive outcomes being perceived to have resulted from participation in the CMP component of the DCC. As with the reduction of frequency of criminal behavior noted earlier, many of the improvements appear consistent with a harm reduction model outcome. There were also comments made about what it is that makes the CMP successful. Positive role modeling and the provision of practical skills and helpful support were viewed as CMP characteristics which helped them break the crime cycle. They were also appreciative of the personalized assistance and guidance by the staff within the courtroom and subsequently in the CMP program itself, the latter of which many saw as giving them a "second chance".

Self-reported less positive outcomes. A smaller number of less positive comments were registered by the participants related to the perceived intrusiveness of the program in their

lives, personality clashes with staff, a perceived shift in the caring approach in the DCC courtroom from their initial experiences there, and the feeling expressed by one participant that the program simply wasn't for him.

Context and Summary

The first North American community court opened in Midtown Manhattan in 1993. Focusing on quality-of-life offenses, such as drug possession, shoplifting, vandalism, and prostitution, the Midtown Community Court sought to combine punishment and help, sentencing low-level offenders to perform visible community restitution, receive onsite social services, including drug treatment, counseling, and job training. There are currently more than 60 community courts in operation worldwide. In the United States alone there are 33 while there are 17 in South Africa, 13 in England and Wales, and one each in Australia and Canada (Community Courts: The Research Literature, 2011, p.1).

The Downtown Community Court in Vancouver was based in part upon the Red Hook Community Court in Manhattan. However many differences did evolve with the DCC creation. It is not located in a community centre, for example, as the Red Hook court is, nor does it deal primarily with minor street crime as does Red Hook. DCC does attempt to identify and address offender needs. Whether it is a need associated with unemployment, housing, mental illness, or a combination of such factors, offenders are assisted to address those needs.

This approach was also based on the idea that the court and linked services could work collaboratively, that is, the police, court staff, judges, social service providers, and community representatives for efficiency (Center for Court Innovation, The Research Literature, 2011, p.14). The “community” approach is reflected not only in the assessment of needs and the provision of social services needed to address them, but in the actual court outcomes themselves. In the sense that it is a community problem and community good order was broken by the criminal behavior, then the offender, as one possible response, if appropriate, can make an effort to undertake work service in the community with an alternative sentence. This approach also should decrease jail/prison time, or sanctions based only on a fines structure.

Comparisons

What the series of six reports contained herein accomplished was to document, from the key stakeholders, how the intended process was working or worked according to certain community court principles. The findings were consistent with other process evaluations completed for community courts elsewhere. A recent process evaluation made of the Red Hook Community Court was presented at the American Society of Criminology meetings in November, 2012. Over a two year period, surveys and interviews were made with 52 stakeholders, such as community representatives, court staff officers, judges and attorneys. Similar to the DCC process evaluation (with 240 offenders being surveyed or interviewed), the Red Hook process evaluation included interviews with 200 offenders.

The Red Hook offenders viewed the community court judge as quite fair and the court itself as less punitive, perceptions also held by the DCC clients. When asked if the court

had resulted in a change in their criminal behavior, the Red Hook Offenders also became more discrete (actually many of the DCC offenders simply did not respond to this question, of those who did, many indicated the frequency of the criminal behavior had decreased).

As with the Red Hook and DCC process evaluations, several other studies employed offender surveys to examine user perceptions of the community court experience. In the Hartford Community Court process evaluation study in the states, 96 % of offenders interviewed thought the community court was a good idea; that their sentence was fair; that all people were treated fairly at the court; and 91% thought they were treated with respect by the judge. The majority had no legal representation (79%) and most thought they did need a lawyer (84%).

By comparison in the DCC court, from the larger Phase I Study, a majority of the clients (offenders) found the DCC to be helpful, both personally and in breaking their crime cycle, with more resources and tangible help provided. Most felt they were treated fairly by the judge, the defence, the probation officer and front staff (93%), with the Crown receiving 77% agreement. The sheriffs were seen to treat the participants courteously (64% agreement). A DCC result that was quite different from the Hartford Study was that almost 90% of DCC clients had either a DCC defense lawyer, a Duty Counsel lawyer or a Legal Aid lawyer, compared to only 7 who had a private lawyer and 11 who self-represented (a few having some combination of lawyer arrangements).

In the same Hartford Study referenced above, staff were also interviewed about the court's operations, with a majority of them expressing the opinion that the court provided an "opportunity for a second chance" with a client-centered social service delivery system. A similar sentiment was expressed by the community representatives in the present DCC process evaluation. The Hartford staff also documented implementation challenges and barriers in opening a new innovative program in the criminal justice system, as did many DCC staff and community representatives. It would be of interest to see what the DCC staff now perceive about strengths and challenges in the operations of the court four and one half years after its opening.

Finally, treatment staff in the Hartford Study were pleased with linking offenders to services, holding them accountable and locating the key services providers in the same building as the courtroom. Similarly, the DCC community representatives, many of whom are service providers, felt that the proximity of services to the offenders was an important strength of the court.

Conclusion

The process evaluation reports for the Downtown Community Court in Vancouver address an important component of an overall evaluation of the court. They highlight the important elements of the court's operation relative to its stated goals, as well as the more general context within which those operations occur. The latter include other systems' and services' operations as those impact, or are perceived to impact, the DCC itself.

It should be noted that very few community courts globally have undertaken a comprehensive evaluation. As concluded in the global report on community court evaluations quoted above, in this context and summary section:

“It’s important that rigorous evaluation studies be performed...more research is needed concerning how community court outcomes differ from traditional courts...Finally, although community court stakeholders often cite recidivism reduction and solving underlying offender problems as important community court goals, (globally) only three studies to date have assessed their impacts on this front, with all three reporting mixed results...Perhaps the most important contribution (such) evaluations could make is to identify quantifiable performance indicators.”

As indicated in the introduction, the efficiency and recidivism outcomes for the DCC remain to be studied.

Downtown Community Court Research: Interim Report December 2008

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Executive Summary

The goals and objectives for the Downtown Community Court were established by consensus at the DCC Steering Committee meeting in January 2007. Parties at the table included: the Executive Lead, Social and Justice Integration; His Honour Thomas Gove, the Lead Judge; the dedicated Crown and a representative from the Legal Services Society; the representative of the Chief Judge's Office; and representatives of other involved agencies, including police, corrections, health, housing, etc. Subsequently, in January 2008, a finalized project Evaluation Framework document that detailed the approach and methodology was approved by the same committee.

Primary goals identified were:

- 1) Better integration of services to address offender needs;
- 2) Increasing offender accountability with reduced recidivism;
- 3) Promotion of public confidence in the community court;
- 4) Creation of a more efficient court.

This report serves as an update on the research team's efforts to address the four guiding goals of the project. It discusses the status of the data collection process to date, as well as some of the data acquisition issues, and justifications for data access required to meet the goals of the evaluation. It includes some initial activity indicators provided by Court Services. The report continues with preliminary analyses of the qualitative data collected to date. This includes the initial interview data and the observational data. The former are included to assist in the understanding of opinions about the court; the latter to assist with an understanding of Downtown Community Court (DCC) processes, including the operation of the court, the triage process and offender case management. These observations provide valuable contacts with court staff as well as allowing researchers the opportunity to note the kinds of interactions that occur in court and to document the differences between morning and afternoon sessions. The final goal of such observations is to document the uniqueness of this court along a number of dimensions. These will continue at intervals during the first year of the operation of the court as deemed useful.

One key caveat that should frame the report for readers is the reality of DCC being a new initiative - thus many of the findings must be considered with that perspective in mind. In the initial stages of implementation there are many important process-based challenges that need to be addressed as court staff work through the process of implementation. From a systems analysis standpoint this is often termed the "warm-up" phase of a system. As such, the analyses presented in this report should be regarded as exploratory and should be used primarily as a basis to assist court staff with an understanding of any implementation-related challenges.

In order to ascertain initial knowledge and perceptions of the DCC by key stakeholder groups, qualitative interviews were conducted shortly before the opening of the court. This assisted with the research team's understanding of the sources of background information on DCC by key stakeholders, their views on the perceived goals of the DCC and any challenges they believed would impact the implementation and success of the DCC. The parameters of this report do not cover actual implementation challenges.

In general, a large number of respondents indicated that they received much of their information pertaining to the DCC through informal sources, including colleagues and other court staff. Those who did attend formal information sessions asserted that the sessions were lacking in substantive character and generally stated that they heard the DCC was to be based on the New York model.

Overall, respondents summarized the goals of the DCC as:

- Dealing with minor offences;
- Providing services for high-needs offenders to deal with etiology of crime and associated problem behaviour;
- Increasing efficiency of the court process;
- Showing the public that the government is responding to public concerns regarding crime and disorder;
- Developing an alternative approach with community accountability that incorporates principles of restorative justice;
- Integrating holistic treatment-based services.

Generally, respondents indicated the primary challenges of the DCC as:

- Resources for requisite services;
- Workload of court staff, especially Crown and Judges;
- Internal commitment of clients to treatment outcomes;
- Matching client needs to available resources;
- The philosophies of different court staff (crime control vs. due process vs. rehabilitation);
- Private Defence Counsel involvement in/commitment to the DCC process;
- Managing expectations relating to the “success” of the DCC;
- The evaluation of the initial start-up phase of the DCC;
- Confusion regarding roles and responsibilities of DCC actors;
- Lack of meaningful community involvement and reciprocal communication.

Additionally, the research team canvassed the stakeholder groups on their views of the requisite foci and concerns for the evaluation. This input often reflected some of the themes that emanated from the goals and challenges that were reported (for a detailed review of these foci please go to the section entitled *Aggregated Interview Comments about the Evaluation: Suggested Foci and Concerns* on page 33). The foci interests can be summarized as follows:

Aggregated Interview Comments about the Evaluation: Suggested Focus and Concerns

- An analysis of different recidivism metrics;
- An analysis of change to crime and disorder in the DCC catchment area;

- An analysis of DCC case characteristics;
- An analysis of community views of the DCC;
- An analysis of services provided in the DCC and Main Street courthouse;
- An offender-focused analysis;
- An analysis of defence/offender participation in the DCC;
- An analysis of Police and Crown charging practices in the catchment area pre- and post-DCC implementation.
 - Currently, the research team is negotiating access to JUSTIN, as this database allows for the acquisition of information that may not currently reside in any of the other criminal justice databases. The research team has also engaged Vancouver Police Department representatives on potential access to PRIME information and made application for access to CORNET, a database, which contains post-disposition information on DCC offenders in cases where a corrections-based sentence is ordered. Some data elicited to date have employed other data collections methods. Findings from these activities are set out in the quantitative section above.

Downtown Community Court Research: Interim Report December 2008

This report provides some of the findings of the research activities that have taken place during the first months of the court operation.

Introduction

The first research/monitoring report on the Downtown Community Court (DCC) is designed to provide the reader with an overview of the research activities to date, and to highlight data collected from interviews and focus groups from a variety of individuals involved in the planning and operation of the court as well as people from the community who have no direct involvement with the court. It also provides recent interview material with select key respondents. In addition, this report includes information about a number of activities the research team has undertaken including court observations, Crown counsel and Triage shadowing, negotiating data access as well as collecting and analyzing historical material relating to the development and implementation of the court. It is also important to note that because of the ongoing process of acquiring access to official databases, this first report does not contain any individual tracking quantitative data but a description of the nature and of data to be collected and a discussion to date of the negotiation processes to acquire data access. In addition, some early aggregate data is presented.

Planning the Research

The Research Team has held frequent meetings centering on methodological and data collection activities. The methodologies employed are consistent with the proposed evaluation frameworks and the Logic Model that was agreed upon early in the process by the DCC Steering Committee. We have met with officials from the Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat to ensure that their information needs are being clearly identified, and that the requirements for obtaining access to official data systems are being met.

Developing Data Collection Instruments

We have developed a variety of data collection instruments for purposes of interviewing key respondents, for court observation activities, and for shadowing key staff. We have also been assisting various decision makers, such as counsel, with the development of their own data gathering instruments.

Identifying Relevant Respondents

Part of ensuring that we are collecting the most relevant data involves identifying the individuals and groups who are critical to interview and shadow. It is important to remember that interviews are not necessarily conducted once but are an ongoing part of the research because perception and opinions may change or broaden depending on the time of the interview. We submitted interview data in September 2008, which reflected perceptions of Steering Committee members, the judiciary and criminal justice system personnel with no direct involvement in the DCC. These interviews occurred a few months prior to the opening of the court. In this report this information is supplemented with interview material with DCC staff, Social Services Working Group (SSWG), community members and key DCC staff.

Data Collection

This report contains information relating to our data collection activities. It includes a short description of court observation themes, the shadowing of Crown counsel and the Triage and Case management teams, and, the interview material described above. More detailed interview material from the DCC Steering Committee; DCC Staff members, the SSWG members, and the non-DCC justice system personnel (e.g., defence counsel, Crown counsel and judges) that was secured just prior to the opening of the court is included. Finally, community members, who represent various organizations and agencies in the three catchment areas, participated in focus groups during the first months of the operation of the court and their responses follow.

Data Access and Other Quantitative Data Issues

The section describing an overview of activities relating to quantitative data the research team is collecting, and intends to collect in the future, includes a description of the activities undertaken to identify possible sources for this data. For the latter issue, this includes a summary of the interactions of the research team with DCC stakeholders.

Overview of Activities Relating to Quantitative Data

During the first few months of the DCC implementation the research team met with many of the stakeholders in the DCC to determine the nature of the data available, the location(s) of the data, its form (i.e., text vs. pre-defined fields) and the validity of the available data. This section details the activities relating to this process as well as a high-level specification of the desired data and its location.

Initially, the research team recognized that it was important to gather data at the level of the individual accused in order to address the four primary goals of the research. This was determined not only through our understanding of the goals of the research but in conjunction with our discussions with DCC stakeholders. The types of data that address these goals include:

1. Demographic information on the offender;
2. Needs and risk information on the offender;
3. Court case characteristic information tied to individual offenders, including outcomes;
4. Appearance information linked to cases that are tied to individual offenders;
5. Outcome information tied to an offender that proceed DCC dispositions, including case management plan compliance;
6. Pre-court information tied to an offender, including negative police contacts.

Once we determined the nature of the data required to address each of the four goals of the research we began the process of confirming this understanding with stakeholders in an iterative manner, and determining the explicit location(s) of the relevant data. The research team has attended numerous meetings with the individuals who designed and currently maintain the DCC “shared database”. It was determined that this database is capable of yielding portions of the six types of data described above. However, the shared database is undergoing revision and we are awaiting the conclusion of this process to

ensure the validity of any extracted data. In the interim, we are undergoing the process of acquiring official access to this database.

Currently, the research team is negotiating access to JUSTIN, which we view as the primary data source for many of data types mentioned above. Access to JUSTIN allows for the acquisition of information that may not currently reside in any of the other criminal justice databases. Examples of this type of data include: appearance data, court outcome data, and any data tied to DCC offenders that does not occur at the DCC, such as bail hearings and pre-DCC comparison data (i.e., two years prior to the implementation of the DCC). These negotiations are currently ongoing.

The research team has engaged Vancouver Police Department representatives on potential access to PRIME information. This information allows for an analysis of police contacts for DCC offenders, which could be used as one type of recidivism metric.

The research team has made an application for access to CORNET. This database contains post-disposition information on DCC offenders in cases where a corrections-based sentence is ordered (i.e., community sentence and incarceration sentence). The research team views this database as a source of information on case plan compliance while under a corrections sentence, risk assessment/factors information, other needs-based information and incapacitation time required for certain recidivism analyses.

The research team has engaged in several meetings with the Crown counsel, the dedicated Defence counsel and their support staff to determine their research needs, the nature of data they collect for their internal processes and to develop a data collection form and associated database that may serve both the needs of the stakeholders and the research team. A prototype of this form and database is currently under development by the research team. Additionally, several meetings with the DCC Triage Team, Caseworkers and Probation Officers have been undertaken to assess their analysis needs and to determine the nature of data they currently collect. At present, the research team believes that a substantial portion of the data collected by these stakeholder groups is relevant to data types five and six listed above and may be applicable to data type three.

The last facet of the research process we have been addressing is the storage of any extracted data in order to maintain the security of the data while it is being collected and amalgamated. To this end, we are actively pursuing access for representatives of the research team to the IDIR intranet. We believe it is necessary to gain access to this intranet so that access to the requisite databases listed above and a common secure place to store any data that is extracted or coded directly is achieved.

Available Quantitative Data from Other Sources

While the research team is currently engaged in developing tracking data, information on court activities has been made available from other sources. Table 1 contains information provided by Court Services on activity of the court. Table 2, provided by the DCC staff, shows the utilization of various court directed measures.

Table 1: 2008 Interim Report -- Information on Court Activity Provided by Court Services

SEPTEMBER 2008	
Accused	
Number of unique individuals who had at least one appearance in DCC	146
Number of unique individuals who resolved their court cases	57
% of unique individuals who resolved their court cases	39%
New Cases	
New DCC Cases - initiated with DCC agency code (Accused on an Information with at least 1 appearance anywhere)	176
Cases new to DCC – initiate with non-DCC agency code (Accused on an Information with at least 1 appearance in DCC)	63
Total	239
Cases Proceeding in DCC	
Total cases appearing in DCC (Accused on an Information with at least one appearance in DCC)	194
Concluded Cases in DCC	
Cases with and appearance at DCC that concluded in September (Accused on an Information with at least one appearance at DCC that concluded in September but not necessarily in DCC)	75
% of concluded cases (ratio of cases with at least one appearance in DCC to those that concluded in DCC)	38%
Time to Disposition for cases initiated in DCC (time from first appearance to concluded date – its reported as the number of days it takes for most cases in the DCC)	1 day
Adjournments	
Total # of case appearances at DCC	335
Total appearances that resulted in adjournment	214
% of adjournments (ratio of all appearances in DCCC to those that resulted in adjournments)	64%

OCTOBER 2008	
Accused	
Total number of unique individuals who had at least one appearance in DCC in the month of October	273
Number of unique individuals with at least one appearance at DCC who concluded their court cases in October, whether they started in October or earlier	131
% of unique individuals who resolved their court cases in October	48%
Number of unique people who had 1 st appearance in DCC in October	189
Number of accused who appeared in October but also had a court appearance in September	84
Number of accused who had an appearance in September but not in October	62
New Cases	
New DCC Cases - initiated with DCC agency code (Accused on an Information with at least 1 appearance anywhere)	238
Cases new to DCC – initiated with non-DCC agency code (Accused on an Information with at least 1 appearance in DCC; there might have been more appearances elsewhere prior to the appearance in DCC)	101
Total	339
Cases Proceeding in DCC	
Total cases appearing in DCC (Accused on an Information with at least one appearance in DCC)	381
Concluded Cases in DCC	
Cases with and appearance at DCC that concluded in October (Accused on an Information with at least one appearance at DCC that concluded in October)	199
% of concluded cases (ratio of cases with at least one appearance in DCC to those that concluded in DCC)	52%
Time to Disposition for cases initiated in DCC (time from first appearance to concluded date – its reported as the number of days it takes for most cases in the DCC)	3 days

Table 1 (Con't): 2008 Interim Report -- Information on Court Activity Provided by Court Services

Adjournments	
Total # of case appearances at DCC	742
Total appearances that resulted in adjournment	440
% of adjournments (ratio of all appearances in DCCC to those that resulted in adjournments)	59%

Table 2: 2008 Interim Report -- Information on Court Activity Provided by DCC Staff

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY COURT									
October Draft Monthly Report									
Date	Case Management Team Intake	VCH Information Sessions		MHSD Intake	MHSD Information Sessions		Refer to Community Placement		
		Refer	Attend		Refer	Attend	Complete	Incomplete	Hours
Oct. 1	1	4	3					3	15
Oct. 2	2	5	2				3	2	10
Oct. 3	3	4		1			4	2	8
Oct. 6	2	5	4				5	4	16
Oct. 7	2	4	2				4		18
Oct. 8	4	2		1			5	4	4
Oct. 9	5	4	2	2			6	3	12
Oct. 10		5	4				4	4	8
Oct. 14	2	6	3						
Oct. 15		5	3	1			1	3	8
Oct. 16		4	3	1			3	2	8
Oct. 17	1	4	2				3	1	8
Oct. 20	3	4							
Oct. 21	4	4	3				4	4	8
Oct. 22	1	6	3				5	4	4
Oct. 23	3	4	2				3	2	16
Oct. 24	4	8	5	1			5	3	32
Oct. 27		10	3				3	1	16
Oct. 28	1	5	5				1	1	4
Oct. 29	3	5	3				2	1	5
Oct. 30									
Oct. 31									
TOT:	41	98	52	7	0	0	61	44	200

Table 2 (Con't): 2008 Interim Report -- Information on Court Activity Provided by DCC Staff

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY COURT									
October Draft Monthly Report (Con't)									
Date	Refer to Street Project			BC Housing			Forensic Services		Victim Contact
	Complete	Incomplete	Hours	Interview	Housed	No Show	FLW Contact	Psychiatrist	
Oct. 1	2		6	2	2		1	1	7
Oct. 2	2		8				1		1
Oct. 3	2			2	1	1			
Oct. 6	4	3	15	3	1		1		5
Oct. 7	4	3	18	1	1		1		7
Oct. 8	5	2	17	3	2		4		7
Oct. 9	4		17	3	1	1			6
Oct. 10	4	2	24				2	1	4
Oct. 14				3	1	1	2		6
Oct. 15	7	6	28	1	1	1			5
Oct. 16	3	1	24				1	1	3
Oct. 17	2		12	1	1		1		
Oct. 20	1		8				2		3
Oct. 21	1		4				1		7
Oct. 22	4	1	16						9
Oct. 23	6	1	24						10
Oct. 24									5
Oct. 27	5	4							4
Oct. 28	1	2	20						10
Oct. 29	4	4	16						8
Oct. 30									11
Oct. 31									
TOT:	61	29	257	19	11	4	17	3	118

Court Observation

This section provides preliminary information from a number of court observations. The purpose of these observations is to provide information about various aspects of the court function and operation. In addition to gathering general information about the court, some targeted observations have been done to address issues raised by the Lead Executive.

The interviews of DCC staff became increasingly productive after the team became more visibly present and known to the staff. This resulted in a well-rounded accounting of DCC operations.

Collecting Anecdotal Information

Needs of the Offender

One of the primary “official” functions of the DCC is the meeting of the needs of the client through effective offender management. From informal observation in the courtroom, it may appear those are not always being met:

1. if clients wait in the gallery for extended periods of time;
2. if clients are uncertain of the procedures on the court.

However, there are other informal observations of behaviour by staff, which appear to go beyond a “normal” attendance to the client. These behaviours are consistent with the intent of DCC to establish trust through relationship building with the client:

1. if staff take a client to lunch while he/she is awaiting to appear, or even buy the client groceries in lieu of lunch;
2. if staff do repeat key information to the client (even though it may not always be understood).

Morning vs. Afternoon Sessions

Some differences were observed between the morning and afternoon court sessions.

Morning:

1. delays (i.e., either until later in the same day or as a new appearance on a different day) occurred because of waiting for different types of information, such as triage outcomes, and;
2. the offender may not appear as scheduled (i.e., a failure to appear).

Afternoon:

1. fewer delays because needed information arrives (i.e., triage assessment), and;
2. the offender may also appear later in the day.
3. afternoon sessions are normally reserved for out-of-custody accused (i.e., less complexity)

Courtroom Interactions

The judges at DCC make the effort to speak directly to the accused, as opposed to speaking through the defense counsel.

Importance of Preliminary Observations

Some of the observations made by the research team now inform:

1. Development of questions to pose in future interviews and focus groups. For example, one such question, is whether staff spend more time with the client/offender in meeting their needs during the actual court process. Does that create workload-related challenges?
2. A meaningful context for the quantitative findings. This is particularly important when trying to assess the functioning of the DCC since it is a new initiative about which little is known.
3. Understanding of court processes, such as how different types of delays and adjournments affect court functioning.

Crown Counsel and Triage Shadowing

In order to provide more understanding of the DCC process, the SFU Research team observed the Triage meetings twice and the Provincial and Federal Crown decision making before court on one occasion each. This allowed for an up to date understanding of current procedures as they evolve for the team.

The provincial Crown in particular has a leading role in the Triage process, especially since most of the charges are summary or hybrid. As a result, the Crown is most likely to make the suggestion on the stream (e.g., intensive case management) for the client.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Over the period of July – November, 2008 eighty-five (85) representatives of the following groups were interviewed or participated in focus groups regarding their opinions and perspectives of the Downtown Community Court (DCC) in Vancouver:

1. Criminal justice system representatives that were not directly involved in the operations of the DCC;
2. DCC Steering Committee;
3. DCC Social Service Working Group;
4. DCC staff;
5. Community organizations.

The interview questions developed by the SFU Research Team were posed to representatives of these groups in a face-to-face interview format or in a focus group setting. Their participation was voluntary and the information confidential. These interviews were conducted to provide context in the ongoing development of the DCC, the evaluation plan, and further development of problem solving courts in B.C.

It is important to note that the interview information provided in this report provides the context for the data collection and is part of the background and process of the DCC development. The purpose of a process evaluation is to examine the operations and processes that comprise the program, track the strengths and weaknesses of the program and determine which parts are working and which are not, so that changes can be implemented.

Non-DCC Criminal Justice Respondents

During the months of May and June of 2008 criminal justice personnel were interviewed for their opinions about the Downtown Community Court (DCC). The respondents represented those criminal justice participants that were *not* directly involved in the operations of the DCC. The Chief Judge, Administrative Crown (Provincial and Federal) and Legal Services Society provided access to criminal justice personnel by introducing the interview process as part of the DCC evaluation and providing contact emails or contact phone numbers to the evaluators.

The following criminal justice personnel were interviewed:

1. Provincial Court Judges (5);
2. Provincial Crown Counsel (4);
3. Federal Crown Counsel (4);
4. Defence Counsel (8).

Provincial Court Judges

Sources of Information about the DCC

The majority of the Provincial Court Judges interviewed first heard about the DCC informally from other judges in chambers. The respondents heard that the development of a community court was being considered and that the most likely model upon which it would be built would be one from New York City -- the Red Hook Justice Centre in Brooklyn. All the judges had attended at least one lunch hour information session held by the DCC team composed of the Lead Judge, Lead Crown and Dedicated Defence. Two judges specifically suggested that more communication should continue as the DCC developed.

From a “judges only” information session in May, the judges also understood that the Main Street Court would continue to provide bail hearings, trial confirmation hearings and regular trials. To aid the assignment of cases to the DCC, they were told a screening process would be in place to determine eligibility to the DCC. The judges understood that even DCC clients would have their bail hearings at Main Street.

Perceptions about Goals and Challenges for the DCC

Overall, respondents indicated that the purpose and goals of the court centered on dealing with minor non-violent offenders (one judge provided the example of “low level” drug dealers). These offenders would often have multiple problems, such as FASD, drug additions, other mental health and physical health conditions.

The issue of resources was the primary challenge seen to exist for the DCC; both in terms of assuring adequate availability for the new court, but also for the Main Street Court. Several respondents noted that client resources would be provided on site at the DCC (one suggested that they were contracted) to increase efficiency. There were a few other remarks made to the effect that ideally these resources should be supplied to the current Provincial Court at Main Street as well.

The resource issue was mentioned by all judges as the perceived strength of the DCC. It related to the connection between onsite resource availability for offenders soon as they

entered the DCC and efficient case resolution. One judge stated he was actually more concerned with service availability than with the speed at which the court process occurs.

Another judge noted that the DCC was an attempt by the government to acknowledge the magnitude and complexity of the problem and the need to deal with it in an innovative manner rather than to expand the use of incarceration. He stated:

“The penny dropped when Riverview was shut down and that was an enormous social experiment that went wrong.”

One judge said it was useful to have a psychiatrist at DCC as the assessment could happen right away. This is in contrast to Main Street where an accused/offender is sent for an assessment, and a resultant delay of up to several weeks.

The opinion all of the judges held about what they believed to constitute the primary difference between the DCC and Provincial Court at Main St. was the availability of these resources. They referenced the wide array of agencies and partners involved, including associated community members and community work service organizations. In comparison, it was felt that while accused/offenders do obtain similar services to those at Main St. court (i.e., P.O. involvement) given the high workloads in the traditional setting, these services were often minimal.

One judge commented:

“They could have just had those resources at 222 Main and opened up a court right here”.

Several Judges states that the relationship between the two courts was important and needed to be integrated. One judge suggested that there should be active information sharing built into the DCC model, with emails and joint meetings between DCC and 222 Main St. Related to that need was a concern that there was not a clear rationale specifying protocol for the transfer of cases and offenders between Main Street and DCC. Although judges hoped the DCC would reduce the overall backlog of the courts, they expressed concern that the DCC would not necessarily have a positive impact on their daily workload.

Several respondents noted that it was difficult to think of specific challenges for the DCC before it is operational, but stressed that offenders can be very entrenched in their criminal and social lifestyles. They felt that this entrenched lifestyle is difficult to change, even with the employment of the additional resources of DCC.

“I am not convinced that those with minor offences will be going to DCC resources. Homelessness is a manifestation of a lifestyle; criminality as a lifestyle is entrenched.”

Another judge felt that, although it may be unrealistic to stop recidivism, any indication of more people appearing less often in court could be seen as a success.

Finally, another judge felt a challenge for the court will be the workload with only two dedicated DCC judges. It was therefore argued that it is important to get the “right dedicated people” working at the DCC.

Provincial and Federal Crown Counsel

Four Provincial Crown counsel (PCC) and four Federal Crown counsel (FCC) were interviewed. The FCC had spent much less time in their positions than the PCC. The PCC first heard about the DCC between one and two years ago, and the FCC all reported hearing about it one year ago.

Sources of Information about the DCC

The Provincial Crown reported receiving information about the new court through colleagues, the DCC Crown, and emails sent from the Provincial Crown. One PCC reported getting information primarily from judicial case managers and the media. The FCC responses were similar except they reported hearing about the court through judicial case managers and an information session.

Although Provincial Crown respondents obtained their information through the sources mentioned above, they reported very little detailed information other than the DCC was based on a New York model and it was under development.

Provincial Crown that had attended the information sessions found them “informative” to “somewhat informative”. Several noted that they felt that the practicalities had not been “ironed out yet” and they were not clear how the court would function.

Most of the Federal Crown had not attended any information sessions and the one that had attended found it very general. One respondent indicated it “sounded like the DCC was a work in progress”. Several reported that the information session notices made it sound like they were only for DCC staff and had not attended.

Perceptions about Goals and Challenges for the DCC

All Provincial Crowns responded that the purpose and goals of the DCC were to address the underlying causes of crime in a timelier manner, to deal with chronic offenders and address mental health issues, provide requisite social services, and to provide the tools necessary for offenders to become law-abiding citizens. One suggested that the purpose and goal of the court was “to appease the public” but stressed the importance of implementing the principles of the DCC.

The Federal Crown responded in a similar fashion but in less detail. They perceived the purpose and goal of the DCC to represent an alternative approach to justice services that incorporates community accountability and aspects of restorative justice. One suggested that the DCC would focus in large part on possession charges to save court time.

Provincial Crown felt that the differences between DCC and Provincial Court at Main St. were that the DCC would have a more immediate response to criminal behavior, more immediate access to resources and more offender visits to court in order that the DCC could monitor progress. All mentioned the fact that the resources would be in one building and there would be more accountability. Several noted that there would be more diversion type cases and there may be more dispositions involving less jail, and no trials.

Federal Crown believed that the DCC and Drug Treatment Court were similar (i.e., offenders must plead guilty), except that the DCC would have a more rehabilitative focus. Provincial Crown suggested the strengths of the new court would be the immediacy, the services addressing mental health, the integration of services and the internal desire of

offenders involved in this type of court. They suggested that the DCC would deal with fewer cases allowing justice system personnel to gain familiarity with repeat offenders. The removal of repeat offenders from the provincial court system was described as desirable because the DCC is more able to provide services and address the real issues behind offending of this sub-group than a traditional court. One crown suggested that addressing the underlying problems made more sense because offenders in the DTES do not see the potential consequences of their actions, nullifying punishment itself as an effective deterrent.

The Provincial Crowns perceived challenges for the DCC to be the condition that offenders must want the resources offered, and those available services may not be well utilized by those who most need them. Several mentioned that offenders might even go to other areas to commit crimes if the conditions the DCC imposes are too onerous. Housing was seen as essential to stability and the lack of housing resources an acute issue. As a result the workload for the DCC was potentially heavy because it would be dealing with a “*high maintenance population*”. One crown suggested:

“There is a certain part of the population that is beyond hope – prolific offenders are so entrenched in crime, so brain damaged, drug addicted, that I don’t think the DCC can actually change the behavior.”

An emergent theme expressed by PCCs was the challenge of ideological differences between criminal justice personnel. For example, one Provincial Crown suggested that there may be some duty counsel available to the DCC that are too adversarial. There was some concern expressed about the potential for a lack of consistency within a small catchment area, where similar offences committed in a different area would be treated differently. Another said that the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) was focused on chronic offenders under a law and order approach that may not support the intentions of the DCC.

The Federal Crown saw the weaknesses/challenges the DCC through a somewhat different lens. These included getting sufficient material to defence so they could advise their clients, the emphasis of the court on guilty pleas, and the disconnect between theory and action. There was some doubt in their minds about the functioning of the DCC alongside the Drug Treatment Court, and they felt that the impact of the DCC would be limited if it only dealt with simple possession cases. In addition, coordination of prosecutions with the mainstream system was unclear as was the handling of in-custody cases. Several crowns also suggested that the practical realities of people might be difficult to change, particularly if housing did not exist outside the DTES.

When asked if they had concerns about how DCC would affect their current functioning, both provincial and Federal Crowns generally said they did not. One PCC suggested that the charge approval workload might go down if cases are referred to DCC. Another expressed concern over potential delays at Main Street as a result of the voluntary nature of the DCC. For example, if an offender agreed to participate in the DCC process and at some point during the process declines to participate. This crown also expressed some confusion regarding the case assignment process to the DCC and stated:

“I hope that the DCC will take some of the chronic property offenders and deal with them in a different way – it would reduce the workload in bail court.”

One Federal Crown felt the DCC may be too separate from Main St. court and communication between the two systems may be difficult.

Defence Counsel

Eight members of the Bar were interviewed. Four of the lawyers had some involvement with DCC as they were added to the roster of defence counsel while the other four were not. The majority of defence counsel were very experienced, reporting 20 or more years as defence attorneys.

Sources of Information about the DCC:

The majority of the lawyers first heard about DCC approximately two years prior to DCC implementation. Some of the lawyers had been involved in Drug Treatment Court, and as a result had some familiarity with problem-solving courts.

The sources of information for the lawyers included colleagues, postings in the barrister's lounge, government staff, the two DCC Judges, as well as other people involved in DCC. Other participants obtained information on the court via the media, the New York model, the Safe Streets Working Group, and/or information from police. One said there was no discussion with DCC Crown or Defence about the specifics of the court.

The lawyers reported hearing that there was going to be a community court in Vancouver, similar to the existing Drug Treatment Court, to deal with chronic petty offenders by focusing on medical and mental problems. Several defence counsel mentioned that information they heard earlier (i.e., the Lead Judge indicating that he would direct Justices of the Peace to keep people in custody until they could go to the DCC) had now changed. One lawyer suggested that Lead Judge should promote and disseminate the idea of the court more to defence counsel. Finally, one lawyer commented on the treatment and rehabilitative aspects of the court and believed it was more broadly based than the Drug Treatment Court.

The majority of lawyers had not attended a formal information session or course because of scheduling difficulties, as well as the sessions being located in inconvenient areas. Two had attended the information session for duty counsel in April 2008, and found it somewhat useful but they left with several unanswered questions. One lawyer suggested that these sessions should continue and there should be on-going information sharing.

Perceptions about Goals and Challenges for the DCC:

Defence counsel generally believed that the purpose and goals of the DCC were to deal with chronic, less serious offenders through alternate means that involved providing community services to address underlying causes of their offending. One referred to the concepts as being more rehabilitative, one referred to the *Gladue* case, and suggested that there needed to be a “*better way by offering something other than a trial, a conviction and a sentence*”. Several spoke to the value of providing centralized social services and understood that the DCC would deal generally with substance abuse, mental health and health issues in coordinated treatment environments. As one respondent stated:

“If we deal with the root problem, maybe the client won't come back, that is the main goal.”

One lawyer suggested that the goal of the DCC is to reduce the number of remanded persons and those in pre-trial custody because those facilities are exceeding their capacity. Several mentioned the need to restore public faith in the criminal justice system.

Respondents noted that the DCC differed from the Main Street court because the former would be more streamlined, would avoid lengthy trials and it would have more services available to it whereas the Main St. courts have very few services. Furthermore, the DCC would provide more support to offenders, and sentences would be more meaningful to offenders. As one lawyer explained:

“There will be less time spent on law and more time on their welfare and their ability to survive without being in conflict with the law.”

Other positive aspects of the DCC that were identified are that there would be health workers at DCC, psychiatric assessments could happen more quickly and a fast track to welfare and housing might occur.

Respondents believed that the reported main strengths of DCC were that resources were contained in one site -- especially health and housing. As a result of this structure the court has an increased capacity to address the underlying causes of crime for individual offenders. One lawyer suggested that the DCC would be good for some offenders and something was needed because the Main Street court was at capacity. Another mentioned the need to involve more defence counsel in the development of the DCC.

In terms of weaknesses and challenges to the DCC, respondents provided explicit detail. Their concerns included the judge making conditions too onerous for clients, and guilty pleas for the sake of getting a softer sentence. Some felt it should be patterned after the Drug Treatment Court where offenders opt in rather than the DCC where they opt out. Several mentioned political issues, such as the need for government to fully commit itself to provision of services in the court and not use the presence of the court as an image management device for the Olympics. Another pointed out the politics within the system itself could be a barrier. One lawyer stressed the need to get the Defence Bar on side and well informed and another expressed concern that defence counsel would be hesitant to criticize the DCC for fear of being labeled a “non-team player”.

Some respondents suggested that there was no role for defence counsel, their concerns would not be incorporated by DCC stakeholders and they questioned the process of selecting a lawyer for duty counsel at DCC. One lawyer was uncertain what would happen to mentally ill offenders and wondered if there would be compulsory treatment; another suggested the catchment area was too large. Other concerns were that the team approach may erode the rights of the accused and that there is no magic solution for addicted people.

Two respondents said they would not refer clients to the DCC. One noted they already had their own resources and had actually fast-tracked some cases through the regular system. It was noted that if conditions were too onerous some clients might be advised to take jail time in provincial court at Main St. Another suggested there might be too much pressure for immediate guilty pleas at DCC and a shorter sentence may result.

Several defence counsel were unsure of their roles in regards to the DCC. Some were concerned about a possible loss of income if DCC became too bureaucratic, too onerous

and encouraged guilty pleas for lesser offences, irrespective of their due process rights. They stressed that this would lessen the role of defence counsel and decrease their work. To circumvent this process, one respondent suggested that they pay defence for guilty pleas. Another suggested that there would be no role for private counsel. One lawyer, however, expressed the opposite view:

“I believe in my clients and I don’t worry about my business being less busy, as I hope I never see the offenders again. Most defence counsel work hard for their clients. I have too much business now and do mostly cases involving violence.”

There was concern that the few existing services at Provincial Court Main St. might get funneled over to DCC. One lawyer said that if the DCC tried to save money it would lose its focus on good service. Finally, one other lawyer wondered how they would recruit young defence lawyers who gain experience on less serious cases, like the ones intended for DCC.

DCC Steering Committee

At the request of the Lead Secretariat, the Vancouver Downtown Community Court Steering Committee (SC) members were interviewed by the DCC Evaluation Team in regard to three main issues:

- their participation on the DCC Steering Committee;
- the DCC in general;
- their ideas regarding the evaluation of the DCC.

The Research Team interviewed nine DCC Steering Committee members. The information provided summarizes the main themes of the DCC Steering Committee responses with quotes and individual members’ suggestions inserted where appropriate.

Participation on the DCC Steering Committee:

Respondents generally reported that their role on the Committee would involve “*high level*” issues and monitoring as it relates to the Vancouver DCC. This would include an overseeing role in respect to the delivery of services and the operational role of the court, but with no direct involvement. Some respondents had ideas for the evaluation of the DCC from their perspective as members of the Steering Committee.

Several SC respondents noted that there was not a clearly specified goal or terms of reference for them as a Committee. One member suggested that the evaluators would mainly be involved with the Working Group and that group would report to the Steering Committee.

Main Issues / Challenges for the DCC:

Respondents reported that the main challenges for the DCC include:

- The volume of files that the DCC will be dealing with;
- The range of offences may be broader than originally thought; “*to do it right, you have to invest the time*”;

- Adequate and appropriate resources to support the DCC as some SC members were not sure if these exist and one expressed a need for a ‘cushion’ of resources; *“the right resources at the right time”*; resources available for a client which is repatriated back to the community when released from the Burnaby facility.
- Targeting those offenders who *“really want to change”* in order to actually reduce crime and help offenders; other systems such as health look at *“building resiliencies in individuals so they can manage their triggers”*.
- The Downtown Eastside is a challenging place for offenders to return when they are working on personal and criminal issues (such as the conditions of their orders); a system such as health will look at repatriating the person back into the community and may need to look at flexible options / alternatives to the DTES.
- The high expectations of various stakeholders in relation to what the DCC can accomplish;
- The possibility of disagreement about needs of offenders between various DCC stakeholders;
- DCC activities should be focused on creating stability rather than on changing behaviour;
- Members suggested that the DCC should be *“run as a limited defined court and experiment first”*;
- The first few months of the DCC operation would most likely involve working out the processes and procedures.
- Unclear procedural issues with the DCC and specifically in conjunction with the Burnaby Facility. For example, can a person be sentenced to a facility? How is time-served treated? How is a referral made? Will the police start using the facility as a diversion? Is there conditional sentencing?

Members of the Social Services Working Group (SSWG)

Prior to the opening of the Downtown Community Court (DCC) on September 10, 2008, eleven members of the Social Services Working group (SSWG) were interviewed. The respondents were primarily managers representing various systems and organizations that are involved in some manner with the DCC.

The SSWG respondents represented the DCC, Vancouver Police Department, Corrections Branch and Victim Services and Crime Prevention Division (both within the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General), Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC. DCC Crown and Defense participated in the group and were interviewed. The interviews focused on three areas of interests. The first was their participation on the SSWG, the second was their perceptions of the Community Court, and the third centered on their view regarding the evaluation of the DCC.

Participation on the SSWG

The majority of SSWG members had been managers for several years and were very experienced in their respective fields. Some occupied a managerial role while others a

senior role in their organization. The respondents perceived their role on the SSWG as representing their system or agency and supporting the DCC staff. Nearly half the respondents had experience working with developing some type of integrated service.

The majority of respondents were directly involved in managing and developing roles and responsibilities for their own DCC staff and for identifying relevant policy and process issues for the DCC. A few were slated to assume a more operational role once the DCC opened. Several suggested that their roles had changed and they had become more involved in developing policy and processes. This change had time implications for them as well. The role of the SSWG focused on the coordination of front line staff developing practices and processes for the DCC, and assuring accountability to their own systems and organizations. Several members noted that their role on the Working Group had changed over time and that structure and clarity in leadership and management of the group was required so changes in decision-making could be tracked.

The majority of respondents were interested in becoming involved in the DCC because of its innovative approach that involved working collaboratively to assist marginalized clients who are unable to access services. Several members felt that their roles were more related to law than to rehabilitation.

The Downtown Community Court

In terms of knowledge about problem-solving courts, most respondents had visited New York, and others had some knowledge about these courts through information provided by the Centre for Court Innovation. A third of respondents were familiar with the Drug Treatment Court in Vancouver, and with other problem solving courts in Toronto, such as the Mental Health Court. One member had seen other “restorative type” justice processes in other communities.

The members of the SSWG identified the goals of DCC as the following: to reduce offending behavior by identifying and responding to the underlying problems, to improve the lives of offenders and the quality of life in the community, to connect offenders with services, to improve court efficiency and to provide opportunities for inter-agency collaboration and cooperation. Several respondents suggested that the court would have the capacity to deal more quickly with summary conviction offences.

When asked if these goals were both realistic and attainable, the responses were mixed. Some respondents suggested that a real commitment on the part of offenders and the understanding of behaviors were essential, and while there may be short-term improvements, the greatest challenges would be assisting those with mental health issues and addictions to change long-term patterns of behavior. Therefore, reducing recidivism may be unrealistic as the sole goal of the DCC. The majority of respondents were concerned about having adequate resources to meet the goals of the court and about unrealistic expectations for the court. Respondents felt that coordination and collaboration among team members were attainable.

The main differences between the DCC and Provincial Court at Main St. were perceived to be the involvement of agencies and partners, the rehabilitative process, and the timeliness in dealing with cases. Dedicated staff, including Crown, defence and the judges, and better communication among these staff were seen as critical differences from Main St. It was suggested that there was a need for the DCC to be more

preventative than reactive, although it was still unclear about how this would be operationalized.

The main challenges they had faced as members of the SSWG included:

- Variation in knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice system;
- Lack of meaningful community involvement;
- Lack of ability to make decisions and /or in documenting and implementing these decisions;
- Lack of consistent communication between agencies;
- Confusion between being a SSWG and also being a staff member;
- Lack of structure and consistency in project management;
- Differences in agency goals and culture which affected collaboration;
- Unclear objectives and vision from those in senior positions.

When asked how they responded to these challenges, some members did not try to address them because of the hierarchy of their own organizations; others attempted to improve communication and build trust between members; others simply hoped that the opening of the court would resolve many of them. A few people dealt directly with the DCC Coordinator.

When asked how they might do things differently if the opportunity arose in the future, the majority of respondents suggested they would prefer more structure and a leadership role with a clear and documented decision making process. Other suggestions included hiring all staff to work for the DCC (and not remain staff of their own organizations) to promote autonomy and political separation for decision-making. In addition, respondents suggested having the judge more involved in the SSWG process, and finally setting up the DCC as a small, experimental pilot project free from political interference.

When asked what advice they would give to another community interested in developing and implementing a community court, respondents made the following suggestions:

- *“look around carefully first as you may already have what you are seeking”;*
- *“do an environmental scan first, you may not need a new courthouse”;*
- *“it starts with an integrated network and connecting with the court”;*
- *“have caring staff in an effective team and be open to new ideas”;*
- *“start small and use established and familiar relationships to build on”.*

When members were asked about the impending opening of the court all reported they were excited, relieved and/or looked forward to finally going ahead with cases. Several respondents felt staff had lost some momentum as a result of the various delays and that it would have been useful to test cases before the court opened. This would have given them an opportunity to work through some outstanding issues, such as roles and right to information. **Some caution was expressed about the fact that results may not be immediate and challenges such as resources needed time to be assessed and resolved.**

Having a continuing role for the SSWG was not of major concern to respondents as most saw their own roles changing with the opening of the court. In terms of the changing role of the Working Group most respondents saw it evolving into an operational committee, which had the potential to develop and improve procedures, policies and practices. Some suggestions for this operational group included it being more transparent and that all policy and other changes should be well documented. Several members noted the strength of the SSWG members in working together and the accessibility of the Coordinator, however, they also felt that better communication was required.

DCC Staff

Shortly before the official opening of the Vancouver Downtown Community Court (DCC) eleven staff members were interviewed about their opinions and perceptions of the court. The respondents represented those systems and organizations that provide support to the court, and include DCC, Corrections Branch and Victim Services, and the Crime Prevention Division (both within the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General), Ministry of Housing and Social Development, Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, Public Prosecution Service of Canada and Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC. The interview questionnaire focused on three areas - the role of the respondent in the court; perceptions of the Downtown Community Court and problem solving courts more generally, and the evaluation of the DCC.

Roles and Responsibilities

The majority of staff had gone through a selection process to obtain their jobs and most had been involved in the development of the DCC since January 2008. Generally, respondents had no previous experience with problem solving courts and those who had some familiarity had obtained their information in large part from the Internet. The majority of staff had received two weeks of training in April, 2008. Most found it useful for team building and developing relationships, however, others felt their experience was not adequately acknowledged and the training did not deal with the DCC processes in enough detail.

Staff described the structures and processes in place for the DCC in several ways. Those in Corrections were clear about their reporting relationship with the local Corrections manager, as were most staff with their own agencies and services. However, the role and responsibilities of the DCC Coordinator and the management and other committees were unclear to many respondents. Most were not concerned about their own roles at the DCC but were concerned about the activity flow at the court and the potential for what the Judge may ask staff to do and how he may manage them. One staff member was concerned about staffing and wanting to continue to do community engagement even though this responsibility may be subsumed in a new position created for DCC; another expressed concern about the amount of work required by DCC staff.

Since becoming involved with the DCC, the issues facing staff focused on the delays in the opening of court. This contributed to lack of work, lack of focus, no consistent vision and difficulty in working without a home base. One result was that some staff members were sent to other offices. One person saw these delays as positive because they provided

an opportunity to work out issues and to learn to work together. Most staff, however, saw it as frustrating because the court delays made it difficult to engage the community.

Another issue was that line workers were prevented from participating effectively by policies originating in their home systems. One staff noted that *“different staff have come together governed by different policies”* and it was sometimes difficult to find effective ways to work together. Power relations were identified as challenging. One staff member felt there was an imbalance of power between probation officers and justice liaison workers (VCH); another felt it might be intimidating for offenders to be interviewed and assisted by so many workers. Communication between the staff from various agencies and institutions was often difficult but there were effective remedies provided by their own systems. Several staff reported that weekly meetings assisted all concerned in focusing and working together.

The Downtown Community Court

The rationale for the implementation of the DCC was seen by respondents as expediting cases and relieving stresses on the regular court system, dealing with chronic offenders and their problems, using problem solving approaches to reduce offending and being more accountable to the community. Some noted that the systems would work together and identify resources more effectively and address both crime and corresponding health issues.

When considering if these goals were realistic and attainable most respondents felt that they were and while others had some reservations nearly all respondents thought new resources were key to success. Given the co-morbidity of the offenders they would be dealing with the expectations about their potential for major changes unrealistic. Working with the community was generally perceived as positive but there was some concern that while their efforts might make a difference with offenders these might not always be visible in the community. One staff person voiced the concern often heard in the community that the DCC was in response to the Olympics and for that reason might not be concerned with the long-term needs of clients. Consequently, staff widely believed that the establishment of the DCC was in a step in the right direction and so long as it maintained its focus it had the potential to be effective. One noted *“I am an optimist and in my outreach work I have seen incredible things happen when people have secure housing and can be able to interact with society”*.

The majority of staff were interested in becoming involved in the DCC because it gave them the opportunity to work differently; they were part of developing a new system and working interactively with other systems, and it allowed them to work with the DTES population. Several mentioned their interests lay in working with individuals with a multitude of problems and trying to bring about changes in their lives. They saw the limitations of the criminal justice system in changing people, believed that actively working with offenders was more effective than simply talking to them about services, and only by becoming part of the solution could crime be reduced in Vancouver. One respondent noted that:

“empowerment is needed and people need choices, when people act out, they are trying to grasp their last bit of power that they still have, we have taken away their responsibility and must give them information to make choices”.

In terms of what they saw as the primary differences between DCC and the Provincial Court at Main St., a majority of respondents felt the DCC will be more efficient, more focused on problem solving and is more likely to achieve positive outcomes because of the amount of information that will be elicited by the various teams. The DCC was generally perceived to be less punitive and more likely to reduce recidivism as offenders will be held accountable for their behaviour but this would not prevent them from accessing services. In respect to the actual operation of the court, offenders will have more opportunity to interact with the DCC officials - the Judge, Crown and Defense -- and the physical layout of DCC courtroom will be more intimate and much less intimidating than 222 Main St. It was expected that victims and offenders and their families (where involved) will have better experiences in the DCC, there will be fewer court appearances and greater coordination amongst criminal justice officials than in regular court.

When respondents were asked how they felt about the opening of the DCC at the beginning of Sept. 2008, most believed that there may be some initial confusion but that they were as ready as possible and everything would fall into place once they worked cases through the process. Several were quite clear about their own roles, but were concerned about how they would work together across systems. One staff expressed the need for greater structure and direction but at the same time was quite willing to proceed on opening day.

Community Respondents Organizations, Agencies and Groups

During the autumn of 2008, representatives from many community groups were interviewed regarding their perceptions of the Downtown Community Court, as involvement with the community is one of the objectives for the court. The agencies were located primarily in the West End, Downtown and Downtown Eastside (DTES), and involved housing groups, community centres, churches, hotel societies, resident groups, Aboriginal groups, homeless advocacy groups, business groups and seniors groups. In all, 23 individuals representing various community organizations and groups in the three areas were interviewed. The following information is provided from these groups while ongoing focus groups with community members are currently taking place.

The majority of respondents had first heard about the Vancouver Downtown Community Court (DCC) less than two years ago when court staff attended a community meeting. Several people participated in a SPARC meeting with the Native Courtworkers. Other sources of information varied widely from word of mouth, awareness of models such as Red Hook, the DCC community barbeque, and discussions with the DCC Coordinator. However, there was some variation by geographic area. For example, respondents in the West End / Downtown (WED) received their information via the community engagement process that took place in that catchment areas the year before the court opened. Several in the West End had access to the Street Crime Working Group outreach sessions.

In terms of the level of community interest in the DCC, many respondents claimed to have favourable perceptions about the “concept” of the DCC but there was a certain

amount of caution and a “wait and see” attitude, especially in regard to the need for adequate resources to support it and the fact that so little was known about it by the general population. Respondents perceived the goals of the court to deal with the root causes of crime, to deal more effectively and efficiently with crime, to improve the lives of offenders, to treat them with more humanity and respect, and to involve the community as a partner in creating a better response to crime. While several respondents liked the idea of community services they were unsure how their organization would fit into that role. An interesting aspect of the response to the question about goals and purpose was the attention many respondents paid to restorative justice. These respondents suggested victims, offenders and families needed to be involved and that a restorative process, which breaks down the “us” and “them” mentality, was important. Respondents from a variety of organizations in different locales raised the value of “restorative type” approaches. Despite the fact that many respondents were able to identify the goals for the DCC, several people suggested the need for greater information and clarity about the court.

When asked why they thought the DCC was located in Vancouver, the majority of respondents felt the Downtown Eastside (DTES) area had the most serious, visible and intractable crime problem, involving open drug use, drug dealing, homelessness, etc. Several respondents went on to say that the DTES was perceived as an embarrassment by those outside the community, to the city and a clear failure of government, mental health policy tied to a lack of resources. Several respondents thought the 2010 Olympics was a motivating factor for the DCC implementation. Others felt that the regular court system in Vancouver was simply overwhelmed. Many people suggested that the current system does not work and is not rehabilitative so the DCC may provide more options. There was also a feeling that Vancouver was a city with considerable community activism and that some politicians looking for change responded to through the establishment of the DCC in this locale.

Perceived Differences between the DCC and 222 Main St:

When asked about the differences between the DCC and the Provincial Court at 222 Main St., the responses were similar. Most respondents felt that the DCC goals did not reflect the Main St. court and that the DCC was more immediate and more humane. The DCC was seen as more time efficient, less adversarial and more meaningful than the Main St. court:

“the DCC serves community first and the provincial court serves the court”.

There was some concern about the consent of individuals and the sharing of 3rd party information in DCC, which differs from Main St. One respondent suggested it was “*consent by coercion but a better option than Main Street*”. The DCC was seen as a wedge for change.

The issue of fear with the regular court system was raised a number of times as was the way in which people are treated in the jail system. Respondents felt there was the potential for this to be different at DCC and to involve restorative approaches. The DCC triage and holistic approach involving several ministries working together was perceived as another important difference between the two courts. Several respondents felt that for people who really wanted to get out of the criminal justice system the DCC was a better

tool than was the Main St court, because the regular court system is perceived as not rehabilitative.

Community Contact and Involvement between the DCC and the Community

Many respondents, particularly those in the West End, reported they had no ongoing contact with the DCC, since the community engagement process had ended before the court opened. Others were involved in meetings and discussions in the past but now felt there was no clear connection. Others said they were just too busy with direct service responsibilities to attend events at the DCC.

Half the respondents had some ongoing contact with the Coordinator of DCC through email updates, and several said the Coordinator attended their meetings and the Urban Core meetings. However, since the opening of the court, contact with the Coordinator had become less frequent and respondents wanted more contact, to meet DCC staff and to get information about community work service.

The formation of an Advisory Board involving a number of stakeholders was the most common suggestion for collaboration between the DCC and the community. Another suggestion was to have ongoing dialogue between the community and the DCC through monthly 'get togethers' or regular sessions of some kind. However, education and community development were seen as essential first steps to meaningful community involvement because of the lack of knowledge and information that exists among many of the agency members. On the other side, it was felt that DCC staff needed to know more about community agencies and resources and needed to establish a better relationship with them. Some respondents suggested that community groups should have actual physical space at the court.

Other ideas put forward included the need for pamphlets about the DCC that agencies can hand out to members and/or to provide information about the court through local theatre groups. Several respondents felt the DCC should be more proactive in getting information out into the community and even offered their own newsletters as a way of doing this. Other methods included community gatherings, social housing areas, churches, etc. A report back from community events (i.e. Community BBQ) and open houses at night, a contact person at community groups, and a short video with a couple clients speaking about what DCC did or did not do for them were suggested. A monthly or bi-monthly report to the community with photos and graphs was suggested.

Suggestions about having an outreach person go into the community and access groups that already met were made. Another suggestion was disseminating information through an Advisory Council and to have the Advisory Council represent business, service providers, the activist community and possibly those who went through the court.

Challenges Facing the DCC:

When asked about the challenges they perceived facing the DCC, respondents indicated the following:

- Lack of housing, resources, mental health and detox services;
- Lack of coordination and communication with one another and the community;

- Concern about capacity of the DCC to accommodate the number of people going through the court;
- Potential conflict between staff with different mandates from their home organizations;
- The lack of long term resources would affect the ability of the court to meet its goals;
- The bureaucracy of the DCC, which is an arm of government, may restrict its ability to meet its objectives;
- The impact of guilty pleas on offenders who do not complete DCC orders and have to return to court;
- Need to ensure the public understands what DCC is and is “thoroughly and respectfully engaging communities in the process”. The public needs to know that it is effective and crime is reduced or change is apparent. There was a suggestion that the community needs to know what limitations exist;
- The Court may not be sensitive enough to women offenders and fully understand the context of their offending, e.g. such as in domestic violence retaliation.

Strengths of DCC:

Respondents perceived the DCC as having the following strengths:

- Offenders will be better serviced where there is an integrated, holistic approach;
- Offenders will receive more humane and respectful treatment;
- Offenders will be dealt with more quickly which will give more legitimacy to the court;
- The whole concept of trying to do something different is good and serves the criminal justice system;
- The multi-service network model will promote coordination and involve the offender in planning;
- The DCC has the potential to be better than the existing system and community service has the potential to be more of a valuable experience;
- The DCC provides more opportunities for engaging participants in the process and for participation on a more meaningful level.

The Relationship between the DCC and Community Organizations or Members

Suggestions for creating and/or improving the interaction between community services and the DCC included the following:

- Better communication among services that are already involved in the DCC;
- More information about the court process including community education is required;

- Increases in housing needs to come with supports so individuals can move from the street to housing;
- Better liaison between clients of organizations and agencies and the court;
- The DCC should be aware of and sensitive to victims, Aboriginal participants, women, disabled people, the lesbian, gay, transgendered, and bisexual (LGTB) community and the organizations representing their interests. It was also important to ensure that the DCC make appropriate referrals and reduce the potential for clients to be shuffled from one area to the next.
- The lack of official sharing of information protocols was identified by respondents as being important and affecting the interaction between the DCC and service organizations. Again, the need for restorative approaches involving offender, victim and community reconciliation was identified.

Community Information Needs

Many respondents felt the community, including ordinary citizens and service providers, need information about:

- the purpose of the court and what it was trying to achieve;
- the services the court will provide and the agencies that comprise the DCC; the kinds of offences the DCC adjudicates;
- the appropriate people at the DCC for community organizations to contact;
- the hours of operation of the DCC;
- how the rights of the accused are protected;
- the range of sentences used by the court and the types of community service utilized.

Some respondents suggested that the DCC provide profiles or generic case examples and a timeline as to the nature of follow-up. Another respondent suggested a profile of what service had been performed in the community and the kinds of court sentences administered. Another suggested that messaging was important and provided an example:

“when the province announced that police were flying people back to their original province to deal with their warrant, they didn’t take into account that mostly people didn’t want to go back to their home province because of all kinds of reasons but that they were willing to deal with the warrant”.

Aggregated Interview Comments about the Evaluation: Suggested Foci and Concerns

This section of the report brings together common foci and concerns expressed by interview respondents and focus groups about the evaluation process. Stakeholder comments that are unique and specific to a specific group are listed in the respective sections following the general comments.

General Evaluation Interests: Part I: Evaluation Focus

In general, respondents indicated that the evaluation should focus on:

- An analysis of different recidivism metrics.
 - Health and mental health metrics (i.e., contacts with emergency services).
 - Police-related contacts (i.e., arrests/charges).
 - Court-related contacts (i.e., cases/convictions)
 - Corrections-related contacts (i.e., CSOs and incarceration sentences).
 - Breaks in offending.
 - Changes in the type of offending.
- An analysis of change to crime and disorder in the DCC catchment area.
 - Pre and post DCC implementation.
 - As compared to surrounding/comparable areas.
- An analysis of court case characteristics.
 - Types of offences.
 - Rate of refusal to participate in the DCC process.
 - Appearances in court.
 - Type and count.
 - Adjournments from court.
 - Type and count.
 - Time spent by different staff on different types of cases.
 - Alternative measures vs. intensive case management.
 - Efficiency of the DCC process (time to disposition).
 - Time from disposition to sentence completion.
 - Impact of different DCC outcomes (i.e., CSOs vs. incarceration) and intervention (i.e., alternative measures vs. intensive case management).
- An analysis of community views of the DCC.
 - Public awareness of the DCC and its goals.
 - Process of community engagement.
 - The views of victims on the experience, process and outcomes of the DCC.
 - The views of NGOs on the DCC process and outcomes.
- An analysis of services provided in the DCC and Main Street courthouse.
 - The evolution of referrals to service agencies over time.
 - How disagreement from DCC staff is addressed.
 - Are there roles that take precedence?
 - An analysis of the triage process.
 - An analysis of the case management process.
 - Accessibility of service referrals and client compliance.
 - The effectiveness of outreach workers.
 - An analysis of the attempt(s) to connect clients with services.
 - Length of time spent in a referred service.
 - Completion vs. non-completion rates.
 - The process of monitoring referrals by DCC staff.
 - The effectiveness of the DCC as a connector to client services.
 - The effectiveness of different types of resources/services/case management approaches.
 - Identification of gaps in services.

- Are the services required to meet the needs of the offender amongst those available?
 - Do referred offenders attend programs?
 - What is the profile of wait-times for specific services?
 - The difference between the case management plans of the DCC and BMHA.
- An offender-focused analysis.
 - Offender demographics.
 - Changes in employment patterns.
 - Changes in mobility and residential status.
 - A focus on addiction and addiction-related outcomes.
 - A focus on mental health and health outcomes.
 - Incremental vs. dramatic changes.
 - An examination of co-morbidity.
 - A focus on other measures of stability.
 - An analysis of offender characteristics that predict “success” or “failure”.
 - Their experiences with the DCC as compared to Main Street.
 - Motivation for participating in DCC process, positive (i.e., assistance with underlying problems) and negative (i.e., avoid traditional prosecution and incarceration).
 - The offenders’ in-depth views on changes in their lives as a result of DCC involvement.
 - The case study approach for selected offenders (both success and failure cases).
- An analysis of defence/offender participation in the DCC.
 - Reasons for or against participation and their source (i.e., is defence encouraging/discouraging participation in specific circumstances).

Defence Specific Interests: Evaluation Foci

- Police and Crown charging practices in the catchment area pre and post DCC implementation.
 - Examining whether certain minor offences that would not have ended up in court in the past, will now (DCC and net-widening).

General Evaluation Interests: Part II: Evaluation Concerns

- In general, respondents expressed concern regarding:
- The comparability of different courts (i.e., DCC vs. Main Street).
- The provision and maintenance of social services for high needs offenders.
 - Access to treatment services.
- The issue of communication.
 - Getting up-to-date information on the operation of the DCC.
 - Sharing information from different agencies within the DCC.
- Entering accurate and timely information into the shared database.
- A properly controlled comparison group, although desirable, is not practical.

DCC Steering Committee Specific Issues: Evaluation Concerns

- Need many different types of success metrics for the DCC.
- The difficulty in changing entrenched behavior in high-needs clientele.

Social Services Working Group (SSWG) Specific Issues: Evaluation Concerns

- Needed assistance with the creation of databases for both DCC processes and the evaluation.

DCC Staff Specific Issues: Evaluation Concerns

- Feasibility of tracking offenders six months post-court
- Is this a reasonable goal given the system “warm-up” period?

It is apparent from the summary of evaluation interests, both foci and concerns, that respondents discussed key elements, which serve as requisites for a comprehensive evaluation of the DCC. The research team was pleased with the depth of the responses provided by the respondents and we have already incorporated, or are planning to incorporate, the majority of these interests into the evaluation framework, as they are consistent with the goals of the evaluation.

Downtown Community Court (DCC): Staff Survey Summary

OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS FOUR MONTHS AFTER DCC OPENING

**Conducted by: SFU Research Team
February, 2009**

Downtown Community Court (DCC): Staff Survey Summary

An important aspect of monitoring and evaluating a model program such as the Downtown Community Court is to elicit the opinions and perceptions of program managers and staff particularly during the first year operation of the program. This may be done at various intervals. The importance of this strategy is two-fold. First, to find out how the program is functioning; and second, to feed information back to program decision-makers. It was for these reasons that the SFU Research Team conducted a short survey four months after the opening of the court.

Methodology

The survey content was consistent with the kind of information that is required of any new and often evolving program – questions relating to function, operation, processes, roles and role conflicts, changes, challenges, understandings etc. These were incorporated into 10 questions. Examples of questions relating to these major areas are, “What are your general impressions of the court and how it functions?”; “Has the way it functions met your expectations?”; and “What changes in process do you think still need to happen in order to achieve the goals of the court?” Some questions provided probes to assist the respondent in better understanding and replying to the questions.

The survey was distributed to 43 managers and staff of the DCC on January 26, 2009. These staff included Community Corrections personnel, Court Services, Sheriffs, Crown and Defence counsel, Judiciary, Forensic Psychiatric Services, MHSD, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Police Department, BC Housing, Victim Services, and the Native Courtworker program. One or more people from each of the areas responded. The cover page of the survey described the rationale for the survey, requested the completion and return of the survey within a designated period of time, and gave assurances of the confidential and anonymous nature of the survey.

Response Rate

Twenty-eight (28) of the surveys were returned – the majority at the requested time and the rest a week or two later. Four of the surveys were filled in a very incomplete manner, leaving 24 surveys that were fully completed. The number of fully completed surveys comprises a 55.8 % return rate which may be satisfactory for a general population survey but was disappointing. Thus the results cannot be seen as representative of the views of all staff.

Findings

The findings will be presented in the following way. Each question will be identified in sequence and the range of responses discussed. Most questions generated positive, negative or mixed responses. Some of responses could be grouped into themes and will be discussed in that manner.

Question 1: What is your general impression of the court and the way it functions? (including existing challenges/strengths)

People quite understandably have different takes on the meaning of a question like this and the responses generally fell into five categories – how the court is run and efficiency; teams working together and whether or not integrated; effects of the DCC on offenders; community accountability and the physical layout of the court. More people focused on the first three components than on the last two.

- a. How the court runs and its efficiency: Some of the positive responses included the court running more smoothly and being more consistent; the court being timely, efficient, competent; with a dedicated and committed staff; staff levels are exceeding expectations; faster court orders; good access to forensics; swiftness and timeliness of dispositions; the court is a vast improvement over provincial court and is adhering close to its mandate. Some of the more negative responses included bureaucratic interference from Victoria; multiple appearances for offenders; too much like regular court; and too many adjournments with cases not being resolved at first appearance. Mixed responses included the quickness of the court causing problems for staff trying to keep up; court has the potential to be effective but is not there yet; that court is now functioning satisfactorily but disjointed at the beginning; that the court is still learning and evolving and rules not always defined; and that the overall experience is good but communication needs to be improved. One person simply said it was still too early to tell how the court was working.
- b. Teams working together: The most positive response was that teams were working well together. A mixed response was that teams are not fully integrated yet but when integration does occur the team works well. A negative response was the occurrence of friction between partner agencies. There was limited integration and staff tending to continue to work as if in their previous roles. This resulted in working within a team but with individual agency policies.
- c. Effects of the DCC on offenders: Probably the most consistently negative responses were that offender accountability was lacking and that offenders were simply getting too many chances. A positive response was that there is easy

- access to services for offenders, which gets them more quickly into solutions, and that the court is respectful of offenders. A mixed response is that there is now less for offenders to complain about, but several respondents indicated that offenders would be made more accountable if there were immediate dispositions and court review dates possible.
- d. Community accountability: The few responses to this component were diametrically opposed – either the court was thought to be accountable to the community or it was not.
 - e. Physical layout of court - One respondent said that the court was insecure and unsafe.

Question 2: Has the way it functions met your expectations? If yes, in what way? If no, why not? (include both administrative process as well as justice outcome issues)

Nine respondents gave an outright ‘no’ to this question and five an outright ‘yes’ but within these responses they gave reasons for their opinion. Six respondents gave a mixed response. Three people gave no answer, three said they didn’t know what to expect, and person one said it was a ‘work in progress’. Another said he or she was open to whatever processes work for offenders. The range of responses has a clear overlap with responses to the first question:

a. Positive

- Dealing with clients is more streamlined, faster and more efficient;
- Addresses needs of clients within a psycho-social model; and,
- Greater respect shown to offenders and they are involved in decision making.

b. Negative

- Process is too offender focused and not justice focused;
- Clients are not held accountable and given too many chances;
- Too much stepping on toes between staff;
- Not enough understanding how other staff work and too little information sharing;
- Too like regular court;
- Only about the law and run like a probation office;
- Victim outcomes poor;
- Not enough hands-on assistance by Triage Team;
- Not enough accused being considered for alternative measures;
- Disjointed teams, red tape, political interference;
- Housing resources still a big need;
- Very little involvement with the judge;
- Lacking in dispute resolution/conferencing;

- No access to shared database; and,
- Conditional service orders (CSO) used too often for chronic offenders.

c. Mixed

- Process is generally good but there are limited sentencing options;
- Generally fits with expectations and information sharing helps;
- Functions well for clients but at times is run like a probation office; and,
- Seems efficient but efficiency can sometimes compromise the effectiveness of sentence.

Question 3: Has the process remained as originally conceptualized as a community court process? If not what changes have occurred? (i.e., are community agencies still as involved, is connecting the offender to them happening as envisioned originally, etc.?)

Again, there were five outright ‘yes’ and nine ‘no’ responses with comments and several ‘mixed’ to this question. Almost all responses focused on the community agencies and the degree to which DCC and clients are involved with them. Generally far more respondents felt that greater involvement with community agencies was required than those who felt it was adequate. The community responses are identified below followed by responses relating to other aspects of the process.

- a. Community agencies: Positive responses to the involvement of community agencies included clients being connected to services, community being willing to be involved in the case management of clients, and the efforts of staff to stay connected to community and to developing community partnerships. The negative responses included the requirement for the community to be more involved and engaged with DCC; not enough community presences on a daily basis as DCC is too court focused; more coordination is required between health and social services and more recovery houses required; and there is no input from community or victims into DCC priorities. The mixed responses included a changing process that was not yet solidified; DCC is now working towards community engagement with the hiring of a manager and that there needs to be more CWS placements especially outside of the DTES area. The latter was a concern about the use of services more generally, i.e., they are almost exclusively within the DTES area.
- b. Other Process Issues: There was a wide range of process concerns expressed by respondents including: multiple appearances and adjournments, the latter often created by defence bar; confusion around Triage Team and whether they are/should be involved with all offenders; offenders not being in recovery or CWS right away; again – clients not being held responsible when they ‘screw up’; and, criteria for DCC clients are too broad now, but at the same time, adjustments have been made to the process to make it run more smoothly. One respondent expressed a concern about the front door search gate claiming it was unwelcoming to clients coming to court.

Question 4: Have you seen any differences emerge in the way the DCC operates over the four months since it has been open? (i.e., differences in established procedures, timelines to process a case or secure needed information etc?)

The vast majority of respondents had seen some changes in the way the DCC had operated since opening in September 2008. These fell into changes in procedure and changes in appearances and volume. Finally we note some general comments in response to this question.

- a. Changes in procedure – meeting offender needs seems to be the primary reason for changes in procedure and one respondent noted that it is important that this occurs quickly. Some specific changes such as in LSS applications and having an E. Fry volunteer in court were also noted. Procedures relating to how cases are referred to the case management team, who interviews which clients, and where Triage meetings occur (and whether other agencies are involved) have all changed or are in flux. There is no longer a resource person in court to give oral reports to the judge. Depending on what the court has ordered can also change procedures when working with clients. The case management system was also perceived as changing, processes are not consistent and there is a lack of adequate communication among members. However, changes to case management are because of the focus on those clients who want help.
- b. Changes in Appearances and Volume – multiple adjournments and the handling of “K” files are now common and one result of this is many more appearances and a higher volume of cases. Delays for lack of court time are resulting as volume increases.

A rationale given for changes is the necessity to optimize staff resources and ensure that the court process runs more efficiently. One respondent noted that information collection and procedures have yet to be streamlined in order to address the workflow. Staff and managers were seen as very resilient in responding to needed changes but this was often hampered by lack of information sharing and the need to work on staff integration and understanding about procedures was identified.

Question 5: What changes in process do you think still need to happen in order to achieve the goals of the court?

This question generated more than just suggestions about changes in process. Many respondents interpreted the question to mean any changes that they felt were required to improve the court and its operation and outcomes, which resulted in a wide range of responses. Five respondents had no answer or were not sure what changes were needed.

Three themes emerged from this question – needed services, changes in process and offender accountability.

- a. Needed Services – While the court is seen to run well it is hampered by the lack of adequate services. The needed services include treatment, detox and housing for offenders. One respondent noted that a shelter administered by court services or corrections would be useful. The DCC also needed to invest in more public education and awareness services in the community and probation officers need to

be out in the community so they can be made more aware of the lack of resources for their clients.

b. Changes in Process – these process changes included: the need for offenders to be represented by a full-time DCC counsel rather than by private lawyers in order to reduce number of appearances; more creativity in sentencing; more community ownership of cases outside the DTES; more private business and community involvement in case management plans; and, greater integration between DCC and direct service agencies. Other process suggestions were: having centralized files; increase alternative measures without a charge; and have less case management by the court.

c. Offender Accountability - as in other parts of the survey there were concerns expressed here as well about the need for offenders to be held more accountable, for the judges to be more firm and for public safety to be a greater consideration by the court. Having a judge who means what he says was also identified.

Question 6: Do you think any changes in your role are required to be more effective and more satisfied with the role? If yes, what would you like to do differently?

Four respondents gave no answer to this question while only three people gave an outright ‘no’ in response to this question. Included in this group were those who spoke about their roles as being satisfying because of the flexibility and encouragement they received in allowing their roles to evolve, and other who said it was too early to tell because of the constantly evolving nature of their roles. The remaining respondents all had suggestions about changes they would like to see. Three themes emerged about suggestions for change – more time for client work, needing more staff and reducing outside influences on role.

a. More time for client work. There is a need to be client-centred and work with clients but this can be compromised by the time it takes to do paperwork (notes, statistics etc.) and the amount of breaches to process. Appearing at the request of the court also takes time away from client work. However, one respondent actually wanted to present more information to the courts, if permitted. Another noted that more time was needed with the victim especially in cases where the accused is in custody and seeking release on a spousal assault.

b. Needing more staff or assistance within role: Several respondents noted that their role required more staff as they did a lot of problem-solving and if more staff were available, they could do more outreach. More staff would also be needed for preparing cases because the pace of the court would eventually be unsustainable given the increasing file load.

c. Reducing outside influences on role: Several respondents felt their home Ministries or agencies needed to be clearer about the barriers that affected the role of their staff at DCC. One respondent wanted less decision-making in Victoria and more autonomy and freedom to make connections to the community. One felt a clearer managerial structure was required and another respondent wanted more access to DCC data system. Better communication about their roles and responsibilities was also needed.

Question 7: Has there been any role conflict or confusion among those involved in the operation of the court? If yes, what are they and how have they been resolved (or not)?

Fully seventeen (17) of the respondents replied ‘yes’ to this question so there was more agreement here than in any other survey question. Role conflict was often reported as philosophical and resulted from different mandates among agencies, often between probation officers and community workers. These conflicts included information sharing restrictions, who makes contact with the victim, how to deal with clients with mental health problems, who presents what information in court and lack of clarity around the roles of the Triage and Case Management teams. Some of the responses put forward as to how to resolve conflicts were the following: that staff resolved some of these issues on their own; that management became involved in the resolution of some; that more education on FOI/POP Act provisions was required; and that getting clear direction from one person would be helpful. One respondent noted that some workers had roles outside of DCC that could create conflict and add additional pressures to their workloads, thus inhibiting collaboration and integration with their team.

Role confusion was perceived in terms of knowing who is doing what and who has what responsibilities. Confusion about these can lead to clients ‘falling through the cracks’.

Several respondents felt that community groups did not understand other agency groups, and there were sometimes attempts by community and support groups to dictate DCC practice. Pressures from home agencies to do outside activities can also take away from the ability of the individual to be a DCC team member. Inconsistent messages from management also contributed to confusion. Confusion about referral processes sometimes resulted when roles and responsibilities were unclear, for example, one person was confused about which clients to see and whether to connect them if they already have a lawyer. Another reported that there was not an understanding of the role of sheriffs and police were often unclear about criteria for admission and scope of DCC. One respondent noted that the original concept of all DCC workers having equal job descriptions did not necessarily work as all workers were seen as independent and working within their job-defined roles. At the same time, however, several respondents suggested that greater understanding and collaboration is starting to occur. An example of this was the early role confusion between outside agencies and the DCC which now is getting resolved.

Question 8: Do you feel accused understand what is going on at DCC any differently than at Main St. provincial courts? What is the nature of the difference?

Respondents generally felt that most offenders were not really aware of the differences between DCC and Main St. and required explanations either from their own defence counsel or from staff people at DCC. One person felt that offenders are aware that it is a new courthouse and another that it is seen as having faster access to resources, but there was still a learning curve particularly for those offenders who do not go through triage or case management. Several respondents suggested that there were a small number of accused who may know that resources and programs are available but do not understand the DCC process. Suggested remedies to this included a clear and concise information sheet but there may also be the problem that the actual differences between DCC and Main St. are overstated.

Several respondents expressed the concern that offenders simply see the court as lenient and may take advantage of this. This concern related primarily to offenders who are anxious to get out of custody and/or avoid incarceration so will agree to anything to achieve these ends. Again, there was the recurring theme that the court is too lenient and breaches do not result in anything meaningful for offenders.

On the positive side, however, it is felt that some offenders are aware that DCC is trying to help them, they feel listened to and cared about and demonstrate an understanding of the court and take full advantage of what is offered.

Question 9:

Are offenders getting into needed services? If not what is happening to them?

While seven respondents did not answer this question or did not know whether offenders were getting into needed services, those who did respond identified lack of services and waitlists as impeding offenders getting into needed services. In terms of coordination of service, some respondents saw this as an on-going effort on the part of DCC staff.

a. Needed services: Some of the needed services identified by respondents were treatment beds, specialized treatment and the Burnaby Facility. And for those who are not ready for treatment, community services may still be required to prepare for treatment and recovery. Mental health services were identified as being too restrictive in terms of admission. Several respondents noted that while there is access to short term housing (shelters) and some BC Housing, this access is limited. Housing was mentioned in various parts of the survey as being an outstanding need as was the need for more housing and treatment services outside the DTES area. One respondent suggested an employment counselor be placed at the DCC to assist accused with paid work.

b. Waitlists: The issue of waitlists to get needed services was a significant response. Waitlists are seen as a major barrier for clients who are motivated and need access to services, particularly to treatment. Waitlists were also identified as impeding clients getting safe and affordable housing and accessing mental health services including admission to mental health teams. Several more respondents noted that when there are no available services it is demoralizing for both staff and offenders because the latter lose the motivation to go to treatment if waiting is too long and at present it can be up to several months. However, it was also mentioned that the time needed to receive income assistance has improved for clients, and those in-custody can apply for legal aid services.

Question 10: How are you documenting your own work with offenders, in what format and where do you keep the information?

This question revealed a wide range of methods of record keeping involving the shared database, their own ministry/agency systems and/or their own notes and file keeping.

a. Shared database: Approximately half the respondents said they entered data into the DCC Shared Database. However, one person suggested that data may be entered in different ways because of a lack of clear direction and updated training about how to enter it. The end result is that those entering data into the shared database may not be using it effectively. Several respondents suggested that the

- shared database needed to be updated and made more user-friendly with data entered in chronological order in order that access would be easier. There was only one respondent who only used the DCC shared database whereas other respondents used it as only one part of their information collection methods.
- b. Home agency systems/shared database: The majority of respondents document their work on their own systems, such as CORNET, Paris, or their agency provided information systems. One respondent noted a responsibility to their own system that they are familiar with and bound by. Eleven staff reported using their home systems as well as adding data to the shared database. Home systems were seen as the primary entry and one respondent noted that familiarity with these systems made it easier to input data into them. However, some staff used their own agency system in combination with the shared database.
- c. Individual record-keeping: Other methods for documenting activities and information included intake forms, monthly agency reports, DCC monthly statistics, journals, triage reports, hand written notes, and their own notes including meeting notes, for generating statistics and time management monthly updates to staff. One respondent also kept daily statistics for in-custody and out of custody appearances, including adjournments, dispositions, warrants issued and K-files.

Conclusions

This survey gives us a picture of the perceptions of 24 out of 43 staff members of the DCC at a particular point in time. It may be useful for decision-makers to look at their program from the perspective of these staff and consider some of the concerns and suggestions for change that were expressed. Most notably, these relate to improved communication, and integration, role clarity, offender issues and the desire to have more community contact and involvement. There was a need expressed for more consistent record keeping as well as to have better co-operation and collaboration among staff. It is fair to say that a model program such as this goes through many iterations and changes as it 'irons out wrinkles' in the first few months' of operation. Our goal is to provide information that may benefit funders, clients, managers, and staff alike. Finally, our intent from this preliminary effort is also to further analyze the responses to inform subsequent survey development.

Downtown Community Court Staff Survey II: Opinions and Perceptions Two and A Half Years After Opening

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Executive Summary

The intent of the present survey was to 1) compare the opinions and perceptions about the Downtown Community Court by its staff members two and one half years after the opening of the court with the opinions and perceptions of staff recorded four months after its opening in September 2008, and 2) summarize the primary issues identified by both sets of staff. Twenty-four staff members were surveyed on each occasion. These included Community Corrections personnel, Court Administration, Sheriffs, Crown and Defence counsel, Judiciary, Forensic Psychiatric Services, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Police Department, BC Housing, Victim Services, and the Native Courtworker program. It was deemed important to understand from the staff perspective how they thought the DCC was achieving its goals as a problem-solving court – what the strengths and challenges were in terms of process and structure and what might be perceived as areas in need of change. The DCC staff composition is unique in that it is comprised of more Health and Social Services representatives than are normally associated with a traditional court, as well as having in place dedicated justice personnel.

The primary results are discussed in detail in the conclusions, however, it is clear that many of the issues raised by participant staff in the first survey remain at the forefront of concern for the participant staff two and one half years later: the need for more service availability for clients, improved communication with staff and increased community involvement were key issues in both survey results. The achievement of offender accountability in the context of the perception that the DCC is a lenient court also emerges from both surveys as in need of proof. Along that same line, financial accountability for the specialized features of DCC was identified in the most recent survey as an issue. Finally, in the 2011 survey, the problem of appropriate court security versus the informal community vision for the court provided some tension, as it had not done in the first survey outcomes.

Downtown Community Court Staff Survey II: Opinions and Perceptions Two and A Half Years after Opening

It has been argued that the *culture* of problem-solving courts, such as the Downtown Community Court (DCC) represents, differs from traditional courts more than with any other element (Porter, Rempel, & Mansky, 2010, p. 22). In particular, “court actors were willing to move away from the deliberately impersonal or ‘objective’ roles they traditionally maintain towards each other, defendants (accused) and victims (Ibid, p.22). It is also said that the judges, lawyers, and court staff in these courts “embrace a vision of their professional responsibilities that allows them to consider the context in which a crime takes place and the circumstances and conditions that contribute to criminal behavior” (Ibid., p.22-23). Therefore in any assessment of that culture, the perceptions and opinions of those key court actors is important, in order to determine if such a vision is in place.

The Downtown Community Court (DCC), which opened in Vancouver in 2008, is the first community court in Canada, based in part on the successful Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, New York. The DCC was structured to differ from the traditional justice system in several important ways:

- the court process is more timely;
- it has an integrated approach to assessing and managing offenders; and,
- it is connected to the community.

- derived from the Downtown Community Court website

The same legal opportunities to craft justice responses to offenders do exist in both traditional and community courts, however, the same availability of resources may differ, restricting the options for traditional court.

Along with the opinions and perceptions of the community service agency representatives working with the DCC and its clients, which was gathered in other research by the SFU research team, it was felt important also to capture similar information from the DCC staff members. Since this is a pilot project, it was thought important to learn from these key groups about the strengths and challenges they perceived about the court, in order to engage in a “Lessons Learned” exercise.

In February 2009, the SFU research team submitted a report on the findings from the first staff survey undertaken four months after the opening of the Downtown Community Court (DCC). It was felt important to document the opinions and perceptions of the staff on how the program was perceived to be functioning shortly after its implementation. Since staff are individuals responsible for implementing the policy and procedures of the DCC on a daily basis, their perceptions and their opinions about those operations is important. A second purpose was then to provide feedback (the Lessons Learned) to program and policy decision makers.

In Spring, 2011, staff surveys were again distributed to examine subsequent perceptions after the court had been in operation for two and one half years. It also allows for a monitoring of changes in those expressed perceptions and opinions over time.

It should also be mentioned at the beginning of the report that one thing which became apparent in both survey results was that at times it was hard to dissect DCC workplace environment/culture issues from DCC operations/systems issues.

Methodology

The SFU research team members spent time in the DCC environment to develop a clearer understanding of what components of the process and outcomes would be salient for survey exploration. These were identified in formal meetings with administrators and staff, informal “shadowing” of key individuals, sitting in on Triage meetings, and with courtroom observations.

The survey content was consistent with the kind of information that is required of any new and often evolving program – questions relating to function, operation, processes, roles, changes, challenges, understandings, etc. These were incorporated into 10 questions.

Basically, the same ten questions were employed for the 2011 survey, with the exception of a simplification in wording of Question #3, a change in Question #4 to reflect the additional time passed since opening, and a rewording of Question #7 in order to provide more relevant information (see Appendix X for a listing of the questions). These questions generally relate to the DCC’s function, operation, processes, roles of key actors, and the challenges and strengths of the program. Examples of questions relating to these major areas are, “What are your general impressions of the court and how it functions?”; “Has the way it functions met your expectations?”; and, “What changes in process do you think still need to happen in order to achieve the goals of the court?” Some questions provided probes to assist the respondent in better understanding and replying to the questions.

The second staff survey was distributed internally to 35 DCC staff, including Community Corrections personnel, Court Services, Sheriffs, Crown and Defence counsel, Judiciary, Forensic Psychiatric Services, MSD, Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Police Department, BC Housing, Victim Services, and the Native Courtworker program. However, it must be noted that the staff composition changed over the two and one half time period such that it was not necessarily the same staff participating as did in the earlier survey. The cover page of the survey described the rationale for the survey, requested the completion and return of the survey sealed and mailed to research staff within a designated period of time, and gave assurances of the confidential and anonymous nature of the survey.

Response Rate

Twenty-four (24) of the surveys were returned – the majority at the requested time and the rest a week or two later. The number of fully completed surveys comprise a 69% return rate. The return rate for the 2009 survey was 56%.

Findings

The findings will be presented in a format similar to the first report. That is, each question will be identified in sequence and the range of responses discussed. Most questions generated positive, negative or mixed responses. After three iterations of examination, responses were grouped into themes.

Question 1: What is your general impression of the court and the way it functions? (including existing challenges/strengths)

The responses to this question were generally positive. The different perspectives of the staff were seen as both successes and challenges. Five respondents saw the DCC as being a very good idea which has now failed, mostly because of the number of breaches committed by clients. All 24 staff answered this question.

Six staff mentioned offenders breaching their court orders and the leniency with which this is treated. A few respondents referred to the DCC as a “revolving door.” The breaches issue implies that the respondents did not believe the DCC was achieving its goal of addressing the offenders’ needs, or changing their offending behaviour. One person commented that they believed breaches are recorded in the stats of 222 Main Street; not at the DCC.

“What do you do with an accused who has 10 breaches of his sentence?”

“I believe that the intentions of the court to deal with local and summary issues is helpful. But the number of breaches occurring belies the issues that services as part of the court are really assisting people to change their ways.”

One positive type of response from staff related to the belief that because of the number of services provided at the DCC, the accused and complainants receive better services. One respondent referred to the services as a “one stop shop” at DCC.

Another positive comment was based upon the belief that the Court is more informed about clients before it. But, in reality, the same kind of detailed and current information on offenders and their circumstances is possible to acquire in traditional court, that is, there is the legal opportunity to do so. However, traditional court often does not have the court time needed to gather the information.

More recently, the triage process was perceived to have changed at DCC, such that the representatives from service organizations do not participate at the early morning meetings to assess offender needs and consider what might constitute appropriate services in that regard. The result of this seems to be the perception on the one hand, by the community organizations, that they have been distanced from the decision making, and, on the other, the perception of staff is that this makes the process more streamlined and reduces their workload. In any event, one unintended consequence may be a widening of a gap between the court and the community components (see SFU Community Service Organization Report - 2011).

There is also an overall perception that clients are treated with more respect by judges and staff in DCC.

Physical Layout of the Court:

A few respondents mentioned the physical layout of the court as having a detrimental effect on the DCC. For example, three staff mentioned the DCC as being too security conscious. This contributes to lack of trust between clients and staff. There seems to be a lack of understanding by Sheriffs about what the Court is. Another respondent mentioned the open concept cubicles as causing stress and inefficiency.

“Having the sheriffs meet and search everyone who comes in is a huge barrier in building trusting relationships with clients facing multiple challenges. Sheriffs can be very nasty to clients.”

“Programs could be located in a space not so security conscious for clients voluntarily attending DCC.”

How the Court Operates & Its Efficiency:

Four staff mentioned that the DCC was a far faster process than 222 Main Street or other traditional court houses and there are less delays. Decisions are also quick and well informed. It is felt that the lack of a long wait to attend court is more advantageous to clients. In addition, communication is faster and more efficient because of all the services provided at the DCC (many services are off site). One staff member noted that they felt the DCC was too expensive to run, especially for the poor results and additional overtime for court staff due to contested bails being processed at DCC.

“Court functions exceptionally well relative to the alternative at 222 Main Street. Most advantageous to clients is that they do not have a long wait to attend court to have their matter heard. For clients on the CMT, they are more comfortable attending DCC and often report that they feel like the judge and staff (who are familiar with their criminal and personal history) treat them with respect and show them that they care and want to help. One of the biggest differences is DCC can be more of a one stop shop, especially for the high needs clients on CMT (Case Management Team).”

“I think the overall expense of running this court for the poor results/outcome makes this one of the biggest financial [xxxxxx] in some time now. Everyone knows the DCC doesn’t meet the purpose it was set up for. Fail.”

Question 1 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

Interestingly, there was only one respondent in the 2009 survey who commented that the DCC was insecure and unsafe. In the most recent survey, however, the main concern expressed about security was that it was too intrusive and the court was too security conscious - a problem that is perceived to contribute to a lack of trust between staff and clients.

The issue of teams working together was seen to be more problematic in the initial 2009 staff survey – understandable given that the teams had not yet fully integrated. It was also mentioned in the 2009 survey that there was some friction between partner agencies – a point which did not arise in responses from the current survey in which successful collaboration appeared to be the general consensus.

For court efficiency, the 2009 survey respondents stated that the court was functioning satisfactorily and evolving through a learning curve experience to become more effective.

On the other hand, a few from the current survey felt that the DCC was not cost-effective in the processing of offenders.

Some from the 2009 survey also worried about government corporate interference, which may have in part resulted from the geographic distance to Victoria and the difficulty that can make to staying connected.

Respondents from both surveys seem to feel that the DCC was quicker in the processing of offenders.

Assessments of DCC offender accountability remained about the same in both surveys, that is, it is felt that offender accountability is lacking in the dispositions handed down which contributes to the "revolving door" nature of DCC.

Respondents in both surveys identified the positive outcomes for clients as being how they are actually treated in the courtroom and the fact that the services they need are more immediately in place for them.

Question 2: Has the way it functions met your expectations? If yes, in what way? If not, why not? (include both administrative process as well as justice outcome issues)

Thirteen respondents commented positively; seven said no; two said yes and no; and two did not answer. One respondent noted that they were proud to be part of DCC in terms of justice outcomes, but that the administrative process was similar to all other bureaucratic organizations. Another mentioned they were pleased that DCC was a "work in progress" with additions or improvements constantly being made. But the respondent was not sure that it was the case with the administrative process.

Many of the negative comments dealt with the fact that there is too much work, mostly in the form of too many cases (four respondents). One saw the court as being little different than a regular court structure and they would like to see some statistics about the effects of triaged clients. One of the respondents noted that there was "too much of a disparity between what client agrees to in front of the judge and what actually happens." And one respondent mentioned the high number of breaches as a problem. In fact, more generally, breaches appeared particularly targeted as problematic in the current survey. Problematic in the sense that it could be taken as an indicator that the community court process was not effective in addressing offending behaviour.

It was also mentioned that "the recent addition of an executive council is concerning because it's all men and doesn't actually represent the community."

"To use a phrase, this is not what I signed up for. Just because a court is overly busy does not mean it's effective. Just the opposite."

"No. DCC files notoriously come back with breach after breach. It's a running joke. Staff in our section have never wanted to be "volunteered" to work over there. Most of those who have left complaining of extreme stress, unfair/unequal work distribution . . . Now the duty is forced on us."

Some staff noted, however, that, at DCC, "Crown and Defence work well together." Because of this, clients receive the services they require. Another advised that there was better understanding of court processes and decisions on cases because of everyone working together. "The ability for constant collaboration builds a real sense of teamwork," suggested another respondent. Another believed that DCC offers an "integrated approach to high needs clients."

"Yes. The involvement of all the parties in the case, provides everyone with a better understanding of the court process & the decision on cases."

“Yes. As noted above, the ability for constant collaboration builds a real sense of teamwork. The administrative process is efficient and because of communication, justice outcomes seem to reflect respect for the process and sources of information.”

“Even those who had not been sure of DCC indicated that they like the informal atmosphere which makes the process seem more welcoming overall.”

“One of the interesting aspects that have emerged is the breaking down of the ‘us/them’ mentality with other community agencies. Even grassroots organizations are accepting staff at the court as legitimate players in assisting clients rather than being a bureaucratic entity devoid of empathy.”

Question 2 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

In both the 2009 and 2011 survey results, similar responses were found to both Question 1 and Question 2. In the current survey results, however, respondents were more specific in describing how the DCC met their expectations than was true in the 2009 survey. Most responded positively in the current survey, noting that the justice outcomes were positive but that the administrative processes were similar to other bureaucratic organizations in not noticeably improving over time. Another positive comment from the current survey was the observation that the DCC has been successful in breaking down the “us/them” mentality.

The negative comments related to perceived heavy workloads and some wonderment about the effectiveness of justice outcomes, given the numbers of breaches that occur.

In the 2009 survey, one comment spoke to the fact that the DCC seems efficient, but that efficiency can sometimes compromise the effectiveness of sentence outcome. This is an interesting juxtaposition to the comment in the previous paragraph in which the number of breaches noted seem to suggest ineffectiveness, not inefficiency.

One operational limitation in 2009 was related to the lack of access to the shared database. This shared database no longer exists in 2011, being replaced by the SharePoint (SP) database tool, which may account for the absence of a similar concern being noted in the 2011 survey results.

Question 3: What aspects of the community court can be characterized as “community”?

Respondents interpreted the meaning of community widely, for example, it could be referencing the community existing in the physical neighbourhoods; the community of service providers; the community of offenders; or, a community of the staff at DCC itself.

One staff member noted that the same group of chronic offenders, who were described as all coming from the same general physical and socio-economic neighbourhood, seldom seem to make it beyond the services originally offered. Thus, from this conceptualization, there is the potential for there to be a community of offenders; those who live close to, and interact with, one another in the same physical and socio-economic community.

One respondent suggested that all staff members working together constitute a sense of community. Two staff noted that the staff barbeques provided evidence of the community

at the DCC. Seventeen respondents noted that the services provided at the DCC as well as the staff who run them, who are all working towards the same end, constitute a community. In addition, the fact that most of the staff were expected to undertake community outreach created a strong community bond between staff and outside agencies as well as with their clients. In addition, offenders who have left the Case Management Team and who are now back in Vancouver, have asked to continue at DCC. The implication is that they are returning to a safe, supportive site for them.

“(Community) is (t)he many partners that set up programming at the court. The coordinator who works continuously to engage community partners to ensure that they become involved in the court by voicing their opinions, coming for tours and accepting clients on community work service. It is an open, collaborative venture.”

But, according to another staff member, there was not much community involved with the staff, meaning that involvement was one-directional: from staff to community service providers, but not with community service providers’ involvement with staff. Another person noted that they “don’t really see a lot of community involved with the cast (sic) voluntarily.”

“There are over 100 community agencies that are involved in DCC. Unfortunately, we have not been able to establish a community advisory board which would help facilitate links to the residents.”

[The above represents the one comment made about the lack of a community advisory board. There has not been one established for the almost three years of DCC operation]

“Only thing that represents the community are the BBQ’s and other community functions that happen from time to time. Other than that, as far as criminals go, it only serves as a faster way out of jail with minimal expectations.”

One respondent noted that the DCC has a desire to gain real understanding of people from the Downtown East Side and that there is an effort to “give back to the community with work service and educational sessions.”

Question 3 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

It is interesting that the responses to this question from each of the two surveys were notably divergent. In the current survey, respondents were far more nuanced and thoughtful in their responses about the different aspects in which that DCC could be characterized as a “community”. In fact, it was a sociological exercise in which different stakeholders and different processes could be described as constituting “community”. Not only offenders with their own community of other offenders and their emergence from a perceived neighbourhood community, but the service providers themselves, the DCC staff themselves, the providers plus the staff together were each in turn considered as categories to have aspects of a “community”.

On the other hand, staff in the 2009 survey seemed to define “community” in the traditional manner, that is, the existing physical community outside of the DCC. That well could reflect the fact that with only four months of operation, other “communities”

had not yet emerged for them. In the 2011 survey, there were observations made that there were many divergent communities now related to the DCC.

Question 4: Have you seen any differences emerge in the way the DCC operates over the time since it has been open? (i.e., differences in established procedures, timelines to process a case or secure needed information, etc.?)

Twenty respondents answered yes to this question, most providing examples of differences. Two did not answer the question and two answered that there had been no changes.

Changes in Volume/Clientele:

According to one respondent, the DCC is now more like Main Street Court, “just pushing bodies through” from 40 names on the court list 1.5 years ago to 90 now. Another wrote that numbers of cases have tripled.

And finally, one respondent was concerned about the increased stress level caused by the perceived increased workload.

Another staff member felt that new staff have been added in every area from clerks in the registry, typing documents to Pre Trial Centres also having extra staff, but none of these costs have been put onto DCC’s budget properly to reflect the true cost of making sure all in-custody clients get out as fast as possible.

Finally, it was noted by one staff member that there have been needed changes in the community support for certain types of offenders:

“Greater involvement of the local aboriginal community.”

Changes in Procedure:

Staff mentioned a lot of changes in procedures. There is less focus on organizational needs such as data entry and staff meetings and more emphasis now on client needs in procedures. However, one respondent noted a “decline in client effectiveness” which was characterized as “a system failure.” (It is not clear what was intended by the use of the term “client effectiveness” here, but it could presumably relate to whether outcomes were perceived to have improved for the client as a result of DCC involvement. It cannot relate to knowledge about recidivism rates, however, as those have not yet been examined.)

Other mixed responses emerged:

“Procedures have become more streamlined and consistent over time given the proximity to all involved in the court process. Info gathering is easily accomplished.”

“We have continued to evolve, one of the strengths of DCC. The speed with which we can spot a problem (real or potential), and address it; the willingness of everyone to adapt to new procedures. We have new protocols for CMT/General Assessments, MHP, No charge alternative measures, getting report to Crown counsel, defense counsel.”

“No (differences). Generally the rules which apply to our courthouse aren’t followed. The DCC stats have been skewed just to reflect the supposed successes but at the expense of 222...”

On the other hand, one respondent expressed the view that the DCC programs have evolved to better address the special needs of the DTES population.

Finally, one respondent commented on the fact that the sheriffs at the front gate are more receptive to engaging clients as they come through the front door. They were described as “much more accepting and respectful of clients”.

Question 4 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

For obvious reasons, Question 4 was another question responded to rather differently in 2009 than in 2011. More changes were observed to have occurred in the four month start up in 2009 than in 2011, as might be expected, with various procedures in the processing of the clients in flux, new staffing additions being made, such as an E-Fry representative, along with shifts in how cases were referred to case management and who did the actual interviewing. There was already a noted increase in 2009 in the volume of cases which resulted in multiple adjournments and delays in court time because of many more appearances. Handling of “K” files (domestic violence cases) was also noted as becoming common. Both factors resulted in the diminishment of the DCC intent to have a quick turnaround of cases.

In the current survey, the volume of cases was seen to be more similar to Main Street Court, with many cases being pushed through, and, as a result, stress levels perceived to be higher for staff. On the other hand, the staff was generally viewed as being able to work more effectively together in 2011 and the DCC programs have evolved to better address the special needs of the DTES population.

Question 5: What changes in process do you think still need to happen in order to achieve the goals of the court?

Three respondents did not answer this question. Three themes emerged from the responses to this question: Needed services/changes; offenders’ accountability; and services/processes which were in place, but not needed at DCC.

Needed Services/Changes:

Half the respondents (12) commented on the services provided by the DCC. For example, more drug treatment and rehabilitation is required. A few respondents mentioned the assumption by judges and others that drug and alcohol addiction programs are readily available. According to these few respondents, they are not available. Another staff member mentioned the need for more affordable housing outside of the Downtown Eastside and programs offering training in employment readiness, vocational and help with job applications.

One person noted the need to be able to “define measurable outcomes and gaps in services available”.

Another staff member indicated there was one service which should receive priority in being developed:

“Just one (needed service): increase referrals/enhance alternative measures for Aboriginal Transformative Justice or another agency to get cases out of court process altogether.”

Another respondent felt that the image of the DCC would be helped if it were to become a “full service” court:

“I think it would be helpful if DCC was a full service court that was able to do trials as well as guilty pleas. Until that occurs, DCC will always be considered a court ‘soft on crime’”.

Four respondents mentioned changes in process are necessary to achieve goals. Programs should be more innovative so that they’re seen as an opportunity rather than punishment.

Offender Accountability:

Seven respondents mentioned offender accountability as being necessary for achieving DCC goals. Four of these noted that judges needed to be stricter in their dealings with breaches. One noted that assessments occurred perhaps too quickly. And finally, one staff thought that DCC should “raise the bar” for reciprocity to occur. This, according to the staff member, will increase self-esteem and independence.

“I believe the programs are great, but the repeat, reoffenders are basically allowed to keep those “successes” looking good. Failure to abide by court orders must be stricter. Hard, real jail must be imposed on those who can’t abide court orders.”

Not Needed Services/Processes:

Four respondents mentioned moving the security gates and searches by sheriffs to another area of the court. “Remove the gate or move it downstairs closer to the courtroom.” It is felt that the gate acts as a barrier to clients who are attempting to access services. “Get the sheriffs to the top of the stairs leading to the court” which would make “social and therapeutic programs more welcoming.”

This sentiment contrasts to the one response to Question 4 in which the individual felt that the sheriffs had become more accepting and respectful of the clients coming in the front gate.

Another stream of responses for this question relates to access issues for the client/offender. Access for the types of offenders, types of justice responses, and types of physical boundary restrictions that impact upon the clients.

1. Access for types of offenders:

“Stop allowing lawyers waiving in clients based solely on them getting out as fast as possible. Gang members from all types have come through DCC jails including several Hell’s Angels, UN, Red Alert, Indian Posse, Persian Pride to name a few. None of which benefits from any part of DCC programs and was only motivated by a quick way out of jail. The gang members showed up to do garbage pickup wearing their best Ed Hardy apparel and did not do any work.”

2. Access for legal services:

“Stop allowing duty counsel to put people (in) day to day motivated only by legal aid and not by what’s best for the community.”

3. Access impacted by DCC boundaries:

“Keep the DCC en-catchment for arrests a firm boundary - they don’t need to be waived in from other areas in the province. Farthest out of province was from Alberta and in BC, it’s been Prince Rupert and Terrace.”

Additionally for the last access issue, one staff similarly mentioned that they thought DCC should address the Downtown Eastside community only, instead of taking on cases from Surrey, North Vancouver, and Kamloops.

Question 5 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

For one of the three themes emerging from the current survey, that is, the needed services/processes theme, more housing, more drug treatment and rehabilitation programming, more alternative measures for Aboriginal offenders were thought to be needed. Existing services/processes that were not seen as needed related to the problem of the provision of security measures by the sheriffs, the problem with dispositions that are not meaningful to the client, such as gang members being assigned to community work service, and duty counsel not operating to serve the best interests of the client, rather than legal aid needs for cases. For offender accountability, the recurring theme of the need for stricter responses to client breaches was again made.

When speaking to needed services in the 2009 survey, staff members commented on the need for the same additional services that were set out by the 2011 respondents – housing, drug treatment, and shelter for rehabilitation. They also felt that the DCC needed to invest more in public awareness and education programming in the community about the DCC, as well as the need to inform PO’s about the lack of services available in the community. Certainly much more has been done for the former issue since 2009 with the creation of the DCC community outreach staff position (the manager of community engagement). Many of the suggested changes in process by the 2009 respondents have also been addressed, such as the need for greater integration between the DCC and the service agencies, and increasing the alternative measures without a charge category of outcome. For offender accountability, we return in 2011 to a replication of the thoughts set out by the 2009 respondents – that is, the perceived need for offenders to be held more accountable and to have the judge be more firm in their decisions about dispositions for public safety reasons as well as for offender accountability outcomes.

Question 6: Do you think any changes in your role are required to be more effective and more satisfied with the role? If yes, what would you like to do differently?

Six respondents did not answer this question. Three respondents said no, they don’t think their role requires any changes, one said they were not sure, and two said they were happy in their role. The remaining respondents described what they would like to be done differently.

“Not really (any changes needed).”

“I love working here so much that I really can’t think of any.”

“My role continues to evolve and expand.”

Needing more staff:

Five respondents reported being overworked, one of whom noted that they dislike the DCC.

“...The DCC is treated like a favoured child, and I resent how we are expected to excel in performance, do more work, all for a program that ultimately doesn't work.”

One respondent would like to see a “Community Court Advisory Board” (the second time this idea was mentioned in the survey results).

More time for client work:

Three respondents mentioned needing more time for client work, particularly community service work and outreach.

“More activity in the community as outreach team. Many times we are not available to respond in pairs due to responsibilities at the DCC office.”

Reducing negative influences:

Two staff mentioned two different kinds of influences which impinge on the effectiveness of outcome either for an offender or for staff's own work.

One respondent noted that those with mental health problems are often housed in the Downtown Eastside where they are exploited by drug dealers and addicts. It was argued that these people eventually die because of that negative influence.

Another type of negative influence is perceived to be from the base organization for the staff member:

“I would like to be more involved. However, my organization cautions me because DCC is not providing any money for my role. However, my perspective is that it is a community, therefore this sort of mind-set is undermining.”

This perceived problem emerges from those staff whose base organization exists in outside locations such as the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Police Department, or BC Housing. That is, the staff member not only has the corporate government mandate of their base organization to still continue to account back to, but the DCC's mandate, where they are currently working.

Question 6 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

In the current survey responses, three individuals indicated they did not think any change was needed in their own role and two said they were happy in their role. Most of the other respondents referenced specific issues that were related more to general, systemic problems within the DCC, listing problems with work overload, more needed community outreach, and role conflict of interest situations, rather than describing any individual role changes that were needed. Finally, current survey respondents registered concerns about the negative impact of influences on their clients, such as, for example, exists when clients with mental health problems are housed in the Downtown Eastside where they can

be exploited by drug dealers and addicts, or as sometimes exists with conflicting directives from base organizations.

On the other hand, in responses to the 2009 survey, much more in depth consideration of the role issues emerged. Not dissimilar to the noted differences between the two sets of responses to Question #3 above, this time the 2009 responses were more reflective than the ones to the current study. In light of the volume of administrative work needed to be completed and the court time requests, the 2009 respondents felt they needed to have more time to fulfill their client-centred roles and the work with clients more generally. Understandably, given the short time DCC was in operation in 2009, there were also suggestions expressed about the need to have better clarification and communication about DCC roles. The 2009 respondents also referenced a worry about the influence of corporate government decision-making on their DCC roles, yet again a different form of perceived negative influence.

Question 7: Are the personnel/staff roles in the community court the same as in Main Street court? If not, does that cause confusion for justice personnel elsewhere in dealing with the community court process and/or for the offenders being processed by the community court?

Twelve respondents answered this question positively and six answered negatively. One answered yes and no, and five did not answer the question.

One respondent noted that “most outside people are confused by Community Court procedures and roles”. Others noted that lawyers, sheriffs, judges, and probation are even confused by the differences between the two courts. A staff perception about such generalized internal confusion about the DCC procedures and roles is concerning. It does suggest the need for clarification.

“I believe there is some confusion and misconceptions by justice partners who work outside DCC. Court roles are similar such as court staff. However CMT/triage/MHP are unique. We are sometimes confused with Main St. court, Van Court Probation, Drug Court . . .”

“Many of the same roles exist at DCC as in Main St., so I do not believe there is confusion for justice personnel working elsewhere. For clients involved with other aspects of DCC, there are many more services/agencies stationed at the court and with that more people to provide info and answer questions.”

Three respondents did not know if roles in the Community Court are different from Main Street. Five said the roles were different. Nine said the roles were the same. Some were not clear in their assessment of a difference existing or not.

Finally, some staff are challenged to try and maintain their traditional mandate for the community court.

“The court roles are the same but are constantly being interfered with by outside staffs who are working within the court system closer than they have ever worked before. This has caused constant grief from day one between what they are used to and the Sheriff policy which dictates how a courthouse is to be run from a security point of view. Staff has constant issues trying to take clients into secure areas, for example, and don’t understand why. But

they don't appreciate that sensitive Crown files are left in the open as well as probation files about clients. Containing all information of witness's addresses and evidence from police in them. But still they don't seem to care about this because it does not serve their needs and is not a priority to them."

Question 7 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

With the rewording of Question #7 between the 2009 and 2011 survey instruments, the straight comparison is not possible. It is worth noting again, though, that there did not seem to be consensus about whether the staff roles are the same as for Main Street. If there were perceived differences, what those differences are were not clearly described. Additionally, there did seem to be agreement that, when there were differences in roles, it was not only "outsiders" who were confused, but those working within as well.

Question 8: Do you feel accused understand what is going on at DCC any differently than at Main St. provincial courts? What is the nature of the difference?

All respondents answered this question although they answered the question as to whether the accused understands DCC, and not within the contrast to 222 Main Street Court. Fully 21 respondents said that yes, the accused did understand DCC.

"My experience is that the more chronic (the offender), the more they know. So DCC clients tend to know exactly what is going on with the exception of the first time offenders and those tripping out. Everyone understands the intention, and may or may not capitalize on that."

Seven of these noted that the provision of services was the difference between DCC and other courts and eight said that staff resources were an important difference. Nine respondents said the accused found the court at DCC to provide more lenient sentences with some finding it to be a "joke". Five said the DCC was quicker than 222 Main Street Court.

"I do (believe they understand) because the triage nurse explains the process and lets them agree to work on MH team or CMT, etc. The nature of the difference is that at Main St. there is more jail time, more probation orders, restitution, etc. DCC has many more options, programs, staff outreach, etc."

"They know they'll be treated differently. They want DCC because they know it's easier/lenient/soft. I've heard many accused say that. Sentences are weak at DCC. Nobody gets any benefit from the public view. Reoffending is rampant. DCC is a joke to accused and many staff as well."

Question 8 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

Most respondents in the current survey indicated they felt that the clients did understand the DCC operations, except for first offenders and those under the influence of drug and alcohol abuse. When asked to specify the differences that do exist between DCC and Main Street court, many felt that it was the provision of services and the staff resources which were the main differences. They felt that clients understood that DCC had more options for justice outcomes, including more programming and staff outreach, and,

lenient sentences. Five respondents indicate the main difference was that DCC was quicker.

In the 2009 survey responses, most respondents felt that offenders are not that aware of any differences between DCC and Main Street court. A small number of offenders were described as understanding there were more resources available in the DCC, but really did not understand the DCC process itself. Again, this difference in understanding about DCC on the part of the clients may reflect the fact that in the early months of operation in 2009, the differences between the two courts may not have yet crystallized for clients. Finally, as with the 2011 respondents, several 2009 respondents also suggested that many offenders see the court as lenient.

Question 9: Are offenders getting into needed services? If not what is happening to them?

Nine respondents answered yes and no, or don't know to this question. Thirteen answered yes. No one mentioned wait lists.

Follow-through with Services after Sentence Completion:

First, a number of respondents framed the question as referencing the issue of offenders getting into needed services after they fulfilled the requirements of the court-ordered sentence, as indicated by either the client or the service-provider.

“Follow through is poor and repeat offending continues”. One respondent noted that “there is no follow-up unless they reoffend again”.

One staff member said that some clients are not ready to make changes.

“Offenders are getting to the “door” of the service, i.e. initial program or emergency shelters. However, those agencies aren't going the next step for ongoing support. It seems like they need to cycle through the court again so that we push the service to move it forward.”

“Yes. Services are abundant, however, follow through is poor and repeat offending continues.”

Additional Needed Services:

Respondents identified the following services, already in existence, as being badly in need of additional capacity positions for DCC clients:

- detox beds
- recovery/treatment beds
- Burnaby Mental Health and Addictions
- permanent housing, particularly outside of the Downtown Eastside

Three staff members stated the problems this way:

“Some (offenders) are (getting into needed services), but not all. We need to do more detox beds, recovery/treatment beds available when the client is treatment ready – by the time a program or bed opens up, we can't find the client in time (for some, not all).”

“Some services, yes (re getting into them). Others, for example, Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addictions, there can be lengthy delays. Some clients have been waiting for more stable housing and have been at shelters for considerable time.”

One respondent noted that, “(t)here aren’t enough services and some of the services they do enjoy may not be suitable. It is difficult (not sure) to track what happens to offenders who do not access services.” Another similarly commented on the latter point about tracking, “(n)ot sure (whether offenders are receiving the services they need), as would like to see statistical data. A lot of re-offending.”

Finally, it was noted by one respondent that, “(c)lients that truly are interested in opportunities to connect with other needed services certainly do. At times, CMT clients agree to participate with the CMT and identify numerous needs, yet they are not ready to make changes in their lives. We continue to try to engage these resistant clients and encourage them to address their needs. For clients who are not receptive to support and namely because it is a voluntary program, they might be transferred to a regular probation office for the sole purpose of having their court order monitored.”

Question 9 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

A key question in both surveys relates to whether the staff perceive that offenders are getting into needed services, and if they are not, what is happening to them. Since the provision of services to offenders, based upon their identified needs, is a basic feature of the DCC, how that process functions is essential to any evaluation of it. The themes that emerged here were two.

The first theme was “Follow through with services after sentence completion”. A number of the 2011 respondents indicated that offenders might get to the service but then there is lack of ongoing support and repeat offending continues. For the 2009 respondents, an actual lack of services was noted and the fact that waitlists for the existing ones impeded getting the offenders into the needed services when they were most needed. Several 2009 respondents noted that when there are not available services, it is demoralizing for both staff and offenders, as the latter may lose the motivation to go treatment. Waitlists were not mentioned as a problem by the 2011 responders.

The second theme was labelled as “Additional needed services”. The 2011 respondents identified specific additional capacity positions needed to attach to already existing services: detox beds, recovery/treatment beds; Burnaby Health and Addictions services for mental and drug health; and permanent housing. It is interesting that almost the exact list of needed additional services were also indicated in the 2009 survey responses. In summary, in the opinion of the respondents, the situation in the adequate provision of such additional services has not yet been perceived by them to have been resolved.

Question 10: How are you documenting your own work with offenders, in what format and where do you keep the information? What information from court processes would be useful to you?

Seven respondents did not answer this question. Responding staff mostly use their agency programs (CORNET, PARIS, JUSTIN) or the SharePoint (SP) site, or both. A few only used their own written notes (or that is all they mentioned).

Home Agency Systems & Shared Database:

One respondent reported using CORNET only, and another used the Crown system only. Two respondents used both CORNET and JUSTIN.

[It should be noted that the original DCC shared database system no longer exists and a new information system, the SP system, has replaced it. However, in the 2011 survey, many respondents still referenced the new SP system as the DCC shared database system.]

Five respondents indicated that they use their own base organization information system only (e.g., CORNET, PARIS, JUSTIN). Most respondents reported using the DCC SharePoint site (nine). Some of these nine also use their base systems (seven), thus doubling their record-keeping work.

“Documentation as it relates to CMT is all kept on the DCC shared services drive. Triage intake screens are also kept on our DCC shared drive. Other requests for assistance here at DCC will often be communicated to supervisor at home agency, if appropriate. I also have requests from my home agency relating to dispositions, court outcomes.”

“My stats all are captured on 2 systems SCMS (the Shared Custody Management System) or Cornet and the other for court proceedings is JUSTIN. SCMS gives records for prisoner information alerts about the person, be it gang, allergies, concerns with other I/C’s and the other is JUSTIN and it gives all information bringing a person to court and all past court appearances.”

Individual Record Keeping:

A few respondents made their own notes (two), attendance files, and spreadsheets.

“I record notes/case notes in my own computer system. PARIS: I copy/paste the same note into the shared drive so that everyone sees the updates as we can’t access different Ministry’s computer systems, e.g.: JUSTIN, Cornet, MSD, Forensics, etc.”

“I keep statistics. I document in the Justice System and my Ministry systems. Double documentation.”

There does appear to be a significant amount of duplication in the recording of DCC information, through a number of different databases. The fact is, however, that in order to share information with others, it is not possible to simply provide access to the base organization’s information system, for privacy and other concerns, the relevant information for DCC purposes must be captured again separately.

Question 10 Comparison Between 2011 Staff Survey and 2009 Staff Survey

The documenting of “what’s happening” at DCC is another key process component to an evaluation. In order to fulfill the quantitative requirements of such an exercise, statistics need to be captured in a standardized manner, both by DCC staff, as well as by ministries in Victoria (the latter, primarily through the Court Services Branch). In the 2011 survey, staff responding to the question about how they document their work with offenders mostly all identified the same databases into which they could enter data: JUSTIN,

CORNET, and PARIS, or the DCC SharePoint site. Two depended upon their own written notes. Some respondents indicated that they did double entry into two or more such databases.

In the responses from the 2009 survey, approximately half indicated that they entered data into the (then) Shared Database (SD) system site but there were concerns at that time that a lack of clear directions and training about how to enter the information may mean that it was not being used effectively. The Shared Database system also was not thought to be user-friendly and it also needed updating. Additionally, the same issue of duplication entry was mentioned by the 2009 respondents, in entering data not only onto the SD but onto their home systems. Finally, the 2009 respondents spoke in greater detail about the types of individual record-keeping they undertook, with a listing of intake forms, monthly agency reports, DCC monthly statistics, journals, triage reports, time management monthly updates to staff and their own hand written notes on such activities as meetings.

Conclusions

In the 2009 staff survey results, several of the same issues/themes emerged that were also identified in the current 2011 staff survey results. Certainly the need for additional service availability was a common concern, as were the needs for improved communication with staff and increased community involvement. As well, the issue of offender accountability arose in the results from both surveys – the perception that the DCC is a lenient court does not seem to address that concern. Other matters, such as the need for more consistent record keeping expressed by the 2009 staff, was not an issue for the 2011 staff.

Some perceived positive aspects also differ from the 2009 results in that collaboration amongst the team members seems to be functioning much more smoothly in 2011, and the informal nature of the court is seen to be a strength for the client, the staff, as well as the community organizations.

One shift in the other direction has come with the perceived increased volume of appearances (often thought to be caused by the high numbers of breaches) over time, whereby, in the earlier survey, the DCC was perceived to be quicker in the processing of clients for the most part than at Main Street court, in the 2011 survey, staff generally appear to feel there is no real difference.

An issue of relevance only expressed by the 2011 staff was that of security of the building and how that proves to be intrusive to the spirit of the community court in the provision of support for clients.

Two other 2011 concerns were the perceived increased workload of the DCC, which also affects the securing of the DCC vision of quick processing of the client, and the resulting impact upon the financial accountability of the DCC relative to its effectiveness. In the latter regard, when speaking about the operations effectiveness of the court, staff did appear to juxtapose the volume of appearances with the perception of whether the court was effective or not. In the opinion of many staff, it seemed that they viewed the high number of appearances as caused by a high number of breaches, which in turn spoke to

the court being ineffective in the handling of the cases, which again in turn circles back to the financial effectiveness issue.

In summary, in order to understand the responses of the present staff survey, one needs to contextualize the DCC model, its workings and its perceived impact in a holistic way. Clearly within the DCC context, the importance of client/staff/community understandings and accountability, through their various roles and relationships, were perceived as significant components of the DCC operations.

One other point should be kept in mind when assessing the comments from not only the staff, as in the present survey, but from the community organization representatives and the clients themselves, as captured in the other two reports. That is, there should be a continual referencing back to the goals of the court. In that regard, this present study, as informed by staff opinions and perceptions, constitutes one significant contribution to that assessment.

References

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Survey of Downtown Community Court Service Agency Representatives

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Executive Summary

The Downtown Community Court (DCC) opened officially in Vancouver in the Fall of 2008. Prior to the opening and in the weeks immediately following, SFU research team members interviewed key stakeholders about their perceptions of, and opinions about, the DCC. Two and one half years later, a second series of surveys and a focus group were undertaken with 30 community service agency representatives (CSAR). The current report primarily presents the findings from the second round of opinions from the CSAR, with a few findings from the first survey for comparison.

Three different approaches were employed to collect data for the current research: an online survey, a paper form with the same content, and a focus group.

Many of the results were consistent with those from the 2008 survey, that is, general support for the concept and vision of the DCC, but indications of operational challenges that hinder the securing of that vision.

There were concerns expressed about information sharing, both between the agencies and the DCC as well as between the public and the DCC, and impediments to collaboration with the DCC. There was also the perception that the structured nature of a provincial court environment placed constraints on some of the “community” components of the initiative.

On the other hand, the participants saw positive value for offenders in giving them voice in the proceedings, in challenging their growth, addressing their needs, giving them a second chance, and more generally in making a positive difference in the Downtown Eastside.

Survey of Downtown Community Court Service Agency Representatives

Vancouver's Downtown Community Court (DCC), which opened in 2008, is the first community court in Canada, based in part on the successful Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, New York. The DCC was structured to differ from the traditional justice system in several important ways:

- the court process is more timely;
- it has an integrated approach to assessing and managing offenders; and,
- it is connected to the community.

- derived from the Downtown Community Court website

Along with the opinions and perceptions of the clients and staff members of the DCC, gathered in other research by the SFU research team, it was felt important to capture similar information from representatives of community service agencies who either work directly with the court or those who work with clients of the DCC in the community. From the literature on community courts, "A key component of community courts is the focus on...the concept of collaboration - court staff, judges, social service providers, and community representatives working together to tailor the response of the court to the offender's needs (Center for Court Innovation, 2011, p. 14)". That is true as well for the Downtown Community Court in its approach to assessing and addressing the needs of their clients.

In a survey of 35 community courts around the globe, Karafin (2008) found that in response to the question: "What are the most important goals of the community court?", the four most common answers were: "helping defendants with underlying problems"; "...addressing community needs"; "improving the public perception of the court"; and "increasing offender accountability" (Center for Court Innovation, 2010, p. 9). The DCC set out its own similar goals:

- Integrate justice, health and social services to hold offenders accountable while producing better outcomes for the community by addressing risk-related needs of offenders;
- Improve justice system efficiencies through a coordinated case management practices among government agencies, emphasizing collaborative problem-solving approaches; and,
- Contribute to a livable community and provide new opportunities for community participation in criminal justice system outcomes.

Thus it makes sense that community service agencies' collaboration is a primary focus needed for the achievement of those goals.

Questions were developed to enquire about issues around collaboration and coordination amongst the agencies, and, about the community agency representatives' opinions and perceptions about the DCC more generally.

In late Fall 2008, initial interviews were conducted with representatives from 23 community agencies representatives prior to, and in the weeks following, the court's opening. Some of the findings from those interviews will be interjected into the text discussion of the present survey for comparison (in boxes) on a number of key issues. The interviews formed one component of the first round of information gathering from those involved in the DCC process about their perceptions and opinions of the DCC. Two other components involved staff and community organization representative perceptions and opinions.

Methodology

In Spring 2011, three different methods were employed to obtain opinions about the court from representatives of community agencies who had some connection to it, two and one half years after the DCC opened. The different methods were utilized in an attempt to secure greater numbers of participants. The first was an online survey (see Appendix A) which was sent to the e-mail addresses of individuals identified as representatives of community agencies working directly with the court (those identified by the DCC Manager, Community Engagement) and/or those working in the DTES with a community agency who might work with DCC clients, but not through direct liaison (those identified by our community researcher). The survey stated its purpose, asked that they respond to it within the next five days, clearly indicated that it was to be anonymous, and finally, specified that they did not need to participate, should they not wish to do so. A reminder e-mail was sent out one week later.

In addition, paper forms of the same survey were distributed at three separate regular meetings of the community agency representatives at the DCC. The DCC Manager, Community Engagement invited the SFU researcher to attend the first meeting at its beginning to explain the project and request their participation. Hard copies of the survey were then distributed along with a stamped, addressed envelope for return of the completed survey to SFU. Subsequently, the same approach was taken at the other two meetings. The representatives in attendance were asked not to fill out the hard copy version of the survey if they had already completed the online version.

A focus group, representing the third method, was comprised of those representatives from community agencies who indicated an interest in participating by signing up on a sheet passed around at the three above referenced meetings. As well, other agency representatives, who were not at the meetings, contacted the SFU researcher to express their interest in participating in the focus group (see Appendix C for a list of community groups contacted for all three methods). They had heard about the focus group by word of mouth. While the attendees were not paid for their participation, they did receive a light lunch. Upon entry to the room, the attendees were asked to fill out the first page of the hard copy survey which requested information about their agency's primary and secondary roles, as well as their own role within the agency. The facilitator also took Flip-Chart notes, while an additional person took written paper notes.

The focus group, held at SFU Harbour Centre, lasted 1 ½ hours. Given the stated focus on the participants' opinions about the Downtown Community Court, open-ended questions loosely guided the discussion (see Appendix B for guiding questions) - starting with questions about the strengths and challenges of the community court and moving to

ways to best evaluate a “community” court, including the appropriate model against which to assess effectiveness and success. After examining the responses for a number of iterations, several subthemes emerged. They relate to DCC programming and procedures for the processing of the client, as well as to more systemic/structural issues of safety of the court, and the availability of services.

All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and their comments would be anonymous. Direct quotes are presented from the online survey, the hard copy survey, and the focus groups. Additionally, other focus group responses have been paraphrased and aggregated in an effort to fairly succinctly summarize the more extensive group discussions. The questions were derived from the literature on community courts and informed by input from key stakeholders. Data tables from the online and hard copy survey are inserted where relevant.

Overall, from the administration of the three different methods employed, data from 30 participants were obtained (two individuals who were in the focus group indicated that they had previously filled out the survey in one of the other formats). Given the nature of the process, the respondents constitute a non-probabilistic self-selected sample of those solicited to participate in the study.

Findings

Agency/Respondent Characteristics

The primary service agency role lies in the addiction services area, with community centres next highest, followed by housing and advocacy tied for third (

Table 3).

Interestingly, both advocacy and housing take the lead in the articulation of secondary service roles, with addiction services a close third to housing (Table 2).

Table 3: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Primary Role of the Agency (select one response)

Primary Agency Role	n	%
Addiction Services	7	23.3
Community Centre	4	13.3
Housing	3	10.0
Advocacy	3	10.0
Victim Services	2	6.7
Health	2	6.7
Drop-in Centre	1	3.3
E & I Assistance	1	3.3
Mental Health	1	3.3
MH & Add. Couns.	1	3.3
MH system negotiator	1	3.3
Aboriginal justice agency	1	3.3
Education	1	3.3
Funding	1	3.3
Not stated	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 4: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Secondary Role of the Agency (please select ALL that apply)

Secondary Role(s)	n	% Responses*	% Respondents
Advocacy	15	30.6%	60.0%
Housing	10	20.4%	40.0%
Addiction services	9	18.4%	36.0%
Health	5	10.2%	20.0%
Mental health	5	10.2%	20.0%
Employment and income assistance	5	10.2%	20.0%
Total	49	100.0%	196.0%

*Respondents could provide more than one response.

The majority of the respondents list the managerial/supervisory role as best characterizing their own individual role in the agency (

Table 5).

Table 5: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Role of the Respondent

Respondent Role	n	%
Mgmt/Supervisor	19	63.3
Counselling	4	13.3
Outreach	3	10.0
Advocacy	2	6.7
Volunteer Coordinator	2	6.7
Total	30	100.0

Clearly the service agencies target the accused/offender rather than any other participant in the court process, such as the victim. In other words, as two respondents noted, victims do not receive the same services, or assessment of needs that the offenders do (Table 6).

Table 6: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Clients of the Agency (please select ALL that apply)

Agency Clients at DCC as:	n	% Responses*	% Respondents
Accused/Offenders	14	66.7%	82.4%
Victims	5	23.8%	29.4%
Observers	1	4.8%	5.9%
Not Applicable	1	4.8%	5.9%
Total	21	100.0%	123.5%

*Respondents could provide more than one response.

The primary type of involvement of the agencies is for community work services positions, followed by the acceptance of service referrals (Table 7).

Table 7: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Involvement of the Agency with the DCC (please select ALL that apply)

Agency Involvement with DCC	n	% Responses*	% Respondents
Provide placement for community work service hours	10	32.3%	58.8%
Volunteer at the DCC	1	3.2%	5.9%
Advisory capacity	4	12.9%	23.5%
Accepting service referrals from the DCC	6	19.4%	35.3%
Q8f: Housing placement	4	12.9%	23.5%
Q8g: Other	6	19.4%	35.3%
Total	31	100.0%	182.4%

*Respondents could provide more than one response.

Responses

Throughout the presentation of the results relevant quotes are included from the survey and focus group feedback. As many unique quotes as possible were included in order to fully represent the range of opinion.

Overall View of DCC

Respondents expressed many views of the DCC as a whole. A number were mainly supportive while some identified various challenges that, from their perspective, need to be met.

Primarily Supportive Responses

Information was obtained from the focus group and surveys.

Summary of Focus Group Input

Among issues that were identified in the focus group were those relating to the overall view of the DCC. What are the perceptions of the community agency representatives about the community court itself? Without exception, those who spoke to this issue felt that the vision of the community court was of value. Most of the comments presented the view that the DCC philosophy is primarily about helping rather than punishing the offenders and that the community court outcomes for the offender were effective. The latter perception is interesting in the sense that the use of the term “effectiveness” clearly is not based upon known recidivism rates for DCC clients, as those have not yet been established. Since these were service providers, their lens for effective outcomes may well have been related to programming outcomes.

Survey/Focus Group Quotes

Among the comments made were:

“Great initiative!”

“DCC is needed, respected, and making a positive difference in the DTES.”

“Communication between organizations is excellent.”

“Relations are good.”

“Very little wait time for clients re referrals.”

“DCC seems quicker than regular court and cuts through bureaucracy to get client connected to services.”

“There is significant availability and resources for DCC clients.”

“Those doing community hours often return to volunteer after their stint, integrating into the agency.”

“They have no criminal record after completion of hours which is a ‘huge deal’”.

“The people I work with get a ‘wake up’ call from their experience in DCC, which can influence their subsequent behaviour positively.”

“I love that they have a second chance.”

“The community hours get them out of familiar environment (where they get into trouble); focuses them and gives them an unfamiliar place to challenge their growth.”

“The work crews give them a sense of pride.”

“Main Street Court is cut and dried (no discussion; no conversation) for the person; at DCC the clients at least get a chance to speak for themselves or have someone speak for them.”

“DCC is also affecting changes within the system of lawyers – shifting their understanding of how offenders with MH issues can be served more effectively and efficiently through a health approach.”

The qualitative responses above were quite consistent with the results from the structured questions on the online and hard copy survey responses to Question 10 (cf. Table 6).

The vast majority of respondents agreed that the DCC informs them well, “makes our clients feel safer”, makes an important contribution to the community, and deals with the accountability and underlying causes of offending behaviour.

Table 8: 2011 DCC Services Survey – Perceptions of the Agency on the DCC and Clientelle

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

	D	A	n
a. The population my agency/group serves is well informed about the DCC	12.5	87.5	16
b. The DCC provides my agency/group with information about the court	23.5	76.5	17
c. Having the DCC makes our clients feel safer and more secure	23.1	76.9	13
d. The DCC addresses concerns expressed by my service agency/group	17.6	82.4	17
e. The clients my agency/group serves have access to DCC	20.0	80.0	15
f. There is mutual respect between my agency/group and DCC	11.8	88.2	17
g. The DCC is making an important contribution to the community	11.8	88.2	17
h. The DCC is increasing the accountability of offenders	11.8	88.2	17
i. The DCC is addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour	11.8	88.2	17

Similarly, from the 2008 interview results:

“The whole concept of trying to do something different is good and serves the criminal justice system”;

“The DCC provides more opportunities for engaging participants in the process and for participation on a more meaningful level.”

Perceptions of Current Challenges

In contrast to the generally positive impressions of DCC noted above in the “Primarily Supportive Responses Section”, there were a few expressions of dissatisfaction related to various aspects of the court.

Survey/Focus Group Quotes

“I was very excited in the beginning – very supportive verbally and in action. My feelings now are it seems like a loosely run operation, not being taken seriously, both by staff and accused.”

“I love the original concept of DCC. Most of the original players have moved on and I am unsure of the present value, commitment and quality of what is now going on. I feel rather disappointed about something that originally sounded fantastic.”

“The vision of DCC was to change a system of punishment and make it a filter of help for those needing to be connected with services. There is still too much politics involved in creating ideas on how to make DCC effective to the individual, family and the community.”

Summary of Focus Group Input

The DCC mandate about creating partnerships does not seem to be happening; it continues to be a structured court, thus another challenge is that the “long arm of the law” still has the say and continues to be the primary decision maker in inflexible ways, while the community agency is required to be the flexible agency. “Community court *is* a community court”, therefore the judge will continue to act in the legal sphere. Therefore it is still a legal situation (e.g., a probation order) and is not client driven – it operates to meet DCC needs. It is more the probation (punitive) perspective and not the community (helping) perspective. According to one person, the DCC appears to serve as “a broker of services for the client and that doesn’t seem to be a role that is likely to change”. The latter comment however can not necessarily be presented as either a supportive comment or a comment about a challenge.

Comparison with Other Literature and the 2008 Interviews

The above perceptions are consistent with a concern from a focus group held in the U.S. with community court practitioners: “Community courts have to work hard to make themselves seen as community resources because communities are hard to define and hard to incorporate, especially into a bureaucratic structure such as the court” (Center for Court Innovation, 2010, p. 25).

Similarly, from the 2008 interview results:

“The bureaucracy of the DCC, which is an arm of government, may restrict its ability to meet its objectives.”

Additional Challenges Specifically Relating to Court Operations

A number of concerns were expressed about the specifics of the way the court process unfolds (i.e. in the processing of the client through various stages of their disposition).

Survey/Focus Group Quotes

The following comments were made:

“The community hours are often completed quickly which doesn’t allow for an establishment of a real connection with the client.”

“There isn’t any outcome transparency back to the community and/or the community agency about the actual outcomes for the client, in other words, insufficient feedback is provided.”

“More documentation from the Probation Officers is needed for the clients arriving for services at the community agency.”

“In the past, clients were sent directly to us from court - with a change in staff, we often don’t see the client until close to their completion of hours date and (they) expect us to rush them through their hours. We want to be involved but not exploited in this way.”

“When the client is ‘finished’ with their disposition, their court obligation is over and the service stops, even if more is needed (the exception being the intensive case management stream - ICM).” [However it was also observed that relatively few clients are actually involved with ICM].

“Some of the accused don’t take community service work very seriously. Too much leniency on the part of the judge, which serves to disempower the whole process.”

“In Main Street Court, it appears to be possible that more counseling can be requested and/or a direct contact with the agency can be made, than is true for the DCC.”

“With PO’s making decisions rather than the community agencies, reciprocity (which is needed) is skewed. The questions asked were, ‘Who holds the stick?’, and, ‘Is the PO experienced with counseling and counseling services?’”

“The choices presented to the client are often not balanced, for example, the client needs choices better than 20 hours of community work service (CWS) versus 18 months of treatment. Understandably, CWS often gets selected over the treatment ‘option’”.

“Programs within the court are well intentioned but the location that requires all attendees to go through a search creates barriers to access.”

Summary of Focus Group Input

There is not a lot of opportunity for the community agencies to consult/collaborate with DCC staff. One problem emerges with the Triage intake processing that occurs early in the AM. A small team has to be relied upon for making these decisions. The concern is that a probation officer is assessing an individual’s needs initially; it is felt that someone more qualified in counselling is needed to make the assessment. It is only after a court appearance (that) the individual will receive counselling. They are missing the input from community service providers who may better understand the complexity of these cases.

The DCC experience may be the first time that clients are exposed to community services (or even to community court); being physically in the court to make the community

agency connection is the prime time to intervene; being there “to meet and greet”. Other options to engage (in addition to the “meet and greet”) is to have a one on one, or, to have a brief meeting in the court. A presence in the courthouse is starting to payoff for one community agency – it provides a support at a key stage and helps the process of building trust. But this must also result in referrals from the court because if there are no referrals, then the community representative is not going to be spending time there, waiting for referrals, and, it is not sufficient to just hand out the cards for the agency to potential clients, either on the street or in the court – it’s the face to face experiences that count.

Similarly, from the 2008 interview results:

“It (is) also important to ensure that the DCC make appropriate referrals and reduce the potential for clients to be shuffled from one area to the next.”

These qualitative comments must be placed in juxtaposition with the responses to the structured questions from the online and hard copy survey, in which, once again, high ratings of satisfaction with related issues are given (Table 9).

With the exception of the responses to statement “e.” (“The availability of community resources to meet DCC client needs”), the majority of respondents responded in a more supportive manner to statements that appear less supportive in the qualitative comments. Statement “f.” responses (“The wait times for placements for DCC clients”) are also less supportive in agreement than the other four statement responses, but still reaches over 75% agreement.

Table 9: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Level of Satisfaction of the Agency on the DCC

Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following statements by indicating the appropriate response from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied". The statements should be read "I am _____ with:"

	Dis	N	Sat	n
a. The level of knowledge in my agency/group about the purpose of the DCC	11.8	0.0	88.2	17
b. The level of knowledge in my agency/group about the operation of the DCC	17.6	0.0	82.4	17
c. The exchange of information between the DCC and my agency/group	5.9	5.9	88.2	17
d. The coordination of case management plans between my agency/group and the DCC	6.3	6.3	87.5	16
e. The availability of community resources to meet DCC client needs	18.8	18.8	62.5	16
f. The wait times for placements for DCC clients	7.1	14.3	78.6	14

Similarly, from the 2008 interview results:

“More information about the court process including community education is required.”

“Better liaison between clients of organization and agencies and the court (is needed).”

Systemic/Structural Issues

Some points were also made about more systemic/structural issues.

Survey/Focus Group Quotes

“Victims of crime cannot access the same resources as the DCC clients, nor are the community resources open to the larger community.”

Summary of Focus Group Input

In addition, it was said that there is a perceived urgency on the part of DCC administration (and thus this sets the tone for those working under administration) that there must be an “efficient” court. Therefore there is no time for input from the “community” to capture the complexity of the cases overall. The spirit of the DCC may have been lost in such a process, or, the spirit may still be there, but the question is how to restore it?

Some community organization representatives indicated that they have heard that the public is frustrated with the DCC; it is viewed as a lenient court. The public’s perceptions are as important as the client’s perceptions.

An overarching question to ask, relative to the mandate for the court is: Is DCC working for the clients themselves, in terms of addressing their needs; in terms of whether their perceptions of justice being served are actually met? One representative said that in listening to the clients being served in their community agency, two extremes were heard: that the DCC is either a kangaroo court in which they don’t receive a fair trial, or, that DCC is a “cakewalk” and is lenient.

[In the latter regard, it is worth noting that the DCC is not a trial court.]

The responses to Question 12 (Table 10), asking for the level of agreement on the community criminal justice priorities expands on the perceptions of the court set out above.

Table 10: 2011 DCC Services Survey – The Level of Agreement of the Agency on the Criminal Justice Priorities Relating to the DCC.

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on the community criminal justice priorities relating to the DCC since its implementation. The statements should be read "The implementation of the DCC has resulted in:"

	D	N	A	n
a. Faster processing of accused	7.1	14.3	78.6	14
b. Offenders being able to see the consequences of their criminal behaviour sooner	6.7	20.0	73.3	15
c. An increase in offenders referred to services and resources	12.5	6.3	81.3	16
d. More offenders actually receiving appropriate services	6.3	12.5	81.3	16
e. Better coordination of services	6.3	0.0	93.8	16
f. More community involvement with the criminal justice system	6.3	0.0	93.8	16
g. Improved quality of life in the community	12.5	25.0	62.5	16

While still projecting supportive responses to the perceived results of the implementation of the DCC, a spread in agreement percentages is more evident. Relatively speaking, there is less support for the notion that the implementation has resulted in improved quality of life in the community than for the statement that there has been more community involvement with the criminal justice system, but nevertheless the percentage for the former remains over 50%. Similarly, there is relatively moderate agreement that the implementation sees a faster processing of accused/offenders or results in a more effective ability of the offender to see the consequences of their criminal behaviour sooner, compared to the better coordination of services percentage agreement.

Determining the Success of the DCC

It has been argued in the literature that community courts, as a form of problem-solving court, should have different goals than traditional court, that is, while recidivism is important, other goals such as addressing the offenders' needs; offering fewer custody sanctions (e.g., other responses such as work service, intensive case management); more involvement of the community, may suggest different outcome indicators for the measurement of "success" of the courts than for traditional courts.

Clearly the DCC has set out its goals (previously indicated on pages 1 and 2) which in themselves suggest what indicators would be appropriate to determine whether they have been successfully achieved or not.

What is of interest here is to ask what indicators for success the representatives would identify, given their unique perspective on the operations of the court from a service agency perspective and their distance from the actual court decision making (compared to staff, for example).

Do they feel that DCC should have different outcome indicators for success than are normally used for traditional courts?

Summary of Focus Group Input

The comparison with Vancouver Drug Treatment Court (VTC) outcomes was made throughout the focus group discussion on DCC success and concluded with one comment:

“In the Drug Treatment Court setting, offenders will see the success of others and when they are deciding about whether to participate or not themselves, that observation of a positive outcome can be influential in swaying them to decide to participate. DCC doesn’t have that perception of successful outcomes among clients nor does the community.”

(It should be pointed out that the DCC is not a voluntary court, as is the case for the DTC. There may be have been some confusion between the nature of DTC and DCC.)

Researcher Commentary

If the indicators of success are in part related to outcomes such as reoffending/recidivism, how is that reoffending to be categorized? Is it the total abstinence model or the harm reduction model which is more appropriate for community court outcomes? Community organization representatives appeared more supportive of the Harm Reduction model approach to the reoffending outcomes, that is, as was argued, sometimes even showing up for community hours may be a “success” for some DCC clients.

This kind of discussion brings up the differences of opinion recorded. That is, some respondents observed that the court is too lenient and soft, suggesting it is not holding offenders appropriately accountable. Others felt it was too heavy-handed. It is the mandate of the DCC to identify and address offender needs, and a harm reduction model (which basically presents shades of reoffending rather than the either reoffend or not reoffend model, that has no gray in between) allows for a longer term consideration of successful outcome. But the question in this discussion then becomes, where is the appropriate balance for successful offender accountability in a community court?

Other Focus Group comments about effectiveness/success for the DCC specify the role of the community itself in producing desired outcomes:

“How successful do we want DCC to be?” “Offenders are from the COMMUNITY! So, how hard do WE want to work to make it a success?”

However, it is not just court limitations that impact success; it is the larger systemic problems as well, as far as funding for needed resources, both short and long term; in order to counter the barriers of long waitlists. (Although with regard to the last point about waitlists, one focus group participant indicated that if the client wanted and needed the resource, they were usually willing to wait).

From the 2008 interview results:

“The lack of long term resources would affect the ability of the court to meet its goals.”

Suggestions of Changes to Improve the Relationship Between the DCC, Community Agencies, and the Broader Community

Participants were asked if they could suggest changes to address the challenges they had articulated, and/or identify practices that should continue.

Survey/Focus Group Quotes

“Keep up the good work; community events are important.”

“That clients come to us in a reasonable time before their completion date.”

“Judge(s) should take this whole process more seriously. My fear is this whole process is becoming so loose, it’s losing its effectiveness and trust/credibility by those who we are trying to help.”

“Just that we know more. Maybe information packages (should) be made available for all of our acting managers that include who to contact at the DCC with regard to whatever...”

“Increased communication between agencies in regards to individual clients.”

“Better referral process to agency (it should be noted that the “satisfaction” rating for the referral process from the structured survey was 80%.)Any coordination of services is an improvement on the current system.”

“More ownership from the offenders – follow through after community service hours.”

“An option for one to one counselling at the time of arrest and before court.”

“Be able to somehow see firsthand how the DCC is run. So see mock case files online.”

“Quarterly community engagement. We have meetings twice a year; we would like to see more communication between crown and our agency in a timely manner as we deal with victims.”

“Frontline staff use what they know. Opening up new areas of networking would have value. Giving the frontline staff opportunities to increase relationships with new programs must be helpful...”

“Is there a monthly or quarterly newsletter to inform the community regarding changes and new programs?”

“More community gathering much like a working group with all agencies associated, especially the DCC team.”

“Working with victims, there is not enough services for them at DCC apart and separate from offenders. They should be able to access services to the same level as offenders.”

Summary of Focus Group Input

“I would like to see the DCC open up to more groups that relate to Aboriginal offenders, victims, and their families. I would like to see DCC open up to the local Bands that relate to the area.”

Similarly, from the 2008 interview results:

“The DCC should be aware of and sensitive to victims, Aboriginal participants, women, disabled people, the lesbian, gay, transgendered, and bisexual community and the organizations representing their interests.”

“I would like the DCC to treat only people living in the area and not those who are coming into DT Vancouver from other neighbourhoods. Accepting such a wide range of people creates unnecessary needs on the DCC and the service agencies.”

There should be a revisiting of the mandate of the DCC to have the discussion about what model of outcome they support: harm reduction or total abstinence (from reoffending).

The public should have more information on the operations of DCC, in terms of what is the scope of offenses dealt with in DCC (many in attendance indicated they themselves did not know). One assumption expressed by the community representatives is that minor offenses are only dealt with, although a few were aware that more serious offenses, such as assault, were also being processed on occasion.

Similarly, from the 2008 survey results:

“Many respondents felt the community, including ordinary citizens and service providers, need information about: the purpose of the court and what it was trying to achieve, the range of sentences used by the court, and the types of community service utilized.”

Structurally, the DCC can be made into a more welcoming space. The search gate to DCC doesn't make it feel like a community court. People who don't feel comfortable in coming to court (and being searched by the sheriffs) are not as likely to come for appointments or court follow ups. Thus staff are behind yet another barrier for the clients. It becomes a process for clients to even walk in the door and it stigmatizes the client when, in fact, the preferred approach is to engage with them in a different context. At times, some program managers actually will meet with their clients out in front of the building, rather than to subject them to the entry processing. Therefore access...can be limited, based upon the realities of walking through the sheriff's search area.

Disjunctures between the qualitative and quantitative survey responses

As indicated earlier, the qualitative responses from all three methods, that is, the online, the hard copy, and the focus group, were summated together. For the most part, the direct quote was recorded because the emphasis in qualitative research is upon the direct verbal report. Quantifying responses is seen as a step removed from the people's actual words and perceptions (and thus possibly distorting of them) (Palys, p.13).

Interestingly, the responses were consistent amongst the three sets of qualitative responses as far as the type of strengths, challenges, and mixed comments identified about the DCC, although the focus group obviously allowed for much more dialogue. On

the other hand, disjunctures emerged when comparing the qualitative and the structured quantitative responses on some key issues. One possible explanation may be the fact that the response to structured statements does not provide for expanding specific comments which is possible in the qualitative component. The latter possibility allows for more contextualization of meaning. As Palys observes, qualitative research is a “human-centred approach: people’s ability to think and abstract requires special consideration.” (Ibid., p13). The structured quantitative approach also employed in the survey represents a more detached analytical stance in which objectivity is achieved through social distance, not personal proximity to the phenomenon (Ibid., p.13).

In other words, the differences noted may well have emerged from the three different methods employed. As a reminder, those three were put into place in order to attempt to secure more numbers for the survey. Initially, only 10 responses were received from the online survey and then eight were generated from the distribution of hard copy versions at the community organization meeting. An additional 13 individuals participated in the focus group.

It appears that there were more management level respondents overall, which makes sense, especially given that the online survey request was e-mailed to the Executive Director of an organization, if that were known. It may be that those in management positions are more supportive in their formal structured responses because of the perceived professional distance and expectations associated with the responding exercise. In the focus group, by contrast, an informal group (human) dynamic can occur whereby perceived common and proximal issues can materialize.

In any event, the numbers secured do place a limit on the ability to undertake meaningful statistical analysis with the data and thus the ability to generalize the findings beyond this particular sample. It represents a “snap-shot” of opinion and perceptions which emerged from those individuals who participated at that particular juncture of time.

Overall Conclusions

The points to be taken away are many, another reason why most of the quotes were included, in order for the reader to get a sense of the range of voices from the community representatives. The overarching issues appear in part to relate to the perceived dilemma of the DCC as a problem-solving court. First, it is thought by many participants to be an initiative constrained by the reality that it is still a provincial court and all the issues surrounding ultimate legal governance in its decisions generally, and on a more operational level, with specific court needs attached, such as security and client control. Second, it is seen to deal often with the minor chronic offender, the dysfunctional individual who has multiple needs. In order to succeed in addressing those needs, which in turn would assist in reducing the criminality, longer term goals relating to a harm reduction approach were suggested by those in the focus group as perhaps more appropriate. If you are dealing with an individual who has gone through the revolving court door many times previously, then it may take exposure to therapeutic programming over several sentencing experiences before there is a start to the reduction of the severity and frequency of the criminality (as expressed as well in the community court literature, Center for Court Innovation, 2010, p.21). What most of the community representatives focused upon were those issues around the actual processing of the client in community

programming that can assure that the goals of DCC can be achieved. Many of those relate to matters of the need for more information sharing and feedback, barriers to true collaboration and the problem of resource availability.

The supportive comments certainly must also be emphasized however. It comes back to the comments about the view that the DCC philosophy is primarily about helping rather than punishing the offenders and the perceptions by many of the service agency providers that the community court outcomes for the offender were effective from their perspective. They feel that the DCC makes an important contribution to the community and deals with the accountability and underlying causes of offending behaviour.

Overall, as with the findings from the 2008 survey with community service representatives, these community representative participants appear supportive of the vision of the Downtown Community Court and its potential. Interestingly, there were many other similarities between the two different time period interview/survey outcomes in the identification of challenges, both as earlier predicted and subsequently materializing. Basically, it comes down to how the community court vision gets operationalized on a daily basis that seems to the participants to present the key challenges in securing that potential.

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- Karafin, D. (2008). Community Courts Across the Globe: A Survey of Goals, Performance Measures and Operations". Report submitted to the Open Society Foundation of South Africa, New York, NY: Center for Court Innovation.
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List of Community Groups Contacted

1. Great Beginnings Project
2. Aboriginal First Door
3. Atira Women's Resource Society
4. Aboriginal Wellness
5. BC People with Aids (BCWA) Community Rep and Engagement
6. Carnegie Community Action Group
7. Community Legal Assistance Society
8. Covenant House
9. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
10. Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV)
11. The Dugout
12. St. James Society
13. Strathcona Business Improvement Association (BIA)
14. United We Can
15. Vancouver Adult Mental Health
16. Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU)
17. Watari
18. West End Residents Association (WERA)
19. West End Seniors' Network
20. Directions Youth Services
21. Gathering Place
22. Harbour Light
23. Healing Our Spirit
24. Lesbian Gay Transgendered Bisexual (LGTB) Centre
25. Motivation, Power and Achievement Society
26. Portland Hotel Society
27. Rain City Housing
28. Lookout Society
29. Coast Mental Health
30. WISH Learning Centre and Women's Advisory Group
31. WISH Drop-in Centre
32. New Chapter
33. Elizabeth Fry
34. Quest Outreach Society
35. The Door is always Open
36. Belkin House
37. Pathways/Tradework and Training Society
38. Native Courtworkers and Counselling Association of BC (NCCABC)
39. Vancouver Coastal Health
40. Vancouver Aboriginal Transformative Justice Services (VATJS)
41. Mental Health and Addictions Counselling
42. Community Centre

Downtown Community Court Phase I Participant Survey: Final Report

August 2010

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with SFU Research Team Members:
Chris Giles and Rita Buchwitz

Executive Summary

The present study of 196 participants who were processed through the Downtown Community Court in Vancouver in the spring of 2010 is a foundational qualitative study of the participants' perceptions of their experiences in that court. It also provides basic demographic information on individuals who appeared or were sentenced for their offences in Community Court. The sample included people who had their cases stayed for alternative measures. There were 87% male and 14% female participants; 55% Caucasian and 22% Aboriginal participants (the latter percentage reflecting the "overrepresentation" factor often noted with Aboriginal offenders); a median age of 38; an unusually high percentage of educated participants (about 90% with a Grade 9 or higher grade completion, up to college degrees); 76% who were single and 76% who were unemployed. As well, 58% reported living at a fixed address in the last six months.

Nearly two-thirds of the participants' offences fell into a generic "property" offence category. Other offences were from categories such as minor drug-related offences, breaches/failing to comply with a court order, shoplifting, mischief, and uttering threats. Two offence types appear anomalous in that they seem more serious: one being a spousal assault offence and 32 others also fall under the category of assault, including one with a weapon. Additionally, there was one robbery offence in this category.

Problems obtaining legal representation were reported by only 12% of respondents. It is worth noting that only seven respondents secured private counsel for their last court appearance.

Many respondents agreed that they choose DCC in order "to change their behaviour" (65%) and "to get help" (68%), and about the same percentage (63%) felt that their sentence will help them address their personal problems, with 65% feeling that their sentence will help them to not offend in the future.

Most felt they were treated fairly by the judge, the defence, the probation officer (with 93% agreement for each court actor) with the Crown receiving 77% agreement. The front staff and sheriffs were seen to treat the participants courteously (94% and 64%, respectively).

Their comparison of DCC's to other courts' speed in resolving their case, resulted in 85% feeling that their DCC case was resolved more quickly. In addition, 89% were satisfied with how their case was resolved and 85% were satisfied with the length of time it took to resolve their case.

Responses to the two qualitative questions added a dimensional context for the quantitative portion of the survey. Three theme areas emerged in response to the question about additional challenges that brought them to the community court: 1) **Addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse** (of the three themes, this one was the most frequently referenced; 2) **Mental and physical health problems more generally, such as dual diagnoses, depression, stress, anger problems, head injuries, back injury, bipolar disorders and seizures** (this category covered a myriad of issues, both mental and physical); and 3) **Financial and social challenges, such as homelessness, lack of available work and income, lack of education which contributes to the inability to obtain work, and limitations of living allowance**. Many intersections did occur among

the themes as well. Answers to the second qualitative question of overall general comments about the Community Court revealed four groupings: Comparisons with provincial or other courts; programming, programming staff, and the effects of programming; the process of DCC; and safety and security. Responses to this question, as with the survey questions more generally, generated mostly positive responses.

Phase I Participant Survey: Final Report

August 2010

The purpose of the Phase I survey study was to gain an understanding of the DCC process from the perspective of participants. This involved collecting background information on the participants in the process and their perspectives on different aspects of the court experience and the perceived impact of the court experience. An interview of this nature covers, but is not limited to, the following areas of interest:

1. Relevant background characteristics that can be used to identify the nature of the sample:
 - a. Demographics of the individual.
 - b. Their life situations re employment, housing, etc.
 - c. Attributes of their current offence(s).
2. Reasons for participating in the DCC process.
3. Views on the accessibility of the DCC.
4. Experience and satisfaction with the DCC process.
 - a. Experiences with DCC staff.
 - b. The extent to which their needs were addressed in the DCC process.
5. Understanding of the DCC process.
6. Sentence outcomes and perceptions of the sentence(s).
7. Perceptions on the impact of DCC participation on behavioural change.
8. Comments on additional challenges the participants perceived they bring to the DCC and any other general qualitative comments they had about the DCC.

Method for Phase I Survey Study

The intended sample size was 200 participants. The actual number of participants was 210, with 14 excluded for a variety of reasons, primarily because of lack of completion of the interview, thus ending with a sample size of 196. After a small pilot with 10 individuals was conducted, the original survey instrument was revised, refined and shortened to fit into the 15 minute survey time slot available. The bulk of the survey instrument is composed of structured questions with response options. A preliminary interim report for the Participant Survey, based upon the findings from the first 72 participants, was submitted at the end of March, 2010. The present Final Report employs the same format as that first interim report.

The interview procedure initially involved Elizabeth Fry volunteers escorting participants from the court after their appearance to the reception area. The volunteer asked if they would be willing to participate in the survey. If they agreed, the interviewer escorted them into the secure area off the reception area set aside for that purpose. At the end of the interview, the individuals were escorted back into the reception area by the SFU interviewer, at which point she indicated to the reception staff person that the person had completed the survey and was ready to be released to leave the courthouse or proceed to meet with another court staff member. This procedure did not generate many participants in the first few weeks. After conferral, there was consensus to begin to solicit other participants as well who appeared in the reception area for an appointment with one of the community court program staff for reporting purposes. This resulted in more

participants completing the survey. Additionally, an incentive of a five dollar coffee card for a coffee shop nearby also produced more participants. Those participants declining to engage with the survey exercise represented about 50% of those approached, according to the E-Fry volunteers and the interviewer.

Findings of the Survey

Data from the sample of 196 respondents are presented below. (Note that totals are less when information was not available due to non-response or item inapplicability.)

Types of Offences

Most types of offences the participants listed appeared to be consistent with the mandate of the Downtown Community Court. (See Table 11).

In general, they indicated they were charged with less serious “street crime” offences. Nearly two-thirds fell into a generic “property” offence category. Other offences were from categories such as minor drug-related offences, breaches/failing to comply, shoplifting, mischief, and uttering threats. Two offence types appear anomalous in that they seem more serious: one being a spousal assault offence and 32 others also fall under the category of assault, including one with a weapon. Additionally, there was one robbery offence. That percentage of total cases (21%), falling under the category of “violence”, does seem to constitute a high percentage for a “relatively minor crimes” focus.³ It is also of interest that the percentage is over twice that of drug-related offences (9%). Even so, the majority of offences were primarily summary or hybrid offences.

The final caveat is the reminder that these are offences as provided by the participants themselves. While it might be reasonable to assume the recalled offenses represent a close approximation to what the real offences actually were, the memory of the participants may have been skewed by other factors.

³ “The two (DCC) courtrooms will deal with thefts, drug offences and other relatively minor crimes” (<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2008/09/10/bc-080910-community-court-opens-vancouver.html>)

Table 11: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Offence Types of the Sample

Charge	N	%
"Violent"		
Assault	25	12.7
Assault Causing Bodily Harm	1	.5
Assault Police Officer	3	1.5
Assault with Weapon	3	1.5
Spousal Assault	1	.5
Robbery	1	.5
Weapons	1	.5
Possession of a Weapon	1	.5
Uttering Threats	5	2.5
Subtotal	41	20.9
"Property"		
B & E	10	5.1
Credit Card Fraud	1	.5
Fraud	3	1.5
Food Fraud	1	.5
Fraud under	1	.5
Mischief	10	5.1
Motor Veh Theft	1	.5
Possession Stolen Property	1	.5
Shoplifting	8	4.1
Theft	7	3.6
Theft Under	78	39.8
Vandalism	1	.5
Subtotal	122	62.3
"Compliance"		
Breach of CSO	1	.5
Drunk and Disorderly in a Public Place	1	.5
Failing to Comply	1	.5
Failure to obey non-entry order (Skytrain)	1	.5
Obstruct PO	2	1.0
Restraining Order	1	.5
Subtotal	7	3.6
"Drug-related"		
Marijuana Possession	1	.5
Possession	6	3.1
Possession -- Breach	1	.5
Possession for the purposes of Trafficking	3	1.5

Possession of Cont Subs	5	2.6
Possession of Marijuana	1	.5
Trafficking	2	1.0
Subtotal	19	9.7
“Other”		
Trespass	1	.5
Solicitation	1	.5
Vending	1	.5
Unknown	4	2.0
Subtotal	7	3.6
Total	196	100.0

Participant Characteristics

As shown in Table 12, 86% of respondents were male.

Table 12: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Gender of Participants

	N	%
Male	167	86.1
Female	27	13.9
Total	194	100.0

Such a finding is consistent with the percentages generally found in the adult court system populations.

Table 13 provides information on the age of the participants. The median age was 38, with a range of 18 to 69.

Table 13: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Age of Participants

	N	%
18-20	7	3.6
21-25	23	11.8
26-30	26	18.5
31-35	23	11.8
36-40	33	16.9
41-45	36	18.5
46-50	24	12.3
51->	23	11.8
Total	195	100

Respondent ethnicity is shown in Table 14.

Table 14: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Ethnicity of Respondents

	N	%
Caucasian	106	54.9
Black	7	3.6
Asian	13	6.7
Aboriginal	42	21.8
Métis	11	5.7
East Indian	9	4.7
Hispanic	5	2.6
Total	193	100.0

The highest level of education is reported in Table 15.

Table 15: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Highest Level of Education

	N	%
Below Grade 9	20	10.3
Grade 9 to Grade 11	72	37.1
High School	51	26.3
Some Post-Secondary Education	39	20.1
Bachelor's Degree	9	4.6
Graduate Degree	3	1.5
Total	194	100.0

Three-quarters of the participants were single, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Marital Status

	N	%
Single	148	76.3
Common-Law	13	6.7
Married	12	6.2
Divorced	17	8.8
Widowed	4	2.1
Total	194	100.0

The bulk (58%) of respondents reported living at a fixed address⁴ in the last six months. However, about a third had lived at two or more places during the previous six months, as noted in Table 17. It is also interesting to note that almost 10% did not live at any fixed address in the last six months.

Table 17: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Number of Residences Past Six Months

	N	%
0	18	9.5
1	110	57.9
2	40	21.1
> 2	22	11.6
Total	190	100.0

Most were unemployed (76%). The most common types of financial aid being received were social assistance (47%), and disability (32%).

⁴ Some respondents described living in shelters, hotels and/or hostels as living at a fixed address which probably skewed the percentage.

Two points of interest are the notable overrepresentation of Aboriginal or Métis offenders (over 27%) and the high percentage of respondents living at a fixed address (58%). While the first point is consistent with the literature, the second is not. As well, on average, the participants in the sample appear to be more highly educated than the norm for those entering into the adult court system.

Court Experience

Problems obtaining legal representation were reported by only 12% of respondents. Types of legal representation are shown in Table 18. It is worth noting that only seven respondents secured private counsel for their case. It would be of interest to determine what factors influence that decision, and, as well, how having private counsel affects court outcome, compared to having a public lawyer⁵ (or representing self).

Table 18: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Type of Lawyer at last DCC appearance

	N	%
DCC Defence Lawyer	18	9.2
Duty Counsel	52	26.5
Legal Aid	103	52.6
Private	7	3.6
Self-Represented	11	5.6
None	3	1.5
Other	2	1.0
Total	196	100.0

Respondents were asked to rate possible reasons for choosing to participate in the community court. The results are shown in Table 19.

Table 19: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Rating of Possible Reasons for Choosing DCC

I participated in the DCC:	Disagree	Neither	Agree	N
To receive a lighter sentence	25.4	17.5	57.1	189
To speed up my court case	33.3	18.0	48.7	189
Because I wanted to change my behaviour	22.2	11.9	66.0	194
To get help with my problems	19.2	11.4	69.4	193

More respondents agreed that they choose DCC in order “to change their behaviour” (66%) and “to get help” (69%) than agreed with the other two options of “to receive a lighter sentence” (57%) or “to speed up my case” (49%). Of especial note is the response to Option 1, “I participated in the DCC to receive a lighter sentence”. This response is in contrast with the Preliminary report findings in which almost 70% agreed or strongly agreed that they participated in community court in order to receive a lighter sentence.

⁵ Respondents may not have understood the differences among a “DCC Defence Lawyer”, a “Duty Counsel”, and a “Legal Aid lawyer”.

Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with the participation statements as reasons they did participate in the DCC.

Respondents' ratings of characteristics of their judge are shown in Table 20.

Table 20: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Ratings of Judge

The Judge in my case:	Disagree	Neither	Agree	N
Was well-informed on my background	20.6	10.6	68.9	180
Explained everything clearly	7.3	5.0	87.7	179
Listened to me when I had something to say	6.3	19.3	74.4	176
Treated me fairly during my case	3.4	3.9	92.7	178
Treated me with respect	1.7	3.9	94.4	178

A smaller percentage of respondents felt the judge was well-informed on their background than the percentage responding positively to the other four options about how the judge dealt with them.

Perceptions of other court personnel are shown in Table 21.

Table 21: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Perceptions of Court Personnel

Court Personnel Treated Me -	Disagree	Neither	Agree	N
Fairly:				
Crown Prosecutor	10.3	13.0	76.8	185
Defence Counsel	2.2	5.0	92.8	181
Probation Officers	2.1	4.8	93.1	145
Courteously:				
Front Staff	2.1	4.3	93.6	188
Sheriffs	18.5	17.9	63.6	184

Overall, respondents thought court personnel treated them fairly and were courteous, although a small percentage felt the Sheriffs were not courteous.

Satisfaction with the how DCC handled their case and with how long it took to resolve the case are reflected in Table 22.

Table 22: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Satisfaction with DCC

	Dissatisfied	Neither	Satisfied	N
The way your case was handled	5.1	5.8	89.1	137
The length of time it took to resolve your case	9.6	5.2	85.2	135

Table 23 indicates how the “speed” of the case closing in DCC, compared to other courts.

Table 23: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Relative Speed of DCC

	N	%
Slower	4	3.3
Neither	14	11.6
Quicker	103	85.1
Total	121	100.0

It is clear that the respondents are generally satisfied with how their case was handled in the DCC and with its timely processing, and about the same percentage (85%) perceived the process to be much quicker in DCC compared to other court settings.

Table 24 provides respondents' ratings of their DCC sentence.

Table 24: 2010 Phase I Participants Survey – Perceptions of DCC Sentence

	Disagree	Neither	Agree	N
My sentence was fair in relation to my offence(s)	9.4	2.9	87.7	138
I did not understand the terms of my sentence	94.9	2.2	2.9	138
I will be able to meet all the conditions imposed in my sentence	5.0	4.3	90.6	139
My sentence will help me address my personal problems	22.1	14.7	63.2	136
My sentence will help me access the services I need to improve my life	13.9	13.9	72.3	137
My sentence will help me to not offend in the future	16.5	18.7	64.7	139

Fewer respondents indicated that they felt “My sentence will help me address my personal problems” (63.2%) and “My sentence will help me to not offend in the future” (64.7%) than responded positively to most of the other perceptions about their sentence. The exception being that only 3% felt they did not understand the terms of their sentence.

Qualitative Comments

Finally, two questions at the end of the survey asked participants first to relate additional challenges that brought them to the Community Court, and any additional general comments they might have about the court.

Additional Challenges

For the first question, three (although not mutually exclusive) theme areas emerged:

1) Addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse

Of the three themes, this one was the most frequently referenced. Typical responses included such themes as:

- Criminal life was assumed in order to support an addiction;
- Addiction to drugs and crime (described as a dual diagnosis);
- Problems with both drug addiction and physical health;
- The cycle of detox and relapsing;
- Homelessness and substance abuse;

- Lack of money and substance abuse;
- On methadone and some anti-anxiety drugs;
- Substance abuse. Unable to function.

2) Mental and physical health problems more generally, such as dual diagnoses, depression, stress, anger problems, head injuries, back injury, bipolar disorders and seizures.

This category covered a myriad of issues, both mental and physical:

- Stress; Lost job and housing because of “incident”;
- Legally blind and hard of hearing;
- Medication for schizophrenia usually works; also injects and smokes rock;
- Bipolar/depression;
- Brain injury/Hep C;
- Rage tendencies, antisocial disorder, isolation;
- Chronic pain and depression.

3) Financial and social challenges, such as homelessness, lack of available work and income, lack of education which contributes to the inability to obtain work, and limitations of living allowance. (The Downtown Eastside itself was given as a challenge by one participant.)

- Didn't have money, so I stole shoes to replace my stolen shoes from shelter;
- Financial pressure and psychological barrier;
- Housing;
- Low income – on social assistance;
- Lack of funds for food, living outside for 7 years;
- Theft because of hunger and homelessness;
- No funds and I missed food lines.

General Comments

For the second question, seeking overall comments about the Community Court, more content and detail was provided about the community court experience itself. The participants were generally positive in the description of these experiences, indicating they felt the DCC was fairer, faster and more humane than with their past provincial or other court experiences, with staff exhibiting high professional standards. There were a few mixed responses about the role of justice personnel, such as the police and corrections officers in jail.

More paraphrased (and actual) quotes are included here as they are quite revealing of the various perceptions related to community court. The comments were categorized into four groupings: Comparisons with provincial or other courts; Programming, programming staff, and the effects of programming; Process of DCC; and Safety and security. Examples of some of the typical responses for those groupings are below. While the four groupings were established to assist understanding the main foci for the comments, it is also true that some of them could have legitimately been incorporated into more than one of the groupings (as was true for responses to the first qualitative question).

1. Comparisons with provincial court or other courts:

- A lot different from provincial court. Faster lenient sentences. Don't wait long to get released.
- All staff professional with high standards. Same as provincial court.
- Sheriffs more friendly than provincial court. DCC more clear. Satisfied with handling of case because it takes a burden off.
- DCC has made difference -- could be a lot worse in mainstream court. DCC very speedy process. Dislike how court looks at past offences -- need to be present.
- DCC is a hell of a lot easier than regular court system. If I do some help for myself so maybe I don't have to go to jail like treatment. I need that help.
- I like DCC better than other court. People here are warmer, more human. I feel more like a person here at DCC.
- DCC is better than the alternative. Education is needed for those coming out of jail.
- Easier to do (community service) hours in Vancouver than Richmond.
- Chose jail for one month instead, as there is no detox available (here).
- Came to DCC because would've stayed in jail for six months awaiting trial. Opted to get out of jail by going to DCC. Have been in jail since 11, but turned around life by self.

2. Programming, programming staff, and the effects of programming

- DCC is effective in delivering programming
- Very humane – a rehabilitation model. Learning experience – taken two courses to improve life.
- Before coming to DCC was heavily into drugs and incarcerated -- not helping problems. Now, has changed behaviour and drug addiction has decreased due to community court processes. DCC has changed life and drug use due to DCC programs. DCC POs are very patient compared to others. DCC PO gave her opportunities other court POs wouldn't provide or facilitate.
- Court doing a good job. Effort into helping you. Good way to get you housing. Everything is here: welfare, probation, programs.
- Enjoyed CWS probation officers – really generous, nice guys. Respectful and good conversation.
- PO strongly influences change of lifestyle and hooked up several resources. Lenient sentence. “Everyone’s gone on a limb” for him to get help and improve life.
- If you get on the case management team and choose to change your ways they will go out of their way for you. It’s very good.

3. Process of DCC

- I’m mostly happy because I had a chance to explain and to be able to speak openly about some things. I just want to learn.
- Confusing conditions on court orders.
- Happy with DCC, especially if I can transfer other charges.

- Experience as a whole was positive and really drastic difference than dealing with police. Police were more into making sure I was treated as a criminal to learn my lesson.
- Judge is fair and understanding and looks at you as an individual.
- DCC is a breath of fresh air.
- DCC very helpful. Existence of DCC important. Wants to volunteer at community program after hours are complete.
- Forced to plead guilty to offence that didn't do - robbery and was fraud. Not eligible for help (programs) in this court.
- Came today to change a condition on order and saw same judge – comfortable to do so.
- Chance of not going to jail. More compassion—actually care what you have to say.
- Don't treat you like a criminal. You feel like you get support here. And getting me a place made a difference and being in this court I do have some responsibility since I am here doing great.

4. Safety and security

- Don't like coming here because have to go through security sheriff zone.
- Feels safe here in DCC, away from the drugs.
- Felt he was not let out of jail during the Olympics.
- Inappropriate forceful completely unnecessary handling of person.
- Thought human rights existed in Canada and I found out the hard way I was wrong. Jail guards beat me.
- Police treatment, felt violated for such a misdemeanor charge. Users get pinched and drug dealers not. Now more police pressure during Olympics. Need more D&A program in DTES, nursing and health care 24 hrs.

As can be seen, the qualitative responses were quite consistent overall with those emerging from the structured questions, that is, mostly positive.

Discussion

Prior to the opening of the court in 2008, the SFU Research Team interviewed various stakeholders, such as the DCC staff and representatives from community organizations, about the community court concept. It is of interest and relevance here to reference some of those observations in discussing the results from the Phase I Participant Survey. Having the early visions of both the DCC staff and the representatives for community organizations about how the community court is to operate in a unique manner allows a comparison with how the participants themselves view the court as having achieved those unique aspirations or not.

In terms of what they saw as the primary differences between DCC and the Provincial Court at Main St., a majority of the staff felt the DCC would be more efficient, more focused on problem solving and more likely to achieve positive outcomes because of the amount of information that will be elicited by the various teams. The DCC was generally perceived to be less punitive and more likely to reduce recidivism as offenders would be

held accountable for their behaviour but this would not prevent them from accessing services. With respect to the actual operation of the court, offenders would have more opportunity to interact with the DCC officials - the Judge, Crown and Defense -- and the physical layout of DCC courtroom would be more intimate and much less intimidating than 222 Main St.

For responses from the representatives of Community Agencies in the DCC Catchment area, the DCC was similarly conceptualized as having the following attributes:

1. Offenders will be better serviced where there is an integrated, holistic approach;
2. Offenders will receive more humane and respectful treatment;
3. Offenders will be dealt with more quickly which will give more legitimacy to the court;
4. The whole concept of trying to do something different is good and serves the criminal justice system;
5. The multi-service network model will promote coordination and involve the offender in planning;
6. The DCC has the potential to be better than the existing system and community service has the potential to be more of a valuable experience;
7. The DCC provides more opportunities for engaging participants in the process and for participation on a more meaningful level.

Most of these attributes were referenced to one extent or another by participants in the Phase I Survey. While questions about the longer term outcomes, such as reduced recidivism rates, are still not answerable because of the relatively short time period the community court has been in operation, the shorter term outcomes envisioned by staff and community representatives for the court seem to be perceived and experienced by the participants themselves as having been achieved.

Overall, the participants did appear to sense that the court operated on different assumptions about how justice is achieved in a formal court process than what is true for traditional courts. They recognized that the intent was focussed more upon addressing their needs through a variety of resources. Generally, they found DCC to be more efficient in terms of the time it took to resolve their case, more friendly and supportive in terms of the court personnel and programming staff, and they were more satisfied with the outcomes for themselves.

In the Phase II interview that is to follow, more in-depth information from those participants experiencing intensive case management will be probed. This will involve collecting background information on the offenders whose sentence includes intensive case management supervision with some treatment conditions set to address the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour. In addition, the Phase II study intends to gather information on their perspectives regarding different aspects of the sentence and supervision experience and the perceived impact of the supervision experience on present/future behaviour.

In conclusion, the Phase I survey results establish the foundation for further examination of the perceptions and experiences of the participants with the Downtown Community Court. It will be interesting to see if the sub population of intensively case-managed participants perceive their experiences with the more closely managed program as positively in the Phase II interviews.

Downtown Community Court Participant Survey II

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Executive Summary

The Vancouver Downtown Community Court (DCC), the first community court in Canada, opened in the Fall of 2008. A key goal of the DCC is to reduce harm caused to the community by crime. The court operates on the principle that collaborative case management can help make long-term changes to offender behaviour. In complex cases, a case management team may be assigned to make sure the offender follows through with recommendations in the intervention plan. Based upon an individualized assessment of the Case Management Program (CMP) participant needs, a variety of resources are organized to address those needs, ranging from community service to addictions treatment. It is from this stream that 44 participants who were in the CMP for a minimum of 90 days were selected for the present study intended to capture their perceptions about that program specifically, the DCC more generally, and perceived self-report changes in their behavior and personal circumstances from pre-CMP to the time of their involvement with CMP and participation in the study.

Although a relatively small program at the Downtown Community Court, the CMP is structured to be a rigorous and intense multi-program experience for the participant. The individuals are to be closely monitored, and based upon the intervention plan set out for them, a variety of programming is established, such as is referenced above. The DCC-CMP teams attempt to balance necessary supervision and enforcement of orders intended to address the offenders' criminogenic needs.

Participants in the CMP who were interviewed for the study do seem to fit the profile of a "complex case". They indicated they have dealt with a variety of challenges in their lives, contributing to lack of stability, lack of "appropriate" coping skills, isolation, offending behaviour, and ongoing addiction problems.

A sample of DCC participants being processed through the DCC were surveyed in the fall of 2010 and the results reported in the Phase I Participant Report. The present study, completed in the spring of 2011, constitutes the Phase II Report in which *only* participants in the CMP were interviewed in greater depth about their experiences. While not directly comparable, common themes of challenges faced for the participants did emerge between the two studies: 1) Addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse; 2) Mental and physical health problems more generally; and 3) Financial and social challenges, such as homelessness, lack of available work and income, and a lack of education. The differences between the two samples in the reporting of these factors is primarily one of scale, that is, overall, CMP participants in the Phase II study represent individuals reporting more complex and serious challenges in those areas than individuals in the general participant sample surveyed in the Phase I study.

In terms of procedure, the in-depth interviews of the CMP participants proceeded from participants first being made aware of the interview opportunity by their case managers. Participants were paid \$15 for a 45 to 55 minute interview. The different interview locations were on site in the court, in a quiet area; off-site at the Burnaby Centre (operated by Vancouver Coastal Health for people with addictions); and off-site at the Pre-trial Centre in Coquitlam, where participants were interviewed in custody for reasons such as non-adherence to their conditional sentencing order conditions.

Most of the participants were male (73%), Caucasian (43%), about a fifth completing high school, and most were single. The average age of the sample was 36 years with their median age at first conviction being 17. As well, many of the CMP participants resided in multiple

accommodations in the year prior to their current sentence; most in a single resident occupancy room (SRO), hotel, apartment or house, or accommodation in a shelter.

These individuals also generally experienced a marginalized existence, often struggling with mental and physical health problems, unemployment, and addictions prior to CMP experience. This particular set of participants also experience ongoing justice system issues.

The CMP participants were under supervision for a variety of property offenses and a small number of violence offenses and administration of justice offenses. Minor theft under \$5000 convictions constitute the majority of offense types, with 15% falling into a more serious range of offending. The participants reported a mean of 34 past convictions. Thus, the label of a chronic offender seems to be appropriate for the CMP supervised offenders.

Subsequent reporting about their circumstances (after a minimum of 90 days in the CMP) revealed little change in income assistance dependence from their life prior to involvement in the CMP and about the same rate of unemployment, but there was a reduced usage of alcohol and drugs and accommodation was markedly better in that fewer were in shelters and/or friends'/relatives' homes, and more living in standard housing.

Although self-reported criminal behaviour remained at about the same level of reporting (about one-third indicating they were criminally active) for both pre-CMP participants and CMP participants, the CMP participants actually then indicated, that while the criminality was at about the same level of seriousness (71%), slightly higher (7%), or, slightly lower than pre-CMP (22%) seriousness, it was of a less frequent nature from the criminality in the pre-CMP time (93% reporting less activity). However, about two-thirds of the CMP participants declined to respond to the criminal activity query.

Improvement in their quality of life was also one factor noted by a few participants, as well as positive outcomes more generally being perceived by the majority of participants as a result of the participation in the CMP component of the DCC. Many of the improvements appear consistent with a harm reduction outcome. There were also comments made about what it is that the CMP does that leads to successes. Suggestions ranged from the use of positive role modeling to the provision of practical skills and helpful support which helped them break the criminal behaviour cycle.

The majority expressed favourable opinions about the DCC process generally and the CMP specifically. They were appreciative of the personalized assistance and guidance by the staff within the courtroom and subsequently in the CMP program itself, the latter of which many saw as giving them "a second chance".

The smaller number of negative comments registered by the participants related to a perceived intrusiveness of the program in their lives, as exemplified by problems of relatively more rules affecting their experiences in the program, personality clashes, a perceived shift in the caring approach in the DCC courtroom from initial experiences there, and, the feeling expressed by one participant that the program simply was not for him.

What now remains to be examined are actual outcomes for the participants, which can only be revealed by recorded recidivism and officially documented mental and physical outcomes. The comparison with the above perceptions of the participants about the CMP outcomes can then be verified and placed into a different context for evaluation.

Downtown Community Court Participant Survey: Phase II

The Downtown Community Court (DCC), which opened in Vancouver in the Fall of 2008, is the first community court in Canada, based in part on the successful Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn, New York. The DCC was structured to differ from the traditional justice system in several important ways:

- the court process quicker than the traditional court process;
- it has an integrated approach to assessing and managing offenders; and,
- it is connected to the community.

- taken from the Downtown Community Court website, 2011

The same legal opportunities to craft justice responses to offenders do exist in both traditional and community courts, however, the same availability of resources may differ, with fewer resources available for traditional court.

After the opening of the Downtown Community Court (DCC), the SFU research team undertook a number of surveys and interviews of 85 individuals in key roles within the DCC. A few of those were undertaken shortly after its opening (SFU Interim Report 2008). Subsequently, additional surveys and interviews took place from two to two and one half years after the opening. The Phase I and Phase II reports are based upon surveys of 196 clients/participants (Phase I) and interviews with 44 clients/participants in a particular program, the Case Management Program (Phase II). The Phase I study forms a separate report (previously submitted) and is not directly comparable with the Phase II results, given the different method, sample, and intent.

A study that is somewhat comparable was undertaken for the Red Hook Community Justice Center in New York state (2006). Defendants' perceptions of that community court were examined with reference to the way they were treated by the court and their perceptions of the outcome of the process. Since community courts are "problem-solving" courts, it is of interest to obtain the perceptions of the clients to determine if they felt their problems were fairly resolved. As quoted from that report, "(p)revious research shows that when defendants perceive their treatment to be fair, they are more likely to accept the decisions of the court, comply with court-imposed sanctions, and obey the law in the future (Tyler and Huo, 2002, as quoted in Red Hook Report, 2006, p. iii). Therefore the perceptions of the individuals in this stream of the DCC are quite relevant to an assessment of the program's effectiveness

One of the goals of the Vancouver Downtown Community Court is to instill and improve the public confidence in the court. Since clients do form one part of the community, this constitutes another reason for trying to understand their perceptions about the functioning of the court.

In our Phase I Report in 2010, 196 clients being processed through the DCC were surveyed about their perceptions of their community court processing experience. It was a foundational study that provided basic demographic information. Most of the clients felt they were treated fairly by the judge, the defence and the probation officers.

For the current Phase II Report, more in-depth interviews were conducted with 44 individuals participating in the intensive case management stream. The Case Management Program (CMP) is a key stream of the court and is described below:

“The Downtown Community Court has two integrated case management teams made up of the following personnel: Probation Officers, who manage the legal requirements of court orders; VCH justice liaison workers, who are responsible for the provision of health services; an employment assistance worker, who assists in employment and income assistance problems; and a Vancouver Police officer who is responsible for the identification and interventions with respect to chronic offenders.

By means of intensive and assertive case management, the DCC teams strive to balance the supervision and enforcement of orders. Their commitment is to assist offenders in bringing about positive changes in their lives. The teams develop case management plans that focus on intervention strategies to address the risk to reoffend and linkages to address criminogenic needs (e.g. housing, employment, financial assistance, associates, mental health, and addictions). The emphasis is upon problem-solving to find solutions that assist the offender while reducing harm and/or risk to the community” (Vancouver Downtown Community Court Interim Report, Victoria, September, 2010).

The CMP constitutes a much smaller but more intense program than the general population of DCC participants would experience. The individuals have to be deemed appropriate for inclusion in the program based upon an assessment of their needs and risk level.

Description of Phase II Study

The Phase II study of 44 Downtown Community Court case managed participants was conducted in the fall of 2010 to the spring of 2011. As indicated above, the study builds upon the Phase I study initially undertaken to obtain 196 DCC participants’ perceptions of their experiences in the court. The longer Phase II instrument had more open-ended questions than the Phase I instrument (see Appendix C for Phase II instrument). The Phase II Study intended to provide a more in-depth consideration of those perceptions with the specific case management program (CMP), which, as described above, is one primary program intended to secure the mandate of the court. In complex cases, a case management team may be assigned to make sure the offender follows through with recommendations in the intervention plan. Based upon an individualized assessment of the CMP participant needs, variety of resources are organized to address those needs, ranging from community service to addictions treatment. Therefore the perceptions of the individuals in this stream of the DCC are quite relevant to an assessment of the program’s effectiveness.

From the results of the Phase I survey of participants, three general theme areas emerged in the discussion of challenges for those individuals. These same areas remained dominant in the Phase II interview: 1) Addictions, such as alcohol and substance abuse; 2) Mental and physical health problems more generally, such as dual diagnoses, depression, stress, anger problems, head injuries, back injury, bipolar disorders and seizures (this category covered a myriad of issues, both mental and physical); and 3) Financial and social challenges, such as homelessness, lack of available work and income, lack of education which contributes to the inability to obtain work, and limitations of living allowance. Many intersections did occur amongst the themes as well. The differences between the two samples in the reporting of these factors is primarily one of scale, that is, overall CMP participants represent those reporting more complex and serious challenges in those areas than those in the general participant sample surveyed in Phase I.

Additional in-depth probing of other perceptions of CMP participants in the Phase II study, such as differences perceived in process and outcome between regular court and DCC, self-report

changes in behaviour between pre-CMP involvement and program involvement also occurred in the Phase II study.

Methodology

The Case Management Program (CMP) participants were made aware of the interview survey opportunity when they attended appointments with their case managers from the Case Management Team (CMT) at the DCC. Only those CMP participants who had been in the program for 90 days or longer were selected in order to assure that they had been experienced in the program before being interviewed.

It was indicated to them that participation in the study provided a honourarium of \$15 for a 45 to 55 minute interview about their perceptions of the DCC and the case management program. The interviewing took place in a number of locations: on-site in a quiet room off the DCC main waiting area; off-site at the Burnaby Centre (operated by Vancouver Coastal Health for people with addictions); and off-site at the Pre-trial Centre in Coquitlam, where participants were interviewed in custody for reasons such as non-adherence to their conditional sentencing order conditions.

Of the original 52 interviews, 44 were deemed sufficiently complete for inclusion in the analyses. Most of the eliminated interviews were because the client did not wish to complete the interview, often because of the length of time required. They would begin the interview with an understanding of the time needed, but would not be able to continue to focus upon responding. Several simply did not engage with the process and provided no real information beyond monosyllabic responses.

The same experienced interviewer for the majority of the Phase I surveys was the sole interviewer for the Phase II interviews. She is quite familiar with the justice system, having worked in the system for 25 years. The rich qualitative responses were initially examined and categorized by her. Subsequently, with conferral for theme content and clarification, another experienced researcher analyzed the comments and categories to further refine them. Finally, a third iteration of that process was made by the co-researcher for the project.

Study Findings

Demographic & Background Information

This section provides information on the demographics of the participants.

As shown in

Table 25, most of the participants were male (72.7%), Caucasian (43.2%), about a fifth completed high school, and most were single (72.7%). The average age of the sample was 36 years at the time of the interview and the participants reported their first conviction at a median age of 17.0 (see Table 60).

Table 25: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview – Sample Characteristics

Gender	%	n
Male	72.7	32
Female	25.0	11
Not Stated	2.3	1
Ethnicity	%	n
Caucasian	43.2	19
Aboriginal	29.5	13
Black	9.1	4
Métis	9.1	4
Asian	6.8	3
Middle Eastern	2.3	1
Education Completed	%	n
Below grade 9	20.5	9
Grade 9 to grade 11	50.0	22
High school	20.5	9
Some post-secondary school	6.8	3
Bachelor's degree	2.3	1
Marital Status	%	n
Single	72.7	32
Common-law	20.5	9
Divorced	6.8	3

Pre-DCC Background

This section presents information on several criminogenic variables in the year prior to the case management supervision. The variables include employment status, income, residential mobility and drug and alcohol use. In addition, the effect of these variables on the quality of life and criminal behaviour are explored. These results will subsequently be compared to similar responses about those variables while experiencing the CMP.

Table 26 presents the background of the CMP participants in the year prior to their supervision by the CMP. In the year before the most recent sentence, two-thirds of the participants lived at a fixed address. Two-thirds also indicated they had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. An overwhelming percentage used drugs the previous year (95.5%), although many fewer admitted to using alcohol (40.9%). While 48.8% admitted to being hospitalized in that previous year, only 25% indicated they engage in other negative behaviours during that time.

Table 26: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview – Pre-DCC Background of Participants

In the year before your sentence:	Yes %	n	No %	n
Did you live at a fixed address?	63.6	28	36.4	16
Were you homeless (ever)?	63.6	28	36.4	16
Did you use drugs?	95.5	42	4.5	2
Did you use alcohol?	40.9	18	59.1	26
Did you engage in other negative behaviours?*	25.0	11	75.0	33
Were you hospitalized?	48.8	21	50.0	22

*gambling; other addictive behaviours

Table 27 shows the types of accommodations the CMP participants lived in prior to their involvement with the CMP. Many CMP clients resided in multiple accommodations in the year prior to their current sentence; most in an SRO, hotel, apartment or house, followed in frequency by accommodation in a shelter. Moreover, CMP participants who were homeless had a mean of 6.2 months without a residence and on average had a 2.4 separate homelessness incidents in the year prior to their current sentence (see Table 60).

Table 27: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Types of Residences of Participants in the Year Prior to the Current Sentence

Types of Residences in Past Year	% of Responses	% of Participants	n
Apartment or house	9.2	15.9	7
Single room occupancy or hotel	31.6	54.5	24
Residence of a friend	15.8	27.3	12
Residence of family	11.8	20.5	9
Shelter	22.4	38.6	17
Other residence	9.2	15.9	7
Total	99.9	172.7	76

Table 28 presents the employment status of the CMP participants in the year prior to their current sentence. A majority of the clients (81.8%) were unemployed in the year prior to their current sentence. Very few participants were employed full time (2.3%) and the remainder indicated that they had casual employment (15.9%).

Table 28: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Employment Status of Participants in the Year Prior to the Current Sentence

Employment in the past year	%	n
Unemployed	81.8	36
Casual	15.9	7
Part-time	0	0
Full-time	2.3	1
Total	100.0	44

Table 29 shows the types of income assistance of the CMP participants prior to their involvement with the CMP. An interesting result is that over 51% of the clients were on disability income, followed by social assistance income (41.9%), in the year prior to their current sentence.

Table 29: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Types of Income Assistance of Participants in the Year Prior to the Current Sentence

Types of Income Assistance	% of Responses	% of Participants	n
Social assistance	41.9	40.9	18
Disability	51.2	50.0	22
Unemployment insurance	2.3	2.3	1
Other	4.7	4.5	2
Total	100.0	97.7	43

Table 30 presents the frequency of drug use for the CMP participants in the year prior to their sentence. Of those clients using drugs multiple times a day, heroin and crack are the drugs of choice. The majority of offenders use crack either daily (29.5%) or multiple times per day

(43.2%), while offenders reported using heroin daily (18.2%) or multiple time a day (29.5%) in the year prior to their sentence. These habits obviously require a constant source of funding. On average the CMP participants spent a median of 500 dollars per week on illicit drugs (see Table 60).

Table 30: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Types and Frequency of Drugs Used by Participants in the Year Prior to the Current Sentence

Drug Use in Past Year	No Use % (n)	< 1 Per Month % (n)	> 1 Per Month % (n)	Weekly % (n)	Daily % (n)	Multi x Day % (n)
Marijuana	54.5 (20)	4.5 (2)	13.6 (6)	6.8 (3)	15.9 (7)	4.5 (2)
Heroin	34.1 (15)	4.5 (2)	6.8 (3)	6.8 (3)	18.2 (8)	29.5 (13)
Cocaine	81.8 (36)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)
Crack	18.2 (8)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)	29.5 (13)	43.2 (19)
Methamphetamine	90.9 (40)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Crystal Meth	79.5 (35)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	11.4 (5)	2.3 (1)
Prescription Drugs 1	84.1 (37)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (2)	9.1 (4)	2.3 (1)
Prescription Drugs 2	95.5 (42)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	0.0 (0)
Other Drugs	97.7 (43)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)	0.0 (0)

Table 31 presents the self-reported frequency of alcohol use by the CMP participants in the year prior to their involvement with the CMP. The self-report on the usage of alcohol does appear low, given the stereotype of the alcoholic offender. On the other hand, over 11% do report daily or multiple times a day use in the year prior to their sentence. On average the CMP participants spent a median of 25 dollars per week on alcohol (see **Error! Reference source not found.**Table 60).

Table 31: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Frequency of Alcohol Use by Participants in the Year Prior to the Current Sentence

Alcohol Use in the past year	%	n
No use	61.4	27
Less than once a month	9.1	4
More than once per month	2.3	1
Weekly	15.9	7
Daily	9.1	4
Multiple times a day	2.3	1
Total	100.0	44

In summarizing Table 26 to Table 31, it should be noted that in the year prior to their current sentence which resulted in the placement into the CMP program, most were on income assistance of some form, they were using drugs relatively frequently, a majority were living in SRO's, hotels or with family or friends, and were unemployed.

The first open-ended question asked people to think about **issues and behaviours that affected their lifestyles within the past year, including offending behaviour**. The information gathered is helpful in providing overall context for the interview, and also to assist in determinations of which DCC programs and initiatives are most helpful and relevant (or not) in addressing the needs of the people in the program.

There is one theme in which many participants are dealing with (or have dealt with) ongoing life challenges, such as unstable family relationships, poor role models, education and life skills deficits, and so on. Table 32 categorizes the impact of those life circumstances (i.e., drug use, etc.) of the CMP participants on their quality of life and offending behaviour prior to their involvement with the CMP.

Table 32: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- The Effect of Negative Behaviours on the Quality of Life and Offending of the CMP Participants

Based on behaviours/issues experienced in past year, describe effect on life articulate relationship of issues to offending behaviour	n
Addiction ongoing	37
Isolation/estrangement	28
Commit crime-stealing	23
Chaotic lifestyle / lack of focus / willpower / lack of follow-up/discipline	18
Have family and/or friends' support	15
Lack of stable living arrangements	14
Money issues, lack of	12
In/out of jail / breach/relapse	12
Family/relationship problems	11
Hopelessness/sense of futility/ongoing stress/depression	11
Commit crime-drugs	10

Addiction (and overcoming it) appears to be one of the greatest barriers to “getting on track.”

Participant Comments:

- Before (in another BC location), relapse between having children. Binged, lost everything I had acquired while clean for 6 months. Split up relationship and lost child. Evicted, stayed in a resource as I was homeless, pregnant, sex trade. Went back into drug use heavily.
- Shoplift to get money for selling stuff for crack. Stealing, go to jail, get out and repeat.
- Shoplifted every day to get drugs, clean clothes. Drug use so bad, shoplifted continuously.
- I didn't give a shit, everyone around me thought I was nuts. I got stupid and didn't care who saw me, and I'd get in trouble. The hustle and thrill of scoring dope, doing it is addictive.

Reports of isolation from others (i.e., family and friends) are common, and appear to be strongly tied to addictions.

Participant Comments:

- When I use drugs I isolate; only "using" friends. When I went to recovery I had more contact with family and friends I could call.
- Had a wife and 3 boys, and left family because I thought it was better for them that I left and sent money. Moved down here; drugs cheaper and easily accessible.

- Couldn't visit my family/mom. Stealing from family and friends. Family was surprised by drug use.

Negative role models and surroundings reinforce the cycle of addictions and chaotic lifestyles. The “Downtown East Side” (DTES) is mentioned in responses throughout the survey.

Participant Comments:

- No friends when you are heavy in your addiction. Partner would do it with me, back and forth for both of us in jail. Relationship wore thin, stressful. He didn't have a problem being homeless and I did so was angry and resentful.
- Criminal activity to buy drugs/heroin, full-time addiction, selling dope. Also buy food.
- It was hell. Empty, sad, abusing constantly, using every day.
- Crashed with dad but he also used drugs. Flopping place to place, stayed in DTES, only place in city where people who do drugs run the scene - cops don't.
- Chaotic; trying to get money, stealing, going to jail. Focused on criminal behaviour, shoplifting.

Current DCC Offences

This section enumerates the offences that associated with the current supervision by the CMP at the DCC.

Table 33 includes up to seven convictions for the 35 participants for whom data were available. The table indicates that the CMP participants were under supervision for a variety of property convictions, along with a relatively small number of violent and administration of justice offences.

Table 33: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participant Offences

Offence Type	Offences		Offenders	
	N	%	N	%
Robbery	4	3.9%	1	2.9%
Assault	7	6.9%	4	11.4%
Uttering Threats	4	3.9%	3	8.6%
Break and Enter	2	2.0%	2	5.7%
Theft Over \$5,000	1	1.0%	1	2.9%
Possession for Purposes of Trafficking	2	2.0%	2	5.7%
Possession of a Controlled Substance	1	1.0%	1	2.9%
Theft Under \$5,000	49	48.0%	26	74.3%
Possession of Stolen Property Under \$5,000	3	2.9%	1	2.9%
Dangerous Operation of a Motor Vehicle	3	2.9%	1	2.9%
Mischief Under \$5,000	14	13.7%	7	20.0%
Unauthorized Use of a Credit Card	1	1.0%	1	2.9%
Possession of Break-in Instrument	4	3.9%	3	8.6%
Breach of Probation Order	6	5.9%	6	17.1%
Breach of Undertaking or Recognizance	3	2.9%	2	5.7%
Total	104	100.0%	35	174.50%

Minor theft under and mischief under \$5000 convictions constitute the majority of offense types, with 15% falling into a more serious range of offending.

Comparison of DCC Court with Other Courts "Past Convictions" in survey

This section describes the prevalence of past involvement with the traditional court system. In addition, the perspectives of the participants are describes on how the DCC process differs from the traditional court systems are examined. Table 34 shows the proportion of CMP participants that reported past convictions in other courts.

Table 34: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Whether Participants Were Ever Convicted of Offences in a Court Other than DCC

Ever Convicted in Another Court	%	n
Yes	95.5	42
No	4.5	2
Total	100.0	44

The great majority of clients (95.5%) had been convicted of offenses in a court other than the DCC. The participants indicated that they had a mean of 33.8 past convictions (see Table 60). Thus, for this program, the label of a chronic offender seems to be appropriate for participants supervised by the CMP.

As indicated in Table 35, the DCC is generally seen as much more helpful than “regular” court programs, due mainly to its more personal approach, combined with more resources from which

to draw. Here it is interesting to note that only two participants indicated “life has improved”. It should be noted that this table captures a “free comments” area on the survey, and not checked boxes.

Table 35: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- The CMP participant perceptions of the DCC process

How DCC differs from non-DCC court experiences	n
DCC helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	31
DCC helpful - general / break cycle	26
DCC helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	13
Regular (non DCC) system not helpful - in and out of trouble	7
Regular (non DCC) system impersonal	4
In/out of jail / breach/relapse	3
DCC - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative	3
Good role models / peer support	2
Life has improved	2
Lifestyle - no significant change / no difference	2
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	1
Overcoming addiction struggles	1
Regular (non DCC) system - lack of resources	1

Participant Comments:

- Most participants appear to recognize the need to accept help in order to achieve a more positive lifestyle.
- Work with you on a one-to-one basis.
- Totally night and day difference.
- In DCC it's more personal and they look at you more holistically. Treatment options, work with you for a good fit.
- I wouldn't be here talking to you. Turned my life around. I appreciate it more in DCC, how it functions to get me off probation.
- DCC - I get a lot of help for housing, food, everything; no comparison.
- DCC - here they want to break the cycle of in and out of jail. Give the option for people to get help, not just lock you up. I don't think that works.
- Regular court I would just get thrown in jail and released to nothing, no support. Fend for yourself. Guidance was needed (like DCC) when I was drug addict.
- In other court systems, I don't like the police and make it tough for police; I would never sit down and talk to them. With DCC I am courteous as I understand they are out to help.
- Offer you recovery first instead of punishment first.

Experiences with DCC Supervision

Section 5 of the survey deals with participants’ experiences with DCC supervision. This includes an analysis of the supervision process, difficulties reporting and breaches and how CMP supervision differs from past community supervision experiences. In examining the responses in this section, it should be kept in mind that the minimal time the individual was in CMP was 90 days.

Case Management Ratings

Table 36 shows the ratings of the CMP participants of their CMP supervisor. The CMP participants indicated agreement with statements that the case management staff was quite comprehensive in their explanation of the outcomes of the court process. In addition, the participants overwhelmingly responded that they were well treated by the case management staff during their supervision to date.

Table 36: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Level of Agreement with CMP Descriptors

The Case Management Team:	Agree % (n)	Neither % (n)	Disagree % (n)	N/A % (n)
Explained the post-sentencing process	84.1 (37)	2.3 (1)	9.1 (4)	4.5 (2)
Explained the conditions of my orders	95.5 (42)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Was knowledgeable about programs you need	79.5 (35)	11.4 (5)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)
Explained your responsibilities from the sentence	95.5 (42)	2.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)
Treated you respectfully	93.2 (41)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Treated you fairly	93.2 (41)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (2)	2.3 (1)
Allowed you to have input into the supervision plan	86.4 (38)	0.0 (0)	9.1 (4)	4.5 (2)

Difficulties with Reporting

Table 37 addresses whether the CMP participants found reporting to their supervisor to be difficult. The percentage of participants reporting difficulties is 22.7%. The statements below include acknowledgement of the DCC team trying to assist, for example to “get me for appointments.” It is apparent that the CMP participants are also closely monitored. The median number of times they reported to their CMP supervisor was 4.0 times per month (see Table 60).

Table 37: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Whether Participants Experience Difficulty Reporting to the CMP

The Case Management Team:	Agree % (n)	Neither % (n)	Disagree % (n)	N/A % (n)
Explained the post-sentencing process	84.1 (37)	2.3 (1)	9.1 (4)	4.5 (2)
Explained the conditions of my orders	95.5 (42)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Was knowledgeable about programs you need	79.5 (35)	11.4 (5)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)
Explained your responsibilities from the sentence	95.5 (42)	2.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.3 (1)
Treated you respectfully	93.2 (41)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Treated you fairly	93.2 (41)	0.0 (0)	4.5 (2)	2.3 (1)
Allowed you to have input into the supervision plan	86.4 (38)	0.0 (0)	9.1 (4)	4.5 (2)

Table 38 presents the types of difficulties experienced by the small number of participants that reported difficulties reporting to the CMP. The majority of the responses are related to personal difficulties, such as a chaotic lifestyle, addiction and health problems.

Table 38: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Impediments to Reporting to the CMP

Type of Difficulties	n
Chaotic lifestyle / lack of focus / willpower / lack of follow-up/discipline	3
CMP - Come to see me / get me for appts	3
Showing up for appts - doing better now	3
Addiction ongoing	1
Hopelessness/sense of futility/ongoing stress/depression	1
Lack of stable living arrangements	1
Ongoing and/or chronic physical problems	1
Transportation / money issues	1
Fear of being breached / going to jail	1

Participant Comments:

- In the beginning I couldn't get up out of bed; stay up all night and sleep during day.
- CMP PO comes here to see me due to hip.

Breaches

Table 39 shows the proportion of participants that were breached while under supervision by the CMP. Most of the participants indicated that at the time of the interview they had not been breached by the CMP. However, 22.7% stated that they had been breached during their supervision. For the 10 CMP participants who indicated that they were breached, the mean was 1.2 times while under CMP supervision (see Table 60).

Table 39: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants Ever Breached by the CMP?

CMP Breaches	%	n
Yes	22.7	10
No	70.5	31
Not Stated	6.8	3
Total	100.0	44

Table 40 describes the justifications for ever being breached by the CMP. The reasons from the participants for the breaches were relatively straightforward.

Participant Comments:

- Not complying with conditions such as residing where directed, treatment centre.
- Re-offended and heavy into addiction, didn't follow through, missed appointments.
- I took advantage of them giving me so many chances.

Table 40: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Reasons for Breaches

Reason for breach	n
Not complying with conditions / not showing up	11
Commit crime-general	2

Comparison of CMP with Other Supervision Experiences

Table 41 describes the respondents experiences with CMP supervision as compared to their past experiences under community supervision. In general, the participants responded favorably to their experiences with the CMP, as compared to their past experiences under non-CMP supervision.

Table 41: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- CMP Experiences Compared to Other Community Supervision

Comment	n
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	43
DCCCMP helpful - general / break cycle	34
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	29
Regular (non DCC) system impersonal	20
Regular (non DCC) system - lack of resources	6
Regular (non DCC) system not helpful - in and out of trouble	5
CMP - Come to see me / get me for appts	4
Showing up for appts - doing better now	1
DCC CMP - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative	1
Good role models / peer support	1
DCC CMP not helpful	1

The responses centred on the helpfulness of the DCC and staff, the intent of the DCC to deal with the underlying causes of criminal behavior and that the DCC and staff are organized with more success to resources.

Participant Comments:

- Think twice about doing crime.
- More knowledge, more in-depth with their job instead of stuffing people off. POs are just a court to get you to sign and see you next month.
- Want to make sure you do right. More effort to cope with your problems and addiction, housing, food.
- Patience, have the time and the normal system doesn't (all they have are the conditions, no program).
- Regular POs have high caseloads and no time for support - in and out. One of my POs just had me sign in and no consequences; see him once every 3-5 months. Some regular POs hard to get along with and don't understand my needs.
- CMT encourages you to seek other options. Counselling, very resourceful, care and concern, stay on top of you.
- I am obligated to do things they think I need; they want me to focus on my addiction, decide what programs I need. Seeing CMT once a week gives me initiative to not use. I don't have to lie.

- The explain things to me and read my papers to me, as I don't read or write.
- Help me get to appointments, doctor and therapy. Never got help before.
- Look forward to coming to DCC. I built trust with them. Came to see me in Surrey. Something positive about coming here, positive support. If I have problems I will let them know.

Participants' "Likes" About DCC Experience

Table 42 presents the CMP participant perceptions on the benefits of the DCC process. The responses to the open-ended questions on the perceptions of the CMP participants were generally strongly positive and are similar to the responses to the perceptions of the CMP staff. Again, as in Table 35, it is interesting that only two individuals indicated that “life has improved”. On the other hand, the mostly positive ratings of their experiences with CMP might be unexpected, given that CMP is structured to be a rigorous and intense multi-program experience.

Table 42: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Specific Likes About DCC Program Experience

Comments	n*
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	54
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	44
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	38
Good role models / peer support	17
Had/have stability	3
Life has improved	2
Showing up for appts - doing better now	1
DCC CMP not helpful	1

*Respondents may have offered more than one comment in each category.

The responses tended to include information pertaining to the helpfulness of the DCC process, the supportive nature of the DCC process and the impact of enhanced resources connected to the DCC.

Participant Comments:

- Found me a place to live.
- Divided my cheque into twice a week; works better for me so I don't spend it (full amount) all at once on drugs.
- Knowing somebody is on my side.
- Patience, tolerance, easy to talk to.
- They gave me food and clothes.
- Money management course.
- Very good at getting you into treatments or shelters.
- They got me into recovery.

- Make me more of a person; before I was "f' n" this and that. I love waking up every morning above ground, and I see the world in a different way. Sheriffs, cops, doctors - I used to think they were out to get me.
- POs here will offer medical, counselling, coffee, better supports. If I tried to do that on my own I would be on a waitlist and not taken seriously.
- Have welfare, case workers, counselling.
- In DCC I am not set up to fail. They work with me. Listen to me, express concerns but allow me to make decisions.
- Everything is incorporated into one. I can get all the info I need in one place.
- They care what happens. They mean well and I feel I let them down if I use or rob.
- Obviously there are restrictions but there is less force, and they work with you.
- More intense. Ask more questions; more onto you.
- Respect one another. No lies; can't help me if I lie. We are straight up with each other.
- They take a personal approach. I think I really like it; it's new and positive.

Participants' "Dislikes" About DCC Program Experience

Table 43 shows the categories of CMP participant perceptions of the problems associated with the DCC.

Table 43: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Specific Dislikes About DCC Program

Comments	n
DCC CMP - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative - *see below for examples	13
Worries about back-sliding	2
DCC CMP not helpful	1
Lack of stable living arrangements	1
Lack of support services	1
Learning/education challenges	1

Although some participants had some negative associations with the DCC process, such as lack of connection to specific resources and the increased burden of supervision, the responses were generally focused on isolated incidents that occurred under supervision.

Participant Comments:

- This DCC court is frustrating as there are more rules to go by.
- CMT is kind of the same. I report and then I am gone again. I go to A&D program here.
- May not necessarily get along with one person, and trust issues.
- One incident with my stuff; it disappeared after I got out of jail and breached. SW told me it would be looked after and it was all lost.

- They can be too nosy. I guess they are just being polite and not writing it all down.
- When you are done reporting, they should keep you longer. *ed: Paradoxically, also a compliment about program.*
- Daytox not helpful.
- No, just not for me. I don't think everyone using drugs needs treatments.
- DCC now has different prosecutors. When I first came to DCC they seemed more compassionate and now they call me a menace to society. Lawyers defending clients bringing people to DCC.

The last comment is of interest as it suggests the experience with prosecutors changed with the changing of prosecutors, such that the compassionate component in community court transitioned to a more conventional adversarial style.

Court Ordered Services

Section 6 of the survey deals with court-ordered services and programs that are targeted at reducing the impact of criminogenic needs.

Table 44 indicates the types of programs that the CMP participants were ordered to attend as part of their community sentence.

Table 44: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Reported Referrals

Program Referral	Yes %	n	No %	n
Drug and alcohol	56.8	25	43.2	19
Other behavioural addictions	2.3	1	97.7	43
Life skills	11.4	5	88.6	39
Nutrition	13.6	6	86.4	38
Employment skills	9.1	4	90.9	40
Emotional well-being	4.5	2	95.5	42
Community work service	34.1	15	65.9	29
Women's support group	4.5	2	95.5	42
Mental health	31.8	14	68.2	30
Other	38.6	17	61.4	27

Not surprisingly, most participants were referred to drug and alcohol programs (56.8%), community work service (34.1%), mental health (31.8%) or an “other” program (38.6%). A smaller proportion of participants were referred to nutrition (13.6%), life skills (11.4%) and employment skills (9.1%).

Table 45 shows the self-reported wait times for admission of participants for each program type. The longest wait times (i.e., over 1 month) were reported for drug and alcohol programs (59.1%), employment skills (100.0%) and mental health (50.0%). In addition, the participants reported that most programs, other than community work service, nutrition, and “other” programs had wait times longer than two weeks.

Table 45: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Approximate Time to Admission for each Program Type

Program Entry Time	< 2 Weeks % (n)	2 Weeks to a Month % (n)	Over 1 Month % (n)	On Waiting List % (n)	Not Stated (n)	Tot (n)
Drug and alcohol	27.3 (6)	13.6 (3)	59.1 (13)	0.0 (0)	3	25
Other behavioural addictions	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0	1
Life skills	33.3 (1)	33.3 (1)	33.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	2	5
Nutrition	60.0 (3)	20.0 (1)	20.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	1	6
Employment skills	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (4)	0.0 (0)	0	4
Emotional well-being	0.0 (0)	100.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	1	2
Community work service	64.3 (9)	7.1 (1)	28.6 (4)	0.0 (0)	1	15
Women's support group	50.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	50.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	0	2
Mental health	20.0 (2)	30.0 (3)	50.0 (5)	0.0 (0)	4	14
Other	60.0 (9)	13.3 (2)	26.7 (4)	0.0 (0)	2	17

Table 46 presents the self-reported completion rates of participants for each program type. It is worth noting that at the time of the interview a large percentage of participants indicated that their program(s) were still “in progress” (again, not surprising, since the participants may have only been in the program for 90 days). However, the table does show that for programs with more than two participants, the lowest completion rate is drug and alcohol programs (36.0%). The programs with the highest self-reported completion rates were nutrition (83.3%) community work service (53.3%) and “other” programs (41.2%). Many of the programs had low counts and are therefore not discussed.

Table 46: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Reported Completion Rate for each Program Type

Court Program Completion	Yes %	n	No %	n	In Progress %	n	Tot n
Drug and alcohol	16.0	4	36.0	9	48.0	12	25
Other behavioural addictions*	0.0	0	100.0	1	0.0	0	1
Life skills	40.0	2	20.0	1	40.0	2	5
Nutrition	83.3	5	0.0	0	16.7	1	6
Employment skills	25.0	1	0.0	0	75.0	3	4
Emotional well-being	50.0	1	0.0	0	50.0	1	2
Community work service	53.3	8	13.3	2	33.3	5	15
Women's support group	50.0	1	0.0	0	50.0	1	2
Mental health	21.4	3	7.1	1	71.4	10	14
Other	41.2	7	23.5	4	35.3	6	17

The participants provided qualitative responses for of the reasons for non-completion of court ordered programs. The responses are varied but tend to centre on issues like relapse, lack of commitment and dislike of the programs.

Participant Comments:

- Didn't finish as I was sent back to jail.
- Relapsed and no support in Surrey when I was there. If I had my DCC PO in Surrey it would be better.
- D&A - didn't finish as I screwed up my 3 month conditional sentence so served my last three weeks in jail; started up again going to D&A counselling.

- Daytox didn't seem helpful sitting around talking about problems. Didn't help me.
- I couldn't make my appointments to my therapist and didn't know they had to still pay for it.
- I don't want to do it or need it.
- Homeless and end up in jail.

The participants reported their perceptions of the consequences of non-completion. The most frequent consequences seemed to be breaches and that the fact that some were in another program that had not been completed.

Participant Comments:

- Breach and then got into another program.
- Left voluntarily.
- Relapsed and triggered by other residents. Lonely, no family, support.
- Nothing. I didn't want anything to happen so I came in (checked in).
- In progress so nothing's happened yet.

Table 47 presents the responses of CMP participants on the utility of the programs they attended while under supervision.

Table 47: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Reports of How Programs Helped

How have DCC programs helped, or not helped?	n
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	25
Good role models / peer support	18
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	13
Overcoming addiction struggles	10
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	9
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	8
Life has improved	7
Practical skills - have and/or learning	6
DCC CMP - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative	3
Sense of having some personal integrity	3
Crime - not offending at present	3
Ongoing and/or chronic mental problems	3
DCC CMP not helpful	2
Learning/education challenges	2
Had/have stability	2
In/out of jail / breach/relapse	1
Not interested / not attending	1
Fear of being breached / going to jail	1
Lifestyle - no significant change / no difference	1
Anger/hostility/abuser	1
Find some work / self-supporting / some challenges	1
Bad role models	1

The responses are varied but tend to focus on tangible results such as peer support, assistance with addiction, connection with the program staff, and improving educational and mental stability.

Participant Comments:

- Drug and alcohol treatment.
- Employment skills.
- You see/meet others in our situation trying to get out of it.
- Forensics, seeing psychiatrist is helpful.
- Absolutely; have structure in my life, better frame of mind. Meaning and purpose in my life which I didn't have before.
- I am accountable to someone.
- Provided with shelter and food and not starving out of a vulnerable "fragile" place where I would be more likely to do crime.

- Changed my life; no more d/a use and no desire.
- I have a conscience now. I care now.
- I am a role model now; i.e. methadone, invite people to 44 Club and now they are doing their laundry. People depend on me.
- Made me think things. Experience. Realize seriousness of my situation.
- Makes me think that there is a better way rather than hurting yourself.
- Burnaby Centre - baby steps; seeing progress and seeing self go forward. Less crime, moving around.
- I don't crave stealing anymore, and if I do it more they may throw me in jail again. I will hurt myself if that happens.
- Self awareness, harm reduction, helped me with my addiction. Decision for myself to clean up.
- Keeping me clean and out of the DTES.
- I'm starting to enjoy a place to go back to every day, rather than lost and homeless.

Section 7: Changes in Circumstances & Behaviour since CMP Involvement

Section 7 of the survey deals with participants' changes to their criminogenic behaviors since their involvement with the DCC process and CMP supervision.

Table 48 presents the self-reported frequency of drug and alcohol use of the CMP participants since being under CMP supervision. A large proportion of participants indicated that they have not used drugs (31.8%). However, a significant proportion of participants indicated that they used drugs weekly (13.6%) or daily (27.3%). In contrast to higher frequency drug use, the majority of participants indicated no alcohol use (77.3%) or infrequent (15.9%) alcohol use. In any case, compared to their pre-CMP usage reported earlier, both drug and alcohol use dropped.

Table 48: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- The Drug and Alcohol Use of the CMP Participants Since Involvement with the CMP

Current Use	Drug Use %	n	Alcohol Use %	n
No use	31.8	14	77.3	34
Less than once a month	6.8	3	9.1	4
More than once per month	13.6	6	6.8	3
Weekly	13.6	6	2.3	1
Daily	27.3	12	2.3	1
Multiple times a day	6.8	3	0.0	0
Total	100.0	44	100.0	44

Table 49 presents the categories of responses given by CMP participants for how the DCC process and the CMP supervision have changed their use of drugs and alcohol.

Table 49: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Ways Involvement with CMP Has Changed Drug/Alcohol Use

Has DCC/CMP changed drug/alcohol use?	n
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	29
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	16
Good role models / peer support	11
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	8
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	7
DCC CMP not helpful	6
Overcoming addiction struggles	5
Sense of having some personal integrity	5
Fear of being breached / going to jail	3
Life has improved	2
Crime - not offending at present	1
Ongoing and/or chronic mental problems	1
Had/have stability	1
Isolation/estrangement	1
Regular (non DCC) system not helpful - in and out of trouble	1
Addiction ongoing	1
Have family and/or friends' support	1

The responses focus on the resources that the DCC and CMP connect them to, role models and peer support, the support of the DCC staff and general improvement in the quality of life of the participants as a result of the DCC experience.

Participant Comments:

- Yes, in recovery where don't use.
- Went to my doctor and was honest about relapse.
- Yes; before I was using more drugs and doing crimes/stealing.
- I'm doing really good; focus, maintain self better. CMT made me realize they care and then I started to care about what I'm doing.
- Yes, in a big way. Really wanted help this time and if you want it it's amazing what they will do for you and go out of their way to do it.
- Yes: art program, talking to CMT, going to family visits in Kamloops.
- CMT helped me get into treatment centre; helped me think about how I make choices - pros and cons.
- When got out of jail went on a tear but not doing it now, just causes so many problems.
- I used to use tons and be retarded and now I use very little.
- Yes, because here (DCC) they care. In other places, they expect but don't help.

Table 50 shows the perceptions of change of the participants for basic needs and behaviours since their supervision by the CMP. As was true in the year prior to entry into the CMP noted earlier, almost all of the CMP participants received income assistance. In addition, large proportions were also visiting a doctor (53.5%) or mental health specialists (39.5%) regularly. About one third of the participants (about the same percentage as pre-CMP) indicated that they were still committing crime, but 88.1% responded that involvement with the CMP changed their

offending in a less frequent direction. A large proportion (79.1%) indicated that involvement with the CMP had changed their quality of life.

Table 50: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Changes to Participants' Circumstances and Behaviour Since Involvement with the CMP

Since You Started Case Management:	Yes %	n	No %	n	Not Stated
Do you receive income assistance?	95.3	41	4.7	2	1
Are you visiting a doctor more regularly?	53.5	23	46.5	20	1
Are you seeing mental health specialists more regularly?	39.5	17	60.5	26	1
Are you still committing crime?	33.3	14	66.7	28	2
Has it changed your offending?	88.1	37	11.9	5	2
Has it changed your quality of life?	79.1	34	20.9	9	1

Table 51 shows the employment status of the participants since their involvement with the CMP. The results show that most of the participants were either unemployed (81.8%) or were employed on a casual basis (11.4%). No participants were employed on a full-time basis. While the unemployment percentage did not change from the earlier unemployment percentage pre-CMP, there were a few changes to the casual, part-time and full-time employment numbers.

Table 51: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Employment Status Since Involvement with the CMP

Current Employment	%	n
Unemployed	81.8	36
Casual	11.4	5
Part-time	4.5	2
Full-time	0.0	0
Not Stated	2.3	1
Total	100.0	44

Table 52 shows the types of income assistance that the participants accessed since their supervision by the CMP. Although the percent in the social assistance category did drop from pre-CMP experiences, very few participants did not have any access to income assistance (4.5%). Most of the participants were on disability (54.5%) or social assistance (34.1%).

Table 52: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Type of Participants' Income Assistance Since Involvement with the CMP

Current Types of Income Assistance	%	n
None	4.5	2
Social assistance	34.1	15
Disability	54.5	24
Unemployment insurance	0.0	0
Other	2.3	1
Not Stated	4.5	2
Total	100.0	44

Table 53 shows the types of residence of the participants since their involvement with CMP supervision. As shown in Table 53, the majority of participants lived in a single room occupancy or a hotel (54.5%). Fewer participants are reporting to be in shelters, or family or friend residences, than was true pre-CMP experiences. A little over 9% of the participants were still homeless at the time of the interview.

Table 53: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Type of Residence Since Involvement with the CMP

Current Type of Residence Since CMP	%	n
Apartment or house	6.8	3
Single room occupancy or hotel	54.5	24
Residence of a friend	0.0	0
Residence of family	2.3	1
Shelter	4.5	2
Other residence	2.3	1
Homeless	9.1	4
Not Stated	20.5	9
Total	100.00	44

Table 54 provides more detail on the impact of the involvement with the CMP on the medical, housing and mental health conditions of the CMP participants.

Table 54: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Comments About Medical, Housing, Mental health

Has DCC/CMP affected medical, housing, mental health issues?	n
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	44
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	30
Life has improved	26
Overcoming addiction struggles	8
Good role models / peer support	6
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	6
Lifestyle - no significant change / no difference	5
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	2
Sense of having some personal integrity	2
Ongoing and/or chronic mental problems	2
Had/have stability	2
Ongoing and/or chronic physical problems	2

Overall, the comments are positive for all service types. The participants noted that the CMP was directly responsible for improving these conditions and that this had an impact on their drug use and offending.

Participant Comments:

- Health - physical and mental, drug-free and well.
- Got medical care through housing.
- Yes, shelter within OnSite. Have own room, 3 meals a day.
- Self-worth and meaning and purpose to my day; programs repair some of damage caused by my upbringing.

- Big time, mentally and physically.
- Being here is a different perspective; get tired of trying to get money and drugs, and repeat.
- Mental health, medical changed; CMT hooked me up to services.
- If I was homeless I'd be using drugs.
- Get medical, mental health services, and housing through CMT. Homeless before.
- Housing; they hooked me up with Rain City to get a housing supplement; before I was paying rest of my rent out of support money.

Current Criminal Activity

Table 55 shows the self-reported changes to the frequency and seriousness of offending of the CMP participants for the portion that indicated they were still criminally active (n =14) since their involvement with the CMP. None of the participants indicated that their offending became more frequent. Most participants indicated that their offending frequency decreased (92.9%) and a small proportion stated that their frequency remained about the same (7.1%). In addition, few of the participants indicated that their offending became more serious (7.1%). Most participants indicated that their offending seriousness remained about the same (71.4%), slightly higher (7.1%), or became less serious (21.5%). However the majority of CMP participants in the study declined to respond to this question.

Table 55: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Frequency of Criminal Behaviour Since Involvement with the CMP

Frequency and Seriousness	Frequency %	n	Seriousness %	n
More	0.0	0	7.1	1
Same	7.1	1	71.4	10
Less	92.9	13	21.5	3
Total	100.0	14	100.0	14

Table 56 provides more detail on the impact of the involvement with the CMP on the offending behaviour of the participants.

Table 56: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Changes in Offending After Involvement with the CMP

Has DCC/CMP changed offending?	n
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	25
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	15
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	11
Crime - not offending at present	10
Fear of being breached / going to jail	7
Less crime	7
Overcoming addiction struggles	6
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	6
Sense of having some personal integrity	5
Good role models / peer support	3
Life has improved	1
Lifestyle - no significant change / no difference	1
Ongoing and/or chronic mental problems	1
Had/have stability	1
Have family and/or friends' support	1
DCC CMP - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative	1
Worries about back-sliding	1
Victim of abuse / difficult start in life (e.g., fostered/in system)	1

The participants indicate below that the CMP has helped reduce or end their offending because of the supportive environment of the CMP. Participants indicated that relapse into drug use was a problem, but that the CMP continued to try and help them with these problems.

Participant Comments:

- From daily crime to none.
- Can go there to talk to them if needed.
- Not needing to offend to survive, or offend for my addiction.
- Saved me from destruction and a lot of time in jail in my life.
- Haven't got into trouble since CMT/DCC.
- Tremendous help even though I relapsed 2 times in a year.
- I still have the addiction and I have to deal with it; I have to clean up my act. I don't want anything to happen to my physical/mental condition.
- Definitely. I got fear I would go to jail as it never bothered me before. I'm getting older and I want to be productive.
- I have hurt family and friends through my addiction.
- Not shoplifting much anymore. Make more money binning.
- Haven't been in custody once since starting here (DCC); since 1991 I went to jail every year - life on the installment plan.
- Recovery house and stabilization helps; it's temporary to learn how to live, from addictive lifestyle.

- Most offending is related to drug use.
- Given me another chance; I just feel like I've had enough; going into my housing was exactly what I needed. Not being in the DTES is a huge difference. I hate it (DTES) now.
- Because supported here. PO is really helpful and respectful.
- Crime way down; CMT reminds me of the consequences. I have FAS so they remind me if I do crime I'll go to jail.
- Offer me a different way out; shown me something I'm not used to because jail is negative.

Table 57 provides more detail on the impact of the involvement with the CMP on the quality of life of the participants.

Table 57: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Ways Involvement with CMP Has Changed Quality of Life

How has DCC/CMP changed life quality?	n
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	24
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	24
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	17
Life has improved	15
Good role models / peer support	9
Overcoming addiction struggles	4
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	3
Sense of having some personal integrity	3
Lifestyle - no significant change / no difference	3
Had/have stability	3
In/out of jail / breach/relapse	2
Life has not improved	2
Crime - not offending at present	1
Fear of being breached / going to jail	1
Have family and/or friends' support	1
DCC CMP not helpful	1
Addiction ongoing	1

Note: The number indicating “life has improved” has moved up to 15.

The responses of the participants were positive and centre on increased social support, support for immediate needs, such as medication and increased self-awareness and self-appreciation.

Participant Comments:

- Went from disaster to success.
- Have friends, help, rebuilding family, rejoining society.
- Still feel bad physical effects from kicking substances.
- Person has to help self, but CMT has really helped me by making things easier by getting housing and ID back, getting food, where I can go for food and clothing allowance.
- I still get jail. I don't know what they should do with me.
- Have shelter now. Get my meds every day.

- They let you know over and over you have a choice; when in addiction you need it said a lot.
- People show care and concern, and I don't want to disappoint.
- It has been nothing but positive at DCC.
- Learning things I never knew before. Everything is explained to me. Read for me, explain words.
- More support, one to one. Helping the individual; everyone is different.
- They (CMT) are trying to work with me, being homeless and using. Starting to get regular again.
- My life is getting better but I need to get out of DTES as it doesn't help your addiction.
- I am in a more positive headspace and it is working for me. I actually do want a change and that is what DCC offers.

Table 58 presents the additional comments of the CMP participants on the DCC and the CMP supervision.

Table 58: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Participants' Additional Comments on the DCC and CMP

Additional General Comments	n
DCC CMP helpful - general / break cycle	14
Life has improved	7
DCC CMP helpful - more resources / organized / tangible help	6
DCC CMP helpful - more personal / treat me as person, not number	6
Good role models / peer support	5
Sense of having some personal integrity	3
Worries about back-sliding	2
Regrets/acknowledgment about own contributions to problems	1
In/out of jail / breach/relapse	1
DCC CMP - one or more negative comments, but not 100% negative	1
CMP - Come to see me / get me for appts	1

Overall, the additional comments of the participants indicate their appreciation for the DCC intervention and tend to acknowledge the importance of the CMP in producing positive outcomes in their lives. The negative comments tended to focus on the need for more and/or longer assistance from the process.

Participant Comments:

- Can't say enough good things about DCC, CMT do a phenomenal job and it isn't always easy.
- Great idea, whoever came up with this idea of community must have been a criminal.
- I would still be committing thefts and using drugs in the other court; it's a revolving door. You get in and out and back into the same thing, committing crimes.
- If it wasn't for CMT I wouldn't be on my feet. Thanks to them.

- CMT way better than the system at 222 Main. As long as people are interested in change.
- Needs to be longer as you still may need the extra help.
- I wish they could have a job resource program here to evaluate your skills. Assess it and see what you are good at. Someone to help with education.
- CMT a blessing to have. Positivity of the whole team and Stan (CWS supervisor).
- Like throwing a drowning man a floatation device and keeps me from drowning in the old lifestyle.

Summary

A key goal of the DCC is to reduce harm caused in the community by crime. The court operates on the principle that collaborative case management can help make long-term changes to their offending behaviour. In complex cases, a case management team may be assigned to make sure the offender follows through with recommendations in the intervention plan. Based upon an individualized assessment of the Case Management Program (CMP) participant needs, a variety of resources are organized to address those needs, ranging from community service to addictions treatment. The CMP is structured to be a rigorous and intense multi-program experience for the participant. The individuals are to be closely monitored.

It was from this stream that 44 participants who were in the CMP for a minimum of 90 days were selected for the present study intended to capture their perceptions about that program specifically, the DCC more generally, and perceived self-report changes in their behavior and personal circumstances from pre-CMP to the time of their involvement with CMP and participation in the study.

Participants in the CMP who were interviewed for the study do seem to fit the profile of a “complex case”. They indicated they have dealt with a variety of challenges in their lives, contributing to lack of stability, lack of “appropriate” coping skills, isolation, offending behaviour, and ongoing addiction problems. Addiction problems are cited almost without fail by those participating in this survey. The problems are intertwined, and breaking negative cycles is difficult, if not impossible, without support and assistance, according to the feedback obtained in this study. The results of the intersection of the quantitative and qualitative variables indicate that the majority of CMP participants were marginalized in many ways prior to their involvement with the DCC. They exhibited high levels of unemployment, reliance on income assistance, drug and alcohol use and other negative behaviours. In addition, the vast majority of the participants had extensive past involvement with the criminal justice system and they attributed much of their involvement with the justice system as a result of the intersecting challenges in their lives.

Subsequent reporting about their circumstances (after a minimum of 90 days in the CMP) revealed little change in income assistance dependence from their life prior to involvement in the CMP and about the same rate of unemployment, but there was a reduced usage of alcohol and drugs, and accommodation was markedly better in that fewer were in shelters and/ or friends’/relatives’ homes, and more living in standard housing.

Self-reported criminal behaviour remained for about a third of responding individuals both pre-CMP (in the year prior to DCC sentence - Table 32) and while in the program (

Table 56). It was indicated, however, to have been reduced in frequency from the time prior to CMP involvement (93% reporting less). The level of seriousness, on the other hand, remained about the same (71%) or slightly more serious (7%) or less serious (22%), in nature for the respondents. The question about criminal activity while in the program was answered though by only about one-third of the participants, with the others declining to respond to that query.

Many of the improvements appear consistent with a harm reduction outcome in that incremental progress was apparent in decreases noted for drug and alcohol abuse and in frequency of offending, after CMP involvement.

Participants noted improved quality of life and generally positive outcomes as a result of the participation in the CMP component of the DCC. In addition, there were comments made about what it is that the CMP does that leads to successes. Suggestions ranged from the use of positive role modeling to the provision of practical skills and helpful support which helped participants break the criminal behaviour cycle.

Although a small portion of the participants had some negative views, the majority of the participants indicated that they appreciated the CMP staff and the implementation of the DCC. The participants regularly attributed their positive views to the treatment of them as individuals warranting help with their circumstances and offending behaviours. The participants indicated that they felt included in many aspects of the DCC process and that the staff tried to help them improve their quality of life. Negative comments tended to focus on the additional rules and restrictions of the DCC on the lives of the CMP participants and a possible shift in their treatment in the courtroom over time to a more conventional adversarial approach. One caution should be noted though, as it may be that some individuals did not have sufficient time in the program (minimum of 90 days) to develop more negative perceptions.

Therefore the CMP, and the personal support and guidance it provides, is seen as a positive contributor to the improvement of participants' lives, and breaking the cycle. Many survey participants stated that their addictions are not addressed in the "regular" system, and the extra support is key to helping them succeed.

In conclusion, the DCC outcomes, although not tested in a formal statistical sense, indicate that most of the CMP participants in the study perceive that the DCC process and staff had a positive impact on their lives and subsequent (if any) offending behaviour.

Since there are limitations to self-report information, perhaps particularly with offender populations relative to their responses about their own offending behaviour, what now remains to be examined are the actual outcomes for the CMP participants as can be revealed by recorded recidivism rates and officially documented mental and physical outcomes. The comparison with the above perceptions of the participants about the CMP outcomes can then be verified and placed into a different context for evaluation.

Additional Qualitative Comments

Participants in the survey were, for the most part, willing to share many thoughts both generally, and specifically, about their experience with DCC case management. The following shows a broad-based breakdown of comments volunteered per question. As might be expected, the first item in the chart elicited the most comment as it asked about participants' experiences during the course of a full year, and there is likely an influence of "less fatigue" in the earlier course of the survey.

Table 59: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Summary of feedback volume per open-ended item

Text (paraphrased)	Reference	Comments	# of Intee's	Avg comments per intee
Based on behaviours/issues experienced in past year, describe effect on life articulate relationship of issues to offending behaviour	s2v13	140	44	3.2
How DCC differs from non-DCC court experiences	s4v3	89	44	2.0
If DCC reporting difficulties, describe.	s5v4b	12	11	1.1
Reasons for breaches	s5v5c	12	10	1.2
CMP experiences compared to other community supervision	s5v6	78	45	1.7
DCC - likes?	s5v7	80	43	1.9
DCC - dislikes; suggestions for improvement	s5v8	45	41	1.1
If programs not completed, why?	s6v2	19	14	1.4
If programs not completed, what consequences?	s6v3	13	13	1.0
How have DCC programs helped, or not helped?	s6v4	74	41	1.8
Has DCC/CMP changed drug/alcohol use?	s7v3	58	44	1.3
Has DCC/CMP affected medical, housing, mental health issues?	s7v9	73	41	1.8
Has DCC/CMP changed offending?	s7v11b	69	41	1.7
Has DCC/CMP changed life quality?	s7v12b	71	44	1.6
General - additional comments	s7v13	34	21	1.6
Total		867*		

Notes:

* "Comments" could generate up to 3 codes - main, plus secondary (2). For example: "*Money to get drugs; shoplifting for money.*" would generate two codes - Crime-stealing, and Addiction ongoing.

Therefore, the total items coded are well in excess of the 867 total noted above, as the 867 refers to each field entry.

Some questions elicited similar responses, such as DCC specific positive answers ... "break cycle, "tangible help," etc.

As with all qualitative research, there is a degree of interpretation and subjectivity with any analysis. In addition, given the specific sub-group of people interviewed for this survey, there are

also factors to be considered such as participants' mental and physical health at the time the survey was conducted. As well, some interviewees have been in the CMP for some time while others are fairly recent participants, but the minimum length of time in the program was 90 days.

That said, many commonalities surfaced.

As reported in the prior Phase I (August 2010), the three broad areas identified as:

- (a) addictions
- (b) mental and physical health problems; and
- (c) financial and social challenges

remain at play for the case-managed clients.

Overall, some very common, overriding themes emerged.

Mentions of *drug addictions* and related struggles were almost universal amongst those surveyed.

Many themes appear to be related to addiction issues, such as:

- lack of enough “legitimate” money to live and feed addiction, resulting in offending behaviour to get drug money,
- isolation from family and/or friends,
- lack of stable living arrangements, including homelessness and jail time “in and out” cycle,
- drugs as a coping tool for other problems in life,
- chaotic lifestyles, and feelings of hopelessness.

Additional Quantitative Data for Phase II Interview

Table 60: 2012 Phase II Participants Interview -- Additional Quantitative Variables

Variable & Section	N	Mean	Median	25 th Percentile	75 th Percentile
<i>Section 1: Demographics</i>					
Age at interview	44	37.2	36.0	30.3	42.0
<i>Section 2: Year Prior to DCC Involvement</i>					
# of months at fixed address	28	12.5	11.0	6.0	12.0
# of times moved	34	6.5	2.0	0	3.0
# of times homeless	40	2.4	1.0	0	1.0
# of months homeless	35	6.2	6.0	1.0	12.0
\$ spent on drugs per week	43	785.5	500.0	280.0	1000.0
\$ spent on alcohol per week	19	72.7	25.0	2.0	100.0
\$ spent on other negative behaviours per week	11	191.9	21.0	0	100.0
# of times hospitalized	29	2.1	1.0	0	2.5
# of times with mental health per month	40	0.9	0	0	0
<i>Section 3 & 4: Experiences with DCC</i>					
# of times convicted in non-DCC court	43	33.8	30.0	15.0	50.0
Age at 1 st conviction	39	18.9	17.0	14.0	20.0
# of CMP Meeting per month	42	6.7	4.0	4.0	8.0
# of times breached by CMP	10	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.25

Appendix A: Vancouver Downtown Community Court Program Logic Model

Goals	Objectives	Inputs (resources/budget lines)	Activities (activities, tasks, strategies)	Outputs (deliverables)	Target Group	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
1. To Create a More Efficient Court	<p><u>To Reduce:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no. of appearances, - time to disposition, - Main Street court backlog, - nos. of pre-disposition detention - bail intakes; - no. of sentenced offenders - no. cases scheduled for trial - no. remands for forensic assessment - time between arrest & first appearance - time between arrest and arraignment <p><u>To Promote:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -public confidence in court and cjs 	<p>Community court coordinator</p> <p>Police</p> <p>Judge</p> <p>Crown (fed and prov)</p> <p>Defense counsel</p> <p>Probation</p> <p>Triage/Assessment Teams</p> <p>Community court and evaluation advisory committees</p> <p>Community services/resources</p> <p>New financial and capital cost resources for specialized court</p>	<p>Determination of offence list</p> <p>Creation of Police, Crown and Duty Counsel guidelines</p> <p>Establish operational and evaluation advisory/working/steering committees;</p> <p>Police reports to crown counsel;</p> <p>Crown screening and assessment</p> <p>Offender access to defence counsel</p> <p>Offender consent</p> <p>Initial triage team assessment</p> <p>Needs assessment by Triage Team</p> <p>Development of Case Management Reports</p> <p>Provision of case information to crown, defence</p> <p>Crown sentencing position developed</p> <p>Case prepared for judge</p> <p>Disposition of case</p> <p>Court order with conditions set</p>	<p># cases</p> <p># offenders</p> <p># eligible participants</p> <p># of guilty pleas</p> <p># not guilty pleas</p> <p># appearances</p> <p>#in-custody proceedings</p> <p># bail hearings</p> <p># triage assessments completed</p> <p># dispositions</p> <p># sentenced offenders</p> <p># case management plans</p> <p># & type of dispositions (eg. brief interventions; intensive interventions; referrals to current programs; sentences to jail)</p> <p># & type conditions</p> <p># bail intakes</p> <p># rehabilitative/cso sanctions developed</p> <p># case monitoring reports completed</p> <p>Case tracking system implemented</p>	<p>Community court and CJS personnel (police, crown, judge, defense, corrections)</p> <p>Triage/Assessment Teams</p> <p>Offenders</p> <p>Service agency personnel</p>	<p>Target population reached</p> <p>Reduced number appearances</p> <p>Reduced time to disposition</p> <p>Reduced bail supervision and pre-trial detention</p> <p>Increase in eligible accused participating in court</p> <p>Increase in quality and quantity of cso/rehabilitative sanctions</p> <p>Increased # offender referrals and monitoring</p> <p>Decreased Main Street Crown workload</p> <p>Decreased probation workload outside community court</p> <p>Reduction in Main Street</p>	<p>Financial and time savings to Main Street court and corrections</p> <p>More efficient and effective cjs</p> <p>More positive response from community</p> <p>More efficient staffing and resource model for courts</p>

<p>2. To Integrate Services to Address Offender Needs</p>	<p>To identify relevant government and community services To form partnerships and working relationships with services To collaborate with services to identify offender needs and formulate plans To Engage Offenders in Appropriate Services To monitor offender referrals and outcomes</p>	<p>CC Coordinator VPD Coastal Health Authority MEIA BC Housing Community agency and service personnel CSO coordinator Probation New financial resources for assessment/treatment/ wrap-around services</p>	<p>Develop out Integrate case-tracking to existing systems Monitor cases on a quarterly basis Identify range of csso/rehabilitative services</p>	<p>Screening and assessment processes established Referral processes in place Referral follow up processes in place</p>	<p>Triage teams Service agency providers Community court personnel</p>	<p>court backlogs Court provided with better information about offenders and needs</p>	<p>Effective and efficient service delivery Service/agency collaboration and integration CJS and service agency collaboration and integration Offender accountability and responsibility enhanced Offender stability re; employment, housing etc. Triage model for Main Street court and other jurisdictions</p>
	<p># and composition of triage teams # and type of services identified for referral purposes # case management plans developed # of sentencing recommendations that involve multiple partners or agencies # mental disorder assessments/applications # of people connected to MEIA benefits, or MEIA employment or training services, to housing or health services # and type of community service projects identified # and type of offender employment opportunities identified Protocols for integration and co-operation among agencies Guidelines for</p>	<p>Development of Case Management Report form Creation of triage teams MOU's developed for inter-agency cooperation and collaboration Development of a 'wrap-around services' center Development of guidelines for case monitoring and information sharing</p>	<p>out Integrate case-tracking to existing systems Monitor cases on a quarterly basis Identify range of csso/rehabilitative services</p>	<p>Screening and assessment processes established Referral processes in place Referral follow up processes in place</p>	<p>Triage teams Service agency providers Community court personnel</p>	<p>court backlogs Court provided with better information about offenders and needs</p>	<p>Effective and efficient service delivery Service/agency collaboration and integration CJS and service agency collaboration and integration Offender accountability and responsibility enhanced Offender stability re; employment, housing etc. Triage model for Main Street court and other jurisdictions</p>

<p>3. To Increase Offender Accountability and Reduce Recidivism</p>	<p>To reduce no and time of served sentences To reduce offender recidivism To better identify offender needs To engage offenders in appropriate services To monitor offender service engagement outcomes</p>	<p>Corrections (probation) Community service co-ordinator Service agency providers</p>	<p>Complete Case Management Reports Conduct needs assessments Establish case tracking system Regular monitoring of referrals and referral outcomes Identify gaps in services Conduct recidivism research</p>	<p>information sharing Number and type of services integrated CSO Retention and completion rates</p>	<p>Offenders</p>	<p>Improved services to offenders Engaging offenders in services more quickly Needs of offenders better identified and met</p>	<p>Reduced recidivism Increased offender accountability and responsibility</p>
<p>4. To Instill Community Confidence in the Community Court</p>	<p>To reduce crime To establish relationships between communities and Community Court To encourage community participation in the Community Court To increase</p>	<p>CC Co-ordinator/probation Community residents Community merchants Community court personnel</p>	<p>Mount a public education strategy for communities about c.c. Develop newsletter format about court activities to keep community regularly informed Survey of community members for perceptions of impact of community court Regular community meetings with court personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # trouble spots identified • # cj priorities identified • # of public meetings • # meetings between cjs and community 	<p>Community businesses and residents Community Advisory Board</p>	<p>Better informed community Increased satisfaction of residents and merchants with court More community engagement with and access to court More community</p>	<p>Increased sense of safety and security in community Improved quality of life in community Engagement between court and community Community confidence in cjs Community court model for other</p>

	community perceptions of safety and security To increase livability of community through reduction of crime		Community Court media accessibility Public forums/workshops			priorities identified and addressed	courts and jurisdictions Reduce crime rates
--	--	--	--	--	--	-------------------------------------	--

Process

Outcome

<p>Assumptions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a more purposeful approach based on a richer mix of staff and dedicated resources will make the system more efficient and appearances more meaningful; 2. That a focus on a specific geographic community with a dedicated staff will have a positive impact on effectiveness and efficiency; 3. That identifying and addressing the needs of offenders will reduce re-offending; 4. That more appropriate community service work will better reflect community interests and generate greater community satisfaction with the court; 5. That a more effective and efficient court will increase community safety and satisfaction with the criminal justice system more generally and encourage communities to participate in justice matters. 	<p>External factors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalization of the DTES 2. Increase in addiction treatment resources 3. Changes in legislation such as Safe Streets Act and police policies 4. Economic upturn 5. Change in provincial housing policies 6. Riverview hospital dedicated to difficult populations 7. Bail reform 8. Drug Treatment Court, VISU and other existing programs
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Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

Community Groups Survey

School of Criminology

Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive

Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6

Downtown Community Court Community Groups Survey

You have received this material because you are associated with an agency/group that relates to the Vancouver Downtown Community Court.

We are writing to ask for your participation in a survey which focuses on issues relevant to the functioning of the court. Information from those involved with the court is essential to understanding and informing its operation.

We hope that you will be interested in completing the survey, but **YOU ARE UNDER ABSOLUTELY NO OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION AT ALL** - participation is entirely voluntary.

If you wish to take part, complete the survey, seal it in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope, and return it via Canada Post.

If you do not wish to take part, you may simply discard the survey, or if you prefer, leave it blank and post it.

In any event, we appreciate your consideration of this opportunity.

Dr. Margaret Jackson (778-782-4040) &

Dr. Bill Glackman (778-782-4041)

This survey will provide information to SFU researchers about the views of the community-based groups associated in various ways with the Downtown Community Court.

Q1 . Please indicate the Primary service role of your agency/group to clientele (select one response):

- a. Health
- b. Employment and income assistance
- c. Addiction services
- d. Mental health
- e. Housing
- f. Advocacy
- g. Other

Q2 . If other, please list:

Q3 . Please indicate the Secondary service role(s) of your agency/group (please select ALL that apply)

- a. Health
- b. Employment and income assistance
- c. Addiction services
- d. Mental health
- e. Housing
- f. Advocacy

Q4 . Please indicate your role within your agency/group.

- a. Management/Supervisor
- b. Counselling
- c. Advocacy
- d. Health care
- e. Outreach
- f. Other

Q5 . If other, please list:

Q6 . Do the community members primarily served by your agency/group attend the DCC as: ? (please select ALL that apply)

- a. Observers
- b. Accused
- c. Victims
- d. Other
- e. Not Applicable

Q7 . If other, please list:.

Q8 . What type of involvement does your agency/group have with the DCC (please select ALL that apply)?

- a. None
- b. Provide placement for community work service hours
- c. Volunteer at the DCC
- d. Advisory capacity
- e. Accepting service referrals from the DCC
- f. Housing
- g. Other

Q9 . If other, please list:

Section II: DCC-Related Process Questions

Q10 . Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree".

	Str Disagree	Mod Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Mod Agree	Str Agree	+ NA- +
a. The population my agency/group serves is well informed about the DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The DCC provides my agency/group with information about the court :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Having the DCC makes our clients feel safer and more secure :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The DCC addresses concerns expressed by my service agency/group :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The clients my agency/group serves have access to DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. There is mutual respect between my agency/group and DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. The DCC is making an important contribution to the community :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. The DCC is increasing the accountability of offenders :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. The DCC is addressing the underlying causes of offending behaviour :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 . Please indicate if you have any additional comments to make on the items above:

Q12 . Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements on the community criminal justice priorities relating to the DCC since its implementation. The statements should be read "The implementation of the DCC has resulted in:"

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
a. Faster processing of accused :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Offenders being able to see the consequences of their criminal behaviour sooner :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. An increase in offenders referred to services and resources :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. More offenders actually receiving appropriate services :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Better coordination of services :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. More community involvement with the criminal justice system :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Improved quality of life in the community :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q13 . Please indicate if you have any additional comments to make on the questions presented in Section II as a whole.:

Section III: Satisfaction with the DCC Process

Q14 . Please indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following statements by indicating the appropriate response from "Very Dissatisfied" to "Very Satisfied". The statements should be read "I am _____ with:"

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable
a. The level of knowledge in my agency/group about the purpose of the DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The level of knowledge in my agency/group about the operation of the DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The exchange of information between the DCC and my agency/group :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. The coordination of case management plans between my agency/group and the DCC :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. The availability of community resources to meet DCC client needs :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. The wait times for placements for DCC clients :	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q15 . Please indicate if you have any additional comments about the relevancy/adequacy of the questions presented in Section III:

Section IV: Additional Information

Please provide as much detail as you wish when answering the open-ended questions below and in suggesting additions/deletions.

Q16 . What changes, if any, would you like to see implemented in the operation of the DCC?

Q17 . What changes, if any, would you like to see in the relationship between your agency/group and the DCC?

Q18 . What changes, if any, would you like to see in the way the DCC relates to the broader community?

Q19 . Please comment on the availability and accessibility of resources for DCC involved clients/members.

Q20 . Do you have any other comments or suggestions pertaining to the DCC?

Q21 . Please indicate if you have any additional comments to make on the questions/issues presented in Section IV:

Q22 . Please indicate whether you feel that there are any areas of importance that have not been covered in this survey:

Community Groups Focus Group Guiding Questions

1. What are the strengths of the DCC? (in terms of the original vision of the DCC?; in terms of the actual processing and structure of the court)

2. What are the challenges for the DCC?(in terms of the original vision of the DCC?; in terms of the actual processing and structure of the court?)

3. What are the best ways to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the DCC?

(Re the most appropriate model, indicators, and definitions?)

Community Court Participant Survey: Phase 1 – Post Court Outcomes

The intent of this survey is to gather information on the people and their experience with the downtown community court. This version of the survey focuses on the direct experience of the DCC process and does not address experiences and perceptions of the supervision.

Date of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Code for Interviewee: _____

Have you participated in this survey before? (0) No (1) Yes

If not today, when was the last time you were in the DCC courtroom?

_____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Section 1: DCC Background Information

All participants may respond to the items in this section.

1. What is the purpose of your court appearance today/last appearance in the DCC (**select all that apply**)?

- (1) Sentencing hearing
- (2) Sentencing review
- (3) Breach (i.e., CSO or bail)
- (4) 1st appearance/consensus bail hearing
- (5) Trial confirmation hearing -- elected to leave the DCC
- (6) Other (please specify): _____
- (7) Don't know

1b. If the participant selected **Response Option 5**, please ask the reasons for leaving the DCC.

1c. If the participant selected **Response Option 1, 2 or 3 in Question 1**, please indicate the date they were sentenced.

_____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

2. What are your present charges interviewer will sort subsequently)?

***Note: Confirm that the present charge(s) is not a breach**

3. Did you have problems obtaining a lawyer for this appearance? (0) No (1) Yes

4. What type of lawyer did you have for this appearance?

- (1) DCC defence lawyer
- (2) Duty counsel
- (3) Legal aid
- (4) Private
- (5) Self-represented
- (6) None

- (7) Other: _____
5. Did your lawyer explain the community court process to you during your participation in the DCC?
- (1) No explanation (2) Some explanation (3) Detailed explanation
6. Have you been to the DCC before, on another charge? (0) No (1) Yes
7. Do you have other charges pending in the DCC? (0) No (1) Yes
8. Do you have other charges pending in other courts? (0) No (1) Yes
9. How many times have you appeared in any court (including the DCC) on different charges as an accused in the last 6 months? _____

Section 2: Present Experiences in the DCC Court:

Subsection 2A: The Court Process

All participants may respond to the items in this subsection.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on your decision to participate in the downtown community court from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

I participated in the DCC	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
To receive a lighter sentence	1	2	3	4	5	9
To speed up my court case	1	2	3	4	5	9
Because I wanted to change my behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	9
To get help with my problems	1	2	3	4	5	9

Subsection 2B: Experiences with Court Personnel

1. Did you appear in front of the same judge at each hearing? (0) No (1) Yes

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on the Judge that heard THIS case in the downtown community court from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The Judge in my case	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Was well-informed on my background	1	2	3	4	5	9
Explained everything clearly	1	2	3	4	5	9
Listened to me when I had something to say	1	2	3	4	5	9
Treated me fairly during my case	1	2	3	4	5	9
Treated me with respect	1	2	3	4	5	9

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on your experiences during THIS case with other court personnel involved with the downtown community court from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

1. The prosecutor treated me fairly.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. The defence treated me fairly.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. The probation officers treated me fairly.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly
Disagree Agree

4. The front staff was courteous when I came to the DCC.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Strongly Disagree Agree Strongly
Disagree Agree

Section 3: Court Efficiency

The intent of this section is to gather information from participants on the efficiency of the DCC. In addition, we are interested in their perception on the causes of these delays. **All participants may answer questions 1 and 2 in this section.**

1. How many times have you appeared in the DCC on the current charge(s)?

2. Did your case conclude today? (0) No (1) Yes

2a. If yes, overall, how satisfied were you with the way your case was handled in the DCC?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Completely Completely
Dissatisfied Satisfied

2b. If yes, how satisfied were you with the length of time it took to resolve your case in the DCC?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Completely Completely
Dissatisfied Satisfied

2c. If yes, in comparison to other court experiences, how quickly was your case completed in the DCC?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Much Much
Slower Quicker

Section 4: More Appropriate Dispositions

The intent of this section is to gather information on the views of participants with regards to their sentences and court outcomes. This information includes knowledge of their sentences and perception of their sentences. **Only participants who have completed their current case in the DCC may answer the questions in this section.**

1. What was the sentence you got for your present charges (Please write the appropriate information in the space provided, – ranking completed subsequently by interviewer)?

Sentence Type	Length of Sentence	Conditions of Sentence

**** INTERVIEWER -- Note each sentence outcome and the associated information. If the participant does not know/remember, please note this as well.**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on your current SENTENCE(s) in the downtown community courts from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
My sentence was fair in relation to my offence(s)	1	2	3	4	5	9
I did not understand the terms of my sentence	1	2	3	4	5	9
I will be able to meet all the conditions imposed in my sentence	1	2	3	4	5	9
My sentence will help me address my personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	9
My sentence will help me access the services I need to improve my life	1	2	3	4	5	9
My sentence will help me to not offend in the future	1	2	3	4	5	9

Section 5. Demographic & Background Information

This information is collected to provide details on the characteristics of people who are involved in the DCC. **All participants may respond to the items in this section.**

1. Note the gender of the participant. (0) Male (1) Female
2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your ethnicity?
 - (1) Caucasian
 - (2) Black
 - (3) Asian
 - (4) Aboriginal
 - (5) Métis
 - (6) East Indian
 - (7) Hispanic
 - (8) Other: _____
4. What is your highest completed level of schooling?
 - (1) Below grade 9
 - (2) Grade 9 to Grade 11
 - (3) High school
 - (4) Some post-secondary school (no degree)
 - (5) Bachelor's degree
 - (6) Graduate school
5. What is your current marital status?
 - (1) Single (2) Common-law (3) Married (4) Divorced (5) Widowed
6. Do you live at a fixed address? (0) No (1) Yes
- 6b. Please indicate the type of residence (i.e., shelter, apartment, halfway house, etc.):

7. If yes, how long have you lived at your current address? _____/months
8. How many separate residences have you lived at in the last 6 months? _____
9. Are you currently employed?
 - (1) Unemployed
 - (2) Casual employment
 - (3) Part-time employment
 - (4) Full-time employment

Community Court Participant Survey Phase II – Perceptions of the DCC Experience

The intent of this survey is to gather information on the clients managed by the Case Management Team (CMT) in the DCC and their experience with the downtown community court. This version of the interview focuses on past needs and circumstances, the experience of the DCC process, their perceptions of supervision, the impact of supervision and behavioural change.

Date of Interview: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Code for Interviewee: _____

Section 1: Demographic & Background Information:

This information is collected to provide details on the characteristics of clients who are involved with the intensive case management process in the DCC. **All participants may respond to the items in this section.**

1. Note the gender of the participant. (0) Male (1) Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your ethnicity?

(1) Caucasian

(2) Black

(3) Asian

(4) Aboriginal

(5) Métis

(6) East Indian

(7) Hispanic

(8) Other: _____

4. What is your highest completed level of schooling?

(1) Below grade 9

(2) Grade 9 to Grade 11

(3) High school

(4) Some post-secondary school (no degree)

(5) Bachelor's degree

(6) Graduate school

5. What is your marital status?

- (1) Single (2) Common-law (3) Married (4) Divorced
(5) Widowed

Section 2: Life History Background Information (Pre-DCC Involvement)

This section is intended to gather information on the participant's life history and needs prior to their involvement with the DCC. Many questions are asking about their social issues the year prior to their sentence in the DCC. As a reference point, we are asking about their latest sentence that resulted in "intensive case management" and the time frame should be tied to this sentence. This is the intent of all items that begin with "in the year prior to participating in the DCC".

1. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, did you live at a fixed address?

- (0) No (1) Yes

2. If yes, how long did you live at this address? _____/months

3. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, how many times did you move from place to place? _____ times

4. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, what types of residence did you have (**select all that apply**)?

- (1) Apartment/house
(2) Single room occupancy (hotel)
(3) Halfway house
(4) Friend
(5) Other Family (i.e., parent)
(6) Shelter
(7) Other (please specify): _____

5. If no, in the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, how long were you homeless?
_____ months

6. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, were you employed?

- (1) Unemployed
(2) Casual employment
(3) Part-time employment
(4) Full-time employment

7. What type of employment did you have?

8. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, what types of income (i.e., legal only) have you received (**select all that apply**)?

- (0) None
- (1) Social assistance
- (2) Disability
- (3) Unemployment insurance
- (4) Employment
- (5) Other (please specify): _____

9. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, did you use drugs?

- (0) No
- (1) Yes

9b. If yes, please indicate the type of drugs you have used and the frequency of use (select all that apply and indicate in the space provided the frequency of use: 1 = More than once a day, 2 = Once a day, 3 = More than once a week, 4 = Once a week, 5 = More than once a month, 6 = Once a month, 7 = Less than once a month, 8 = No Use).

- (1) Marijuana _____
- (2) Mushrooms _____
- (3) LSD _____
- (4) PCP _____
- (5) Opium _____
- (6) Heroin _____
- (7) Cocaine _____
- (8) Methamphetamines _____
- (9) Crack _____
- (10) Other (please specify) _____
- (11) Prescription medication
(please specify – i.e., methadone) _____

9c. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, how much would you typically spend on drugs in a week?

10. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, have you used alcohol?

- (0) No
- (1) Yes

10b. If yes, please indicate frequency of use: 1 = More than once a day, 2 = Once a day, 3 = More than once a week, 4 = Once a week, 5 = More than once a month, 6 = Once a month, 7 = Less than once a month.

10c. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, how much would you typically spend on alcohol in a week?

11. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, have you engaged in any other behaviours that have impacted your quality of life (i.e., gambling, other addictive behaviours)?

(0) No (1) Yes

11b. Please indicate the types of behaviours:

11c. If yes, please indicate frequency of these behaviours in total: 1 = More than once a day, 2 = Once a day, 3 = More than once a week, 4 = Once a week, 5 = More than once a month, 6 = Once a month, 7 = Less than once a month.

11d. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, how much would you typically spend engaging in these behaviours in a week?

_____/week
_____/week
_____/week

12. Do you have any long-term mental or physical health issues that have impacted your quality of life?

Mental:

Physical:

12b. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, did you receive medical attention for your conditions? (0) No (1) Yes

12c. How often did you receive medical attention in a typical month?

_____/month

12d. In the year prior to your sentence in the DCC, did you see a mental health professional for your conditions? (0) No (1) Yes

12e. How often did you see mental health professionals in a typical month?

_____/month

13. We have discussed a number of behaviours (**list drug use, alcohol use and other behaviours, if applicable**) and issues (**list homelessness, mental and physical issues, if applicable**) you have experienced in the past year. Please describe how these things have affected your life. The explicit focus here is on whether these

conditions and issues are related to their offending behaviour and/or variables related to offending behaviour (friends, family disruption, isolation, etc.).

Section 3: The Current DCC Sentence

The intent of this section is to gather information on the current sentence and other charges heard in the DCC. When asking about a current sentence we mean the sentence that originally tied a participant to their primary case manager.

1. What was the date of your current sentence?
 _____(DD/MM/YYYY)
- 1b. When did you first report to your case manager for your current sentence?
 _____(DD/MM/YYYY)
2. What was the sentence you got for your present convictions (Please write the appropriate information in the space provided, – ranking completed subsequently by interviewer)?

Conviction Type	Sentence Type	Length of Sentence	Conditions of Sentence

**** INTERVIEWER -- Note each sentence outcome and the associated information. If the participant does not know/remember, please note this as well.**

4. How many separate cases have you had in the DCC? _____

Section 4: Past Offending Behaviour and Outcomes

The intent of this section is to gather information on the experiences of participants in the traditional court system.

1. Have you been convicted of an offence(s) in a non-DCC court? (0) No
(1) Yes

1b. If yes, how many lifetime convictions have you had in a non-DCC courts?

1c. If yes, please describe how the DCC process differs from your experience in a non-DCC court.

2. How old were you when you were first convicted (in any court)?

Section 5: Experiences with DCC Supervision

The intent of this section is to gather information on the experiences with case management and their perceptions on the case management experience and their case managers.

1. How often do you report to your primary case manager?

_____ /week/month

2. How long have you seen your primary case manager? _____ /months

3. Do you report to another (secondary) case manager in the DCC? (0) No
(1) Yes

4. Please indicate the type of primary case manager you have (**single response**)?

- (1) Community Corrections/Probation Officer
- (2) BC Housing
- (3) Income Assistance (Housing and Social Development)
- (4) Vancouver Coastal Health
- (5) Native Courtroom Worker
- (6) Other (please specify): _____

(9) Don't Know

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements on experiences with your primary case manager from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Since my current sentence, my case manager	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
Listened to me	1	2	3	4	5	9
Explained the post-sentencing process to me	1	2	3	4	5	9
Explained the conditions of my orders to me	1	2	3	4	5	9
Was knowledgeable about the programs I need	1	2	3	4	5	9
Listened to my concerns about my sentence	1	2	3	4	5	9
Explained my responsibilities in regards to my sentence clearly	1	2	3	4	5	9
Has treated me respectfully	1	2	3	4	5	9
Has treated me fairly	1	2	3	4	5	9
Cares about me	1	2	3	4	5	9
Allowed me to have input into my supervision	1	2	3	4	5	9

plan						
------	--	--	--	--	--	--

6. Do you have any difficulties reporting to your primary case manager? (0) No
(1) Yes

6b. If yes, please describe these difficulties.

7. Did your primary case manager ever breach you on your current sentence?

(0) No (1) Yes

7b. If yes, how many times have you been breached? _____/times

7c. If yes, what were the reasons for the breaches?

8. Please describe how your experiences with your case manager compare with your experiences with other community supervision officers?

9. From your perspective, what are some of things you like about case management in the DCC?

10. From your perspective, what are some of problems with case management in the DCC? If the participant mentions problems make sure to ask for suggestions for improvement.

Section 6: Court Ordered Services

The intent of this section is to gather information on the experiences with the referral process and the programs that the participant was required to attend. In addition, this section is asking the participant to gauge the impact of these programs on their quality of life needs.

1. Please indicate the types programs you referred to as part of your case management plan (**select all that apply**)?

- (0) None
- (1) Drug Addiction
- (2) Alcohol Addiction
- (3) Other Behavioural Addictions (please specify): _____
- (4) Life Skills
- (5) Nutrition
- (6) Employment Skills
- (7) Emotional Well-Being
- (8) Family Skills
- (9) Mental Disorder Programs
- (10) Cultural Programs (please specify): _____
- (11) Other Support Programs (please specify): _____

1b. How long did it take from the time you were sentenced to the time you were first admitted to each of the programs listed above?

- I. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month
(4) On waiting list
- II. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month
(4) On waiting list
- III. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month
(4) On waiting list
- IV. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month
(4) On waiting list
- V. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month
(4) On waiting list
- VI. (1) Less than 2 weeks (2) 2 weeks to 1 month (3) Over 1 month

(4) On waiting list

1c. Did you finish each of the programs listed above (this means did they complete the program without getting kicked out/removed from the program)?

- | | | | |
|------|--------|---------|-----------------|
| I) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |
| II) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |
| III) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |
| IV) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |
| V) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |
| VI) | (0) No | (1) Yes | (2) In progress |

1d. If the participant answered no to any of the above in **Question 1c**, please ask them to explain the reasons for not finishing the program(s).

1e. If the participant answered no to any of the above in **Question 1c**, please ask them to explain what happened to them (via the case manager and the DCC) as a result of the non-completion.

Section 7: Changes in Behaviour

The intent of this section is to gather information on specific aspects of behavioural change and perceptions of behavioural change. These behaviours and conditions are similar to those discussed in Section 2. Each of these questions should be asked in the present tense (i.e., currently/as of today)

- 1. Do you currently use street drugs (this includes the illicit use of prescription drugs)?
(0) No (1) Yes
- 2. Do you use alcohol? (0) No (1) Yes
- 3. Please describe how being involved with the DCC (and case management) has changed your drug and alcohol use?

- 4. Have you worked since the start of the case management process?
 - (1) Unemployed
 - (2) Casual employment
 - (3) Part-time employment
 - (4) Full-time employment

4b. If yes, what type of employment do you have? _____

- 5. Are you receiving any type of income assistance? (0) No (1) Yes

5b. What types of income assistance are you receiving?

- (0) None
- (1) Social assistance
- (2) Disability
- (3) Unemployment insurance
- (4) Other (please specify): _____

- 6. Are you living in a stable residence? (0) No (1) Yes

6b. What types of residence did you have?

- (1) Apartment/house
- (2) Single room occupancy (hotel)
- (3) Halfway house

- (4) Friend
- (5) Other Family (i.e., parent)
- (6) Shelter
- (7) Other (please specify): _____

7. Are you seeing a mental health specialist on a regular basis? (0) No (1) Yes

8. Are you seeing a doctor on a regular basis? (0) No (1) Yes

9. Please describe how being involved with the DCC (and case management) has changed your financial situation and access to housing and medical care (i.e., immediate needs)?

10. Are you still committing crime? (0) No (1) Yes

10b. If yes, do you commit more or less crime than before?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Significantly **Remained** **Significantly**
Decreased **the Same** **Increased**

10c. If yes, are you crimes more or less serious?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (6) NA
Significantly **Remained** **Significantly**
Decreased **the Same** **Increased**

11. Please describe how being involved with the DCC (and case management) has changed your offending?
