

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY COURT IN VANCOUVER

Interim Evaluation Report



Ministry of Attorney General, Justice Services Branch
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Corrections Branch

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vancouver's Downtown Community Court (DCC) was launched in September 2008. The DCC was created as a pilot project in response to a recommendation of the B.C. 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 B.C., and a number of health and social services agencies. The justice ministries, and other partner agencies, have made significant financial contributions to develop and operate the DCC.



The DCC partner agencies work together in an integrated manner, facilitated by staff and services that are co-located in the courthouse, to support victims and offenders. This level of integration was possible due to considerable organizational and staff commitment and dedication. The DCC also creates relationships with neighbourhoods and community groups, and seeks opportunities for the public to connect with the court.

The DCC takes a problem-solving approach to deal with offending behaviours of individuals and the health and social circumstances that often lead to crime. The DCC has a number of goals: improve outcomes for offenders; implement innovative criminal case management to improve justice efficiencies; and provide new opportunities for community participation in the justice system. Ultimately, the DCC aims to reduce crime in Vancouver's downtown area, reduce offender recidivism, improve public safety, and increase public confidence in the justice system.

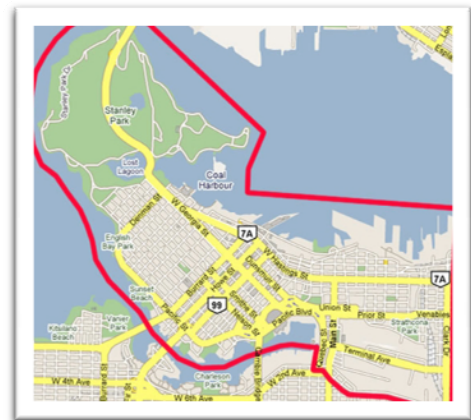
Evaluation is a fundamental component of the project. It will ultimately determine if the DCC model results in more successful outcomes for victims, offenders and the community, and whether it helps the justice system operate more efficiently.

Interest in the DCC is broad and many B.C. communities are looking to establish community courts as possible solutions to crime. The DCC full evaluation, due for release in 2012, will inform these discussions.

DCC model

The DCC is a court of the Provincial Court of B.C. that serves a catchment area in Vancouver's downtown from the West End and Stanley Park, through the Central Business District to the Downtown Eastside. The court deals mostly with *Criminal Code* summary conviction offences and possession of drugs under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

To facilitate the integration of justice, health and social services, staff from participating agencies are co-located in the courthouse. To encourage a problem-solving approach, staff work collaboratively to support the court, victims and the accused.



To support the accused in the DCC and facilitate court efficiency, the DCC has an in-house defence counsel. This service is available to any accused in the DCC, regardless of financial circumstances. Information about the criminal history and circumstances of the accused is available to Crown and defence counsel prior to a court hearing. This information is used to inform options to effectively manage the individual in the community, where appropriate. Through counsel, the court can be better informed in a more timely manner. Sentences passed are expected to be more appropriate.

Whenever possible, offenders are expected to serve their sentences immediately after appearing in court. The DCC, together with community partners, established community work programs through which offenders can contribute to the community in a meaningful way. Offenders with complex problems are managed by inter-agency case management teams in the DCC.

The DCC engages with the community it serves through public meetings, open houses, media events, a website and court tours.

Evaluation approach

The three-year evaluation assesses whether the court was successful in achieving the following objectives of the project.

1. Create a more efficient court;
2. Integrate services to address offender needs;
3. Increase offender accountability and reduce recidivism; and
4. Instil community confidence in the DCC.

The evaluation report that follows—the Downtown Community Court Interim Evaluation Report—is the first of three reports. Based on data available at the time this analysis was undertaken, this report focuses on the project implementation and delivery, and early court process efficiency results for the first 12 months of the DCC's operation.

The second interim evaluation report is planned for spring 2011. It will provide offender outcome information (excluding recidivism) and relate to court efficiencies achieved in the second year of the court's operation.

The final evaluation report will be available in spring 2012, and relate to changes in offenders' behaviour and reoffending rates. Continued operation of the court during the long term will better inform the court, the B.C. justice ministries, and all partner agencies about investments made in the DCC pilot project.

The evaluation framework was developed by a team of researchers from Simon Fraser University (SFU), School of Criminology, and was reviewed by the DCC steering committee and the feedback was incorporated in January 2008. In 2009, the framework was refined and is the basis for this evaluation report.

This report was written by the two justice ministries—the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General—with advice on methodology and analysis from researchers on the SFU research team.

Court design and implementation

- The DCC deals with crime originating in Vancouver's downtown. Previously, these criminal cases would have been processed in the Vancouver Provincial Court (VPC) at 222 Main Street.
- There were 3,616 criminal cases that had one or more hearings in the DCC.
- The DCC resolved 1,890 criminal cases from the DCC catchment area in Vancouver and another 385 that were brought for disposition from other courts.
- There were 2,034 accused whose cases had involvement with the DCC. Cases concluded in the DCC involved 1,226 offenders. On average, each offender resolved 1.9 court cases in the DCC.
- The DCC addresses summary conviction type of offences, mainly theft (33%), assault (14%), possession of drugs (9%) and mischief (5%), as well as administrative offences (27%) and other offences (12%). Among administrative offences, failure to appear and arrest while on a bail order seem proportionally less common than at other courts. Domestic violence cases constitute 8% of the DCC cases.
- Even though considerable planning was undertaken prior to the opening of the DCC, elements of the DCC project needed to be developed or refined after the court's implementation. Collaboration among staff of justice, health and social services agencies co-located in the DCC and integration of their services continued to be a challenge after the court opened.
- The average number of case appearances per day in the DCC is 62—exceeding pre-implementation expectations and estimates of resource requirements. Therefore, a number of elements of the DCC model developed in the planning phase needed to be redesigned.



Entrance to the Downtown Community Court.

Court process efficiency

- The average number of appearances per concluded case and the median time to disposition are the Ministry of Attorney General standard court efficiency measures. Because the DCC is a new court and the court cases analyzed in this report started and concluded within the initial 12 months of the court's operation, standard methodology used to calculate these measures for the selected comparisons had to be modified for this report. As a result, only court cases that started and concluded in the VPC and in the remainder of the province are considered. For this reason, approximately 22% of cases were excluded from the analysis. This may affect the measures. In addition, for this report due to the limited evaluation period, offender criminal history and any effects they may have on court efficiencies were not considered in selecting criminal cases for comparison purposes with the DCC.
- In the DCC, it takes 5.1 appearances on average to conclude a case. This is slightly more than the 4.7 appearances during the same period of time in the VPC and about the same as the average for the remainder of the province. Prior to the implementation of the DCC, the average number of appearances to disposition in the VPC was also 5.1; for the remainder of the province, it was 3.9.
- Court cases in the DCC are processed with median time to disposition of 24 days. This is longer than the 22 days in the VPC and the 18 days for the remainder of the province. Prior to the implementation of the DCC, the median time to disposition was 27 days in the VPC and 16 days for the remainder of the province¹.



The Downtown Community Court is a criminal court that is part of the Provincial Court of B.C.

¹ Time to disposition is the time from the first appearance in court on a case to last appearance date when all counts on a case have a final disposition rendered.

- Duty counsel services (including those provided by the DCC lawyer) are readily available in the DCC and 40% of all court appearances in the DCC were with duty counsel present. This is higher than the 16% in the VPC and 17% for the remainder of the province. There were also fewer unrepresented and self-represented accused in the DCC.
- The use of bail in the DCC was higher than at the comparisons. Approximately 80% of cases concluded in the DCC required at least one bail hearing, while the proportion was 65% in the VPC and 50% for the remainder of the province.
- Approximately 27% of offenders in the DCC spent time in pretrial remand. This is a baseline measure for future reports, because no comparisons are currently available for this indicator.
- The average length of stay in pretrial detention for DCC accused was 16 days, lower than the 29-day average for the Lower Mainland and 32-day average for the province.²
- From the total of 3,616 court cases that had a hearing in the DCC in the first year of the court's operation, 830 or 23% of these cases elected the right to trial and left the DCC. On average, these cases had 3.5 appearances in the DCC.
- Fewer cases were scheduled for trial in the VPC after the implementation of the DCC. The total includes cases that originated in the DCC. The total number of cases that actually concluded with a trial in the VPC stayed approximately at the pre-DCC level. These findings are based on JUSTIN data and are a proxy for actual trial numbers.
- A higher proportion of DCC cases concluded with a sentence compared to other court locations. Jail sentences are used proportionally less in the DCC (45%) than in the VPC (56%), but more than on average in the remainder of the province (38%). Jail sentence, probation and conditional sentence are all sentences disposed in the DCC. Approximately 63% of jail sentences in the DCC are sentences recorded as one-day jail sentences, compared to 50% in the VPC and the average for the remainder of the province.

² This percentage includes pretrial detention time for cases heard or disposed in other court locations.

- Approximately 80% of non-sentence court outcomes in the DCC are stays of proceeding, which include alternative measures. This proportion is much higher than the 53% in the VPC and the 42% average for the remainder of the province.
- The time it takes the police and Crown counsel to deal with DCC offences prior to a court hearing is shorter in the DCC than in the VPC or on average in the remainder of the province. The median time for the offence date to case disposition date is 33 days in the DCC and 64 days in the comparisons.

Integration of services to address offender needs

- Offenders who have complex health and social problems were managed by the integrated case management teams in the DCC. A management plan was developed for these individuals, focusing on strategies to address the risk to reoffend and linkages to address their criminogenic needs (such as housing, employment, financial assistance, associates, mental health and addictions). Within the evaluation period, 184 offenders were managed by integrated case management teams in the DCC.



Community court teams meet daily to identify and address clients' circumstances and needs. Shown here: defence lawyer, probation supervisor, Vancouver Coastal Health nurse, victim services worker. (Photo from community court video produced by Justice Education Society.)

- Another 334 other offenders sentenced in the DCC were supervised in other Community Corrections offices but were offered early access to some of the programs and services in the DCC and outside.
- The number of offenders supervised by community corrections through alternative measures is increasing.

- There were 2,154 referrals to the community service programs in the DCC. More than 76% of individuals completed the required number of hours. Community service programs contributed 7,560 hours of community service. The programs involve community partners such as RainCity Housing, Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Portland Hotel Society, Gallery Gachet, Gathering Place, the City of Vancouver and the Salvation Army. Examples of community service work include tasks in a kitchen environment, general building maintenance and cleaning, reception work, mail sorting, street cleaning, warehousing, gardening and graffiti removal.
- Vancouver Coastal Health offers health information treatment readiness sessions in the DCC. The sessions are meant to act as a catalyst for access to other programs and services, and ultimately lifestyle changes. Approximately 770 offenders in the DCC were referred to attend social, health and mental health information sessions in the evaluation period—just less than 50% of those referred attended the sessions.
- Offenders in the DCC may also be referred to health programs offered by Vancouver Coastal Health outside the DCC. They include services offered at the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction, services for adults with serious mental illness offered by Strathcona Mental Health, addiction counselling and detox services.
- During the evaluation period, 399 individuals were interviewed by BC Housing to assess their housing needs; 203 individuals were housed, and an additional 87 were referred to housing programs but did not follow through on the referrals. Most housed individuals were placed in secure shelter beds. Shelter housing is intended as the starting point towards permanent housing. There were 43 individuals placed in single room occupancy hotels in Vancouver and a small number received other types of housing and rent subsidies.
- There were 173 referrals to a forensic nurse and 57 to a psychiatrist, both services offered in the DCC by the Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission.
- A full range of income assistance services are offered in the DCC by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD). Help with applications for income assistance is available for new clients in the DCC. For individuals already receiving income assistance, access to MHSD services is offered, including referrals and funding to attend life skills, pre-employment, employment and addiction programs. The majority of individuals who came to the DCC were already receiving income assistance; 43 individuals accessed income assistance through the DCC.

- Other complementary programming is offered in the DCC, such as the Aboriginal Wellness Program, counselling services of the Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia, counselling programs of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, and financial literacy programs of Family Services of Greater Vancouver.

Offender accountability

- Offenders in the DCC came back to court after they were sentenced more often than in the comparisons. Approximately 10% of cases after sentencing were brought back before a DCC judge. This compares with 4% in the VPC and an average of 3% for the remainder of the province.
- Approximately 7% of appearances in the DCC resulted in a warrant issued, compared to 4% of appearances in the VPC and 4% in the remainder of the province. The year prior, these figures were 6% and 5% respectively.



Sentences in the community court focus on managing the offender's risk of reoffending and compensating the community for harm caused by the crime. (Photo from community court video produced by Justice Education Society. Accused is portrayed by an actor.)

- There was a decrease in calls for service in the City of Vancouver and in the DCC catchment area. There is no significant difference between the decrease seen in the DCC catchment area and across the city, suggesting that the decrease may not be due to the DCC although the DCC may have contributed.³
- Overall, there was a decrease in reported crimes in the City of Vancouver and the DCC catchment area. Property crime was down in the DCC catchment area slightly more than in the City of Vancouver. Violent crime in the DCC catchment area increased slightly, while decreasing across the city. The differences between the DCC area and the City of Vancouver are not significant.

³ The analysis of calls for service and reported crimes was completed by the Vancouver Police Department, Planning, Research and Audit Section in February 2010.

Community confidence in the DCC

- A concerted effort was undertaken in advance of the DCC's opening to inform and engage the community about the new court. Since the early planning stages, the DCC has held public forums and meetings with residents, Aboriginal organizations, businesses, service providers and organizations in its catchment area. Their function is to understand how crime affects the community and what kind of public service by offenders would be useful to compensate the community for crimes committed.
- Since the opening, the DCC has held public forums, information sessions, open houses, media relations, courthouse tours and celebratory events. A website was established and print materials (i.e., brochures, posters, fact sheets) and educational videos were produced.
- The DCC developed partnerships with community organizations and non-profit agencies, including the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, Watari Youth, Family and Community Services, and the City of Vancouver's Great Beginnings Program. The DCC accepted donations from the Cambie Malone's Group of restaurants, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC), Bean Around The World Coffee, Powell Street location, TELUS, Home Depot, Costco and Dan-D Foods.
- The DCC took steps to establish a community advisory council to formalize the court's relationship with the community. The process of setting up the council was initiated, but has not yet been completed.



Local artists Joey Mallett, Jerry Whitehead and Rita Buchwitz designed and painted murals in the community court. The project was funded by the City of Vancouver.

Conclusion

This report provides limited, output-focused information on the court's results for the first year of its operation. At this time, the available data does not permit conclusions about court efficiencies in the DCC.

Many of the standard measures show that the court's impacts require longer timelines to measure than the short evaluation period of this first interim report. Because the DCC focuses on summary conviction offences to the exclusion of other criminal offences and has no trials, the ability to use comparisons is limited at this time. As a result, this report provides an initial overview of key areas where net impacts are expected in the long run.

Assessing the rate of recidivism among offenders sentenced in the DCC is a long-term measure of the DCC's success. Changes in recidivism may lead to changes in the crime rate in the area served by the DCC. Analysis of changes in offenders' behaviour requires a minimum of two years of data after sentencing. The final evaluation report is planned for spring 2012.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vancouver's Downtown Community Court (DCC) is the first of its kind in Canada. The new court opened its doors in September 2008. At its core, the DCC is about partnership and problem solving. It is about creating new relationships, within the justice system and with health and social services, community organizations, area residents, merchants, and faith communities. It is also about testing new ways to reduce crime and improve public safety.

A high number of offenders in downtown Vancouver have health and social problems, including alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, homelessness and poverty that may lead to antisocial behaviours. The justice system and society at large are challenged to address the risks posed by these individuals, while supporting their health and social needs. Complex needs take time to appropriately assess and manage. This and other factors often lead to criticism that the system is too slow, that it does not address offenders' root problems, and that the cycle of crime continues unabated. It can also lead to a lack of public confidence in the justice system. To address these factors, the court takes a problem-solving approach to address offenders' needs and circumstances and the underlying causes of their criminal behaviour.

The DCC is a court of the Provincial Court of B.C. and is comprised of justice, health and social services partners, including:

- Ministry of Attorney General (Court Services Branch, Criminal Justice Branch, Justice Services Branch),
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Corrections Branch, Victim Services and Police Services),
- Provincial Court Judiciary,
- Vancouver Coastal Health Authority,
- Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission,
- Ministry of Housing and Social Development,
- Ministry of Forests and Range (BC Housing),
- Vancouver Police Department,
- Legal Services Society, and
- Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C.

The DCC is located at 211 Gore Avenue, in a renovated building of the former Vancouver Pretrial Services Centre. It serves downtown Vancouver from Clark Drive on the east to Stanley Park on the west, with Great Northern Way as the southern boundary and the Inner Harbour and Coal Harbour of Burrard Inlet as the northern boundary.

1.1 History

In March 2004, the Attorney General announced that the B.C. Justice Review Task Force, through its Street Crime Working Group, would study crime in Vancouver and make recommendations to address it. The working group members represented all levels of government, the judiciary, lawyers, police, corrections and social service providers. In September 2005, the working group released its report—*Beyond the Revolving Door: A New Response to Chronic Offenders*—recommending the creation of a community court to address Vancouver’s crime problem.

The Government of British Columbia endorsed the recommendation and provided funding for the planning and operation of the new court. The Chief Judge of the Provincial Court provided ongoing support for the initiative. Planners researched community court models around the world, particularly in the United States, where community courts originated and have demonstrated success. These planners incorporated their findings into a model for the DCC, which aims to address Vancouver’s unique circumstances.

The DCC is a strategy of the Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the Provincial Court Judiciary for achieving an effective criminal justice system. The Government of British Columbia’s commitment to the DCC was stated in the 2006 and 2008 speeches from the Throne.

1.2 Evaluation

Evaluation is a fundamental component of the DCC project. It will determine if the DCC model results in more successful outcomes for victims, offenders and the community, and whether it helps the justice system operate more efficiently.

This Downtown Community Court Interim Evaluation Report is the first of three planned reports. It focuses on project implementation and delivery and early court process efficiency results for the first 12 months of the DCC’s operation. The second interim evaluation report is planned for spring 2011. The final evaluation report will be available in spring 2012, and will relate to changes in offenders’ behaviour and reoffending rates.

The original evaluation framework was developed by a team of researchers from Simon Fraser University, School of Criminology, and was reviewed by the DCC steering committee and the feedback was incorporated in January 2008. From May to September 2009, the framework was refined and is the basis for this evaluation report.

This report was written by the two justice ministries—the Ministry of Attorney General and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General—with advice on evaluation methodology, data analysis and results interpretation from the SFU research team. See Appendix 1 for the evaluation matrix and Appendix 2 for an overview of methodological and evaluation issues.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DCC PROJECT

The DCC pilot project was designed to implement and test new approaches in delivering justice that differ from those in the traditional justice system. The DCC project has the following objectives:

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

2.1 Timely court process

The DCC endeavours to address crime in a timely way so that offenders experience the immediate consequences of their offending behaviours and can make reparation to the community. It aims to hear cases within two to 14 days, instead of the typical six weeks for an accused who is not in custody to appear in a conventional provincial court.

It can take from several months to a year for even the most minor cases to be resolved in a conventional court. There are various reasons for this, including: delays in the application for legal aid; and lack of adequate time for counsel to prepare for court and discuss the process or options with the accused, often because of resource challenges in the justice system.

Delays may result in many court appearances before cases are addressed. The accused may fail to show for subsequent court dates and eventually end up in jail. By the time the case is resolved, the process is deemed as punishment and offenders are sentenced to “time served.”

To address these problems, the DCC has a defence lawyer available at all times, providing advice and information to the accused and representing the accused in the community court. Early access to relevant information about the accused and the case, as well as designated staff resources working together in one location, increase opportunities for resolution within one or two appearances.

2.2 Integrated approach

Working with partner health and social service agencies, the DCC uses a problem-solving approach to crime by addressing the underlying health and social factors that may influence criminal behaviours. They include drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, poverty, poor job and social skills and pro-criminal peers. These factors make it difficult for a person to break the cycle of criminal activity.

Staff representing health, income assistance, housing and victim services, along with native court workers, Crown counsel, defence counsel, a police officer, and probation officers are located together in the new DCC courthouse. Integrated teams representing all of these agencies work together to identify offender needs and circumstances, and develop effective offender management plans.

2.3 Connection with the community

The DCC works to create relationships with neighbourhoods and community groups, and seeks opportunities for the public to connect with the court. Public forums and meetings link the court with community groups, individuals and business organizations.

An important element of the court's approach is to sentence offenders to make reparation to the community. This compensates for harm caused by criminal activity. The DCC aims to hear court cases quickly so that offenders can begin making reparation almost immediately, instead of being sentenced to time already served while waiting for their cases to be heard.

2.4 DCC guiding principles

The DCC is based on the following principles:

- Justice system decisions in response to crime can protect victims and the public by reducing the likelihood of criminal behaviour;
- Recidivism can be reduced by addressing the underlying risks for criminal behaviour;
- Public confidence in the justice system can be enhanced through a timely criminal justice process and meaningful involvement of the community in problem-solving approaches to criminal behaviour;
- Offender case management can improve with a co-ordinated approach involving service delivery agencies and community organizations; effective and consistent case management requires co-ordination of decision-making among justice, community, social and health systems;

- Rehabilitation of specific offenders can improve when individual circumstances and risk-related needs are taken into account, and offenders are provided with integrated, uninterrupted management of these needs;
- Public confidence in the criminal justice process can be increased by fostering a sense of engagement with—and responsibility to—the community; and
- The criminal justice process can influence harmful anti-social behaviour by encouraging people to take responsibility for their actions and being actively involved in planning to change such behaviour.

Appendix 3 provides additional information on community engagement. Appendix 4 provides more information on the court's unique features.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A three-stage evaluation was put in place to assess the impacts of the DCC model. Evaluation information will be presented in the following reports:

Spring 2010—Interim Evaluation Report, Part 1:

The first interim evaluation report focuses on project implementation and delivery and early court process efficiencies. The report presents limited interim results for the initial 12 months.

Spring 2011—Interim Evaluation Report, Part 2:

The second interim evaluation report will provide offender outcome information (excluding recidivism) and relate to court efficiencies achieved in the second year of the DCC's operation. The report will include survey and interview information from offenders managed in the DCC. The longer data collection period will allow for a more comprehensive analysis.

Spring 2012—Final Evaluation Report:

The final evaluation report will review the first three years of data to inform questions on the success of the court, including changes in the criminal behaviour of offenders and crime rates in the area served by the court. In addition, the report will include community survey information about residents' impressions of the DCC and their confidence in the court. Continued operation of the DCC over the long term will better inform the court, justice ministries and all partner agencies about the investments made.

3.1 Evaluation approach

Methodology discussions were initially held with representatives of all project partners in 2007/08. More detailed planning was undertaken by the two justice ministries with advice from the SFU research team. Meetings with data experts were held to confirm data availability for the measures selected. As a result of this work, an evaluation matrix with specific research questions, indicators and measures was developed. The matrix serves as a blueprint of the evaluation.

Appendix 1 lists the evaluation questions. It also indicates what questions are addressed in this report and which ones are addressed in future reports. Appendix 2 provides additional information on the evaluation methodology.

3.2 Interim evaluation period

The interim report covers the 12 months of the DCC's operation beginning October 1, 2008 and ending September 30, 2009. Although the DCC was launched on September 8, 2008, the initial three weeks were excluded from the report to reduce the impact of this set-up period.

3.3 Estimating net impacts

Estimating net impacts is an important element in assessing the success of the DCC project in achieving its intended objectives. A complete evaluation of net impacts will be included in the final report.

Many of the standard measures used to show impacts of the DCC require longer timelines to measure the results than the short evaluation period of this report. Because the DCC focuses on summary conviction offences to the exclusion of other criminal offences and has no trials, the use of comparisons is limited at this time. As a result, this report provides an initial and interim overview of areas where net impacts are expected in the long run.

To provide context for DCC results, whenever appropriate, attempts have been made to provide the same information for (1) the Vancouver Provincial Court (VPC) located at 222 Main Street, and (2) the average for the remainder of the province. Comparison information is provided for the interim evaluation period (October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009) and one year prior to DCC implementation (September 1, 2007—August 30, 2008). Criminal history and other offender characteristics were not considered in selecting comparisons for the purposes of this report to match the profile of offenders in the DCC. This analysis will be considered in the future.

3.4 Research activities and information sources

Several lines of evidence were used for the evaluation questions in the interim evaluation report. The research activities are as follows:

- Document review;
- Administrative data extract and analysis;
- DCC programming data; and
- Key informant interviews.

A review of program documentation was important to assess: (1) relevance of the DCC project to strategic priorities of the government; and (2) adherence to the original design of the DCC model and its implementation plan.

A number of administrative data sources were utilized. JUSTIN (B.C.'s justice information system) was the primary source for the information. Additional information was obtained from CORNET (B.C. Corrections case management system). The Vancouver Police Department provided crime statistics for the City of Vancouver and the DCC catchment area, utilizing PRIME (Police Records Information Management Environment system) and CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch system).

Information collected about health and social service programming that was accessed by offenders in the DCC was also included in this report.

Key informant interviews provided contextual information for the quantitative data in the report. The interviews had a semi-formal structure and involved five key DCC officials and staff. The interviews offer a point of view that may not be shared by all participants or by the evaluators.

3.5 Administrative data limitation

Unless otherwise stated, court efficiency questions are answered for criminal court cases that were resolved in the DCC. These cases involve offences that took place in the catchment area. Crown counsel approved the charges to proceed in the DCC and have a DCC file location number in JUSTIN.

Unless otherwise stated, the analysis does not include cases from other court locations that were brought to the DCC for disposition with the consent of Crown counsel.

Not all cases that appear in the DCC conclude in the DCC. A proportion of these cases proceed to trial elsewhere. These cases are not part of the evaluation.

4. DCC IMPACTS—KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section of the evaluation centres on the four main objectives of the DCC implementation:

1. Create a more efficient court;
2. Integrate services to address offenders needs;
3. Increase offender accountability and recidivism; and
4. Instil community confidence in the DCC.

This interim evaluation report focuses on results related to project implementation and delivery, and early court process efficiency for the first 12 months of DCC's operation. Refer to Appendix 1 for the complete list of evaluation questions addressed in this report or planned for future reports. Appendix 2 provides more information on the evaluation methodology and its issues. Appendix 3 offers additional information on the court's community engagement efforts.

Objective 1: Create a more efficient court

This objective was evaluated with the follow questions:

- Are the location of and type of offending behaviours dealt with in the DCC consistent with the original DCC plan?
- Is the number of appearances being reduced in the DCC?
- Is time to disposition reduced in the DCC?
- Does status of counsel appearing in the DCC affect the appearance rate and time to disposition?
- Is the use of bail in the DCC reduced?
- Is the length of pretrial detention reduced?
- Is the use of pretrial detention reduced?
- What proportion of eligible accused elect to proceed to trial elsewhere and how many appearances do they have in the DCC before they leave?
- Do DCC dispositions vary from dispositions applied to similar cases and offenders elsewhere?

- What proportion of DCC matters is resolved through alternative measures and diversion?
- Is the Crown counsel/police portion of the DCC process more efficient?

4.1.1 Are the location of and type of offending behaviours dealt with in the DCC consistent with the original DCC plan?

Indicators

- Cases that start with a DCC file number and conclude in the DCC, type of charges at case conclusion (only most serious offence);
- Total number of cases, including those proceeding in the DCC that do not originate in the DCC catchment area, when brought in for disposition together with a DCC case; and
- Number of offenders concluding in the DCC.

Background

The DCC was set up to address crime in the downtown area of Vancouver. Offences that occurred in that area, except for the most serious ones, are best addressed in the DCC.

Specifically, the DCC intended to deal with:

- All *Criminal Code* summary offences such as causing a disturbance;
- Hybrid offences in which Crown counsel decides to proceed summarily, such as assault causing bodily harm or impaired driving;
- Absolute provincial court jurisdiction offences such as shoplifting; provincial statute offences such as driving while prohibited or aggressive panhandling; and
- Drug possession under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*.

At charge approval, Crown counsel confirms if the offence occurred in the DCC catchment area and decides whether the offence falls within the categories summarized above. Beyond these offences, DCC Crown counsel may allow other charges to be brought in for disposition in the DCC. Crown counsel determines what offences are appropriate to proceed in the DCC.

Results

In terms of the volume of DCC cases, a total of 3,642 new criminal cases were initiated within the 12-month interim evaluation period, with alleged offences occurring in the DCC catchment area and deemed by Crown counsel as appropriate to proceed in the DCC. At the same time, substantially fewer new cases were initiated in the VPC compared to the year prior to the implementation of the DCC. There was a small upward change when looking at the rest of the province.

Location	New cases pre-evaluation period (Sept. 07 to Aug. 08)	New cases evaluation period (Oct. 08 to Sept. 09)	Change
DCC	--	3,642	--
VPC	16,897	12,184	-4,713 (-28%)
Remainder of the province	81,919	84,751	+2,832 (+3%)
Total	98,816	100,577	+1,761 (+2%)

There have been 3,616 criminal cases that had at least one hearing in the DCC within the 12-month evaluation period. Of the 3,616 cases, 63% (2,275) were concluded in the DCC. The remaining 37% (1,341) cases were either resolved elsewhere—mostly in the VPC—or required more time beyond the evaluation period to resolve.

Of the cases that concluded in the DCC, approximately 69% (1,890) involved offences from the DCC catchment area and 31% (385) originated outside the DCC catchment area. For efficiency, they were brought to the DCC to be disposed together.

Of the 2,034 offenders whose cases had involvement with the DCC, 1,226 offenders concluded their cases in the DCC within the evaluation period. In the planning phase, it was envisaged that the court would deal with 1,500 individuals. On average, an offender in the DCC resolved 1.9 cases.

There has been a significant decrease in the volume of court cases resolved in the VPC since the DCC opened. During the interim evaluation period, the VPC resolved 23% fewer cases that were both initiated and concluded within that period, compared to the year prior. Provincially, during the same period, there was almost no change in the number of cases initiated and concluded.

Location	Cases initiated and concluded within Sept. 07 to Aug. 08	Cases initiated and concluded within Oct. 08 to Sept. 09	Change
DCC	--	1,890	--
VPC	11,149	8,568	-2,581 (-23%)
Remainder of the province	53,068	53,986	+918 (+1.7%)
Total	64,217	64,444	0%

During the interim evaluation period, the DCC mainly dealt with theft (33%), assault (14%), possession of drugs (9%) and mischief (5%), as well as administrative offences (27%) grouped together as “CCC other” (i.e., other *Criminal Code of Canada* offences). On the whole and as intended, these offences are more serious than those processed in community courts in other jurisdictions where the focus is on misdemeanour offences and nuisance behaviour.

Offences in DCC October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009	Court cases	% of total
Theft (all theft including over/under \$5,000)	620	33%
CCC other	502	27%
Assault	256	14%
NCA/CDSA	174	9%
Mischief	98	5%
Person oth (utter threats)	47	2%
Off. weapon	39	2%
Prop. oth. (e.g., possession of break-in tools/disguise)	39	2%
Stln. prop.	22	1%
Prov. stat.	21	1%
Fraud	18	1%
Prov. M/V	18	1%
Application	13	1%
B. and E.	11	1%
CC traffic	10	1%
Robbery	1	0%
Sex crimes	1	0%
Total	1,890	101%⁴

The “CCC other” category of offences in the table above typically makes up a large volume of cases in the court system. These are generally—although not limited to—administration of justice offences such as breaches. In the DCC, the most common CCC other offence was failing to comply with a probation order and breach procedures on conditional sentence orders. Failure to appear and arrest while on a bail order are proportionally less common in the DCC than in the VPC or the remainder of the province.

⁴ Due to rounding, this column adds to more than 100%.

October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009		DCC	VPC	Provincial
Offence description	CCC Section	% of total	% of total	% of total
Fail to comply with probation order	s.733.1	36%	27%	22%
Procedure on breach of CSO	s.742.6	21%	8%	5%
Application to change a probation order	s.732.2	10%	8%	7%
Escape and being at-large (fail to appear; fail to comply with an undertaking)	s.145	10%	27%	27%
Other		24%	31%	39%

Of the 1,890 DCC cases that concluded in the DCC, 8% (152) were classified as involving domestic violence (i.e., K files).

Location	Domestic violence cases initiated and concluded within Sept. 07 to Aug. 08	Domestic violence cases initiated and concluded within Oct. 08 to Sept. 09	Change
DCC	--	152	--
VPC	1,389	1,126	-263 (-18%)
Remainder of the province	6,992	8,202	+1,210 (+17%)
Total	8,381	9,480	+1,099 (+13%)

4.1.2 Is the number of appearances being reduced in the DCC?

Indicators

- Number of appearances per case for the three DCC cohorts; and
- Reasons for adjournments (from court observations).

Background

The DCC is unique in that it is not a trial court. Court cases in the DCC conclude by a person pleading guilty. If a person pleads not guilty and a trial is required to determine guilt, the case is transferred, usually to the VPC.

This means that for DCC cases, there are no appearances for a trial confirmation hearing or for trial included in the average count. For VPC and the remainder of the province, the count includes these types of appearances for some concluded cases.

Cases that are set for trial generally have a higher average appearance per case than those not set for trial. In future reports, the average number of appearances per concluded case will be reported in seven categories available in JUSTIN: first appearance, bail, arraignment hearing, administrative appearance, trial confirmation hearing, trials and sentencing. This will assist in a more detailed understanding of the differences, in both the average number of appearances and the types of appearances in the DCC compared to other locations.

The commonly used definition for concluded court cases is all cases that conclude within a set time period (usually a calendar or fiscal year), regardless of when the case started. Some cases included in the period will have started more than a year prior.

On average in the province, 78% of cases conclude within 12 months. Therefore, on average 22% of cases take more than twelve months to conclude and some of these cases take years. The definition of concluded cases affects the average time to disposition. The average number of appearances and the percentage of cases concluded in 30, 60 and 90 days are sensitive to what cases are included in the data set. In this report, these measures apply only to cases that begin and conclude within 12 months and exclude the longer cases.

The modified definition for concluded cases for this report was required, because the DCC is a new court. The data set available for comparison among the three locations (DCC, VPC and the remainder of the province) included only cases that started and concluded within the one-year evaluation period (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009).

The percentage of cases that concluded within 12 months varies according to court location. This variation affects the outcome when studying the rate of cases that started and concluded within a one-year period from one location to another. In future reports, the data sets used for comparison will permit a more complete analysis of all concluded cases within a set period. This may change the comparison between the cohorts.

At this time, the comparisons selected to demonstrate the net impact of the DCC on court efficiencies do not include the consideration of criminal history of offenders. Due to the short timeframe of the evaluation, this report does not take into account offender characteristics when comparing court efficiency measures in the DCC with efficiency measures for cases in other court locations. This analysis will be considered in the future.

Number of appearances for concluded court cases is a key court efficiency measure on which the Ministry of Attorney General relies, along with median time to disposition.

Results

The average number of appearances to disposition for court cases originating in the DCC catchment area that concluded in the DCC is 5.1. This is higher than 4.7 in the VPC and 4.0 for the remainder of the province, for cases that start and conclude over that same period—the first year of the DCC’s operation. The previous year, the VPC concluded its cases with 5.1 appearances. The average for the remainder of the province at the time was 3.9. Currently, these results cannot be compared to the information routinely reported by the ministry because of the necessary methodological differences explained in the preceding paragraphs.

Number of appearances to disposition		
	September 1, 2007--August 31, 2008	October 1, 2008--September 30, 2009
DCC	--	5.1
VPC	5.1	4.7
Remainder of the province	3.9	4.0

Note: To provide a balanced view of the full twelve months for this measure, the calculation included an additional 90 days of followup appearance information beyond the 12-month evaluation period. This helps to ensure that the number of appearances post-sentencing for cases concluding at—or near the beginning of—the evaluation period did not outweigh cases concluding at or near the end of the evaluation period.

For court cases originating in the DCC catchment area that concluded in the DCC, 71% of appearances occurred in the DCC. The remaining 29% occurred elsewhere—mostly in the VPC and Judicial Justice of the Peace Centre in Burnaby, which deals with matters such as bail cases and applications outside regular court-sitting hours.

4.1.3 Is time to disposition reduced in the DCC?

Indicators

- Median length of time from first appearance anywhere to disposition in the DCC, for three cohorts (includes, for example, DCC files that had a bail appearance in the VPC at 222 Main Street or in the justice centre).

Background

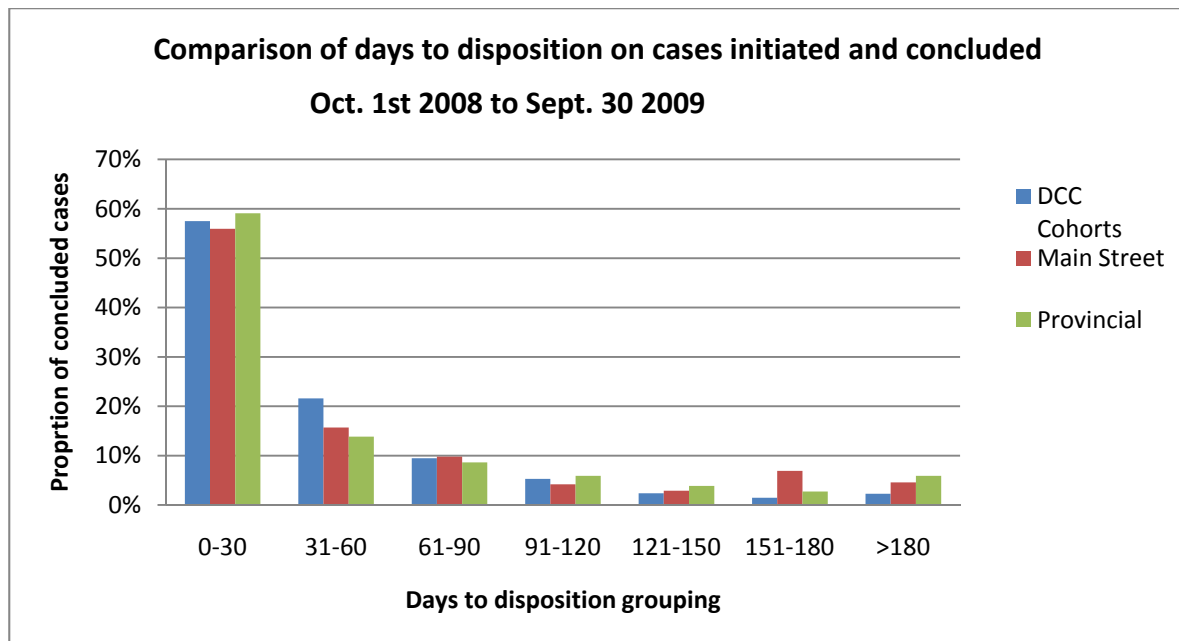
Median time to disposition is measured for cases originating in the DCC catchment area and concluding in the DCC. It is the median time from first appearance, whether in the DCC or elsewhere, to disposition in the DCC. The approach applied to the data analysis in this section is consistent with the information provided in the preceding research question.

Results

Median time to disposition in the DCC is 24 days. In the VPC, the median time to disposition is 22 days for cases that started and concluded during the same period. The median time to disposition for the remainder of the province in the same period of time is 18 days. During the year prior to the launch of the DCC, the median time to disposition in the VPC was 27 days. For the remainder of the province, it was 16 days.

Median time to disposition		
	September 1, 2007—August 31, 2008	October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009
DCC	-	24 days
VPC	27 days	22 days
Remainder of the province	16 days	18 days

Whether in the DCC, VPC or remainder of the province, almost the same proportion of court cases concluded within the first 30 days from first appearance. The DCC is slightly higher than the VPC and slightly lower than the average for the remainder of the province. Looking at the next 30 days, a greater proportion of cases concluded in the DCC (22%) than in the VPC (16%), and even more if compared to the average for the remainder of the province (14%). Cumulatively, looking at the whole 90-day period beginning with first appearance in court, 89% of the total cases concluded in the DCC. During the same 90-day period, the proportion of concluded cases was 82% in the VPC and is the average for the remainder of the province.



4.1.4 Does status of counsel appearing in the DCC affect the appearance rate and time to disposition?

Indicators

- Type of counsel at the last appearance: private, DCC duty counsel, DCC staff lawyer (included in JUSTIN in the duty counsel category), self-represented and other; and
- Comparison between duty counsel, staff lawyer and private counsel for DCC cases: number of appearances and time to disposition.

Background

Accused in the DCC have access to the DCC lawyer and DCC duty counsel. In addition, the accused may be represented by a private counsel of their choice on a legal aid certificate or otherwise.

The DCC lawyer is a full-time position filled by a criminal defence lawyer contracted by the Legal Services Society (LSS). This service is available to all accused in the DCC at no cost, regardless of financial circumstances. In addition, each day there are two duty counsel working in the cells and available to accused in custody. DCC duty counsel represent all in-custody accused at bail hearings that are contested and take place in the VPC. An accused may be represented by different counsel at different times during a court case.

In JUSTIN, court appearances when DCC accused are represented by the DCC lawyer or DCC duty counsel are recorded with one code (duty counsel).

Results

Approximately 40% of all court appearances (on DCC cases resolved in the DCC) were attended by a DCC duty counsel and the DCC lawyer. Based on the DCC model, this is a much higher proportion than in other court locations. Private defence counsel represented the accused in 35% of appearances—a smaller proportion than in the VPC and remainder of the province. Approximately 11% of appearances took place without counsel representation. As expected, this is a substantially lower proportion than in the VPC and remainder of the province.

Proportion of court appearances October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009						
Location	Duty counsel (in DCC, it includes the DCC lawyer)	Private counsel	Not represented accused	No counsel/ No accused	Agent	Not specified
DCC	40%	35%	11%	11%	4%	0.5%
VPC	16.2%	48.8%	18.5%	9.4%	5.1%	1.8%
Remainder of the province	16.8%	39.6%	24.1%	10.5%	5.9%	3.1%
Proportion of court appearances September 1, 2007—August 31, 2008						
DCC	--	--	--	--	--	--
VPC	18.1%	48.1%	16.4%	10.0%	6.0%	1.4%
Remainder of the province	16.0%	40.2%	23.1%	11.8%	5.8%	3.0%

Note: An agent is any individual appearing for the accused before court—usually a law student or family member. The agent may also be a defence counsel if other than the counsel of record.

4.1.5 Is the use of bail in DCC reduced?

Indicators

- Proportion of offenders on bail supervision for the three DCC cohorts.

Background

With better and timelier information about the accused in the DCC and services available in the community, cases are expected to conclude quickly. For this reason, there is less need for accused to be supervised on bail orders. When bail is required, it would often be for a shorter period of time. It is also hoped that breaches of bail orders will be reduced.

For this analysis, all bail appearances in DCC cases are counted, whether they occur in the DCC, VPC, or justice centre.

Results

A higher proportion of DCC cases have appearances to address bail—approximately 80%. This compares with 65% for cases in the VPC and 50% in the remainder of the province. When reviewing the number of appearances per case, DCC cases require a similar number of bail appearances as VPC cases and in the remainder of the province.

Bail appearances in DCC cases (accounting for 52%) are more likely to result in a substantive bail decision (a release or a detention order), rather than an adjournment or a temporary remand. This rate is lower in the VPC (40%) and remainder of the province (34%). The proportion of DCC cases that conclude during a scheduled bail appearance (e.g., by a plea or a stay) is approximately the same in VPC cases and lower than in the remainder of the province.

Bail appearance outcomes October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009					
	Total bail appearances % of total appearances	% of bail appearances with substantive bail decisions (detention and release orders)	% of bail appearances where the cases conclude (e.g., plea, stay of proceeding)	% of bail appearances with no substantive bail outcomes (adjournments and short remands)	Average # of bail appearances per case
DCC	3,456 (36%)	52%	8%	39%	2.3
VPC	13,980 (34%)	40%	7%	52%	2.6
Remainder of the province	61,318 (29%)	34%	14%	52%	2.3

Approximately 71% (922) of individuals in the DCC received at least one bail order, as compared to 48% (2,886) in the VPC and 48% (11,395) in the rest of the province.

4.1.6 Is the length of pretrial detention reduced?

Indicators

- Period of remand (offender/range in the cohort) for the three DCC cohorts.

Background

Similar to the previous question, the DCC model attempts to deal with court cases quickly so offenders can begin serving their sentences sooner. It is anticipated that if detention is needed for the accused in the DCC, the length of stay would be shorter.

Results

The average length of stay in pretrial detention for DCC accused (where the remand warrant has a DCC court file number that concluded in the DCC) was 16 days, as noted in CORNET. The average for the Lower Mainland during this evaluation period was 29 days, while the provincial average was 32. These numbers suggest that the length of pretrial detention for DCC accused, in this evaluation, is considerably shorter than for accused in other courts.

4.1.7 Is the use of pretrial detention reduced?

Indicators

- Proportion of offenders in pretrial detention for the three DCC cohorts.

Background

Because the DCC model attempts to deal with court cases quickly, it is anticipated that the accused in the DCC would spend less time in pretrial remand detention. If detention is needed, it will be needed for fewer accused.

Results

Approximately 27% of offenders (with a DCC court file number that concluded in the DCC) spent some time in pretrial detention, as noted in CORNET.⁵ At this time, due to the complex nature of formulating a comparison group for this variable, no comparison information is available, although it is planned for future reports.

4.1.8 What proportion of eligible accused elect to proceed to trial elsewhere and how many appearances do they have in the DCC before they leave?

Indicators

- Number of accused electing to proceed to trial after an appearance in the DCC (from the total of cases appearing in DCC);
- Number of cases leaving the DCC without disposition in the DCC;
- Number of appearances in the DCC per case leaving the DCC (effort spent); and
- Do these cases comeback to the DCC after they leave?

⁵ This percentage includes pretrial detention time for cases heard or disposed in other court locations.

Background

Cases where the alleged offence occurred in the DCC catchment area are streamed into the DCC. As stated above, the DCC is not a court for contested cases. As a result, accused who wish to dispute their charges must proceed to trial outside the DCC, mainly in the VPC. In practice, the accused may have several appearances in the DCC before the decision to leave the DCC is made.

Results

Out of the 3,616 court cases initiated during the evaluation period that had at least one appearance in the DCC, 23% (830) left the DCC and were concluded at another court or were scheduled to proceed to trial. These cases involved 34% (683) of the accused. A number of these individuals had other cases in the DCC that were concluded or are still proceeding.

The cases that eventually opted out of the DCC had 2,923 appearances while in the DCC (pre-opting out). This is 22% of the total of 13,533 appearances in the DCC on all cases. On average, these cases have 3.5 appearances in the DCC before leaving the DCC.

Looking at trials in the VPC (pre and post-DCC implementation), fewer cases are scheduled for trial in the VPC, even after the cases that left the DCC for trial are added to the total. The decrease is approximately 13%. At this stage, it is too early to conclude attribution to the DCC. The number of cases that concluded with a trial has remained stable.

Location	September 2007 to August 2008			October 2008 to September 2009		
	Total concluded	Case with trial scheduled	Cases with trial held	Total concluded	Case with trial scheduled	Cases with trial held
DCC	--	--	--	2,841	236	67
VPC	17,905	4,152	1,040	14,493	3,365	955
Remainder of the province	81,398	15,845	5,264	84,503	17,130	6,298
Total	99,303	19,997	6,304	101,837	20,731	7,320

Notes:

- The number of cases "with trial held" was calculated using JUSTIN data and methodology developed by the Ministry of Attorney General. The result is a proxy for the number of cases that conclude with a trial.
- For this indicator, the data examined includes all cases concluded in each of the periods considered, regardless of case initiation date.
- Trials for DCC cases are held elsewhere, mostly in the VPC.

4.1.9 Do DCC dispositions vary from dispositions applied to similar cases and offenders elsewhere?

Indicator

- Type and length of DCC dispositions for the three DCC cohorts.

Results

Approximately 54% (1,022) of the DCC cases concluded in the DCC with a sentence. The remaining 46% (868) were resolved without a sentence (e.g., alternative measures that can be indicated by a stay of proceedings). The proportion of cases concluded with a sentence is approximately the same in the DCC as the VPC and remainder of the province. The data presented on the VPC represents an aggregate for approximately 22 provincial court judges and does not relate to sentencing practices of any individual judge.

Location	September 2007—August 2008				October 2008—September 2009			
	Concluded with sentence		Resolved without sentence		Concluded with sentence		Resolved without sentence	
DCC	--	--	--	--	54%	1,022	46%	868
VPC	52%	5,750	48%	5,399	47%	4,045	53%	4,523
Remainder of the province	55%	29,310	45%	23,758	55%	29,481	45%	24,505

Jail is the most frequent sentence in the DCC, followed by probation orders and conditional sentence orders.

Sentence type	September 2007—August 2008			October 2008—September 2009		
	DCC	VPC	Remainder of the province	DCC	VPC	Remainder of the province ⁶
Jail	--	67% 3,856	40% 11,741	45% 464	56% 2,284	38% 11,158
Probation	--	11% 646	11% 3,267	27% 276	14% 568	12% 3,659
Change of court order	--	5% 261	2% 494	10% 99	6% 250	2% 577
Conditional sentence	--	2% 101	2% 481	8% 77	2% 80	2% 696
Other sentences	--	18%	45%	11%	21%	45%

⁶ Due to rounding, percentages add to more than 100%.

Jail sentences of one day are notably higher in the DCC than in the VPC or remainder of the province. One-day jail sentences entered in the record of proceedings may represent time already served by the accused while in pretrial detention.

	Sentence lengths (days) proportionally Oct. 2008—Sept. 2009								
	1	2-7	8-14	15-21	22-29	30-59	60-89	90-119	>=120 days
DCC	63% (292)	4%	3%	3%	0%	11%	6%	4%	5%
VPC	50%(1,142)	6%	5%	3%	1%	12%	5%	4%	14%
Remainder of the province	34% (3,794)	8%	8%	5%	1%	18%	7%	6%	13%

	Sentence lengths (days) proportionally pre-DCC Sept. 2007—Aug. 2008								
	1	2-7	8-14	15-21	22-29	30-59	60-89	90-119	>=120 days
VPC	51% (1,967)	8%	6%	4%	1%	12%	6%	4%	9%
Remainder of the province	34% (3,992)	8%	8%	5%	1%	17%	7%	6%	14%

The total number of jail sentences given in the DCC and VPC (after the DCC implementation) is lower than the number of jail sentences disposed in the VPC during the previous year. The total number of probation sentences given in the DCC and VPC since the DCC was implemented is higher than the number of probation sentences disposed in the VPC during the previous year. This is also the case with conditional sentence orders.

Among non-sentence outcomes in the DCC, stays of proceedings were the most common. Some stays of proceedings in the DCC are for DCC cases that were resolved through alternative measures and recorded in JUSTIN as stays of proceedings.

Non-sentence outcomes	October 2008—September 2009			September 2007—August 2008		
	DCC	VPC	Remainder of the province	DCC	VPC	Remainder of the province
Stay of proceeding	80% 691	53% 2,380	42% 10,387	-- --	57% 3,079	44% 10,430
Conditional sentence disposition hearing	10% 87	3% 129	2% 465	-- --	-- 1,049	-- 4,017
Proceeding on new information	3%	12%	11%	--	11%	11%
Application granted	2%	17%	14%	--	19%	17%
Other	5%	15%	31%	--	13%	28%

Note: Conditional sentence disposition hearing is a case outcome in which an application for a breach of CSO is entered and the case is concluded. Until fall 2008, this outcome was entered in JUSTIN as application granted, together with other application results.

4.1.10 What proportion of DCC matters is resolved through alternative measures and diversion?

Indicators

- Number of alternative measures in the DCC
- Number of diversions/caution letters;
- Number of appearances for each and average number of appearances;
- Time to disposition (stay of proceedings entered); and
- Number of alternative measures and diversion without court appearances (Crown process).

Note: Much of the data necessary to report on these indicators is not available at this time. This information will be provided in the final evaluation report.

Background

Resolving more court matters with alternative measures in the DCC, when appropriate, is expected to take less court time and have an impact on the efficiency of the court.

Results

The total number of alternative measures was 327 during the research period (source: Crown-Corrections JUSTIN module). Because alternative measures are not entered in JUSTIN as case/appearance outcomes, it is not possible to determine the exact number of court cases in the DCC that were resolved through alternative measures.

Refer to section 4.2.4 for information regarding community corrections supervision of alternative measures.

4.1.11 Is the Crown counsel/police portion of the DCC process more efficient?

Indicators

- Median time to disposition from the offence (for three cohorts); and
- Median time to disposition from information sworn (for three cohorts).

Background

The efficiency of the Crown counsel/police process is measured with median time to disposition (MTD) from the offence date and MTD from information sworn date. This is different from the standard measure that calculates MTD starting with first appearance date.

Results

MTD from offence date in the DCC is much shorter than the VPC and remainder of the province. Looking at the year prior, the VPC MTD increased but remained stable in the remainder of the province.

Median time to disposition from offence date to disposition		
	September 1, 2007—August 31, 2008	October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009
DCC	--	33 days
VPC	58 days	64 days
Remainder of the province	65 days	64 days

MTD from information sworn date is also much shorter in the DCC than the VPC or remainder of the province. Looking at the year prior, the measure stayed the same for the VPC and remainder of the province.

Median time to disposition from information sworn date to disposition		
	September 1, 2007—August 31, 2008	October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009
DCC	--	27 days
VPC	41 days	41 days
Remainder of the province	34 days	34 days

It seems that the Crown counsel/police process is more efficient in the DCC. However, this is not sustained once the cases proceed to court. MTD from first appearance to disposition is longer in the DCC than in the VPC or remainder of the province, for cases that start and conclude within the measured period of time.

Objective 2: Integrate services to address offender needs

This objective was evaluated with the follow questions:

- What type of intervention is applied to offenders in the DCC?
- How many individuals were ordered to complete community service?
- How many individuals were ordered to different types of services and programs?

- Are alternative measures used more frequently in the DCC? Is the profile of alternative measure offenders different in the DCC?

4.2.1 What type of intervention is applied to offenders in the DCC?

Indicators

- Number of brief interventions for the three DCC cohorts;
- Intensive case management—cases assigned to probation officers (PO24) in the DCC;
- Transfers to regular supervision by other probation offices, Vancouver Intensive Supervision Unit, and the Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver; and
- Transfers to regular supervision after brief intervention in DCC.

Background

Offenders are managed in accordance with the conditions set out in their court orders. In the DCC, the conditions reflect the nature of the crime, the person's health, social service needs, and the risk of reoffending.

Assertive case management is undertaken by two integrated case management teams (CMT) in the DCC. They strive to balance the supervision and enforcement of orders with the commitment to assist offenders in bringing about positive changes in their lives. This type of intervention is reserved for offenders with complex problems.

A management plan is developed that focuses on strategies to address the risk to reoffend and linkages to address criminogenic needs, such as housing, employment, financial assistance, pro-criminal associates, mental health, and addictions. The emphasis is on problem-solving to find solutions that assist the offender while reducing harm to the community.

Results

During the evaluation period, there were 518 admissions (new clients and transfers) to the DCC community corrections office. This includes bail and sentenced admission.

Admissions of offenders to the CMT by month												
Oct. 08	Nov. 08	Dec. 08	Jan. 09	Feb. 09	Mar. 09	Apr. 09	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug. 09	Sept. 09	Total
40	10	4	9	4	10	23	18	6	16	23	21	184

Of the 518, 272 were for alternative measures, 85 for conditional sentence orders, 81 for probation, 70 for bail, three for recognizance peace bonds, and the remaining seven for other administrative documents.

In the DCC, 184 of the offenders dealt with through alternative measures, conditional sentence orders, and probation were admitted to the CMT. The number of CMT clients per probation officer ranged from 8 to 17 clients in October 2008 to 21 to 36 clients in September 2009.

Although non-CMT clients receive conventional corrections supervision services, consistent with the court order, they also benefit from the DCC integration due to co-location of some services and are offered early access to some of the programs and services in the DCC and outside. Programs outside the DCC, such as the Vancouver Intensive Supervision Unit, provided enhanced services for mentally disordered offenders referred by the DCC.

4.2.2 How many individuals were ordered to complete community service?

Indicators

- Hours ordered;
- Hours completed; and
- Type of assignments/program.

Background

Community service is an important component of the DCC. The goal of community service is for the offender to make amends to the community for harm caused while committing an offence. Ideally, the hours performed by the offender are meaningful, benefit the victim and/or the community, and contribute positively to the reintegration of the person into their community.

Results

There have been 2,154 referrals to community service projects within the evaluation period. More than 76% of individuals completed the required community service hours.

Date	Community service Referrals		
	Complete	Incomplete	Hours
October 08	136	78	512
November 08	79	68	477
December 08	65	61	192
January 09	68	78	286
February 09	126	62	371
March 09	145	24	682
April 09	163	3	721
May 09	143	21	790
June 09	201	47	1,009
July 09	178	49	911
August 09	146	0	764
September 09	190	23	845
TOTAL	1,640	514	7,560

During the 12-month evaluation period, the DCC contributed more than 7,560 hours of work to the community through the community service programs. At \$8 per hour, the value of this work is approximately \$60,000.

Examples of community service completed include:

- Tasks in a kitchen environment including serving meals;
- General building maintenance and cleaning tasks;
- Reception, greeting and answering telephones;
- Mail sorting, bulk mail-outs;
- Cleaning up and maintaining roadways, sidewalks, alley ways to keep streets and neighbourhoods clean;
- Laundry;
- General warehousing—stocking shelves, sorting goods, loading/unloading trucks;
- Library—sorting/processing library materials;
- Gardening, maintaining hanging baskets; and
- Graffiti removal.

Community partners for the community service projects include, among others:

- RainCity Housing,
- Lookout Emergency Aid Society,
- Portland Hotel Society,
- Gallery Gachet,
- Gathering Place,
- First United Church,
- Union Gospel Mission,
- Coast Mental Health,
- City of Vancouver,
- Salvation Army, Harbour Light, and
- Salvation Army, Belkin House.

Through community service, offenders have the opportunity to learn and model pro-social skills and behaviours. The goal is for offenders to accept responsibility for their actions and learn the value of making a positive contribution to their neighbourhood and community.

In turn, the community benefits from having a project that may not be fully realized without the assistance of this program. It also acquires a method of integrating individuals who have engaged in extended periods of criminal behaviour. Community service is often the first link to sustainable employment opportunities for individuals. It also provides an opportunity for individuals to gain a sense of accomplishment and contribution.

4.2.3 How many individuals were ordered to different types of services and programs?

Indicators

- Number of service referrals per agency; and
- Number of service referrals per program.

Results

Referrals to social, health and mental health programming at the DCC are available to all offenders who require these services and include the following:

- Health information treatment readiness sessions offered by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH);
- Access to VCH health programs;
- Help accessing income assistance offered by Ministry of Housing and Social Development;
- Housing, including placement in shelters, single room occupancy hotels and other housing, as well as access to BC Housing's Rent Supplement Program;
- Access to a forensic liaison nurse and forensic psychiatrist for individuals experiencing mental health problems; and
- Other culturally sensitive and community-based programs.

Date	Vancouver Coastal Health Information sessions		Housing and Social Development	BC Housing			Forensic Services contacts	
	Referred	Attended	Intake	Interviewed	Housed	No show	Seen by forensic liaison worker	Seen by psychiatrist
October 08	98	52	7	39	18	6	24	7
November 08	92	58	4	26	12	2	14	4
December 08	69	31	3	20	18	2	16	3
January 09	62	7	3	56	12	2	19	6
February 09	72	43	4	32	17	4	24	10
March 09	79	38	2	38	19	10	11	4
April 09	41	20	1	34	18	12	12	1
May 09	71	40	1	29	14	0	12	1
June 09	63	26	2	32	17	11	14	1
July 09	38	18	2	24	14	7	9	9
August 09	41	9	4	31	18	14	7	0
September 09	44	24	10	38	27	17	11	11
TOTAL	770	366	43	399	204	87	173	57

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH)

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) provides a full-time group co-ordinator and facilitator to support DCC client engagement, develop group support programs, engage external facilitators, and access community-based services.

VCH offers health information treatment readiness sessions. Each session is facilitated by a VCH staff person with expertise in the topic. Clients may benefit by receiving timely, appropriate and accessible information about health-related topics. It is hoped that the sessions will be a catalyst for health services.

Health information session topics vary and can include an introduction to addiction and mental health issues, and/or provide an overview of available resources. Group support programs and related information for clients are offered to encourage skill development in areas such as mental health, addictions, recovery, harm reduction and other related topics.

Program topics include:

- Substance abuse management: Topics include impact of substance abuse, emotional well-being, relapse prevention, problems with alcohol, addictions and harm reduction;
- Mental health sessions: Topics offered by community partners include a focus on mental health issues ranging from anxiety disorders and psychotic disorders to concurrent disorders. Guest presenters, topics and activities related to mental health, come from the Centre for Concurrent Disorders, Strathcona Mental Health and Coast Mental Health;
- Life skills; and
- Nutrition.

For clients who attend sessions, the DCC may facilitate a referral to a VCH program if needed for continued support.

VCH health programs are available to DCC clients on a referral basis. VCH contributes one nurse as part of a triage team. Four health justice liaison workers with the integrated case management teams assist or lead case management of offenders with physical or mental health, or addiction concerns. Clients in the DCC, depending on their needs, may be referred to the following services:

Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction

The Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction is a provincial referral centre that provides integrated, long-term residential treatment for people with combined mental health, physical health and addictions issues. Service is targeted to clients who are unable to benefit from existing mental health treatment, including the homeless.

Core services include:

- Psychiatric care,
- Primary care,
- Withdrawal management,
- Pharmacy services (including methadone distribution),
- Nutritional counselling, and
- Cognitive behavioural therapy.

Supplemental services include:

- Music and art therapy,
- Alternative therapies (including acupuncture),
- Other creative activities, and
- Onsite continuing education services.

The program goal is to help individuals regain their health and return to community life, with continued support for their mental health and addictions recovery. Client length of stay varies, but ranges between six and nine months. The Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction is a provincial resource and serves clients from all over B.C.

Strathcona Mental Health Team

The Strathcona Mental Health team provides assessment, rehabilitation and specialized services to adults and older adults with serious mental illness, and to children and youth with serious behavioural/emotional disorders living in the Strathcona area. The team also looks into reports of suspected abuse and neglect of adults who cannot seek help for themselves. It provides psychiatric diagnosis, medication, therapy (individual, group, and family), rehabilitation, consultation and education when needed. Emergency, residential and specialized services, including home-based services, are also available.

Adult Addiction Counselling

Adult Addiction Counselling provides adults living in Vancouver with access to individual, couple and family/group addiction counselling. The program assesses client needs and recommends appropriate treatment regarding substance misuse. The addictions team monitors client needs and progress, and helps develop an individual care plan.

Addiction counsellors provide consultations and work collaboratively with other counsellors, health care professionals, the client and the client's family. The goal is to identify and resolve client/family care issues, cultural and language barriers, ethical dilemmas, and co-ordination and integration of care. Counsellors may also make referrals to other service providers. Clients are supported to enrol in a methadone maintenance program. Adult addiction counsellors are available at all VCH community health centres in Vancouver.

VCH Withdrawal Management Services—Vancouver Detox

Vancouver Detox provides a safe, supportive residential environment for individuals who are withdrawing from the acute effects of alcohol and other drugs, and require onsite monitoring. The program provides medical withdrawal management for adults 19 years and older living in the VCH region.

Services include assessment, individual counselling, referral, educational groups, 12-step programs, acupuncture, alternative therapies, and assistance in the transition to safe/supportive housing. The program is staffed by a culturally diverse, multi-disciplinary team that uses medical and non-medical approaches to relieve withdrawal symptoms.

VCH Withdrawal Management Services—Harbour Light Detox

Harbour Light Detox is a withdrawal management unit for adults 19 years and over, located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Nursing care and physician support provide a safe, supportive environment for individuals who are experiencing acute withdrawal from substances. Harbour Light Detox also offers referrals to followup treatment. It serves the North Shore, Richmond, Sunshine Coast and Vancouver.

Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD)

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) has two employment assistance workers in the DCC who are part of the integrated case management team. They provide a full range of income assistance services and are lead case managers for a designated number of clients in the DCC.

Staff complete applications onsite and determine eligibility for income assistance. They also provide direct access to MHSD services for clients who are already receiving income assistance. Clients receive the necessary support and shelter benefits as well as supplementary financial and health supports.

Referrals and funding are also provided to clients to attend life skills, bridging, pre-employment, employment and addiction treatment programs.

The majority of individuals who come to the DCC are already receiving income assistance. In 2009, approximately 54% of the DCC participants—including more than 90% of the participants assigned to the integrated case management team—were obtaining income assistance.

BC Housing

BC Housing has two part-time housing support workers in the DCC who are helping DCC clients who require housing. Individuals in need are placed in secure shelter beds as a first step. Shelter housing is the starting point. Staff then work with clients to take the next step toward permanent housing.

There were 43 clients placed in single room occupancy hotels in Vancouver within the evaluation period. A smaller number of clients were placed in other housing or received rent subsidies.

Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission

The Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission provides one forensic liaison nurse and access to the services of a psychiatrist. The forensic liaison nurse receives referrals from Crown and defence counsel for persons before the court who may be experiencing mental health problems. After completing a brief intake assessment, the nurse may refer the person to community and residential resources. When required, a forensic psychiatrist is available to complete court-ordered assessments, which may include certification under the *Mental Health Act*.

Aboriginal Wellness Program

Complementary programming includes an Aboriginal Wellness Program (AWP), which delivers culturally safe mental wellness and addictions programs for aboriginal people. Working with other DCC staff, the AWP addresses social justice issues through education and advocacy so that urban aboriginal people receive the health care they require. Through this outreach service, aboriginal clients can access health and social support and ongoing services.

AWP services are offered weekly at the DCC. Services vary and may include: individual or group healing sessions, counselling, educational support that focuses on holistic wellness and coping skills, counselling circles, relapse prevention and victim services.

The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia

The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C. provides counselling services and programming for aboriginal clients. Native courtworkers give individualized support and connect aboriginal offenders adjudicated through the DCC to housing, health, education, employment, food, and addiction, financial, repatriation and legal services.

In addition, native courtworkers assist the triage team in identifying culturally-appropriate programs and referral options for Aboriginal Peoples. Native courtworkers are assigned a caseload of aboriginal clients from the DCC integrated case management team to provide intensive support to the most difficult offenders.

Courtworkers consult with other members of the team and is the primary case worker. They are responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring a collaborative intervention case plan. Approximately 19% of offenders managed by case management teams in the DCC are aboriginal.

Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver operates a court support program where volunteers are available on a daily basis to assist individuals in DCC programs, including reporting to the probation officer. The society offers a crime and consequences seminar for individuals charged with a criminal offence. It also provides information and education about the criminal justice system and a weekly women's counselling group program. Since July 2009, when statistics were initially tracked, the two programs had 90 and 82 participants respectively.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver

Family Services of Greater Vancouver provides a financial literacy program. It is designed to help participants increase their knowledge and confidence in the tasks of daily money management.

Another program that is critical to the DCC operation that was not available initially but is operational now, is the Legal Services Society (LSS) outreach program. LSS has a worker in the DCC who assists accused individuals with their applications for legal aid at the time of first appearance in court.

If the applicant is eligible for legal aid, the LSS worker notifies the assigned lawyer of the next court date. If counsel is unavailable, they seek a date for arraignment when counsel is available and notify the court. This co-ordinated approach may potentially improve the rate of court appearances in the DCC.

Additional program description is provided in Appendix 3 on community engagement.

4.2.4 Are alternative measures used more frequently in the DCC? Is the profile of alternative measure offenders different in the DCC?

Indicators

- Needs as identified in the community risk/needs assessment (CRNA)—to be provided in the final evaluation report; and
- Type of offence.

Background

Alternative measures are designed to manage low-risk offenders in a more cost-effective and appropriate manner. National research demonstrates that minimized case management for low-risk offenders reduces recidivism, lowers resource consumption in courts and corrections, and reintegrates offenders back into the community.

Results

Reviewing the number of alternative measures admitted to community corrections, there were 477 admissions to the Vancouver area offices between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. Vancouver area offices include Downtown Community Corrections, Burnaby, Vancouver East, Vancouver West, Vancouver South, and the Vancouver Court team. Comparing this to the number in fiscal year 07/08, there were 300 admissions to these offices, as well as 352 in FY 08/09, and 465 in FY 09/10 (up to February 28, 2010, when data was examined). These numbers suggest that alternative measures admissions to these offices are increasing.

To examine the data from a different perspective, the number of referrals to the alternative measure program (adult diversion reports) completed in the Vancouver area offices was considered. For the evaluation time period, 624 referrals were made. This compares with 427 in FY 07/08, 456 in FY 08/09, and 644 in FY 09/10 (up to February 28, 2010). Again, it appears that the number of alternative measures is increasing.

Objective 3: To increase offender accountability and reduce recidivism

This objective was evaluated with the follow questions:

- What is the profile of cases involving judicial monitoring/progress reporting?
- What are breach rates for different conditions of supervision?
- Do offenders in DCC accrue more FTAs (failure to appear) than similar offenders appearing in similar courts?
- What is the rate of recidivism for the DCC participants?

4.3.1 What is the profile of cases involving judicial monitoring/progress reporting?

Indicators

- Frequency of judicial monitoring/progress reporting;
- Proportion of cases with appearances after sentence was pronounced for review (i.e., stated reason in JUSTIN for next appearance)—to be provided in the final evaluation report;
- Characteristics of these cases (e.g., type of sentence, type of offence, offenders needs/community risk/needs assessment or CRNA/criminal history)—to be provided in the final evaluation report; and
- Frequency—number of appearances for judicial review for each case—to be provided in the final evaluation report.

Background

The methodology used to measure judicial monitoring of offenders who concluded their cases in the DCC is the number of appearances after the case concluded. The measure is limited to an appearance for the most serious sentenced offence. It is also limited to appearances occurring after the date when the sentence is pronounced.

Results

A greater proportion of cases in the DCC are brought back to appear before a judge after cases concluded with a sentence.

	Total cases measured	Sentenced cases	# of cases appearing after sentence	% of cases appearing after sentencing
DCC	1,890	1,021	105	10%
VPC	8,568	4,037	154	4%
Remainder of the province	53,986	29,341	1,020	3%

The reasons for appearances after sentence include: judicial review, judicial interim release, application, arraignment (e.g. entered in JUSTIN for appearances on cases that concluded with a conditional sentence order with subsequent breach charges that were disputed), review, application for warrant, conditional sentence hearing, and fix a court date.

4.3.2 What are breach rates for different conditions of supervision?

Indicators

- Number of breach reports prepared by community corrections for different conditions; and
- Number of breach reports accepted by Crown counsel.

Background

The breach rate is measured by the number of breach reports submitted for DCC offenders who were sentenced in the DCC. This data was collected in CORNET.

Results

There have been 379 breach reports prepared by community corrections in the DCC and submitted to Crown counsel to determine if circumstances warranted proceeding to court. Of that number, 272 were approved for proceeding to court. The 379 breach reports involved 228 individuals.

4.3.3 Do offenders in DCC accrue more FTAs (failure to appear) than similar offenders appearing in similar courts?

Indicator

- Number of FTAs for three cohorts.

Background

The methodology is based on the proportion of appearances when a warrant issued is entered as a result of appearing in JUSTIN.

Results

The proportion of warrants issued in the DCC is 7%. This is higher than 4% in the VPC and remainder of the province. In the year preceding the implementation of the DCC, the proportion of appearances when a warrant was issued was 6% in the VPC and 5% in the remainder of the province.

October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009			
	Total appearances	# of warrants issued	% of warrants issued
DCC	9,644	689	7%
VPC	40,636	1,761	4%
Remainder of the province	215,012	8,472	4%
September 1, 2007—August 31, 2008			
	Total appearances	# of warrants issued	% of warrants issued
DCC	--	--	--
VPC	56,900	3,409	6%
Remainder of the province	207,658	9,917	5%

4.3.4 What is the rate of recidivism for the DCC participants?

Indicators

- Date of disposition;
- New charge date;
- New conviction date; and
- Crime rates.

Background

A change in the rate of recidivism among offenders sentenced in the DCC is a long-term measure of the DCC's success. Changes in recidivism may lead to changes in the crime rate in the area served by the DCC. Analysis of changes in offenders' behaviour normally requires a minimum of two years of data after sentencing.

As a proxy measure, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has been monitoring the crime levels and calls for service in the DCC catchment area, based on crime reported and using its standard methodology. The DCC catchment area is served by the DCC and VPC. Indictable offences from the area are normally prosecuted in the VPC.

Results

Because the DCC has only been operational for 12 months at the time the data was extracted for this interim evaluation report, there is insufficient data to measure the rate of recidivism. Recidivism data will be evaluated in the final evaluation report.

For overall crime rates, the VPD has seen a decrease in reported crime in the City of Vancouver (COV). This trend is also present in the DCC catchment area. Demand for police services is down in both the COV and the DCC catchment area.

Calls for service to police in the COV and DCC areas were as follows:

Priority level	Pre-DCC implementation (October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008)	Post-DCC implementation (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009)	% of change
City of Vancouver			
1	18,599	17,915	-3.68%
2	47,784	46,717	-2.23%
3	107,190	98,770	-7.86%
4	74,656	67,365	-9.77%
Total	248,807	231,200	-7.08%
DCC catchment area			
1	6,982	6,748	-3.35%
2	20,383	20,259	-0.61%
3	43,533	39,854	-8.45%
4	38,116	34,384	-9.79%
Total	109,247	101,406	-7.18%

Note: Calls for service are prioritized when they are dispatched to police according to the following criteria:
Priority 1: Violent (life and death) incidents, incidents in progress (e.g., robbery);
Priority 2: Urgent response required, serious crime, crime just occurred (e.g., motor vehicle incident, hit and run);
Priority 3: Routine calls (e.g., disturbance); and
Priority 4: Routine call, no urgent response required (e.g., false alarm).

The decrease seen in the DCC area is not significantly different from that seen across the COV. This suggests that decreases in calls for service by police are not specific to the DCC area.

Differences in percentage change between COV and DCC area for calls for service were as follows:

Priority	City of Vancouver % Change	DCC % Change	Difference (COV – DCC)
1	-3.68%	-3.35%	-0.33%
2	-2.23%	-0.61%	-1.62%
3	-7.86%	-8.45%	0.60%
4	-9.77%	-9.79%	0.03%
Total	-7.08%	-7.18%	0.10%

As for calls for service, there has been a decrease in the number of reported crimes in the COV and DCC areas.

There is one exception to this trend: violent crime in the DCC catchment area has increased by 2%, while violent crime has decreased by 2% in the COV. However, property crime in both areas is decreasing. Since the implementation of the DCC, the DCC catchment area experienced a 2% decrease compared with the COV. The VPD calculates property and violent crime totals using the all offence method.

Property and violent crime in the COV and DCC areas were as follows:

Crime type	Pre-DCC implementation (October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008)	Post-DCC implementation (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009)	% of change
City of Vancouver			
Violent	7,644	7,495	-1.95%
Property	32,872	30,277	-7.89%
Total	40,516	37,772	-6.77%
DCC catchment area			
Violent	4,033	4,108	1.83%
Property	14,664	13,200	-9.98%
Total	18,697	17,308	-7.43%

Note: These statistics do not reflect causal links between crime and the DCC. The impact of the court may—or may not—have contributed to a decrease in crime and calls for service in the catchment area (and potentially the rest of the COV).

Objective 4: To instil community confidence in the DCC

This objective was evaluated with the follow question:

- What has the DCC initiative undertaken to inform and engage the community?

4.4.1 What has the DCC initiative undertaken to inform and engage the community?

Indicators

- Number of court/community meetings;
- Community input to court; and
- Community participation in court and related activities.

Since the early planning stages, the DCC held public forums and discussions with residents, aboriginal organizations, businesses, service providers and organizations in the court's catchment area. Their purpose was to: (1) inform the public about the new court; (2) understand how crime affects the community and what kind of public service would be useful to compensate the community for crimes committed; and (3) develop partnerships with community organizations. A summary list of public events is provided in Appendix 3.

The DCC employs a manager of community engagement. This individual leads initiatives to engage the local community with the court, and to build effective relationships with multiple partners across the justice system.

Community programs and services

The following programs and services contribute greatly to the DCC and make it possible for the court to assist offenders and serve the community.

The **Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver** is a community-based organization that assists women and youth involved in the criminal justice system. The society partners with community and government agencies to create programs and services that help build healthy and safe communities. The Elizabeth Fry Society operates three programs in the DCC.

The volunteer program assists people who are appearing in court by escorting them from the courtroom to see their probation officer, case manager, and intake officer for other DCC programs. In the weekly women's counselling group, women discuss issues that may have contributed to their criminal behaviour. The monthly crime and consequences seminar is designed for individuals who are charged with a minor criminal offence. It focuses on criminal behaviour and the impact of crime.

Watari Youth, Family and Community Services is a non-profit agency working with at-risk children, youth, families and communities in the Downtown Eastside and the Greater Vancouver/Richmond areas. Watari's system negotiator is part of the DCC's mental health assessment and case planning team.

The team assesses the mental health status of people appearing in court who present with mental health problems. In consultation with partner community agencies, it develops suitable case plans. Watari's system negotiator provides offenders with personalized support to access community resources, such as housing, health, education, employment, addiction, financial and legal services. The system negotiator position is funded by the Law Foundation of British Columbia.

The **City of Vancouver's Great Beginnings Program** funds one of two service positions belonging to the Community Corrections and Corporate Programs Division (Corrections Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General). Community service is non-profit/volunteer work assigned to offenders. Ordered by the court as a condition of an offender's sentence, it is hoped that offenders can make amends to the community for harm they caused while committing their offences. Examples of community service performed: maintaining the Carrall Street Greenway; watering hanging baskets along the Hastings Street corridor; and cleaning the lanes and roadways throughout the Downtown Eastside.

The **Cambie Malone's Group** of restaurants has supported the court since it opened in 2008. Cambie Malone's donates bagged lunches twice weekly for offenders doing community service. These lunches encourage participation and make it possible for offenders to complete court orders.

The **Insurance Corporation of British Columbia** provided funds for the court to contract **H.A.V.E. Cafe**, which makes lunches for offenders who are enrolled in social, health and mental health programs in the DCC and completing community service. These meals help offenders prepare and fully participate in the programs and community service.

Bean Around The World Coffee (Powell Street location) donates coffee and baked goods once a month for clients of the DCC's case management team. This provides clients with an additional incentive to meet with their case management workers. It also helps the DCC build relationships with clients and the community as a whole.

TELUS donated more than 500 "comfort kits" for DCC clients attending onsite programming. These kits include soap, shampoo, a comb, deodorant, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and socks.

Corporate donations from **Home Depot**, **Costco** and **Dan-D Foods** were received for supplies and food for DCC programs. Home Depot donated a barbeque to the DCC for use at community events.

5. DCC DESIGN AND DELIVERY—KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Process interview questions are qualitative sources of information. Information collected is subjective and—at times—biased, because it is based on perceptions. This information offers a point of view that may not be shared by the evaluators or all interviewees. Self-reported information enables these perceptions to be documented. Negative comments may indicate that honest opinion and collaboration are valued by the interviewees.

Although this interim evaluation report covers the first 12 months of DCC operations, the court had been operational for approximately 18 months by the time the interviews were conducted. Inaccuracies may have occurred if participants were asked to limit their comments to the initial 12 months. As a result, this section contains information related to the initial 18-month period.

Readers should use caution when reviewing this section, because the results may not be relevant to the entire evaluation. They also do not necessarily reflect the quantitative portion of the evaluation.

Was the DCC implemented the way it was intended?

Background

The question—“Was the DCC implemented the way it was intended?”—focuses on how the DCC was established and its initial operations. It determines whether implementation was consistent with the original plan, and to identify how the approach needs to change.

To aid in the evaluation, this question was split into the following two items:

1. Were the initial operational plans and assumptions workable?
2. What changes were made and why?

Results

To undertake this review, senior DCC officials and staff who were involved in the planning, implementation and operation stages of the DCC were interviewed for their observations and assessment about the implementation.

5.1.1 How clear are the objectives and expected outcomes of the project?

Generally, there was agreement that the overall objectives of the project were clear at the outset. Respondents stated, however, that the specifics and method of achieving these objectives in many instances had to be worked out after the court opened. In particular, the “service integration” objective was not specific enough. This view contributed to mixed expectations and confusion among DCC staff. In addition, some objectives did not seem in sync with each other. For example, “improving justice efficiencies” was not always consistent with “producing better outcomes for the community.”

5.1.2 What is your understanding of your roles and responsibilities?

Although respondents generally understood their roles and responsibilities, they identified two areas of confusion following the opening of the court:

- The integrated services component lacked clear leadership at times. This factor had an impact on the case management of offenders. On occasion, there was insufficient co-ordination among staff.
- The role of the judiciary: The nature of the court enabled and supported the judiciary to assume non-traditional roles. At times, these roles challenged expectations and boundaries. The independence of the judiciary precludes its involvement in integrated decision-making.

5.1.3 Was the DCC project implemented as planned?

At the macro level, there was reasonable consensus that the implementation proceeded as planned. As with any large project that introduces change, some expectations were not achievable. Comments regarding implementation include:

- Focusing the triage interview on the suitability of alternative measures was unworkable. Increasing workload prevented the completion of in-person interviews on all accused prior to court. Most information shared at triage is now the product of a paper screen—relevant information is retrieved from existing sources.
- Involving defence counsel at the screening/triage stage was not achieved due to the unavailability of counsel.
- Diversion from the court system of the seriously mentally ill accused was difficult and did not meet expected numbers. The challenge was connecting individuals with appropriate resources.

- The average number of appearances per day was 50-60, which far exceeds pre-implementation expectations. The increased volume is due to administrative decisions that were made during the first year that the court was operating. This volume had an impact on the time that DCC officials and staff devoted to preparation and administrative functions, and inevitably affected the quality of their work.
- The plan to have the accused appear in the DCC immediately after a bail hearing in the VPC at 222 Main Street was not logical or achievable. A new court date must be established, and this contributes to longer times required for case resolution.
- Moving bail cases between the VPC at 222 Main Street and the DCC has added complexities and court appearances. At times, this factor strained—rather than improved—relationships between the two courts.
- Use of breaches to hold offenders accountable when all support efforts failed was not universally understood. The original intent was that breach procedures would be used as a last resort to ensure community safety or hold an offender accountable after failed attempts to provide assistance and support. Because this approach was not universally accepted by all justice officials, inconsistencies occurred that became a source of dissention. Use of breach procedures to leverage offender case management also increased the number of court appearances and added more volume to the court list.
- The problem with breaches was exacerbated due to the inability of the DCC to adhere to another principle of the DCC model: simplified court orders with fewer and less complex conditions. The original intent was to minimize opportunities for offenders to be charged with administration of justice offences by reducing the potential for breaching the orders. Longer orders with multiple conditions are not likely to support this outcome.
- There was no shared understanding related to offender accountability and incarceration. When offenders are given a “last chance,” they are not held accountable for their chronic non-compliant behaviour. Similar to the problem with breaches, this issue was confusing for case managers.
- There was an increase in expected workload and timing pressure because the police did not regularly identify DCC files. This forced DCC Crown counsel to search for the appropriate documents in the VPC.
- The anticipated timeframe for the police to conclude their file work was generally challenging. The 14-day standard is usually the minimum and is not regularly achieved. On the other hand, longer timelines provided more time to conclude alternative measures cases in which an information document was sworn and a court return date was set.

- There was an addition of a third judge to the DCC; this development has not affected DCC operations.
- The only major physical plant change was the installation of the search gate—a prominent security feature that made the entrance less welcoming to clients. The gate was installed immediately before the DCC opened, and this last-minute modification was not properly integrated into the design of the facility.
- Integration of health and social services was more difficult to achieve than expected. The co-location was effective in bringing resources together but working towards a common purpose has at times proven challenging due to differing priorities and approaches among service providers.
- The integrated case management database was replaced due to incompatibility issues with Windows Vista. A secure SharePoint site was established to facilitate information sharing among integrated offender management team members.
- The functioning of the integrated case management team was central to the management of higher risk offenders with complex health and social problems. A number of unanticipated factors affected the work of the team, including the volume of complex court orders. A high number of conditional sentence orders forced probation officers in the DCC to assume a greater volume of administrative work (versus hands-on case management) than originally envisioned.
- The integration of the service teams and joint case management has been challenging. It requires considerable attention and support to become effective and efficient.
- The timely availability of social and health services was foundational within the DCC model. The co-location of these services within the DCC courthouse was achieved and access for offenders was enhanced. Issues that were identified as requiring additional work include: more integration of co-located services; need for more resources; greater acceptance of leveraged interventions among staff; and ongoing challenges associated with a lack of offender responsibility.
- The community service program assumed a larger profile than anticipated. This required the reallocation of resources. Two new staff were also hired.
- Community engagement has evolved but not fully achieved the expectations set out in the planning stages. While there was considerable and ongoing contact with partners and stakeholders in the catchment area, contact with citizens was primarily limited to community events hosted by the DCC. Such events were not focused and did not obtain citizen feedback on DCC operations. This limited engagement is due to the following three factors:

1. DCC catchment area has at least six distinct communities contained within its boundaries. This makes it difficult to have a meaningful dialogue because the communities have different priorities and perspectives.
2. The court has a limited ability to alter its approaches in response to community feedback because sentencing is subject to judicial precedent and the *Criminal Code*.
3. The initiative to have an appointed community board provide a forum for community representation has not been implemented.

5.1.4 Have there been any unanticipated consequences related to this project?

The respondents identified the following unanticipated impacts of the DCC:

- The Vancouver Court Team Community Corrections office, a traditional probation office located in proximity to the DCC, had more involvement in the management of offenders sentenced in the DCC.
- More cases opted out of DCC for trial.
- The presence of a staff lawyer in the DCC benefitted accused individuals with their decision-making with regard to alternative measures.
- There were more privately retained counsel.
- The addition of the victim services worker at the triage stage was not originally planned but created considerable value-added benefit to the court process and allowed for victim input into court proceedings in a timely manner. All participants felt that this was a substantive and positive addition to the integrated services team.
- The social service and health staff model was enhanced in response to workflow and is now as follows:
 - Half-time victim services worker;
 - Two health case managers (reallocated to the DCC from other programs);
 - Two additional workers to support community service placement;
 - One outreach worker; and
 - Regular psychiatric sessions were eliminated although this service remains available from the Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission when needed.

- Interest in the functioning of the court/justice system increased in several communities throughout B.C. A number of communities are considering whether a community court model may be a solution to their crime problems.
- The DCC served as an influence for positive change in the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the DCC courthouse. This is due to the atmosphere and activity associated with this facility.

5.1.5 What lessons were learned after the first 18 months of operation of this project?

The respondents identified the following lessons learned:

- Having appropriate and timely information about the accused/offender aids in the effective and efficient processing of court cases. However, only some types of information are useful, and the collection and presentation of information must be limited to those areas.
- Less courtroom time and more out-of-court preparation time would provide greater benefit and improve court efficiency.
- Greater emphasis on keeping matters out of court by way of diversion or alternative measures would be a good investment. It can be cost effective, achieve the same outcomes, and not jeopardize public safety.
- Information sharing that occurs in the DCC aids the justice process and benefits the health and social service aspects of offender management.
- The participation of non-justice partners requires considerable fostering and support to ensure continued participation.
- The project is complex. Having a staged implementation would have allowed changes to be introduced more gradually. This would have ensured that successes could be consolidated and problems addressed when they arose.
- Having a community justice centre with a court, rather than a community court with a justice centre, would have added clarity for the clients and the social service and health partners.
- DCC planning was court-centric. This led to compromises for some of the partner agencies and resulted in arrangements that were not always friendly to the health and social service component of the DCC, especially in relation to the facility.
- More housing and residential treatment beds at the Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addiction would facilitate better outcomes.
- Locating the DCC adjacent to the VPC complicated the administration of the DCC due to overlaps in the management of criminal cases.

6. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation is a fundamental component of the DCC project. Ultimately, it will determine if the DCC model results in more successful outcomes for victims, offenders and the community, and whether it helps the justice system operate more efficiently.

This report is the first interim evaluation. It focuses on project implementation and delivery, and early court process efficiency results for the first 12 months of the DCC's operation. The second interim evaluation report is planned for spring 2011. The final evaluation report, planned for spring 2012, will address changes in offenders' behaviour and reoffending rates.

The DCC pilot project was designed to implement and test new approaches to delivering justice that differ from those in the traditional justice system. The main objectives were to:

1. Create a more efficient court;
2. Integrate services to address offender needs;
3. Increase offender accountability and reduce recidivism; and
4. Instil community confidence in the DCC.

One needs to exercise caution when interpreting the data during the preliminary stages of any complex pilot project. The development of DCC has been a process of testing and refining techniques and policies. As a result of this dynamic process, the initial results outlined in this evaluation might not be sustained. The findings in this interim report focus attention on areas that require additional work during the remaining years of this pilot. Observations include:

- From the total of 3,616 cases that involved the DCC, 23% (830) elected to proceed to trial.
- Of the 2,034 accused whose cases involved the DCC, the cases of 1,226 offenders were concluded in the DCC.
- Two standard court efficiency measures—the average number of appearances per concluded cases and median time to disposition—show that the DCC is similar to other courts at this time.
- The DCC has had more appearances per case than anticipated, leading to an average of 62 case appearances per day. This was significantly more than originally projected.
- Police and Crown counsel activities that take place prior to a court hearing are completed more efficiently in the DCC than in other courts.

- The proximity of the DCC to the VPC, and the movement of cases and accused between the two courts, has been challenging for the functioning of the DCC and its evaluation.
- Offenders in the DCC are more likely to return to court for an additional hearing after sentencing.
- The volume of conditional sentence orders has added complexity to the operations of the DCC.
- The DCC achieved a high degree of integration and co-location of services in support of the victims and offenders. The support of this level of integration requires considerable organizational and staff collaboration.
- Offenders managed by the integrated case management team had enhanced access to support services.
- The majority of sentenced offenders are not managed by the DCC integrated case management team. Consequently, although they have better facilitated access to services, they only benefit to some degree from the enhanced offender management and support services associated with this court.
- Crime statistics collected by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) show a decrease in reported crime and calls for service in the City of Vancouver (COV) as a whole and in the DCC catchment area.
- It has been a challenge for the DCC to effectively engage with the community as the court serves a number of distinct communities in Vancouver, each with differing interests and priorities. However, the court developed important partnerships with several community organizations and non-profit organizations.

Since opening its doors in September 2008, the DCC has managed a high volume of summary conviction offences originating from within the DCC catchment area. The administrative complexities associated with the operation of this court have been heightened as offenders typically transition through other courts and other components of the justice system.

The basic framework and policies of this project have been applied as planned. However, adjustments are ongoing in response to the operational realities of this court and the associated services.

This evaluation is only reviewing the first 12 months of a 42-month pilot. Therefore, some targets have not been fully met and others have yet to be measured. The second interim and final evaluation reports will increasingly focus on outstanding issues while revisiting the performance indicators presented in this report. The varied and diverse nature of the services to which DCC offenders are exposed will make it challenging to attribute causal factors that influence their subsequent behaviour.

APPENDIX 1: DCC EVALUATION MATRIX

Objective 1: To create a more efficient court

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
1. Are the location of and type of offending behaviours dealt with in DCC consistent with the original DCC plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each cohort of court cases, type of charges at charge approval Total # of cases, including proceedings in DCC that do not originate in DCC catchment area when brought in for disposition together with a DCC case # of offenders concluding in DCC –how close to 1,500 per year? 	✓	✓	✓
2. Were the initial operational plans and assumptions workable? What changes were made and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key elements of the model at implementation Key changes and rationale 	✓	✓	✓
3. Is the number of appearances being reduced in DCC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of appearances per case for three cohorts Reasons for adjournments (from court observations) 	✓	✓	✓
4. Is the time to disposition reduced in DCC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average length of time from first appearance anywhere to disposition in DCC, for three cohorts (as an example, this could include DCC files that had a bail appearance at 222 Main St. or at a justice centre) 	✓	✓	✓
5. Does status of counsel appearing in DCC affect the appearance rate and time to disposition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of counsel at each appearance (or at the last appearance): private, duty counsel, staff lawyer (now included as duty counsel in JUSTIN), self-represented, other Comparison between duty counsel, staff lawyer and private counsel for each of three cohorts: # of appearances and time to disposition 	In part	✓	✓
6. Is the length of bail periods reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periods of bail supervision in each year, for three cohorts of cases and offenders 		✓	✓
7. Is the use of bail in DCC reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of offenders on bail supervision for three cohorts 	✓	✓	✓
8. Is the length of pretrial detention reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period of remand for three cohorts 	✓	✓	✓
9. Is the use of pretrial detention reduced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of offenders in pretrial detention for three cohorts 	✓	✓	✓
10. What proportion of eligible accused opts out of DCC and how many appearances do they have in DCC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of accused electing to proceed to trial after an appearance in DCC (from the total of cases appearing in DCC) Number of cases leaving DCC without disposition in DCC Number of appearances in DCC per case leaving DCC (effort spent) Do these cases comeback to DCC after they leave? 	✓	✓	✓

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
11. Do DCC dispositions vary from dispositions applied to similar cases and offenders elsewhere?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type and length of DCC disposition for three cohorts concluding in DCC 	√	√	√
12. What proportion of DCC matters is resolved through alternative measures and diversion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of alternative measures in DCC? (for three cohorts, and looking at accused and case level) Number of diversions/caution letters Number of appearances for each and average number of appearances Time to disposition (stay of proceedings entered) Number of alternative measures and diversion without court appearances (this is a Crown counsel process) 	In part	√	√
13. Is the DCC operation more expensive than the operation of other courthouses? Is it cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of justice staff resources Cost of staff resources per workload handled Cost of other staff resources Cost of services/programs Correlation with court efficiency and offender outcomes/effectiveness of services Savings due to service integration 			√
14. Is the Crown counsel/police portion of the DCC process more efficient?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average time from the offence (i.e., arrest) to Report to Crown Counsel submitted by the police (i.e., for three cohorts) How close are the timelines to the original objective of 14 days for out-of-custody appearances? Time from offence to RCC submitted to information sworn to first appearance (i.e., in DCC and elsewhere, such as first appearance/bail and 222 Main St.) 	√	√	√

Objective 2: To integrate services to address offender needs

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
1. What type of intervention is applied to accused/offenders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of brief interventions for three cohorts Assertive case management (cases assigned to probation officer 24 in DCC) for three cohorts Transfers to regular supervision by other offices such as probation and the Vancouver Intensive Supervision Unit, for three cohorts Transfers to regular supervision after brief intervention in DCC for three cohorts 	In part	√	√
2. What are the primary and secondary needs of clients at time of intake and at time of last re-assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs as identified in community risk/needs assessment (CRNA) case management by type of intervention and for three cohorts (CRNA every six months), including alternative measures and diversion 		√	√

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
3. How many individuals were ordered to complete community service work?	For three cohorts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hours ordered Hours completed Type of assignments/program 	✓	✓	✓
4. How many individuals were referred to different types of services and programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of service referrals per agency Number of service referrals per program 	✓	✓	✓
5. Do service referrals match offender needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs of offenders, according to CRNA Number of referrals that matched with the identified needs of offenders 		✓	✓
6. Do offenders feel that the integrated approach is meeting their needs in a timely fashion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of participants about supervision after three months of supervision 		✓	✓
7. Are offenders engaged in services more quickly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time from disposition to engagement with services, per service type/program 		✓	✓
8. Did the DCC achieve more effective service integration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of agencies, partners, and staff 		✓	✓
9. Did service integration contribute to better outcomes for offenders and the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of agencies, partners, and staff 		✓	✓
10. Are alternative measures used more frequently in DCC? Is the profile different for offenders sentenced to alternative measures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs as identified in CRNA Type of offence 	In part	✓	✓
11. Were services provided to DCC clients effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rate of service/program completion Link to reoffending information 			✓

Objective 3: To increase offender accountability and reduce recidivism

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
1. What is the profile of cases involving judicial monitoring/progress report?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of cases with appearances after sentence was pronounced for REVIEW (i.e., next appearance reason that is recorded in JUSTIN) Characteristics of these cases (e.g., type of sentence, type of offence, offender's needs/CRNA/criminal history) Frequency—number of REVIEW appearances for each case (i.e., reasons for appearance that are recorded in JUSTIN) 	In part	✓	✓
2. What are the completion rates for brief intervention attendance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion rates and breach rates Number of breach reports prepared by community corrections Number of breach reports accepted by Crown counsel 		✓	✓

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
3. What are the breach rates for different conditions of supervision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of breach reports prepared by community corrections for different conditions Number of breach reports accepted by Crown counsel 	√	√	√
4. Do offenders in DCC accrue more FTAs than similar offenders appearing in other courts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of FTAs for three cohort 	√	√	√
5. What is the rate of recidivism for DCC participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of disposition New charge date New conviction date For the three cohorts and by type of intervention (Use B.C. Corrections definitions) 			√
6. Are convictions of DCC participants more or less serious?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight scale for offences sentenced applied to pre and post-implementation periods for each offender 			√
7. Are convictions more or less frequent in DCC relative to time spent in the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of convictions two years before and two years after DCC implementation for each offender For individuals sentenced to jail, count time in the community to a maximum of two years 			√

Objective 4: To instil community confidence in the DCC

Questions	Indicators	Reports		
		Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
1. What has the DCC initiative undertaken to inform and engage the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of court/community meetings Community input to court Community participation in court and related activities 	√	√	√
2. Is the community served by the DCC informed about the DCC? Did the DCC make a difference in community liveability and community safety?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of knowledge Level of satisfaction 		√	√

APPENDIX 2: DCC EVALUATION METHODOLOGY ISSUES

Goal for an independent evaluation

The original intent of this evaluation was for the Simon Fraser University (SFU) team of Drs. Margaret Jackson, Bill Glackman and Carol La Prairie to lead an independent review. In the summer of 2009, it became apparent that to deliver the initial report within the original timelines and without exceeding the evaluation budget, it was necessary to rely on Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat staff to take on more direct responsibilities. The SFU team consolidated (Drs. Jackson and Glackman) and refocused its efforts on the collection and analysis of survey information. Initial offender surveys and data collection have been concluded. The data is being analyzed by the SFU team. Additional survey instruments have been developed, including a more comprehensive offender survey, a community organization survey, DCC staff survey and community resident survey. In April 2010, the secretariat was disbanded and staff returned to the Ministry of Attorney General. The Criminal Justice and Legal Access Policy Division, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, is responsible for the DCC evaluation. Support for the evaluation is provided by the Corrections Branch, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

These unforeseen circumstances result in an evaluation with less independent oversight. The SFU team continues to play a crucial independent role in shaping the scope and direction of the evaluation. It also continues to advise on evaluation methodology, data analysis, and results interpretation. In addition, this report was reviewed in June 2010 by the Office of the Chief Judge, which provided important feedback, some of which has been incorporated.

Gathering baseline information and the evaluation period

In addition to achieving the goal of an independent evaluation, this report includes important baseline data summaries that contribute to evaluation of the DCC. While not all measures in this report are useful for comparative review at this time, they provide important baseline information with which to compare in future evaluations.

To aid future evaluations, a clearly stated evaluation period was needed for this report. Deciding which court cases to include also needed to be clarified. This interim report covers the 12 months of DCC operations beginning on October 1, 2008 and ending on September 30, 2009. Although the DCC was launched on September 8, 2008, the initial three weeks has been excluded from the report to reduce the impact of the initial set-up period. To limit confounding influences, this evaluation only includes cases with a DCC file number that concluded in the DCC.

To provide context for DCC results, the same information is used for: (1) the VPC located at 222 Main Street; and (2) the average for the remainder of the province. The comparison information is provided for the interim evaluation period (October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009) and one year prior to the DCC implementation (September 1, 2007 to August 30, 2008). It only includes cases that started and concluded within this time frame. This excludes approximately one-fifth of cases in the standard court system that may affect the comparison results in this report. Many of the standard measures relied on to show the court's impacts require longer timelines to measure the court's results than the 12-month evaluation period of this report. Any effect of this modified evaluation approach should decrease with the next report and disappear entirely by the final evaluation.

Conducting an evaluation with operational data

Data quality can be challenging for any evaluation and using an operational database for an evaluation adds its own difficulties. All possible efforts have been made to ensure that the data used in this report is reliable. JUSTIN and CORNET are the two operational data sources relied on for the DCC evaluation. They offer consistency with historical data and opportunity for comparison over time and across court locations.

Measures taken to ensure data reliability for this evaluation include applying defined procedures for data recording, extraction, verification and analysis. To the extent that there are some unavoidable data limitations, this is likely a systemic factor that equally affects all court locations, including the DCC. All data that was deemed unreliable, invalid or deficient was not used in this report.

Court efficiencies

Any evaluation on criminal court efficiency must acknowledge and incorporate the various forms of court efficiency measures. These include, but are not limited to, efficiencies in system expenditures and processes with a long-term goal of reducing recidivism.

A number of court efficiency measures in this report focus on the unique aspects of the DCC model, in addition to the two standard measures normally used by the Ministry of Attorney General (listed in Appendix 1 in the report). While some of these measures are available at the preliminary stages, other measures require a longer period of time such as overall satisfaction with the court and sentence management, and reductions in recidivism. Reference to the "number of appearances to disposition" and "median time to disposition" were included in this report, because they offer current and future comparisons across different court locations. They are also the measures used by the ministry in its public reporting. These measures were included in the original evaluation framework developed by the SFU team, confirmed in the evaluation matrix, and finalized in December 2009.

APPENDIX 3: DCC—COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Since the early planning stages, the DCC has held public forums, discussions, consultations and public events, as well as efforts to engage media and inform the community. What follows is a brief summary of the key activities:

Forums and information sessions

- Forums and information sessions were held to provide information about the DCC and answer questions. Sessions were also held to consult with and gather feedback during the development phase and after the court became operational.
- During the development phase and after the court became operational, the DCC co-ordinator participated in or presented at 139 meetings with a range of stakeholders. In addition, he met regularly with representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, Vancouver Coastal Health, Forensic Psychiatric Services Commission, B.C. Corrections, BC Housing, Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C., Vancouver Police Department, Victim Services, Crown counsel, defence counsel, and Court Services.
- During the development phase, three public forums were held in the DCC catchment area, and four information forums were held for lawyers, service providers, judges and staff who work in the VPC.
- Four open houses were held for service providers during the week leading up to the start of court operations. The open houses provided an opportunity for service providers to learn about the court and its processes.
- Five information and community engagement forums were held from November 2008 to February 2009 in the following neighbourhoods/districts: West End, Yaletown, Coal Harbour/Central Business District, Downtown Eastside/Gastown/Strathcona, and Strathcona Residents Association.
- Watari Youth, Family and Community Services conducted community information sessions on behalf of the DCC from March to May 2009 to: (1) increase street level awareness about the court and agency; (2) address and dispel misconceptions about the court; and (3) expand relationships with community service frontline staff and consumers.

Consultations

- The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C. (NCCABC) consulted with the aboriginal community about the proposed DCC, the court's processes, and problems experienced in Vancouver's criminal justice system. More than 70 consultations were held with aboriginal service providers. The consultations led to: inclusion of a native courtworker in the DCC; cultural sensitivity training for DCC staff; aboriginal focused programs; and several other initiatives. NCCABC presented its report to the Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat on September 26, 2007.
- SPARC BC⁷, on behalf of the DCC, led consultations with non-profit organizations, beginning in early 2007. These events included: two public consultations, 13 key informant interviews, four focus group sessions with client groups, a literature review, and an electronic survey on the topics of collaboration and cross-disciplinary training needs. This was followed by a justice reform collaborative service planning table that was also facilitated by SPARC BC. The planning table included representatives of several health and social service agencies, such as the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users and Vancouver Coastal Mental Health. It focused on: case management process; client involvement in the case management process; collaboration process development; and other matters.
- Consultations were held in the West End as a community engagement pilot project from March to July 2008. Led by Jessie Sutherland, Lisa Gibson and Robbie Chesick, these consultations provided information about how to engage organizations and associations in this area.

Public events and courthouse tours

- Public events and courthouse tours provided opportunities for the general public, community partners, stakeholders and visitors from other jurisdictions to learn about how the court operates.
- An official opening ceremony was held in September 2008. A community barbecue was held two weeks after this ceremony. Several hundred people attended the two events.

⁷ Social Planning and Research Council of B.C., a non-partisan, charitable organization.

- A mid-winter event was held in January 2009 as a networking opportunity for community agencies.
- In September 2009, a first anniversary event was held that included dignitaries and community members.
- Tours of the court are provided on an ongoing basis. Interested parties from the community, around the province, across the country and internationally have toured the DCC. They included: Churchill Fellowship of Australia, City of Calgary, Russian delegates, local groups, City of Kelowna, school groups, Los Angeles Police Department, Portland Hotel Society, RainCity Outreach staff, Catholic charities, Vancouver Restorative Justice, St. Paul's Hospital (Psychiatric Department), Manitoba Crown Counsel, West End Community Policing Centre, Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and B.C. Mediator Roster Society.

Media relations

- Media is viewed as a stakeholder and a key means to disseminate information about the court to a broad public audience.
- Media was invited to the three public forums held in March and April 2007, prior to the court opening.
- Extensive media relations work with mainstream and community media in the Lower Mainland was carried out prior to the court opening, in order to allow media opportunities to learn about the community court, to provide access to the presiding judge, and to facilitate accurate media coverage.
- An open house was held for accredited media prior to the court opening. Media have been included in several events at the courthouse since it opened.
- Several news releases and backgrounders have been issued. All of them are available online at www.communitycourt.bc.ca.

Website and education materials

- Website and education materials are used to educate about the DCC and to allow the court to be as open and transparent as possible.

- Two weeks before the court opened, the DCC website (www.communitycourt.bc.ca) was launched in mid-August 2008, along with print materials that were distributed broadly. The website is active and has been expanded to include more information as court operations have grown.
- Educational materials include a brochure, poster, accused persons fact sheet and victims of crime fact sheet.
- In March 2010, three educational videos were produced by the Justice Education Society and posted to the website. The videos outline the goals of the DCC and demonstrate how it works.

APPENDIX 4: DCC—KEY FEATURES

A 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 offenders make long-term changes in their behaviour. It is a process that involves all DCC staff.

DCC catchment area

The DCC is the court for the catchment area located in downtown Vancouver from Clark Drive on the east to Stanley Park on the west. Great Northern Way is the southern boundary and the Inner Harbour and Coal Harbour of Burrard Inlet is the northern boundary.

Offences

The DCC receives:

- Provincial offences that are heard by provincial court judges (such as driving while prohibited, aggressive panhandling);
- All *Criminal Code* offences:
 - In the absolute jurisdiction of the provincial court such as shoplifting;
 - Summary conviction offences such as causing a disturbance; and
 - Hybrid offences when Crown counsel proceeds summarily without a preliminary hearing (e.g., assault causing bodily harm, impaired driving).
- *Controlled Drug and Substances Act*:
 - Drug possession.

Offences relating to non-compliance with DCC orders (e.g., failing to appear in court, or violating the terms of bail or probation) are also heard in the DCC.

Dedicated community personnel co-located in the DCC

The following professionals are located in the courthouse: Provincial court judge, co-ordinator, Crown counsel, defence lawyer, Vancouver police officer, sheriffs, court clerks, probation officers, forensic liaison workers, forensic psychiatrist, nurse, health-justice liaison workers, employment assistance workers, victim services worker, BC Housing support worker, and native courtworker.

Co-location is intended to facilitate integration of services and lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Access to in-house lawyer

The DCC has an in-house defence lawyer provided by the Legal Services Society (LSS) who is dedicated solely to the DCC and is located within the building. Defence services are enhanced by a roster of duty counsel. All accused in the DCC have access to in-house counsel free of charge if they wish to use these services.

Out-of-custody accused appearing within 10 days

Each morning, Crown counsel reviews all new files of out-of-custody cases. The length of time in which a case has been within the system is noted. Cases are brought forward within 10 days for a first appearance.

This approach reinforces the need for early responses to offences and early dispositions to hold offenders accountable for their actions within the community. It also allows for early interventions that address offender issues and provides the opportunity to be connected to community supports as early as possible.

Provincial Crown handling federal charges

With the consent of the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, provincial Crown counsel acts as the agent for the federal Crown in the DCC. This functioning as agent most frequently involves simple possession of drugs offences.

Federal prosecutors conduct an initial charge assessment and approval, but transfer the file to a DCC Crown counsel to prosecute. In the event of a guilty plea, provincial Crown counsel address the disposition. If a trial is required, the file is returned to federal counsel to conduct the trial.

It is hoped that this inter-governmental arrangement allows for more efficiency by both levels of prosecution services and reduces overlap of services.

Initial bail and sentencing positions developed with triage information

Triage at the DCC is the process of collecting information at an early stage prior to court. The search results of existing information sources (e.g., B.C. Corrections, police, income assistance, health) inform counsel, court and post-sentence offender management in the DCC. This process allows counsel to formulate their positions for court. The triage process identifies offenders who require additional assessment for mental health and/or addiction issues.

Document production in court

A court registry clerk is present in the DCC courtroom to produce release and/or sentencing documents in the courtroom. This eliminates the need to have the offender returned to cells and return to the court registry to sign their documents. This approach promotes efficiency and simplifies the process for offenders.

Offenders released by judge from courtroom

In the DCC, offenders in custody who are released on bail or their own recognizance do not return to the holding cells to await production of their release documents and the return of their clothing and effects. Instead, they wait in the DCC courtroom while the clerk produces the release document. Offenders are then summoned to the bench where they sign the document and obtain their release.

This approach is intended to keep the offender connected to the DCC process and support system. Offenders are directed by duty counsel to the offices of the integrated case management team to fulfil reporting conditions and/or be connected to needed community supports.

Alternative measures in court

The DCC is a disposition court that hears cases that may frequently be suitable for diversion from the formal court process through the use of alternative measures. When an accused enters into an agreement to perform alternative measures, a subsequent appearance date is scheduled to confirm compliance with the agreement. When there is compliance with the alternative measures plan, the case is concluded with a stay of proceedings or an invitation to dismiss the proceeding.

In the event of non-compliance with the alternative measures plan, the proceeding may continue to trial, or—if the accused pleads guilty—to sentencing.

Use of bail for mentally disordered offenders

The DCC attempts to find community solutions and alternatives for individuals with addiction and mental health issues. Their offences can often be characterized as “nuisance” in nature, but they are troubling in their recurring frequency. The DCC has a mentally disordered offender bail team that receives referrals of cases previously referred by Crown counsel to the forensic liaison nurse or triage nurse for assessment of mental health and/or addictions issues. If an accused is released on bail, the mentally disordered offender bail team supervises the accused and the order while attempts are made to connect the offender with community supports. If successful, the court process may be terminated by a stay of proceedings, eliminating additional court process and expense. Transitional followup may be provided by the team.

Assertive case management through justice, health and social services

The DCC 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 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 on problem-solving to find solutions that assist the offender while reducing harm and/or risk to the community.

Community connections and engagement

From its inception, the DCC has been about partnerships and problem-solving. Partnerships are not restricted to justice, health and social service agencies. They include area residents, business owners, community agencies, faith communities, the City of Vancouver and others. All can contribute by identifying or developing community service projects and opportunities for offenders to serve sentences. These relationships help connect everyone to the task of finding solutions to the problems of crime.

The following are two significant initiatives of the DCC in this area:

Community service crews

The DCC has two community service crews. Each has a probation officer (PO14) who functions as the work crew supervisor. Two crews work daily in the Downtown Eastside, and their tasks are co-ordinated in concert with the City of Vancouver. Supervisors focus on expanding community service opportunities within the Downtown Eastside; allow for the successful implementation of strategies to support offenders performing the hours and the host agency; and contribute to building community capacity. Supervisors work in consultation with the manager of community engagement who has responsibility for the DCC community service program.

DCC administration

The DCC co-ordinator manages the daily/weekly operations of the court and the integration of the justice, social, and health components that allow the court to function. Key functions include:

- Establishing and maintaining a collective identity and purpose among the ministry/agency partners;
- Co-ordinating and resolving physical plant, operations, and equipment issues;
- Providing day-to-day oversight to the local manager, integrated case management services, and the manager of community engagement to support the achievement of DCC service goals;
- Addressing relationships and conflict resolution as required to achieve a successful operation; and
- Chairing or participating in the governance and liaison committees.