

DATE: October 18, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Walter Babicz, City Manager

SUBJECT: Downtown Service Enhancements – Funding Reallocation

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated October 18, 2022, from the City Manager, titled “Downtown Budget Enhancements – Funding Reallocation”.

PURPOSE:

The 2020-2024 operational financial plan approved by Council includes a \$1,422,795 service enhancement package to better manage the downtown and area social issues. The service package consists of activities to enhance cleanliness, police and bylaw presence in the downtown, as well as services for the homeless. The service enhancements are evaluated on an ongoing basis which enables Administration to shift resources in a way that reflects learning, and changes in the operating environment. The purpose of this report is to advise Council of a shift in how funding to enhance services for the homeless will be allocated, beginning in 2023.

BACKGROUND:

To date, \$236,000 has been allocated annually to operate two storage service sites for the unsheltered homeless. Together the two sites offered a total of 102 storage bins. A recent relocation and renovation has enabled one site to grow its capacity from 66 storage bins to 100. The renovation also enabled the addition of washrooms, showers, a large drop-in space, laundry services, computer access, and private client meeting space (with necessary surveillance to ensure safety) for onsite support staff, itinerant mental health workers, and the City’s Outreach Coordinators. This means that a streamlined model of operation, with equivalent access to storage services, can now be managed through one funded site. As such, Administration has reallocated \$138,000 of the \$236,000 envelope for “social inclusion” to enable the continued employment of the City’s two Outreach Coordinators. The Outreach Coordinators work with Bylaw Services, Northern Health, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and many non-profit social service providers to connect unsheltered homeless individuals to support services. City outreach services are available six days per week and are a critical part of a comprehensive strategy to manage homelessness and associated community impacts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

One of the key strategies found in Council’s 2022-2024 Strategic Plan is “provide a community where people feel safe and included”.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The 2020-2024 operational financial plan approved by Council includes a \$1,422,795 service enhancement package to better manage the downtown and area social issues. The service enhancements are evaluated on an ongoing basis which enables Administration to shift resources in a way that reflects learning and changes in the operating environment. To date, \$236,000 has been allocated annually to operate two storage service sites for the unsheltered homeless. A streamlined model of operation, with equivalent access to storage services, can now be managed through one funded site. As such, Administration has reallocated \$138,000 of the \$236,000 envelope for “social inclusion” to enable the continued employment of the City’s two Outreach Coordinators.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Chris Bone, Sr. Manager – Civic Initiatives & Partnerships

Meeting Date: 2022/11/28