

Date: October 3, 2024

To: **Standing Committee on Public Safety**

Name and title: Eric Depenau, Director, Administrative Services

Subject: City of Prince George Outreach Program

Attachment(s): None

Recommendation(s):

That the Standing Committee on Public Safety RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report titled “City of Prince George Outreach Program” from the Director of Administrative Services, dated October 3, 2024.

Purpose:

To share information with the Standing Committee on Public Safety in relation to the function of the City of Prince George Outreach Team as directed in the committee work plan. This includes the team’s relation to other Outreach teams from various non-profits and other agencies working in downtown Prince George.

Background:

The City of Prince George Outreach Team is currently comprised of two unionized positions (one of which is currently vacant). These positions work in conjunction with Bylaw Officers when they encounter a situation, anywhere in the City of Prince George, where an individual requires assistance. This does not only occur in the downtown area. As one of many examples, recently an uninsured house burnt down, the owner did not have the capacity to deal with the required cleanup at that moment. Outreach was able to assist in getting resources in place.

Generally, outreach may be viewed as a municipal function that helps community members navigate City and external systems. Their priority is set through alignment with Council’s strategic plan and the corporate work plan items that support the plan. At present, a good portion of their time is in support of encampment and downtown issues.

Outreach plays an important role in working with vulnerable members of the Prince George community by partnering with other agencies (non-profits) working downtown and elsewhere. Our outreach workers are involved with the Heart and Hearth table which originated with BC Housing and is working towards housing the individuals currently living in the Lower Patricia Encampment.

In this work, Outreach plays an important role in advancing the municipality’s interest in transitioning the encampment to a more appropriate form of shelter by building relationships and gaining consent to remove structures from the site when they are damaged or abandoned as an example. This is a

part of the response that other outreach workers generally do not have a mandate to support (remediation of public property).

Administration is considering a modification to the job descriptions of the outreach coordinators to do more interagency coordination rather than direct service delivery as needs in the community shift. Conducting a needs assessment to identify gaps in the services being provided downtown, working with individual businesses to tailor solutions to specific needs, finding more practical and permanent solutions to support people during periods of extreme heat and cold, destigmatization, overdose prevention, washroom access and revitalization of the Safety Hub (with defined practical and collaborative projects) are all being considered as the municipalities needs change.

Summary and Conclusion:

Having an outreach function integral to the City is an important tool, this is currently how administration manages many important relationships in navigating the toxic drug and housing challenges in the community. Relying on other agencies to do this work would significantly reduce the municipality's ability to influence municipal priorities in this area of work. Outreach is a common function across municipalities and should be viewed as a tool capable of helping deliver a variety of projects and services.

Respectfully submitted:

Eric Depenau, Director, Administrative Services

Prepared by Charlotte Peters, Manager, Bylaw Services

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: 2024-10-15