

Street Activity Steering Subcommittee and Community Support Program Update

ISSUE

The Street Activity Steering Subcommittee (Subcommittee) of the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services currently has a vacancy for a member with lived/living experience. Administration, in consultation with the Subcommittee, has determined the best option to include someone with this experience.

In addition, there has been preliminary discussions around the future format of the Community Support Program. These two issues are discussed in this information report.

BACKGROUND

The Community Support Program is a hybrid that blends community outreach and bylaw enforcement. The mission of the program is to provide a safe and enjoyable street experience for everyone in the community, providing a total approach to community safety and well-being. Identifiable uniformed foot patrols reassure community members and businesses and coordinate with community support organizations as well as the Saskatoon Police Service. The program operates in the Downtown, Broadway and Riversdale Business Improvement Districts to support the safety of all members of the public, including the vulnerable people in the areas, in working to help get them connected to the programs and services they need most.

Patrolling and checking with businesses and vulnerable people helps to identify issues early and halts some behaviour on sight. Attending to someone intoxicated or in distress helps other area users feel like the situation is under control and the very presence of the officers contributes to feelings of safety for the residents. The program also provides information to City Council, through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services to assist in identifying emerging trends and issues as well as potential long-term solutions to issues arising on the street.

At its October 28, 2019 meeting, City Council resolved:

1. “That the Administration report to City Council, through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, on the outcome of current discussions on the future of and alternate forms of funding for the Community Support Program by the end of December 2020; and
2. That the Administration proceed as required to populate the Street Activity Subcommittee for 2020.”

At its Regular Business Meeting held on February 11, 2020, City Council resolved:

1. “That the Administration pursue applications seeking the representative with lived experience or first voice with a report back on the possibility of providing an honorarium for this position as well as access to the other supports provided to the other civic committee members.”

These resolutions have been addressed within this report.

CURRENT STATUS

Subcommittee

Currently, the Subcommittee is operating without a member with lived/living experience. The Subcommittee members are conscious of this missing input and would welcome the addition of a person with lived/living experience to complete the Subcommittee membership. Administration has been actively seeking individuals with lived/living experience and an interest in participating in the Subcommittee.

Community Support Program

The Community Support Program currently operates with three teams of two officers and is active from Tuesday to Saturday. It has been very successful and there are opportunities to expand or modify the program in the future, although funding would need to be identified.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Subcommittee Member with Lived/Living Experience

The Subcommittee included a member with lived/living experience when it was established in 2012. This member has since resigned, and the Subcommittee position is yet to be filled. The addition of lived/living experience input into the policy, organization and operations of the Community Support Program, through the Subcommittee, will be critical to the ongoing and future success of the program.

The Subcommittee is currently pursuing a new member with lived/living experience and has recently submitted this request to the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services, for their consideration on appointment to the Subcommittee. It should be noted, the addition of a member with lived/living experience will require additional supports to ensure full participation in an equitable and sustainable manner. These supports can include transportation to meetings, food, printing and delivery of Subcommittee materials, as well as an honorarium for participation.

The City supports the Subcommittee through the City Clerk’s Office. Bus tickets, parking passes, and childcare reimbursement are supplied to members if needed; however, there is no corporate policy or process on honorariums for appointed Subcommittee members. Other than the member with lived/living experience, all members represent their organization and are paid, by their organization, to attend the meetings.

In order to ensure that a member with lived/living experience can equitably participate as a member of the Subcommittee, Administration is recommending the use of a small honorarium for this role. This honorarium can be accommodated in the existing Community Support Program budget.

Administration met with co-chairs of the Safe Community Action Alliance who have significant experience and background on capturing lived/living experience input. Their recommendation is to ensure that all Subcommittee members with lived/living experience have the supports needed to participate fully and equitably.

After the need for a member with lived/living experience was identified to the Safe Community Action Alliance, a potential candidate for this position was identified and is very interested in participating in the Subcommittee. A letter requesting this individual's appointment to the Subcommittee has been submitted to Standing Policy Committee on Planning & Development and Community Services, for consideration at an upcoming meeting.

Community Support Program Funding

Currently, the Community Support Program is funded on a permanent basis through revenue received from parking meters directed through the Streetscape Reserve. To date, an alternate funding source has not been identified. So if the Community Support Program is to continue and if it is not funded through the Streetscape Reserve it would require mill rate support. Administration has also been in discussions, with the BIDs, on the potential to expand the future scope of the Community Support Program, which would have impacts to the funding level. These discussions will continue and are expected to move forward in 2021. As this is expected to be an ongoing topic of discussion, Administration will report back on future program operations and any implications for funding when program and funding options are further identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Research done by the Safe Community Action Alliance suggests an honorarium in the range of \$20 per hour. Estimating a meeting, including preparation time, may take up to three hours, the total cost per meeting would be \$60. The Subcommittee meets quarterly, so the estimated total funding required to cover an honorarium would be approximately \$240 per year. City Clerks has advised, the current policy guiding protocols for Advisory Committees does not include an option to provide honorariums. This is something which is being reviewed and considered for the future. Therefore, the plan would be to have the honorarium for this Advisory Committee appointment be funded from the existing Community Support Program funds.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environmental implications identified in this report.

NEXT STEPS

Once confirmed, the Subcommittee membership will be complete. Future meetings, discussions, and decisions will include participation of a member with lived/living experience.

Administration will report back on future Community Support Program operations and funding when options have been identified for further consideration.

REPORT APPROVAL

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