

River Use Boating Safety Program

ISSUE

Information in this report is to update Council on the successful funding received from Transport Canada (TC) to support a program to promote boating safety on the South Saskatchewan River (the River) for motorized and non-motorized watercraft.

BACKGROUND

In response to concerns that have come forward to the City of Saskatoon (the City) regarding on-water safety and etiquette of motorized and non motorized watercraft, it was determined that a Boater Safety Program would be a benefit in the City's jurisdiction.

CURRENT STATUS

To date, the Saskatoon Fire Department (SFD) educates the public on social media, and traditional channels on river safety. Targeted communication and discussion with stakeholders related to river use, boating safety, and etiquette has not taken place in several years.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

There are several departments within the City that have certain responsibilities with regards to the River however the SFD is primarily responsible for ensuring river safety through emergency response and education of the public.

The SFD, on behalf of the City, applied for and received funding for a TC Boater Safety Program in place to promote safe boating across all regions of Canada.

To operate, project staff will be hired to work from mid-July until the end of September 2021 to promote safe and respectful boating. Staff will patrol boating access areas utilized by motorized and non-motorized watercraft to promote boating safety on the River. Organization presentations will be delivered to clubs and user groups. In conjunction with this, the SFD Water Rescue Team will also be involved in public education initiatives.

TC is the jurisdictional authority over the River and is the creator of boat safe educational material. The SFD project staff will be delivering information based on TC programs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Eligible expenses incurred for the project are listed below and will be billed back to TC.

- Staff salaries and benefits,
- Professional fees,

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- Rental/use of equipment, office materials, office and /or meeting space costs (fire apparatus/boat),
- Public outreach, communication materials (and associated activity costs),
- Insurance costs, and
- Administrative expenditures (up to 30% of total costs)

The Government of Canada will contribute up to 75% of eligible expenditures to a maximum of \$200,000. The City's contribution of 25% of eligible expenditures is primarily comprised of staff time and equipment (in kind) that is within existing budget levels. Expenditures must be incurred no later than March 31, 2022.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are many formal and informal groups involved with the shared use of the River in Saskatoon's jurisdictional boundaries. These include stakeholders who are commercial operators, organized sports groups, and individual recreational users. The City provides emergency response and some safety oversight around structures (ie: water rescue response, river safety signage). River use and jurisdictional authority have been discussed over recent years. A program promoting boater safety and etiquette will be a benefit for all river users.

There are no environmental implications anticipated from this education program at the time of this report.

Report Approval

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