

Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership – Proposed Service Contract Extension and Annual Report

ISSUE

A four-month extension is being recommended for the service contract, with Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, to implement the Saskatoon Community Plan 2019-2024 (Community Plan), formerly known as Saskatoon's Homelessness Action Plan. An update on the 2020-2021 activities of the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership is provided.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council:

1. That the existing Service Contract with the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership be extended for four-months to August 31, 2022;
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to draft the necessary extension agreement with the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, and that His Worship the Mayor and the City Clerk be authorized to execute the agreement under the Corporate Seal.

BACKGROUND

A Community-Initiated Homelessness Action Plan

In late 2014, a Steering Committee with members from the United Way Plan to End Homelessness Leadership Committee, Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP), and the Community Advisory Board on Saskatoon Homelessness was formed to plan for a coordinated response to addressing homelessness. The result of the steering committee's work was the creation of the Homelessness Action Plan (Action Plan), which was launched at Saskatoon's National Housing Day Conference on November 22, 2016.

The vision of the Action Plan is that:

“Homelessness in Saskatoon is rare, brief, and does not reoccur.”

The Action Plan focuses on four key areas:

- System Coordination and Innovation;
- Strengthening Housing Placement and Support Programs;
- Prevention; and
- The Solution to Homelessness is Housing.

The Steering Committee, on behalf of the wider community, identified SHIP as the most appropriate lead agency to implement the Action Plan. SHIP has been administering the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy since 2012, has remained well suited to this role and has established relationships with local agencies that are delivering services to those experiencing homelessness.

At its February 27, 2017 Regular Business meeting, City Council approved a service contract with SHIP for a five-year term set to expire on April 30, 2022. Annual funding of \$130,000 from the Affordable Housing Reserve has been provided to SHIP, throughout the term of the existing contract. In return, SHIP has helped support the goal of facilitating and implementing the Community Plan (see Appendix 1) as well as several other deliverables.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Homelessness Continues to Require a Coordinated Response

Homelessness has been increasing in Saskatoon over the past number of years due to a variety of factors, including population growth, increased housing costs, inflation, factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic, potential gaps in social assistance programs and a shortage of specialized housing and support systems. The most recent point-in-time homelessness count was held on April 18, 2018. The count identified 475 individuals who were without permanent shelter, including 11 children. This number was up from the 450 counted in 2015, 379 in 2012 and 260 in 2008.

Several Saskatoon agencies, shelters, and housing providers have been working to address the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon; however, the need for a coordinated response to homelessness remains. Consultations with governments, community agencies, businesses and those with lived experience have confirmed there are gaps in service, and further collaboration will be required to continue reducing the number of people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Extension Request for the Service Contract with SHIP

SHIP has provided an annual report for City Council and Administration outlining progress made between 2020-2021 (see Appendix 2). They have also submitted a request for an extension to the current Service Contract (see Appendix 3) from May 1, 2022 until August 31, 2022 as Administration and SHIP continue the process of discussing priorities and reconfirming roles to ensure the new service contract proposal remains effective and identifies any gaps in a rapidly changing situation. Administration is recommending that City Council accept SHIP's proposed extension request. Remuneration for this extension term is proposed to be a maximum of \$43,333.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If City Council supports extension of the existing contract with SHIP, up to \$43,333 in funding would be required. This equates to one third of the current annual funding agreement amount. The source of funding would be the Affordable Housing Reserve, and as part of the 2022 & 2023 Business Planning, in anticipation of a contract renewal

with SHIP, the entire annual funding amount has been accounted for to be funded from this reserve. Sufficient funds are available within the Reserve to meet this obligation.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

If City Council chooses not to enter into an extension of the current service contract with SHIP, this would result in the contract ending and the Community Plan along with other deliverables no longer being implemented at this time. Further direction would then be required.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, SHIP will continue to facilitate meetings, provide staff support to committees and action teams, help develop and enhance programs, research solutions, evaluate and report on progress, foster collective action and ensure that the Community Plan is implemented over the extension term. Administration will also continue to work with SHIP on a new contract proposal which will be presented to City Council prior to the end of the extension term.

APPENDICES

1. Saskatoon Community Plan 2019-2024 - April 2022
2. 2020-2021 SHIP Annual Report
3. SHIP Contract Extension Request Letter

REPORT APPROVAL

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