

Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership – Proposed Service Contract – Implementation of Saskatoon’s Homelessness Action Plan

ISSUE

A 16-month service contract is being recommended with the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) to continue implementation of Saskatoon’s Homelessness Action Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. That the City of Saskatoon enter into a 16-month service contract, beginning September 1, 2022, with the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership to continue implementation of Saskatoon’s Homelessness Action Plan; and
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to draft the necessary 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

City Council, at its Regular Meeting on March 21, 2011, approved a service agreement with SHIP for a five-year term. Annual funding of \$100,000 from the Affordable Housing Reserve was provided to SHIP. In return, SHIP helped support the goal of facilitating creation of at least 100 affordable housing units every year in Saskatoon.

City Council, at its Regular Business meeting on March 21, 2016, approved the 2016 annual report on the [2013 - 2022 Housing Business Plan](#), which reported that SHIP and the United Way of Saskatoon and area had drafted a new unified Action Plan to end homelessness, formerly called the Community Action Plan (see Appendix 1). A Steering Committee, on behalf of the wider community, identified SHIP as the most appropriate lead agency to implement the Action Plan.

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 priorities:

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

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City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting on August 18, 2016, approved a recommendation to extend the existing service contract with SHIP for six months, ending April 30, 2017. The purpose of the extension was to allow SHIP time to transition the focus of its work, from creation of affordable housing, to implementing the Homelessness Action Plan. Administration was tasked with bringing forth a report that recommended the service contract with SHIP be amended to focus resources on implementing the new Action Plan.

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting on February 27, 2017, approved a service contract with SHIP for a five-year term which expired on April 30, 2022. Annual funding of \$130,000 from the Affordable Housing Reserve was provided to SHIP throughout the term of the contract. In return, SHIP helped support the goal of facilitating and implementing the Action Plan as well as several other deliverables.

City Council, at its [Regular Business meeting on April 25, 2022](#), approved a four-month extension to the 5 year Service Contract, set to expire April 30, 2022, to ensure continuity of services remained while SHIP continued to prepare a new contract proposal in anticipation of a new agreement. The service contract was thereby extended to August 31, 2022.

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, gaps in social assistance programs and a shortage of specialized housing and support systems. The most recent Point in Time homelessness count, held on April 28, 2022, identified 550 individuals who were without permanent shelter. This number was up from 475 counted in 2018, 450 counted in 2015, 379 counted in 2012 and 260 counted in 2008.

Several Saskatoon agencies, shelters and housing providers have been working to address 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 reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Extension of Service Contract with SHIP is Proposed

A request has been submitted by SHIP (see Appendix 2) to extend the current service contract and associated funding for a 16-month period from September 1, 2022 until December 31, 2023. During this proposed time-period, 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 the Action Plan continues to be implemented.

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Administration is recommending the City of Saskatoon (City) accept SHIP’s proposal and enter into a new service contract for a 16-month period with remuneration continuing at a maximum amount of \$130,000 per year, for a total of \$173,333 over the entire contract.

Annual contract deliverables are listed in the proposal and will continue to include:

- Project development assistance to increase housing supply;
- A homelessness report card;
- An annual conference on homelessness and affordable housing;
- Support for the Saskatoon Cold Weather Strategy Team; and
- Facilitation of collective action teams and information sharing.

Over the next 16 months, Administration and SHIP will continue discussing priorities and reconfirming roles to ensure services being provided by SHIP remain effective for both parties. Recently, SHIP secured funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to undertake a Housing Solutions Lab project with housing sector stakeholders. Administration and SHIP anticipate the Lab will provide useful information to consider for the partnership between the City and SHIP moving forward.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If City Council supports a 16-month service contract with SHIP, it would require total funding of \$173,333, based on the existing annual funding of \$130,000. The source of the funding would be the Affordable Housing Reserve and as part of the 2022 and 2023 Business Planning, in anticipation of a contract renewal with SHIP, the entire annual funding amount has been accounted for to be funded from the Reserve. Sufficient funds are available within the Reserve to meet this obligation.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

If City Council chooses not to enter into a service contract with SHIP, this would result in the current extension contract ending on August 31, 2022. Further direction would then be required.

NEXT STEPS

If approved, SHIP will continue to implement the Action Plan with support from the funding provided as part of this contract. An annual report will be provided by SHIP, which will be presented to City Council in early 2023, outlining progress made on implementing the Action Plan.

Following stakeholder consultation in connection with the Housing Solutions Lab and future Housing Business Plan, SHIP will work with Administration to determine the role SHIP is best suited for in the on-going partnership. Once determined, a new service contract proposal will be constructed and presented to City Council for consideration in the Fall of 2023 to align with the City’s two-year budget cycle.

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APPENDICES

1. Saskatoon’s Homelessness Action Plan (2016)
2. Fostering Collective Action: Solutions to Homelessness and Affordable Housing in Saskatoon – Extension Proposal for the City of Saskatoon – August 2022

REPORT APPROVAL

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