

# Community Support Program – Service Delivery Model

### ISSUE

The existing Memorandum of Agreement with the Downtown Saskatoon Business Improvement District (Downtown Saskatoon) to operate the Community Support Program (CSP) expires at the end of December 2023. Administration has been in discussions with the Downtown Saskatoon, Riversdale, and Broadway Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), with participation from the Street Activity Subcommittee, regarding the potential to transition the operations of the CSP to the Saskatoon Fire Department (SFD).

### BACKGROUND

On [December 5, 2011, City Council](#), approved, in principle, the provision of civilian uniformed Community Support Officers (CSO) to patrol the Riversdale, Broadway, and Downtown Saskatoon BIDs for a two-year term.

On [March 12, 2012, City Council](#), details were established of the CSP including management structure, operational details, budget, and program/job descriptions.

On [March 26, 2012, City Council](#) approved the initial two-year contract with the Downtown Saskatoon BID to deliver the CSP. City Council also established the membership and mandate of the Street Activity Steering Committee which oversees the CSP.

On [September 28, 2015, City Council](#) approved the permanent status of the CSP with permanent funding from the Streetscape Business Improvement District Reserve. The Downtown Saskatoon BID was also approved at that time to continue managing the program until December 31, 2018.

On [October 22, 2018, City Council](#) approved a five-year extension of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Downtown Saskatoon BID for continued oversight of the operations of the CSP until December 31, 2023.

On [April 26, 2021, City Council](#) approved changes to the Parking Revenue Distribution Formula that included, in part, that the cost of the CSP be funded directly from parking revenue as a fixed program.

On [May 2, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation](#) received a report providing options for consideration for a Dedicated Transit Support Workers Program. Committee recommended the following to City Council for their May 31, 2023, meeting:

1. That next steps for provision of a transit support workers program be considered through Option 4 – One City Approach Community Support Program be approved;

2. That Saskatoon Transit participate in the review of the current Community Support Program Service Delivery Model alongside the Saskatoon Fire Department and Community Services; and,
3. That Administration report back to the SPC Transportation on options with funding considerations for dedicated transit support workers patrolling terminals and stops and rotating through targeted bus routes as part of the report on the review of the current Community Support Program Service Delivery Model in advance of the 2024-25 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget deliberations.

As of the writing of this report, City Council had not yet considered these resolutions.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

The CSP provides uniform patrols within the boundaries of the three City Centre BIDs of Downtown, Riversdale, and Broadway. The boundaries exist as the program is funded by parking revenue realized in those three districts. The CSP was established to:

- provide a familiar, highly visible, and accessible uniformed presence, primarily through foot patrols, in identified areas of the city;
- assist community members in need by accessing relevant supports, such as healthcare, addictions and crisis counselling, and food and shelter, and contacts the appropriate community support agency when necessary;
- respond to requests regarding panhandling, loitering, public drunkenness, and other related activities; is responsible for the enforcement of relevant municipal bylaws; and when necessary, will contact other civic organizations, such as the Saskatoon Police Service;
- establish and facilitate partnerships with local businesses, residents, and community support organizations in order to be aware of potential issues and areas of concern. Assist with the identification of locally highlighted issues and collaborate with community support agencies, residents, and others to develop and implement resolutions to these issues;
- promote relevant social programs to members of the community in need; and
- provide support in the prevention of criminal activities and provincial offences.

The CSP consists of five officers and one supervisor that respond and provide individuals with specific outreach resources or aid in the individual's safe transportation. CSP hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Wednesday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

In anticipation of the end of the current contract with the Downtown Saskatoon BID, preliminary discussions have started between Administration and the three involved BIDs regarding the future operations of the CSP. During these discussions, it was acknowledged that much has changed since the inception of the CSP, and there is a growing need for a more coordinated and integrated response to overall community safety and well-being.

The CSP has been one important piece of the community response and safety plan in Saskatoon from a broader perspective. While the oversight of the CSP by the Downtown Saskatoon BID has been effective, the increasing complexity of this work requires greater capacity and collaboration with other public safety initiatives underway, in addressing the needs of those requiring supports in Saskatoon.

Through discussions with the BIDs, it was identified that transitioning operations of the CSP to the SFD, beginning in 2024, may be a suitable option particularly given that SFD plays a significant role in response and outreach for those in need. As part of the work with the community safety planning, SFD has been focusing on initiatives that work to gain trust and build relationships, with the most vulnerable in Saskatoon.

In reviewing the 2022 CSP's annual report, presented at the [April 5, 2023 Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services](#), it is evident there is alignment and synergy of services provided by the CSOs and those provided by SFD Inspectors. The report identifies a focus of connecting to community and is one of four main goals for the SFD reflected in the SFD 2023-2026 Strategic Plan - Advance Community Resiliency.

Through the current SFD model, there is an opportunity to explore program delivery modifications through a blended CSP/ SFD model. This approach would align with the coordinated efforts of the SFD and Saskatoon Police Service (SPS) to share information and data. Defining this alignment is the draft Saskatoon City Centre Safety Plan. Within the document, 11 Priority Actions are identified with the first being, Increased Presence and Coordination of Public Safety Personnel to Address Encampments and Unsafe Activities. On May 23, 2023, a pilot Task Force, of SPS Alternative Response Officers (ARO) and a SFD Fire Inspector was initiated. It is believed that the potential for synergies and efficiencies will be realized and will be part of the overall evaluation for a collaborative model.

The Administration believes there is opportunity to review the CSP's current work with bylaw enforcement and public education initiatives to determine if realignment with SFD Community Risk Reduction Inspectors would be a viable option for making improvements in responses and outcomes in the community. The ultimate goal in the transition of oversight of the CSP to SFD would be to ensure the current level of service and response is the baseline, and synergies with SFD Community Risk Reduction Inspectors and the SPS AROs will open opportunities for increased levels of response and service for overall community safety and well-being.

A coordinated approach, based on safety plans and data sharing, will be built into a comprehensive community safety plan to be operationalized. Continued evaluation will determine impacts and appropriate resourcing. In recognition of targeted support for the City Centre BID areas, the potential for a future targeted support Transit model, and other targeted support based on community need, a wholistic approach will continue to be explored further. Initial discussions with ATU Local 615 have already commenced regarding the proposed wholistic approach.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

A further review of the financial and operational implications is underway. Once the potential delivery models are identified, a financial analysis will be completed to determine costs of the various options. This will involve estimating staffing and other operational expenditures needed to deliver the various service levels.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social, or environment implications identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Unless directed otherwise, Administration will continue to explore the transition of the oversight of the CSP to the SFD. This will include continued engagement with key stakeholders, including the Downtown Saskatoon, Riversdale, and Broadway BIDs and the Street Activity Subcommittee.

Further review will also include discussions with Transit in exploring a service delivery model that could address the need identified for targeted safety support services. As well, SPS will be a key partner to determine the best collaborative approach through further development of the joint Saskatoon City Centre Safety Plan.

A subsequent report will be brought forward in advance of the 2024-2025 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget.

#### **Report Approval**

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