

Community Risk Reduction

ISSUE

This report provides an update on unsafe and inadequate housing situations that the Saskatoon Fire Department's (SFD) Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team addresses and identifies within Saskatoon.

BACKGROUND

Addressing unsafe and inadequate housing is within SFD's role and responsibility such as closing unsafe housing and offering rehousing options. In November of 2021, the SFD changed processes to address unsafe conditions. Fire Inspectors started to record, track, and identify the who, what, where, and why individuals were living unhoused, in accessory buildings, vacant houses, and public spaces of occupied structures such as apartment hallways.

The data is mapped and tracked for high-level reporting purposes to internal and external partnering agencies, such as, but not limited to:

- Ministry of Social Services,
- Saskatchewan Health Authority,
- Saskatoon Police Service (SPS), and
- Outreach organizations.

CURRENT STATUS

Fire Bylaw and Fire Inspectors receive reports of inadequate housing situations and approach the individuals affected in a respectful, discreet, and dignified manner. Together, SFD and the individuals, will look for a solution to determine an adequate form of housing/sleeping based on the opportunities and circumstances surrounding each person's background/history. Supports, such as transportation, shelter, connection back to friends or family, social services, food, and water, are most often provided.

Relationship building and trust between the Fire Inspectors and the individuals is crucial. Eighty percent of individuals will accept some form of support or allow regular check-ins by Fire Inspectors who ensure no hazards exist and will continue to offer supports.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Saskatoon has 67 neighborhoods. The following table indicates where inadequate and outdoor living was identified:

Community Risk Reduction

Inadequately Housed	2021	2022	2023 (June 25)
# of Encampments	116	512	290
Neighborhoods	27	53	44
Inadequately Housed Individuals	43	221	85
Known Repeat Interactions	6	39	22
Fire/Bylaw Inspector Response Hours	650	3,900	1,950

Appendix 1 shows further breakdown of encampments that were identified in Saskatoon, per neighbourhood, from 2021 to June 25, 2023.

SPS and SFD have developed a joint safety plan. This has been achieved through collaboration and information sharing with a focus on the “hot spots” (areas where calls for service have higher frequency). Through data analysis, it has been identified that SPS and SFD are interacting with the same individuals and/or same areas at times that create “hot spots”. The initial goal is to analyze and synergize a coordinated approach to diminish redundancy and gaps in service.

Data was generated using criteria of fires, overdoses, graffiti, needle pick-ups, vacant/boarded structures, property maintenance concerns, and unhoused locations. This analysis identified key neighbourhoods being impacted the most. Neighbourhoods showing the highest number of incidents, using these key indicators, over a five-year comparison from 2018 to 2022 are as follows:

- Pleasant Hill,
- Mayfair,
- Riversdale,
- Caswell Hill,
- Meadowgreen,
- Massey Place, and
- King George

Since November of 2021, 40% of known individuals to SFD have taken supports and have been successfully rehoused.

In 2023, there is a notable increase of individuals identified as inadequately housed that are new to the Fire Inspectors. Also, through SFD staff expertise addictions and reluctance to accept housing or emergency shelter are compounding the current situation in Saskatoon.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

To support unsafe and inadequately housed individuals equates to two full-time Fire Bylaw Inspectors. This impacts the number of property maintenance inspections and fire inspections conducted.

NEXT STEPS

The Administration will continue to review data and report back.

APPENDICES

1. 2021-2023 Neighbourhood Encampments

Report Approval

Written by: Yvonne Raymer, Assistant Chief, Saskatoon Fire Department
Approved by: Morgan Hackl, Fire Chief, Saskatoon Fire Department

Admin Report - Community Risk Reduction.docx