

### Daytime Drop-in and Navigation Centre – Funding Request

#### ISSUE

The City of Saskatoon has been working with the Government of Saskatchewan and community partners to establish a Drop-in Navigation Centre that supports the safety and well-being of people experiencing homelessness. A facility location and service operator have now been confirmed and a contribution from the City of Saskatoon is required to support the facility costs for the Drop-In Navigation Centre.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That City Council approve:

1. The establishment of a capital project for Response to Homelessness, in the amount of \$125,000 be funded by the Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Incentive Reserve;
2. That \$90,000 from this capital project be allocated for facility costs of the Drop-in Navigation Centre;
3. That \$35,000 from this capital project be allocated for bottled water distribution throughout summer 2025;
4. That Administration be authorized to enter into a contribution agreement with The Saskatoon Tribal Council for the facility costs, as outlined in this report; and
5. That the capital project be increased in the amount of any additional external funding sources received, if applicable.

#### BACKGROUND

The Standing Policy Committee on Finance, at its [meeting](#) on April 12, 2021, considered a report on the Updated Parking Revenue Distribution Formula, which proposed changes to the distribution of parking meter revenue. The previous formula included a \$30,000 annual allocation to the Downtown Housing Incentive Program (Program), which is a component of the Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Reserve. In that report, Administration noted that this Program was no longer having the original intended impact. As of January 1, 2021, the Reserve for this component had a balance of \$322,093, and Administration committed to bringing forward a report outlining options for how these remaining funds could be used.

The Governance and Priorities Committee, at its April 9, 2025 [meeting](#), received a report entitled Shelter Status Report and resolved:

“That Administration work with the province and stakeholders, and report back on options to ensure people who are unhoused have opportunity for a safe place at all hours of the day and in all seasons, until our longer-term strategy for housing is available”.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### Drop-in Navigation Centre

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon has increased significantly in recent years. The 2024 Point-in-Time Homelessness Count identified 1,499 individuals experiencing homelessness in the city, including 315 children and 175 youth.

With the seasonal closure of the overnight winter warming centres on March 31, 2025, and limited hours at some service providers, there is a growing gap in access to basic services for individuals without housing.

To address this need, the City of Saskatoon (City) has been actively working with the Government of Saskatchewan (Province) and community partners to establish a Drop-in Navigation Centre. This type of facility provides a safe, accessible space during the day for individuals experiencing homelessness to access essential supports and services.

The proposed Drop-In Navigation Centre will operate from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily, between June 15 and October 31, 2025, at Station 20 West. The Saskatoon Tribal Council's Sawēiyhtotān Outreach program will be the service provider. Services will include:

- Outreach and navigation support;
- Washrooms;
- Food and water access;
- Assistance with obtaining identification, income support, employment and education services;
- Health supports through the Saskatoon Health Authority, including a nurse practitioner; and
- Indigenous cultural supports.

All services delivered through the Sawēiyhtotān Outreach program at the Drop-In Navigation Centre will be funded by the Province.

As part of the operational agreement, the Province has asked the City to fund the facility costs associated with hosting the Drop-In Navigation Centre. Station 20 West has agreed to provide the space, with estimated additional facility costs of approximately \$82,000 for the operating period from June 15 through October 31. The estimated facility costs are beyond the regular facility expenses and are specific to the needs of the Drop-In Navigation Centre. Administration is recommending that a small contingency be included for this facility, in case of issues arising, up to a total of \$90,000.

For the establishment of the Drop-In Navigation Centre, the City would be responsible for funding the \$82,000 in identified facility-related costs to support the Drop-In Navigation Centre operations. A contribution agreement would be entered into between

the City and the Saskatoon Tribal Council for the facility costs of \$82,000, including conditions for drawing on the contingency, up to a total of \$90,000.

Funding Source for Drop-In Navigation Centre and Future Responses to Homelessness  
Administration has identified the Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Reserve from the former Downtown Housing Incentive Program as a potential funding source. This would offer a one-time funding source with limited impacts to any other programs or services offered by the City.

Allocating a portion of these funds to cover the facility costs for the Drop-In Navigation Centre would help address the community's growing need for safe and supportive spaces. This approach would also contribute to a greater sense of safety in public areas.

### Summer Bottled Water Distribution

For the past two summers (2023 and 2024), the Saskatoon Emergency Management Organization has supported community partners by distributing bottled water to help individuals experiencing homelessness. Each week during the summer months, over 20 community agencies receive bottled water which they then share through their operations and outreach programs.

In 2023, this initiative was funded through the federal government's Reaching Home Program which provided a one-time funding contribution. In 2024, City Council approved \$34,000 for bottled water distribution and an additional \$15,000 for the installation of three water bottle filling stations, funded through the Reserve for Capital Expenditures.

To continue this initiative in the summer of 2025, \$35,000.00 in funding is required.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As of January 1, 2025, there is \$322,093 remaining in the former Downtown Housing Incentive Program held within the Vacant Lot and Adaptive Reuse Incentive Reserve. Administration recommends that \$125,000 be allocated to the establishment of a new Response to Homelessness capital project.

If City Council approves the recommendations in this report, \$90,000 would be allocated to the Drop-In Navigation Centre and \$35,000 to bottled water distribution, for a total of \$125,000.

If future external funding sources are received, such as donations, Administration has recommended that these amounts be added to the project budget without needing to go back to City Council for approval. These funds would be used for initiatives in line with the general purposes outlined in this report.

This would leave a remaining balance of \$197,100.00 in the Reserve that could be considered for further initiatives, subject to City Council approval. Administration

expects that future initiatives to be considered for funding may include overnight winter warming spaces, expanded access to public drinking water or other targeted responses to homelessness.

The former Downtown Housing Incentive Program funding source was annual payments from parking revenue. The remaining portion of funding of the Downtown Housing Incentive Program is specific to renovation grants to existing housing in the City Centre. Due to the complexity and limited cases in which this occurs, the intent of the incentive has been difficult to achieve, and the reserve has not been utilized. The last project for a renovation incentive was approved in 2014, with funding in the amount of \$8,563. There are other downtown incentive programs that are easier to access and target new residential development in the City centre.

### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

No other privacy, policy, social or environmental implications have been identified.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Should City Council approve the recommendations, Administration will finalize a contribution agreement with Saskatoon Tribal Council. Opening of the facility will occur once the service operator has all required components in place, such as funding and required staffing.

Administration will be bringing forward Business Plan Options for consideration in the 2026/2027 Multi-Year Business Plan and Budget to address ongoing costs expected to support the City's response to homelessness.

### **REPORT APPROVAL**

Written by:	Ian Williamson, Senior Project Planner Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development
Reviewed by:	Lana Geib, Senior Financial Business Partner Kari Smith, Director of Finance Celene Anger, General Manager of Community Services
Approved by:	Jeff Jorgenson, City Manager

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