

### **Proposed Criteria and Evaluation Framework for The City of Saskatoon's Priority Based Budgeting – Internal Facing Programs (Support Programs)**

#### **Introduction**

Internal support functions or programs require interpretive guidance for certain community-facing criteria. Direct programs generate value by delivering outputs to residents, businesses or the environment. Support services, by contrast, generate value indirectly by enabling those direct programs to operate effectively, legally and sustainably. This distinction does not imply lower importance; it reflects a different production function. Scoring support services on community-facing criteria without recognizing this distinction produces systematically misleading results.

The following guidance addresses each criterion in turn.

**Criterion 1 – Apply without modification**

**Criterion 2 – Apply without modification**

**Criterion 3 — Public Value and Community Need - Modified as in Table 1**

Community-facing criteria do not translate directly to support services. The relevant question for support services is organizational dependency rather than resident support. In other words, this proposed criterion should assess what proportion of the direct service program inventory depends on this support function and what would be the downstream impact on those programs if the function were degraded or eliminated?

**Table 1: Revised Criterion 3 for Support Programs**

Score	Descriptor	Organizational Dependency Description	Potential Evidence Required
5	Organizationally indispensable	Function is essential to the delivery of the majority of direct service programs. Degradation or removal would cascade into multiple simultaneous service failures with no feasible alternative provider at comparable cost or quality.	Inventory of dependent programs, documented evidence that degrading elimination is not operationally feasible at comparable standard.
4	Broadly enabling	Function directly supports a large share of direct service programs. Reduction would create significant downstream capacity constraints across multiple service areas.	List of programs dependent on this function, documentation of specific enabling mechanisms and their operational significance.
3	Substantially supporting	Function supports a significant subset of direct programs in meaningful ways. Reduction would create manageable but real operational constraints in those program areas.	Description of dependent programs and nature of support relationship.
2	Selectively supporting	Function supports a defined set of programs with moderate operational significance. Alternatives exist but at higher cost or lower quality.	Identification of programs supported and assessment of alternative provision.
1	Marginally enabling	Function provides incidental or highly specialized support to a limited set of programs. Impact of reduction would be contained and manageable.	Program manager description of support relationships.

**Criterion 4 — Community Impact and Equity - Modified**

The same organizational dependency interpretation applies as for Criterion 3. Support services do not directly serve residents, businesses or underserved populations and constructing equity arguments on the basis that 'all residents ultimately benefit from good financial management' is not an analytically honest application of this criterion. The relevant equity question for support services is whether the function enables equity-oriented direct programs to operate effectively and whether its own internal practices, such as those managed by human resources, Indigenous Initiatives or Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI), accessible communications and public engagement, equitable procurement, advance the City's equity commitments organizationally.

Thus, support services that primarily enable equity-oriented direct service programs may score higher on organizational dependency grounds. Functions with no particular equity dimension to their enabling role should score at 2 or below on this criterion.

**Criterion 5 – Apply without modification**

**Criterion 6 — Marginal Impact and Scalability - Minor Interpretive Adjustment**

For support programs, scalability is assessed through organizational capacity rather than direct service output. This could be documented backlogs in legal file processing, finance transaction volumes, human resources recruitment timelines or communications request queues are legitimate evidence of upward scalability. In these cases, additional resources would reduce constraints that are currently creating downstream program delivery delays.