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## Role of the City in Social Development

### Recommendation

That the report of the General Manager, Community Services Department, dated October 1, 2018, be received as information.

### Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to outline the City of Saskatoon's past and present role in social development and social planning in areas that affect the quality of life and well-being of Saskatoon residents, and to set the context for future social planning in Saskatoon.

### Report Highlights

1. Social development and planning at the municipal level means addressing social issues at the community level. Social development is about putting people at the centre of development and improving the well-being of individuals in society so they can reach their full potential.
2. Currently, the City of Saskatoon (City) plays a number of different roles in social development and planning; particularly in areas such as addressing cost as a barrier to participation, affordable housing, anti-racism education, aboriginal leadership initiatives, immigration, and social planning initiatives.
3. Future social development and planning in Saskatoon will need to continue to consider the context of municipal priorities, resources, and community needs.

### Strategic Goal

This report supports the City's Strategic Goal of Quality of Life, specifically, the strategies and priorities of:

- a) reducing and preventing crime and providing protective services in the Downtown core and neighbourhoods;
- b) increasing the supply and range of affordable housing options;
- c) ensuring existing and future leisure centres, and other recreational facilities, are accessible, physically and financially, and meet community needs;
- d) developing partnerships and programs with Aboriginal organizations that will assist in enhancing economic, employment, and training opportunities; and
- e) developing age-friendly initiatives to enhance quality of life as people age.

Furthermore, the City's work in social development and planning helps advance outcomes for three of City Council's priority areas:

- a) Community Safety and Well-Being;
- b) Recreation, Culture, and Leisure; and
- c) Reconciliation, Inclusion, and Diversity.

### Background

The City has a history of involvement in social development and social planning issues. As a guideline, the Administration has more or less followed a framework presented to City Council at its May 25, 1999 meeting, where it was resolved, in part:

- “1) that City Council define the City’s role in Social/Planning Issues as follows:
  - a) the City will continue to address the following issues...housing, transportation, recreation, culture, physical health, and wellness, accessibility, prostitution, and safety and security;
  - b) the City’s policy on Equity and Anti-Racism will continue to be as stated in City Council Policy C04-020 (Equity and Anti-Racism);
  - c) the City will not be directly involved in the social issues of: mental health, education and training, stable relationships and parental practices, teen pregnancy and sexuality, family violence, and child care and welfare; and
  - d) City Council will further determine the City’s role related to issues of poverty, employment and hunger.”

Over time, there was a growing number of social service agencies with clients and active residents expressing the need for the City to take more of a leadership role in ensuring quality of life for residents and in being involved in the social planning aspects of the community. In response, the Administration presented a report to City Council on April 7, 2008, summarizing a list of the growing involvement in social development and planning, and a recommendation to formally establish a Social Development Section with a new Social Development Manager position, within the Community Development Branch.

Over the past ten years, Saskatoon has continued to change, as has the landscape for social development and social planning. Increasingly, Saskatoon, as with other Canadian municipalities, is being asked to engage with other orders of government and community-based organizations on social planning programs and social services for residents. In many cases, these programs and services have not traditionally been in the scope of local government.

At the end of 2015, the amalgamation of the Community Development Division with the Recreation and Sport Division, to create the Recreation and Community Development Division, provided the opportunity to create a new Social Development Consultant position. Then in 2017, the Community Development Section, Recreation and Community Development Division, identified five priority initiatives for 2017/2018. One of these initiatives was clarifying the role of the City in social development and planning. The first step in this process is to identify the areas where the City is currently involved in social planning, both actively and passively. This report provides an overview of the City’s current involvement in social development in order to provide a context for future social development and planning in Saskatoon.

### Report

#### Social Development in Municipal Context

Social development is about working to improve the well-being of the individuals in society so they can reach their full potential. Social development means investing in people and requires the removal of barriers; it is about helping people so they can move forward on their path to self-sufficiency.

While there is much recent literature on what social development and planning means in the context of Canadian municipalities, at its most basic, social planning for Canadian municipalities means addressing social issues at the community level. For many Canadian cities, issues have ranged from affordable housing to homelessness to crime and affordable recreation. Along with other cities, the City is increasingly being asked to engage with other levels of government, community institutions, and community-based organizations to consult, facilitate, liaise, support, manage, or deliver social planning programs and social services that have not traditionally been in the scope of local government. It is important to look at the context of the roles of the various partners in social planning.

The Government of Canada oversees social areas such as immigration and citizenship, employment insurance, health, justice, and Indigenous affairs. The Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction over such social areas as health, education, and social assistance. Each of these levels of government pursues its mandate in a number of ways such as direct service delivery and funding other agencies and levels of government to provide services.

Municipal governments receive their mandated authority from provincial-enabling legislation (e.g. *The Cities Act*). Examples of key areas of municipal responsibility include infrastructure, recreation, land use planning, and police and fire services. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has identified affordable housing, poverty reduction, and immigration and refugee settlement as significant areas for municipal involvement in social development.

Human service agencies provide valuable social, community, and health services to various sectors in the community. They are well positioned to identify needs, perform joint planning, and advocate on priority social issues within Saskatoon.

#### Roles the City Plays in Social Development

Bylaw No. 8769, The Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2009, states that the objective of social development is “to support the social needs of Saskatoon's residents through appropriate public consultation, a fair distribution of community services, and the on-going consideration of social issues in land use policy and land use decisions.” Further to this, the City also has a number of policies and formal partnerships that also help inform our role in social development.

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Historically, the City has played a role in addressing social issues in the community. Over the years, the expanding mandate has seen the City:

- a) facilitate low-cost and no-cost access to civic leisure centres;
- b) play a lead in graffiti reduction education;
- c) provide cash funding and tax abatements to qualifying social-serving agencies;
- d) play a lead in anti-racism awareness and education;
- e) bring the community together on the immigration action plan;
- f) support community initiatives such as Saskatoon's Homelessness Action Plan, the Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership, and the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre Inc. – EGADZ; and
- g) facilitate supportive housing developments in all areas of the city through policy change and financial incentives.

Attachment 1 is an update on the summary provided in the 2008 report noted above, and provides a summary of current City social development and social planning initiatives. The initiatives have been grouped into four categories: access to civic and partner programs and services, social issues, equity/diversity and social inclusion, and community safety. Within these categories, the City's role ranges from direct service delivery, to funder, to partner, and to facilitator.

### Context for Future Social Planning in Saskatoon

The City continues to be invited to deliberations where urban social policies and programs are first being discussed and developed. From housing to health disparity, to food security, to crime prevention, to poverty reduction, other levels of government and social-serving agencies are calling on the City to be part of the process for finding solutions.

While the City has often agreed to sit at these deliberations, role clarity and municipal capacity need to be explored further before more commitments are made, as these commitments are often long term. Presently, the City has committed to, or is considering, a role in the following initiatives:

- a) Smart Cities Challenge;
- b) Safe Community Action Alliance;
- c) Graffiti Reduction Task Force;
- d) Immigration Partnership Saskatoon;
- e) Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership;
- f) Saskatoon Aboriginal Community Action Partnership;
- g) Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention;
- h) Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership;
- i) Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan;
- j) Saskatoon Food Council; and
- k) Strengthening Families Program.

What has become increasingly clear is that no one level of government nor any single human service agency can successfully address social issues on its own. Success at the

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local and community level requires the collective action of federal and provincial governments, human services and social sector agencies, and municipal government. The City, like other Canadian municipalities, must consider carefully its current resources and capacities when determining where and how it can have an impact on addressing social issues in our community.

To this end and as a first step, the Administration is committed to creating an Interdepartmental Social Planning Team to provide support for ongoing social development initiatives. This team will ensure corporate initiatives are strategically aligned and coordinated for effective and efficient use of resources. Part of the work of this team will be to develop a set of principles to assist in the review and prioritization of new and existing initiatives. Examples of principles could include:

- a) aligns with City vision, plans, provincial, federal, community and other priorities;
- b) engages the community and partners in the work;
- c) focuses on a broader community based collective action approach;
- d) enhances social cohesion/sustainability; and
- e) clearly articulates the role of the City in the initiative.

The work of this internal team, in collaboration with partners at the existing social planning tables, will assist in informing the mandate and terms of reference for the proposed Advisory Committee on Community Safety and Wellbeing.

### **Other Considerations/Implications**

There are no options, policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations; a communication plan is not required at this time.

### **Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion**

No specific follow-up is required.

### **Public Notice**

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

### **Attachment**

1. Overview – City of Saskatoon Social Planning Initiatives

### **Report Approval**

Written by: Marieke Knight, Social Development Consultant, Recreation and Community Development  
Shannon Hanson, Social Development Manager, Recreation and Community Development

Reviewed by: Lynne Lacroix, Director of Recreation and Community Development

Approved by: Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department

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