



REQUEST FOR DECISION

MEETING DATE: May 23, 2023

TITLE: Unsheltered Recommendations

DIVISION: Community & Protective Services

SUMMARY:

After several months of experience, analysis, and previous Council direction, a report is being presented with recommendations for further actions and consideration by City Council. These recommendations include both short-term and longer-term actions.

PROPOSED MOTION:

THAT the recommendations included in the May 23, 2023 Homelessness Recommendations Report outlined as follows be approved:

- Maintain the Late Night café in its existing location until a permanent supportive housing facility is secured.
- Transition the Community Hub from a permanent, physical location to a mobile outreach model of service.
- Significantly increase the pursuit of a partner, location, and funding for a permanent supportive housing facility.

THAT the mobile outreach program be approved with an annual budget of \$177,000 ending March 31, 2026.

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Following feedback from partners, members of the community, and businesses, as well as significant research and analysis of other jurisdictions and best practices, the attached report

has been prepared for consideration of City Council and to provide the community with information and rationale for the recommendations within.

The report will attempt to build on previous reports that have been provided to Council regarding homelessness. The work to date over the last year, including this report, is meant to respond to an increase in individuals classified as homeless or on the verge of homelessness in the interim as we work with other agencies/partners and the community for more meaningful and sustainable solutions.

Administration has been working diligently on exploring options to meet the direction provided by City Council in March 2023 to look at alternative locations for a combined temporary Community Hub and Late Night Café (Winter Emergency Shelter). This exploration has included, but has not been limited to:

- Exploration of a variety of options and locations;
- Details around zoning, Alberta Health regulations, fire/building code requirements, site servicing, budget, and program options have been examined for several options;
- Space needs analysis; and
- Cost implications.

OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES:

Administration is making three recommendations at this time.

1. Maintain the Late Night café in its existing location until a permanent supportive housing facility is secured.
2. Transition the Community Hub from a permanent, physical location to a mobile outreach model of service.
3. Significantly increase the pursuit of a partner, location, and funding for a permanent supportive housing facility.

Detailed information, analysis, and rationale for these recommendations are included in the report and presentation as part of this Request for Decision. Generally speaking, the recommendations allow for the municipality to minimize costs (both operationally and throw away costs) that would be realized with a temporary co-located Late Night Café and Community Hub. Also, a mobile outreach model of service delivery will enable the City to capitalize on grant funding and transition a significant amount of human and financial resources towards pursuit of a permanent supportive housing facility.

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT:

Throughout the analysis, Administration has completed the following:

- Discussions with other municipalities and industry partners regarding their experiences (both positive and negative);
- Engagement with Late Night Café/Winter Emergency Response Committee;
- Engagement with community partners, staff, and residents of the Community Hub;
- Analysis of the feedback and direct discussions with residents and businesses in and around the Community Hub and throughout the community;
- Discussion with other government agencies such as Alberta Health; and
- Significant internal engagement across multiple departments. An internal project support team has been in place.

IMPLEMENTATION / COMMUNICATION:

If the recommendations are approved by Council, the following “next steps” have been identified by Administration:

1. Create key messages and begin building a communications plan (key messages and website updated May 24).
2. Signal to the community, partners, and facility users of the closure of the Community Hub by June 30, 2023 (May 24 start).
3. Immediately begin recruitment process for mobile outreach workers (May 24 start recruitment with intention to start employment July 3).
4. Once staff have been secured, analysis, research, planning, and community relations work to begin as soon as possible. Outreach work will commence as soon as the grant has been approved (estimate for grant approval July 15 - August 15).
5. Create and post “Request for Proposals” for a community partner to operate and facilitate a supportive housing facility (estimate for creation, posting, and evaluation of submissions 2 months).
6. Continue and accelerate analysis and recommendations for location options for a permanent supportive housing facility and report to Council for information or necessary approvals (August 21, 2023 or sooner).
7. Prioritize grant analysis and applications for supportive housing funding (immediate – report/decision of Council TBD)

IMPACTS:

The report and presentation accompanying this Request for Decision also provides detail and analysis on many impacts, some both positive and negative. As identified, in many ways the recommendations will provide enhanced levels of service, create some gaps in service delivery, but also maintain existing service levels. This is dependent on the type of issue and needed

response. If approved, one impact that will be seen is the acceleration of realizing a permanent supportive housing facility as Administration will be able to focus on this option versus trying to plan and implement a temporary physical location.

Additionally, there will be minimized cost impacts (detailed below) if the recommendations are approved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

A comparison of the estimated costs of co-locating the Community Hub and Late Night Café, versus the estimated annual cost of the recommended Mobile Outreach Program are:

Co-located Community Hub and Late Night Café = **\$1,080,000 to \$1,280,000** (12 months)
(excludes previously approved \$27,750 annual funding for the Late Night Café)

Mobile Outreach Program = **\$177,000** (annually)
(\$475,000 operating budget less \$298,000 grant)
(excludes previously approved \$27,750 annual funding for the Late Night Café but does include additional budget for transportation, supplies, materials, communications, etc.)

These costs will be updated once Council gives direction to Administration resulting from this Request for Decision. If Council approves, the 2023 costs will be shown in the Q2 Report that will be made public in mid-August, and the 2024-26 costs would be validated and incorporated into the 2024-26 Corporate Planning process.

The motions presented as part of this Request for Decision, including financial commitments for the mobile outreach program, assumes successful grant funding. In the event that the City's grant application is not approved, Administration would return to Council to seek consideration of additional funding support.