

Report to Council



Date: June 22, 2016

File:

To: City Manager

From: J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

Subject: Homelessness and Related Social Issues Update

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information, the Report from the Divisional Directors of Active Living & Culture dated June 22, 2016 with respect to homelessness and related social issues.

Purpose:

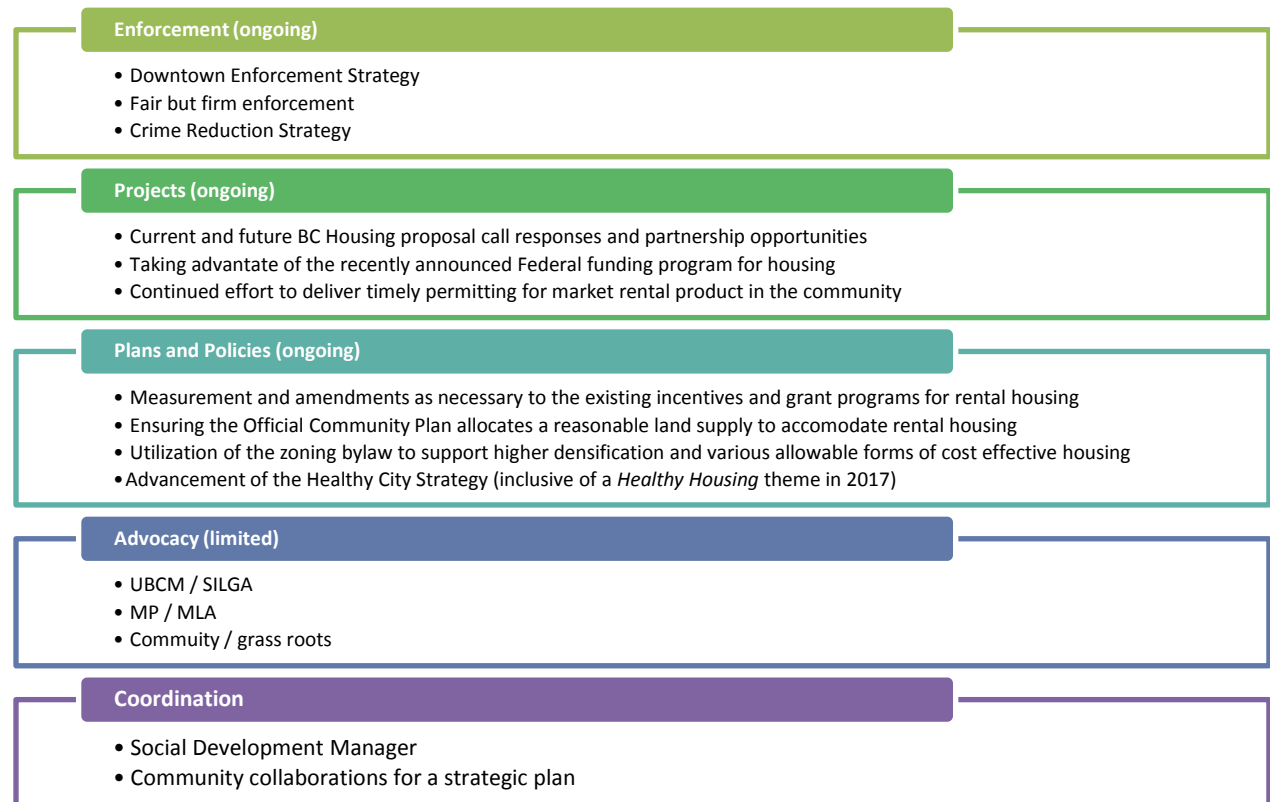
To provide Council with an update regarding homelessness and related social issues.

Background:

Over the past year some social issues, such as homelessness, have become more prevalent in Kelowna, and in fact, across the country.

There are many programs, policies and actions currently undertaken by the City of Kelowna and local agencies, which collectively have a positive impact. Discussion with these local service providers has indicated that a greater level of coordination will produce more impactful results at a faster pace. With the City acting as a convener for many agencies, NGOs, businesses, advocates and volunteers in the community, a more targeted effort will be possible. This effort will include a review of various City directed programs, policies and projects, but also coordination of the community advocates that deliver services directly and other levels of government who provide funding.

In the diagram below are categories of "effort" which work toward reducing homelessness. Each category has varying levels of resource, activity and resulting impact (short-term or long-term).



These areas of effort have much greater depth of detail than portrayed here however, the diagram is intended to show that a multi-faceted approach is needed to address the complex social issues related to housing, homelessness and street-level social issues in Kelowna. Thankfully, there are many committed local social agencies as well as many successful models to draw from around North America, when developing a made-in-Kelowna solution.

Community Collaborations

Numerous community groups, social agencies and prominent members of our city are anxious to advance an effort to reduce homelessness. This is demonstrated through various activities by local agencies and their ongoing discussions with staff, as well as recent correspondence and requests of City Council. Collectively their efforts make a difference.

A collective impact approach is critical as homelessness and related issues will take a community effort to address. “*Collective impact* is the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a complex social problem. In order to create lasting solutions to social problems on a large-scale, organizations - including those in government, civil society, and the business sector - need to coordinate their efforts and work together around a clearly defined goals”.

Coordination with a long term vision will allow more immediate action to advance now but remain consistent with a calculated and strategic long term view. One that includes an understanding of the roles of other stakeholders (social agencies, other levels of government, the business community, etc.), respects our limited resources and ensures that we are directing our energy to a focus area that will deliver a positive, long-standing result.

Social Development Manager

It's anticipated that the new Social Development Manager position will be in place in the coming weeks. As discussed in the November 9, 2015 Council report, that provided additional background on the homelessness issue and included two key directions:

- The development of a made-in-Kelowna approach to address homelessness
- The establishment of a new position to act as a convener and or collaborator between City departments and partnering agencies

Not one individual or agency is able to solve this issue on their own, but a dedicated City presence is required. This new position will begin to fill that role, both internally and externally.

In moving this initiative forward an immediate work plan for this position includes:

- Take an inventory of the current state of affairs
 - Connect with internal stakeholders and external stakeholders
 - Understand the landscape and roles of service providers and funding allocations
 - Review historical plans and documents
- Develop an understanding of existing efforts
 - Research and build City connections where appropriate
 - Connect with working groups and or committee's established to address homelessness and related issues
- Conduct additional research (comparative analysis of success and failures from other communities)
 - Build on the November 2015 Council report "Homelessness - Municipal Strategies-Working Models"
- In collaboration with key stakeholders recommend an approach to the development of an "Addressing Homelessness Strategic Plan", for Council's consideration
- Develop a Strategic Plan
 - Regular updates provided to Council
 - Through process, determine City's role and functions provided by others
- Resource and plan implementation

It is anticipated that staff will report back to Council later in 2016 regarding development of plan. It should also be noted that the numerous programs, policies, projects and coordination efforts already underway, will continue to occur until the Strategic Plan is complete.

Current Activities

While a longer term strategy is being prepared staff and partners are currently active on many fronts to address acute concerns. Examples of activities include:

- Working with Interior Health Authority on harm reduction and needle management
- Working with partners to address storage of homeless possessions and the safe keeping of such while they are receiving services from agencies and sleeping within shelters
- Increasing the access to programs such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)
- Continually monitoring the Downtown Enforcement Strategy for evidence of diffusion and displacement through the RCMP's CompStat data analysis
- Ongoing discussions with BC Housing on joint solutions to Kelowna's housing/homelessness challenges
- Exploration of housing partnership opportunities on City land

Internal Circulation:

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Considerations not applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Personnel Implications:

Communications Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

External Agency/Public Comments:

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