Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – December 10, 2021

BUDGET REVIEW

Item No. 3 Interim Strategy: Mobile Outreach Support

COUNCIL DECISION:

On June 24, 2021, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, which included the following recommendation:

2. That requests for funding to support 24-hour outreach operations in 2022 and each year thereafter be referred to the 2022 – 2025 operating budget process.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

COUNCIL DECISION:

On June 24, 2021, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, which included the following recommendation:

2. That requests for funding to support 24-hour outreach operations in 2022 and each year thereafter be referred to the 2022 – 2025 operating budget process.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Interim Strategy: Mobile Outreach Support

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
C. Brens	C. Fernandes	C. Kloepfer	M. Ruta, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 25, City Council directed the public service to review a request from Main Street Project Inc. (MSP) for financial support for its van patrol outreach program beyond March 31, 2021, and report back on potential City funding to support this initiative, as well as the St. Boniface Street Links mobile community navigator team, including specific sources of City funds and a requirement that any City funding be matched by the Province of Manitoba.

In response to the above disposition, the body of this report is divided into 4 sections. The first provides background information related to the development of the City's Interim Strategy in 2019 to support individuals experiencing homelessness, and outlines the connection between this strategy and the MSP mobile outreach service. The second section examines data from 311 and identifies those dates and times when mobile outreach services are most used through the Interim Strategy. The third section reviews two existing mobile outreach service providers, including MSP and St. Boniface Street Links (SBSL). This section outlines the core services offered by each service provider and their cost. The fourth and final section identifies funding requirements.

Through this report the Public Service recommends the City enter into a grant agreement with MSP for the amount of $268,683 in 2021, and that funding to support 24-hour outreach operations in 2022 and each year thereafter be referred to the 2022 – 2025 operating budget process. It is the position of the Public Service that a call for expressions of interest, or a request for proposals (RFP) be issued to solicit, and transparently identify, an outreach provider, or providers, to support outreach services beyond 2021. Following discussions with the Province of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Public Service has received confirmation that the Province will not be incrementally matching City funding for mobile outreach services as contemplated in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a grant in 2021 be approved to Main Street Project Inc. in the amount of $268,683 for mobile outreach support services beginning April 1, 2021 funded from one-time 2021 temporary salary and benefit savings in the Community Services Department, due to Public Health Order mandates to close recreation and library facilities.

2. That requests for funding to support 24-hour outreach operations in 2022 and each year thereafter be referred to the 2022 – 2025 operating budget process.

3. That the City enter into, execute and deliver a grant agreement with Main Street Project Inc. that outlines key service objectives, data collection requirements and performance indicators, and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements").

4. That authority be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the grant agreement and the Ancillary Agreements**,** in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

5. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On March 25, City Council directed the Public Service to review a request from MSP for financial support for its van patrol outreach program beyond March 31, 2021, and report back in 60 days on potential City funding to support this initiative, as well as the St. Boniface Street Links mobile community navigator team, including specific sources of City funds and a requirement that any City funding be matched by the Province of Manitoba.

Council has the authority to approve a grant to MSP.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the City's recreation, aquatic, and library facilities, operated by the Community Services Department, were closed in October, 2020 with over 600 temporary employees laid – off. The closures continued through to early March 2021 resulting in one-time temporary salary and benefit savings that are sufficient to fund a grant agreement of $268,683 in 2021 with MSP. COVID-19 related salary savings from facility closures are not expected beyond 2021.

Although the City of Winnipeg's 2020-2023 multi-year budget includes an annual grant of $86,400 to MSP, this funding is intended to support its Mainstay Traditional Supportive Housing.

There are currently no opportunities for the Province to match city funding for mobile outreach services.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Understanding the History of the Interim Strategy

In May of 2019, The City of Winnipeg issued an RFP for the "collection and disposal of bulky waste from temporary homeless shelters on public property" (Attachment 1, *Request for Proposal No. 1113-2018*). The release of the RFP resulted in negative feedback from community members. As a result, in early June of 2019, End Homelessness Winnipeg (EHW) invited a group of community stakeholders to come together with the intended purpose of supporting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. In consultation with EHW and other community agencies, in late June, the City cancelled the RFP and committed to work collaboratively with community agencies to develop a coordinated approach in addressing encampments and unsheltered homelessness.

Since that time, this group has developed into what is now the Kíkinanaw Óma: Strategy to Support Unsheltered Winnipeggers, Strategy Group. City participation in this group includes representatives from the CAO's Office, Corporate Communications, Public Works, the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, and Community Services. Two of the key outcomes of this group include the release of the Kíkinanaw Óma: Strategy to Support Unsheltered Winnipeggers, and the development of an Interim Strategy designed to support individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Winnipeg until a long-term housing solution can be developed and implemented.

Through the Interim Strategy, residents of Winnipeg who encounter an encampment or an individual sleeping unsheltered, can contact 311, the non-emergency police line, or 911 and if appropriate, they will be diverted to MSP who have been identified by the City as the first point of contact. Through their mobile outreach team, MSP peer and outreach workers attend the locations identified in the calls, to assess and connect individuals with appropriate supports and services. Emergency calls are directed to 911, so that appropriate first responders can attend.

For the purposes of this report, mobile outreach includes those services that mobilize staff to provide support to individuals in community away from the location where the staff normally work. Typical outreach services include: transportation transfer to emergency shelters, the distribution of warm clothing, blankets, water, coffee, food and harm reduction supplies, as well as wellbeing checks. It is important to note MSP will not ask residents to leave an encampment, transit shelter or other space. Their role is to provide immediate support for individuals in the moment. Since its inception, MSP has been the only outreach support provider directly linked to the Interim Strategy, and has provided outreach services at no cost to the City.

In February 2021, MSP provided a request for funding to the Public Service and Council noting:

> "The MSP van outreach program has been an essential link for the City of Winnipeg's response to emerging issues with houseless individuals, we have been able to assist the city in responding to those in need with care and compassion, establish relationship and support in ensuring people are safe. The partnership has included responding to 311 calls, responding to encampments, bus shacks, and working with City officials to support

> outreach services to those most in need in our city. However, we have done that all without ongoing support for the van operations, staffing, and supplies. Currently we only have confirmed funding for overnight shift van outreach beyond March 31st, 2021, without support from the City of Winnipeg we will have no daytime, or evening van outreach come spring."

As outlined by MSP, without support for the 2021 year and beyond, MSP will not be able to maintain current 24/7 operations. It is also important to note that the Public Service does not have the staffing, expertise, training or resources required to deliver this service. As MSP is the identified first point of contact for the Interim Strategy, this service reduction will negatively impact the hours during which 311 can seek support for mobile outreach services. To better identify the level of need, and the type of support required to continue the Interim Strategy, the following section examines data from 311 and identifies those dates and times when 311 staff contact MSP for support.

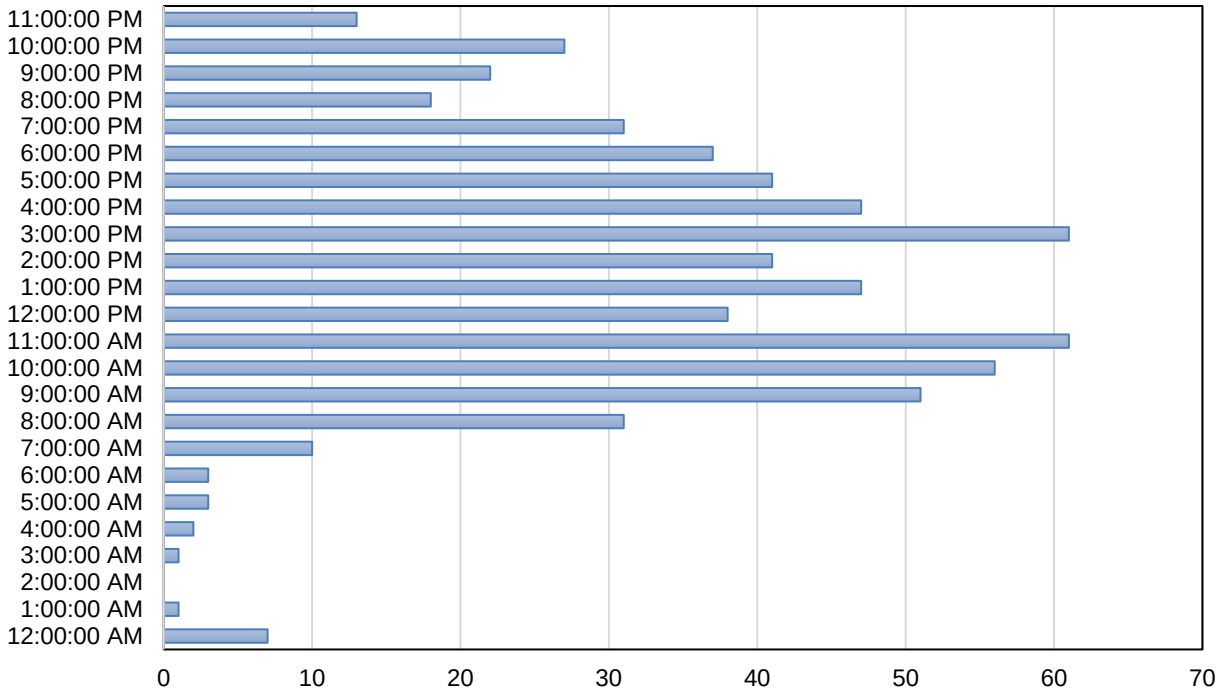
311 and Calls Related to Unsheltered Homelessness

As noted above, individuals who are concerned about an encampment within the City can contact 311. When a call to 311 about an encampment is received, 311 staff generate a report that captures details about the encampment including its location, size, occupancy status, as well as other information that may be provided. The tracking of these calls, and the associated reports, provide insight into the volume, frequency, and seasonality of calls related to encampments.[1] Prior to July 2019, these reports were provided to the Public Works Department who would either dispatch the Parks and Open Space Division, or the Streets Maintenance Division to attend the location and remove debris or personal items that were left at the site. In 2019, this model changed, whereby when 311 receives a call about an encampment, staff still complete the internal report, however, this information is now shared with MSP as per the Interim Strategy noted earlier. MSP will attend the site, and provide ongoing updates to 311 via a shared Google document. If an encampment has been permanently vacated, MSP will notify 311 and City staff will attend the vacated site to clear debris and discarded items. It is important to note that Public Works staff will not attend an encampment site until MSP has indicated that the site is no longer occupied.

Figure 1 below identifies time-of-day data from reports generated by 311 involving MSP related specifically to Encampments. This information was collected between July 1, 2019, and April 12, 2021. For the purposes of this report, an encampment is defined as: "any area wherein an individual or a group of people live in homelessness together, often in tents or other temporary structures". (National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada, Attachment 2).

[1] Data from 911 and the City's non-emergency line were not included in this report. At the time of the writing of this report, this information was not available.

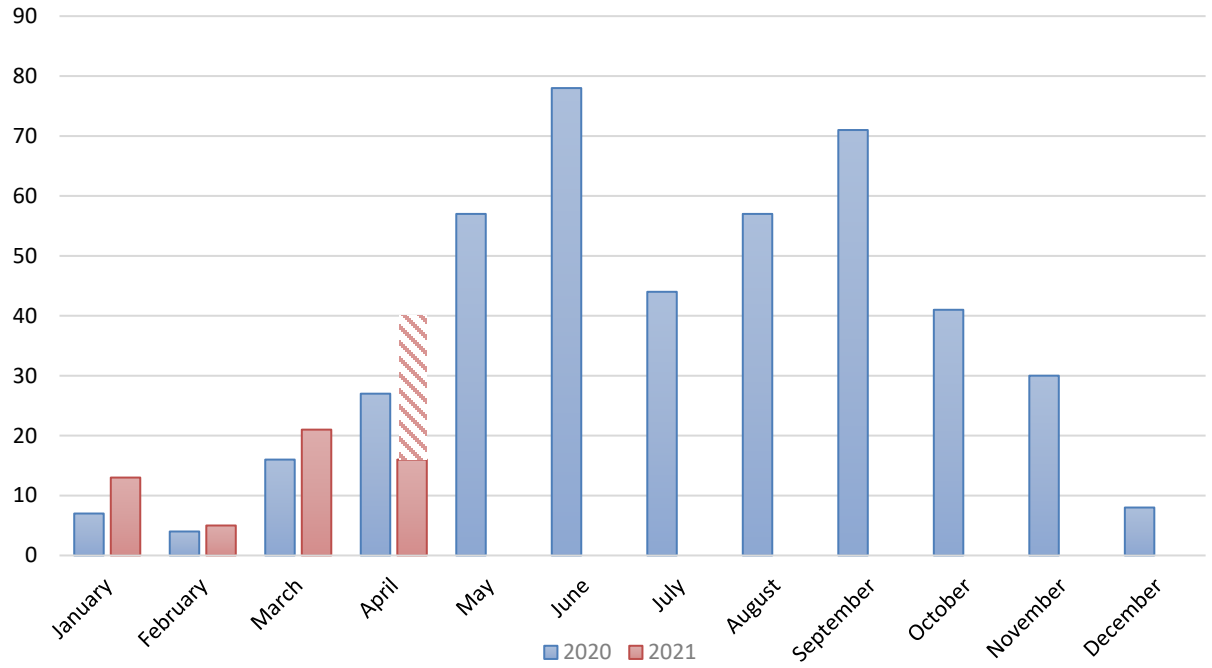
Figure 1: 311 Calls Related to an Encampment and Time of Day
July 1, 2019- April 12, 2021



During the period from July 1, 2019 to April 12, 2021, 311 received a total of 649 calls related to an encampment involving MSP. This includes 154 calls in 2019, 440 calls in 2020, and 55 calls to April 12, 2021. During this time, almost three quarters of all calls, or 73%, were received between 08:00 and 17:00. Of the remaining calls, 23% were received between 18:00 and 23:00, while 4% were received between 24:00 and 07:00. This information suggests that the bulk of all calls were received during the day, with fewer calls occurring at night and in the early morning.

Figure 2 below, provides a comparison between 2020 and 2021 of the total call volumes. Data from 2019 was excluded as the Interim Strategy only began in the Summer of 2019 and would not be reflective of total actual calls. As outlined in Figure 2, there is an increase in call volumes in the first quarter of 2021, and this trend is anticipated to continue into the second quarter and throughout the year. It is important to note that the increase in call volumes may in part be linked to the COVID19 pandemic, increased poverty, and inadequate housing options. With the closure of many public and private spaces, and the perceived threat of the COVID19 virus in congregate emergency shelters, individuals may decide to shelter outside in encampments. This increases the visibility and number of encampments in community, resulting in increased calls to 311.

Figure 2- 311 Calls Related to an Encampment by Month and Year:
January 1, 2020 – April 12, 2021



Within the context of supporting the Interim Strategy, Figures 1 and 2 above identify a growing need for outreach services in Winnipeg in the daytime and evening hours.

Service Review

In response to the growing need described above, and the request of Council, this section of the report provides a review of the Main Street Project Mobile Outreach Team as well as the Saint Boniface Street Links Mobile Community Navigator Team. To do so, this section will provide a general description of each service and outline their hours of operation, service areas, operational costs and proposed outcomes. Although this report will only focus on these two outreach providers as requested in the March 25 Council disposition, it is important to note that there are over 10 different street outreach services active in Winnipeg including the Downtown Community Safety Partnership. These are outlined in Attachment 3: *The Winnipeg Outreach Network Resource Guide*, under section titled *Street Outreach*.

Main Street Project Van Patrol Outreach Program

General Description: The MSP Van Patrol Outreach Program uses a harm reduction approach to support individuals in community including those experiencing homelessness. Core services include rides to the MSP shelter, the distribution of warm clothing, blankets, water, coffee, food and harm reduction supplies, and wellbeing checks. The services provided by MSP can also be

augmented to include a case work support team to provide more intensive supports and services to individuals in community.

Hours of Operation: The MSP Outreach Program can operate up to 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, depending on available funding. MSP has provided the City with a sliding scale of service based on cost. This includes a 24/7 model with case management support, a 24/7 model without case management support, a daytime and evening model, and a daytime only model.

Area of Service: All of Winnipeg.

Cost: The below chart provides a breakdown of the services, staffing levels indicated by the number of full-time equivalent staff (FTE), and the associated cost of the service.

Funding Options	**Annual Cost**
Tier 1: 24-hour outreach operations with case management	$867,200 (13.5 FTE)
Tier 2: 24-hour outreach operations without case management	$561,253 (6 FTE)
Tier 3: Daytime and evening outreach operations	$367,621 (4 FTE)
Tier 4: Daytime outreach operations	$189,417 (2 FTE)

Proposed Outcomes: If funded as a 24/7 model, the Van Patrol Outreach Program will provide outreach services and access to emergency shelter space, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This model would reflect the level of service provided by MSP prior to March 31, 2021 and limit unnecessary responses from the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service, and Winnipeg Transit, while providing social services supports for individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. MSP would continue to provide a lead role in responding to requests related to unsheltered homelessness involving transit shelters and encampments, and the mobile team would strengthen the overall outreach network in the City. If funded as a 24/7 model with case management supports, MSP case workers would augment the outreach staff by providing additional support to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness. While outreach workers provide immediate support to individuals, case workers provide longer-term support and can connect individuals to other services and supports including housing, health care, mental health services, and addictions support. According to the MSP, the model of having casework built in with mobile outreach services has proven effective in providing longer-term solutions and moving individuals from unsheltered homelessness to other levels of care.

Saint Boniface Street Links Mobile Community Navigator Team

General Description: The Mobile Community Navigator Team is staffed by 8 community navigators and 1 coordinator. This team provides two core services that include: connecting individuals to support services and housing, and providing mobile outreach to persons experiencing unsheltered homelessness using a case management approach. Through its mobile outreach service, the Navigator team provides direct services to individuals experiencing homelessness to provide food, harm reduction supplies, personal protective equipment, and basic hygiene supplies. In addition, the mobile team works on site to register individuals for income supports and provide follow-up services to ensure longer-term success.

Hours of Operation: The Mobile Community Navigator team operates from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and from 4:00 p.m. to midnight daily. The team also has an afterhours on-call support function.

Area of Service: The Mobile Community Navigator team provides service in the following locations: Old/Central St. Boniface, Norwood Grove, Norwood Flats, Old St. Vital, St. Mary's to Meadowood including the St. Vital Shopping Centre, St. Vital, North Southdale, Windsor Park, Transcona, Elmwood and Kildonan to Peguis.

Cost: The annual cost for the Mobile Community Navigator team is $412,548.

Proposed Outcomes: The Mobile Community Navigator team will provide outreach services and connect individuals to services and supports on a 24/7 model, however, between midnight and 7am services will be provided on an on-call basis. The Mobile Community Navigator Team will provide supports and services to residents in the greater St. Boniface Area which includes accessing shelter space either in St. Boniface or elsewhere within the City. Using a case management approach, the Navigator team will divert calls from the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service, and Winnipeg Transit, while enhancing support for the individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. SBSL could provide a central role in responding to requests related to unsheltered homelessness involving transit shelters and encampments in the St. Boniface area and would support a coordinated approach with other agencies operating within the City. Similar to MSP, the case management approach would aim to move individuals from unsheltered homelessness to other levels of care.

Key Considerations

To address the immediate need identified above, this report is recommending that the City enter into a grant agreement with MSP in the amount of $268,683 in 2021. The Public Service is recommending that funding be provided to MSP for 2021 as they are the existing first point of contact for this service, and have been providing this service for the City since 2019. It is the position of the Public Service that a call for expressions of interest, or a RFP be issued to solicit, and transparently identify, an outreach provider, or providers, to support outreach services beyond 2021.

Should the City not be able to sustain an external outreach service provider moving forward, this will have an immediate negative impact on the city's ability to continue to support the Interim Strategy and individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. This includes: a limited capacity to respond to 311 calls related to unsheltered homelessness involving encampments and transit shelters; a decrease in transport options for individuals from community to emergency shelters; and an overall decrease in mobile outreach services within the City. In addition to the above, without securing an external outreach service provider, it would likely lead to an increase in calls for service to the Winnipeg Police, Fire and Paramedic, and Transit services.

It is also important to note, that although outreach services play a key role in supporting individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, such services will not resolve the issue of homelessness in Winnipeg. These services are part of a continuum of supports that can be aimed at transitioning individuals from unsheltered homelessness to housing. On their own

however, outreach services will do little to address the larger issue of access to appropriate, supportive, and affordable housing options in the City.

Potential Funding Sources

Funding for 2021

Given the above recommendations, and the existing model provided by MSP, the cost of outreach services over the next year will vary depending on the level of service to be provided. It is the recommendation of the Public Service that the City support the continuation of the 24/7 outreach service previously provided by MSP prior to March 31, 2021. Although the addition of casework support under the MSP model would enhance services to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness, funding limitations prevent the Public Service from recommending this additional level of service. As such the Public Service recommends funding MSP at the second tier noted for 2021.

In terms of overall costs and sources of funding, earlier this year MSP was approved for up to $152,257 in new one-time funding for its mobile outreach service through the Federal Reaching Home Program administered by End Homelessness Winnipeg. This funding is intended to support the mobile outreach service from 11:30pm to 8:00am 7 days per week. MSP also receives additional funding from the Province of Manitoba. Although the Province does not explicitly fund the mobile outreach service it does provide over $2.25 million in ongoing funding to support MPS's housing programming, its emergency shelter spaces, and mainstay program. During the pandemic, the Province has also provided MSP with $3.56 million related to services specific to managing the pandemic. In conversation with the Department of Families, the Winnipeg Public Service has received confirmation that the Province will not be incrementally matching City funding for mobile outreach services as contemplated in this report. Taken together, it is the recommendation of the Public Service that in 2021 the City combine its resources with the already approved Reaching Home funding allocated by EHW. In doing so the City will provide up to $268,683 in 2021 to fund services for the period of April 1 to December 31, 2021 (annual cost of $561,253 prorated for nine-months, less the Federal Reaching Home Program grant).

Funding for 2022 and Beyond

As outlined above, the cost for this service for 2022 and beyond is to be directed to the budget process for consideration. If supported through this process, it is the position of the Public Service that a call for expressions of interest, or an RFP be issued to solicit, and transparently identify, an outreach provider, or providers, to support outreach services beyond 2021.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: May 26, 2021

Project Name:
Interim Strategy: Mobile Outreach Support

First Year of Program **2021**

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ -				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ -				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 268,683	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 268,683	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	268,683	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -

Additional Comments:

Direct costs in 2021 represent a grant to Main Street Project Inc. to support mobile outreach program services beginning April 1, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the City's recreation, aquatic, and library facilities were closed in October 2020 with over 600 temporary employees laid – off. The closures continued through to early March 2021 resulting in one-time temporary salary and benefit savings that are sufficient to fund a grant in 2021.

Original signed by K.Lemoine
Kelly Lemoine, CA, CPA
Manager, Finance and Administrative Services
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

Corporate Finance
Legal Services (as to legal issues)

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

- Theme 3-1 - Opportunity:
  - Direction 3: Work with community partners to foster an inclusive and equitable community &
  - Direction 4: Work within municipal service areas as a collaborator on poverty reduction.

- Theme 01-2a - Collaborate to Make Safe Communities -
  - Direction 6: Take a broad-scaled, complete and collaborative approach to crime prevention.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Not applicable

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services
Division: Community Development
Prepared by: Chris Brens, Manager
Date: 2021-05-26
File No: CMS-2021-6

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Request for Proposal 1113-2018

Attachment 2: A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada

Attachment 3: The Winnipeg Outreach Network Resource Guide, under section entitled “Street Outreach”.