Sent: Thursday, July 4, 2024 8:09:26 PM

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Delegation information
Committee: Executive Policy Committee
Committee - council: N/A
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): Reference: Item # 12. Proposed Grant Intake and Review Process

Service inquiry: Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: N/A
Comments in writing: Dear Mayor and City Councillors,

Our inner city youth are in crisis. The 2024 Winnipeg City Police report tells us the growth in violent youth crime rate is alarming.

Winnipeg Police Service Supt. Dave Dalal is recently quoted saying, "We can't arrest our way out of this problem, we need other solutions that are addressing the root causes." Community Service Programs are the solutions and the most effective tool we have to combat this crisis and rising crime rate.

The City of Winnipeg's inner city children are underserved and are suffering the consequences. To reverse this crisis The City of Winnipeg must provide secure long term funding to our inner city youth programs. We must do better for our children in need.

The City of Winnipeg must ensure funding to community service programs unless an alternative plan is in place to inform what will best reduce crime and increase safety.

Community Programs that provide activities, food security and safe places for our youth are currently the best tools for addressing the youth crisis in our inner city.

Stated in the COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ACTION PLAN 2023 - 2026

Item 1.4 ACTION: Expand access to existing facilities and programming for recreation, library, community gathering, and 24/7 safe spaces, especially downtown.

OUTCOME: Improve access to safe community spaces

Item 3.2 ACTION: Co-create a city-wide community safety, well-being, and crime prevention action plan in collaboration with community-level partner agencies and stakeholders. OUTCOME: Increase safety and wellbeing

Item 3.6 ACTION: Increase funding to implement the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy. OUTCOME: Improve access to library and recreation services and facilities

The City of Winnipeg must implement and fund these plans.

Crime is up 31%. Youth crime is up 23% from 2022 to 2023, violent youth crime is up 43% over the last 5 years. Funding Community services reverse this trend.

Investing in Youth Programming is a win, win for the youth and for the safety and security of our city. Youth who have access to programming that provides activities, food security and a safe space to thrive have a place to be other than out on our streets. Community Programs provide our children with an alternative to addiction, homelessness, hunger and boredom. These vital programs provide our city's troubled and forgotten youth with a chance for a better tomorrow.

I stand in solidarity with community organizations that firmly oppose both the proposed alterations to the Community Grants Program review process and the substantial 62% reduction in funding for the critical initiatives it funds that directly contribute to community safety, community development, and poverty reduction.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed changes to the Community Grants Program and instead:

1) Maintain the existing grant review process
2) Reinstate the 2.1 million dollars to the fund
3) Expand the reach of the program by adding additional funds to it.

The cuts and the new review process threaten the stability and effectiveness of organizations that are essential to building a safer, healthier, and more inclusive Winnipeg.

Sincerely,
Les Scott