

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Minute No. 403

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

Item No. 1 Enhanced Public Space Program

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council adopted the following:

1. That the existing Proactive Cleanup of Needle Debris and Weapons in City Parks initiative be expanded and form the foundation of a new "Enhanced Public Space Program", for a 5-month period to be operationalized by the Public Service immediately, as follows:
 - A. Expanding and enhancing the number of public spaces and hotspots responded to beyond the current proactive cleanup of needle debris and weapons in City parks initiative to include more City parks, bus stops, transit shelters, sidewalks, riverbank walkways, skywalks, pedestrian corridors, civic plazas, boulevards, library grounds, community centre grounds and civic spaces which are experiencing persistent issues related to discarded needles, drug paraphernalia, biohazards and encampment debris.
 - B. Expand coordination of the new Enhanced Public Space Program with relevant departments (e.g., Public Works as lead department in collaboration with Water & Waste, Community Services, Winnipeg Transit, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, and other relevant civic departments), including timely removal of discarded needles, drug paraphernalia, biohazards, garbage, and encampment debris, and pressure washing where required, to ensure that everyone takes responsibility to ensure that civic spaces are clean and safe.
 - C. Where feasible, ensure coordination with the local area Councillor, and outreach agencies including but not limited to Business Improvement Zones, Siloam's MOST program, DCSP Clean Slate, Main Street Project Outreach Van, among other service providers accustomed to ensuring vulnerable individuals are offered available supports prior to restoration of the public spaces to an accessible and safe standard.
2. That up to \$206,250 of the balance of the funding approved by Council on March 20, 2024 to N'Dinawemak for the 24/7 Safe Space Program, be re-budgeted to fund the Enhanced Public Space Pilot Program;

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

3. That the City maintain existing staffed cooling spaces and work with and support the Province of Manitoba on locating additional temporary space for daytime drop-in use in areas where there is high demand on first responders and where outreach services are provided in the area.
4. That the Safe Winnipeg Initiative, through the Community Development Division, be requested to engage with businesses, through the Business Improvement Zones, with participation from the local area Councillor, to identify strategies and coordination for either foot patrols, hotspot deployment or other resources as required to ensure areas are safe for business owners, residents and customers.
5. That the Community Development Division expand their “Verbal Update on the Encampment Response Protocol” monthly report to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services to include a written submission that contains the following additional data, but not limited to, 311 data on encampments and public garbage requests, needle pick-up data, point in time encampment numbers, Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic responses to overdose calls, and any additional data that is collected to assess if the additional resources and investments are reducing calls for service and clean-ups.
6. That the Public Service report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services in January 2027 with an update on the 5-month pilot project which should include any relevant data to show if the pilot was successful.
7. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to provide additional addiction treatment and mental health services that are available 24/7.
8. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to renew and resource its Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Act to aid public safety and help disrupt criminal activity at problem properties.
9. That Council support the Province of Manitoba in seeking urgent financial assistance and sustained program support from the Government of Canada to respond to Winnipeg's addiction and mental health crisis, recognizing that the scale and complexity of the crisis extends beyond municipal and provincial capacity and requires a coordinated federal response, including the fulfillment of federal responsibilities toward First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and respective governments.

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

10. That Council put on record its support of the Winnipeg Police Service to “address the problem properties and on-street drug sales (trafficking), as well as the open drug use in public spaces where it creates harm”.
11. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by His Worship Mayor Gillingham,
Seconded by Councillor Rollins,

WHEREAS the City of Winnipeg has implemented a number of initiatives to improve public safety and support vulnerable residents, including enhanced outreach partnerships, the Safe Winnipeg Initiative, 24/7 safe space funding, encampment response protocols, and investments in public space maintenance, and yet recognizes the need to continue improving coordination, responsiveness, and the accessibility of public spaces for all users;

AND WHEREAS many individuals in the city are experiencing compounding crises such as homelessness, addiction crisis, mental health challenges, and a variety of complex social needs that require a proactive, compassionate, and service-integrated approach;

AND WHEREAS neighbourhoods, commercial districts and public spaces across the City of Winnipeg continue to see elevated levels of social disorder, impacting community confidence, safety, and accessibility;

AND WHEREAS the current concentration of unmanaged open drug use and illicit drug trafficking is creating significant and immediate public health and safety risks for residents, businesses, food security sites, and transit users, including exposure to biohazards such as discarded needles, human feces, and urine, as well as open drug use occurring in transit shelters, residential building entrances, commercial doorways, and other transit-adjacent public spaces;

AND WHEREAS the current concentration of unmanaged street presence, open drug use, and biohazards in residential lobbies, commercial doorways, and transit-adjacent spaces creates significant immediate health and safety risks for residents, businesses, visitors, and service providers alike;

AND WHEREAS in spring 2025, City Council approved a “Proactive Cleanup of Needle Debris and Weapons in City Parks” initiative, a proactive two-person seasonal crew collects needles and dangerous debris from designated City parks, in addition to the regular Gardeners and Refuse Collection staff;

AND WHEREAS extreme weather conditions create an urgent requirement for augmented indoor cooling, respite, and stabilization spaces to de-escalate street-level vulnerability and reduce pressure on public infrastructure;

AND WHEREAS the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) is experiencing significant strain due to a high and rising volume of overdose-related emergency calls;

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

AND WHEREAS the strain on the City's residents, businesses, first responders, is so great as to warrant a comprehensive response involving all governments with responsibilities for public safety and public health delivery, including Indigenous governments, provincial government, federal government and their departments, agencies and organizations;

AND WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba closed N'Dinawemak (Our Relatives' Place) on April 1, 2026, to renovate and transition the building into a specialized "navigation centre" designed to triage homeless individuals and connect them with stable, long-term housing;

AND WHEREAS on March 20, 2024 Council approved \$275,000 to N'Dinawemak to operate a 24/7 Safe Space Program in 2026 and \$206,250 of that funding has not been spent;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the existing Proactive Cleanup of Needle Debris and Weapons in City Parks initiative be expanded and form the foundation of a new "Enhanced Public Space Program", for a 5-month period to be operationalized by the Public Service immediately, as follows:
 - A. Expanding and enhancing the number of public spaces and hotspots responded to beyond the current proactive cleanup of needle debris and weapons in City parks initiative to include more City parks, bus stops, transit shelters, sidewalks, riverbank walkways, skywalks, pedestrian corridors, civic plazas, boulevards, library grounds, community centre grounds and civic spaces which are experiencing persistent issues related to discarded needles, drug paraphernalia, biohazards and encampment debris.
 - B. Expand coordination of the new Enhanced Public Space Program with relevant departments (e.g., Public Works as lead department in collaboration with Water & Waste, Community Services, Winnipeg Transit, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, and other relevant civic departments), including timely removal of discarded needles, drug paraphernalia, biohazards, garbage, and encampment debris, and pressure washing where required, to ensure that everyone takes responsibility to ensure that civic spaces are clean and safe.

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

- C. Where feasible, ensure coordination with the local area Councillor, and outreach agencies including but not limited to Business Improvement Zones, Siloam's MOST program, DCSP Clean Slate, Main Street Project Outreach Van, among other service providers accustomed to ensuring vulnerable individuals are offered available supports prior to restoration of the public spaces to an accessible and safe standard.
- 2. That up to \$206,250 of the balance of the funding approved by Council on March 20, 2024 to N'Dinawemak for the 24/7 Safe Space Program, be re-budgeted to fund the Enhanced Public Space Pilot Program;
- 3. That the City maintain existing staffed cooling spaces and work with and support the Province of Manitoba on locating additional temporary space for daytime drop-in use in areas where there is high demand on first responders and where outreach services are provided in the area.
- 4. That the Safe Winnipeg Initiative, through the Community Development Division, be requested to engage with businesses, through the Business Improvement Zones, with participation from the local area Councillor, to identify strategies and coordination for either foot patrols, hotspot deployment or other resources as required to ensure areas are safe for business owners, residents and customers.
- 5. That the Community Development Division expand their "Verbal Update on the Encampment Response Protocol" monthly report to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services to include a written submission that contains the following additional data, but not limited to, 311 data on encampments and public garbage requests, needle pick-up data, point in time encampment numbers, Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic responses to overdose calls, and any additional data that is collected to assess if the additional resources and investments are reducing calls for service and clean-ups.
- 6. That the Public Service report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services in January 2027 with an update on the 5-month pilot project which should include any relevant data to show if the pilot was successful.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

- 7. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to provide additional addiction treatment and mental health services that are available 24/7.

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Executive Policy Committee – Motions

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

8. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to renew and resource its Safer Communities and Neighbourhood Act to aid public safety and help disrupt criminal activity at problem properties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

9. That Council support the Province of Manitoba in seeking urgent financial assistance and sustained program support from the Government of Canada to respond to Winnipeg's addiction and mental health crisis, recognizing that the scale and complexity of the crisis extends beyond municipal and provincial capacity and requires a coordinated federal response, including the fulfillment of federal responsibilities toward First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples and respective governments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

10. That Council put on record its support of the Winnipeg Police Service to “address the problem properties and on-street drug sales (trafficking), as well as the open drug use in public spaces where it creates harm”.
11. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Required to Stand as Notice of Motion in accordance with Rule 17(1) of the Procedure By-law No. 50/2007.

Moved by His Worship Mayor Gillingham,

That Rule 17(1) of the Procedure By-law No. 50/2007 be suspended to consider the motion at this time.

Carried

Councillor Mayes was absent from the vote on the above motion.

The motion for the adoption of the item was put and declared carried.

Councillor Mayes was absent from the vote on the above motion.