

REPORT

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: December 12, 2022

From: Lisa Spitale,
Chief Administrative Officer
File:

On Behalf of the Senior Management
Team

Item #: 2022-761

Subject: Downtown Livability Strategy – Update and Next Steps

RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT staff be directed to submit service enhancement requests for the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy;

THAT staff be directed to seek Provincial funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy; and

THAT staff be directed to seek Federal funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy.

PURPOSE

This report provides the context for the Downtown Livability Strategy; a progress report on the actions as contained within it; and a rationale for the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget regarding service enhancements.

SUMMARY

New Westminster, similar to other municipalities, is having to deal with multiple crises, including the impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, the opioid epidemic, housing and food affordability challenges, increasing homelessness, mental health issues, and

extreme weather and climatic impacts. This situation is unprecedented, and it is challenging and stretching municipalities, from both a financial and a staffing perspective. Older municipalities like New Westminster also have unavoidable aging infrastructure replacement costs, which results in added financial pressure. Without funds to support aggressive and immediate actions, older municipalities will struggle longer-term and risk the exhaustion of municipal funds and resources. For the City of New Westminster, the impact is already affecting our ability to service existing reserves; this impact may start affecting service levels in core municipal services.

In October 2021, City Council endorsed the Downtown Livability Strategy which includes immediate- and short-term actions to address a range of issues in the Downtown:

1. Improved general cleanliness and enhanced access to 24/7 public toilets;
2. Enhanced homeless outreach and added emergency shelter capacity;
3. Opioid epidemic and illicit drug response;
4. Business support and engagement; and
5. Mental health response and support.

The City is trying to address the challenges in the Downtown in order to improve the livability for area businesses and residents, while serving the needs of the City's most vulnerable populations in a compassionate way. Many of these challenges fall under the jurisdiction and the mandate of the Provincial Government. Notwithstanding, several of the actions in the Strategy have been operationalized under existing City Departmental budgets and City staff work programs. In order to move forward, significant, guaranteed senior government funding is required on a long-term basis as the issues facing the Downtown are beyond the jurisdiction, mandate or fiscal capacity of the City.

The City has received some funding from both the Provincial and the Federal Governments. The most significant Provincial grant was during the pandemic when the City received just over \$6,000,000 in the form of a *COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant*. This grant was designed to support municipalities during, and immediately after, the global pandemic. This funding allowed the City to remain operational and helped provide important services to the community, in particular those most vulnerable and at-risk.

From a transparency perspective, as the City continues with its funding advocacy to both the Province and the Federal Government, in order to address the immediate issues in the Downtown, City staff will be making service enhancement requests in the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget for Council's deliberation.

BACKGROUND

In September 2021, City Council passed a motion to support livability, called the *Downtown Recovery Strategy* (Attachment #1). Based on this motion, City staff worked interdepartmentally to develop the *Downtown Livability Strategy* (Attachment #2). Staff from Community Planning, Economic Development, Engineering, Fire Services, Integrated Services, Parks and Recreation, Finance, and Police Service have all been a part of its development and ongoing implementation.

Homelessness and Other Social Issues

The March 2020 Homeless Count found 52 unsheltered and 71 sheltered homeless people in New Westminster. As with all homeless counts, this is likely an undercount of the true extent of unsheltered homelessness. In September 2020, and six months after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, service providers with a mandate to address homelessness estimated the size of the unsheltered homeless population, including those who couch surf, at three to four times the pre-pandemic number.

Of significance, the city's unsheltered homeless population tends to be scattered and not concentrated. The City has not become home to large homeless encampments as have become commonplace in other municipalities such as Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Maple Ridge, Surrey and Vancouver. This is to a great extent, a result of routine and persistent action by staff across a number of Departments working in conjunction with significant effort by the faith-based and non-profit sector.

The increase in homelessness is stressing faith-based and non-profit service providers. Of note, retaining and recruiting staff and volunteers is becoming more difficult, with many experiencing burn-out as a result of increased and more complex needs associated with the pandemic and the ongoing opioid crisis; this has significant service implications. The increase is also taxing City services, particularly in the areas of Community Planning, Engineering Operations (Sanitation and Parks Maintenance), Fire, Integrated Services and Police.

Business and Resident Concerns

In July 2022, Council endorsed a *Homelessness Action Strategy*, which provides a five-year vision and plan for addressing homelessness. In support of implementing its 46 actions, the City recently formed a *Homelessness Action Strategy Implementation Working Group*, which includes business, faith-based, non-profit, and resident representation. Based on the consultation for the Homelessness Action Strategy, the following issues were identified by businesses and residents, with these issues being most acute in the Downtown:

- increased litter due to reliance on take-out, including meals for the unsheltered;
- lack of access to toilet facilities for the unsheltered and increasing presence of human waste in the public realm;

- increased public drug use and intoxication, and increasing presence of drug related waste in the public realm;
- more people presenting with mental health issues;
- more camping and squatting, and heightened concerns about the potential for fires;
- concerns about public safety, and calls for increased enforcement;
- frustration with calling the police non-emergency line, and inconsistent police response; and
- limited communication about how the City is addressing public safety and social issues.

With respect to enforcement, advocacy groups and recent court cases and challenges limit the ability of Police and Bylaw Enforcement to act when it comes to social issues such as homelessness. For example, Pivot Legal Society is working to end the criminalization of unsheltered people by challenging what it sees as discriminatory laws and practices that violate human rights and prevent the unsheltered from taking steps to save their own lives, including erecting shelters. In 2015, the Supreme Court of BC, in Pivot’s challenge to the City of Abbotsford’s Anti-Camping Bylaw, confirmed the right to shelter overnight.

As such, other approaches beyond enforcement must also be explored to address such issues, and these approaches must also take into consideration the impacts of homelessness on both businesses and residents.

ANALYSIS

THE DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY STRATEGY

Endorsed by City Council in October 2021, the *Downtown Livability Strategy* recommends immediate- and short-term actions in the following five categories:

1. Improved general cleanliness and enhanced access to 24/7 public toilets;
2. Enhanced homeless outreach and added emergency shelter capacity;
3. Opioid epidemic and illicit drug response;
4. Business support and engagement; and
5. Mental health response and support.

1. Improved General Cleanliness and Enhanced Access to 24/7 Public Toilets

Staff are working to address two related issues associated with street cleanliness and public toilets: one, ensuring sufficient resources to keep up with litter, human waste and drug related waste; and two, improving access to public toilets.

With respect to litter, the City has increased the number and size of garbage receptacles in key locations, implemented more frequent garbage collection, and increased the number of staff tasked with litter clean-up by redirecting staff from other

areas. It is not sustainable to continue to redirect staff from other operational needs in the city; therefore, a service enhancement request will be forthcoming in the 2023 Budget to permanently staff an additional position for litter control and enable a sustained adequate level of service in the Downtown.

In addition to City crews doing street cleaning, the City has received two Federal grants: \$127,000 in 2021 and \$124,000 in 2022, under the Strengthening Communities Services Program. These grants are used to fund the 'I's on the Street' program - a micro street cleaning initiative which operates in three neighbourhoods, including the Downtown. With the 'I's on the Street' program, staff is working to ensure its sustainability beyond 2023 (including coverage and hours).

To support the unsheltered population and other members of the community, the City recognizes that access to clean, safe, accessible toilets is necessary. The presence of permanent, well-maintained, accessible and safe public toilets will help to reduce the presence of human waste in the public realm. To respond to this need, the City allocated \$650,000 of capital funding in the 2022 Capital Budget - from the General Fund Reserves - for the purchase and installation of a permanent, free-standing, public toilet in the Downtown. A competitive procurement process is in-progress to acquire the toilet unit, which will be placed in Hyack Square and connected to City water, sewer and electrical services.

The intention is for the toilet to be operational 24 hours a day, seven days per week. It should be noted that providing 24/7 access to the toilet is subject to securing attendant services to monitor its use, because toilets in the Downtown have proven to be highly susceptible to vandalism and other misuse. The City does not currently have budget for a public toilet attendant. Nor is there budget for any of the other costs associated with improved access to public toilets, including cleaning, materials and supplies, repair, renewal, utility costs and insurance. A service enhancement is required to support this additional work. Council will be asked to consider the cost for this service enhancement as part of the 2023 Budget process, in addition to the more routine costs associated with increased levels of service associated with public toilets more generally. If the funding that is needed to support the new permanent toilet in the longer-term is not realized, staff's ability to maintain a high level of service for this new asset and other public toilets will be compromised. This will have an impact on service levels to all users of the facilities. Staff are forecasting a need for \$225,000 for ongoing operating cost associated with public toilets.

Procurement and installation of the permanent, free-standing public toilet is a goal which staff do not anticipate achieving until the latter half of 2023, due to long lead times for procurement, and the construction needed to connect to City water, sewer and electrical services. In the interim, staff are working to install portable toilet units outside the overnight shelter on Front Street and in Hyack Square. The portable toilet adjacent the shelter will be monitored by Purpose Society to ensure it remains safe, clean and available for use. City staff are still working to secure a contractor to provide a similar

attendant or monitoring service for the toilet in Hyack Square. All toilets will be cleaned by the City's special waste contractor, which is a service described in more detail below.

Also under the heading of street cleanliness is drug and human waste. The City has recently expanded its contract with a specialized human waste contractor. Previously, the City utilized these contracted services on an on-call basis; however, beginning in December 2022, in response to an increased presence of more hazardous waste on the street - and with the forthcoming installation of public toilets near the nightly shelter and in Hyack Square - this contracted service will increase to provide a weekday patrol while also servicing the public toilets Downtown. Some of the cost associated with providing toilets will be offset by a \$200,000 Provincial grant that the City has received; the grant helps to ensure enhanced access to toilet facilities for the unsheltered in the short-term through the purchase of portable toilet units and the hiring of attendants through Purpose Society.

There has been increased reports of debris from warming fires and evidence of fires being lit in business alcoves, against business structures, and under the entrance to the parkade at 6th Street and Columbia Street. Three active fires have been reported; only one was still burning upon Fire Department arrival. The Fire Department has randomly surveyed the area but has not been able to conclusively identify the specific individuals who have lit the fires. Business owners have been encouraged to report fires while they are actively burning so that Fire Department personnel can address the issue directly with the people who are lighting the fires. Burnt debris has been removed from the local area but this has had limited success as the individuals who are lighting these warming fires find alternate sources of fuel to burn.

2. Enhanced Homeless Outreach and Added Emergency Shelter Capacity

The City allocated \$180,000 for enhanced homeless outreach services for the period from August 1, 2020 to December 31, 2022, with this amount being covered under Provincial COVID-19 Safe Restart grant funding. Recently, the City applied for a Federal grant in the amount of \$140,000 to extend the provision of these services until March 31, 2024. In mid-November 2022, the City was informed by the Province that the grant funding is over-subscribed, and they will be focusing funding on permanent solutions to homelessness rather than on services. While the application will go forward for review, it is likely not to be funded, and if funded, then only partially. As such, other funding sources will need to be explored to ensure the continuation of these services into 2023 and beyond.

The City worked with BC Housing to operationalize a nightly shelter with 50 beds at 502 Columbia Street, with access off of Front Street. While this shelter is meeting a significant community need related to the unsheltered, it is having a limited impact in addressing issues associated with homelessness, as it is only operational between 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. and does not offer support services.

The City is working with BC Housing to convert this shelter to a 24/7 shelter with supports, and served by two sanitation trailers with a combined six toilets, four sinks and four showers. Support services could include offices for the Integrated Homelessness Action Response Team (IHART), which comprises mental health practitioners and peer support workers, and witnessed consumption.

BC Housing approval on the funding for the 24/7 shelter is anticipated in mid-January 2023. If approved, the shelter should reduce camping in the area, debris associated with the unsheltered, discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia, the incidence of fires in which the unsheltered are trying to keep warm during the colder winter months, and the presence of human waste.

Moreover, the City is working with BC Housing to enhance extreme weather response program capacity, which would activate sleeping mats during extreme weather events until March 31, 2023. Lookout Society had previously hosted extreme weather response mats at the Russell Housing Centre at 740 Carnarvon Street but recently informed the City that they will not be offering this service given the limited amount of funding availability for it, and the difficulty in organizing staff and volunteers given the variability when it is operational (i.e., extreme weather events). The City has operationalized the Health Contact Centre at 40 Begbie Street as a Warming Centre when temperatures plummet and when life/safety issues arise related to the unsheltered.

Additionally, the City is working with BC Housing to develop 52 units of supportive housing at 60 to 68 Sixth Street. At this time, it is anticipated that these units, which will form part of a wood frame structure, will be ready for occupancy in 24 to 30 months or sooner based on the successful addition of Federal funding. These units will provide the stability needed for residents to address underlying issues which may be contributing to their homelessness. When operationalized, this will likely result in the closure of the nightly or 24/7 shelter at 502 Columbia Street. Note that this remains to be confirmed, and will be dependent upon needs at the time.

Through the Livability Coordinators (also known as Bylaw Enforcement Officers), the City is also linking unsheltered homeless persons who agree, and those in need, to community outreach. Working in a co-operative manner with a trauma-informed perspective, and offering bottled water and granola bars, as well as clothing items, it encourages co-operation and good will as people are packing up or moving onward. A challenge is the lack of a service or a space in which to direct these persons. To this end, staff will be drafting a proposal to BC Housing to fully fund a daytime drop-in centre, which could be operational from 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., until a 24/7 shelter is in place. This service or space could offer information and support services, and could be operational during extreme weather, including extreme cold and extreme heat events.

3. Opioid Epidemic and Illicit Drug Use Response

The City worked with Fraser Health to establish a *Health Contact Centre*, which includes an overdose prevention site and other harm reduction services, at 40 Begbie Street. Since opening from April 2021, there have been 2,177 total visits to and 97 toxic drug events at the centre with no recorded deaths. There have also been 675 referrals to services, including detox, recovery and treatment. The centre has saved lives and reduced public drug use and associated discarded needles and other drug paraphernalia. Health Contact Centre staff also conduct needle sweeps of the surrounding neighbourhood. The City is advocating to extend the hours of the operation of the Health Contact Centre to capture additional anticipated high utilization periods and to further reduce public use of illicit drugs while businesses are open.

The City is working towards a *Post-Opioid Overdose Pilot Project* that uses Fire Department emergency response records to identify residents at high risk of death from toxic drug overdoses. This Pilot aims to have people with lived experience together with a health care professional follow-up with the identified people to offer them information, harm reduction services, detox, recovery, treatment and other appropriate supports. It is hoped that this will reduce the harms of drug misuse resulting in fewer public overdoses and fewer deaths, and also stabilizing the lifestyles of those still employed and housed, thus preventing potential job loss and homelessness. Likewise, it is hoped the Pilot will also decrease demand for services from first responders, including Fire Service and the Police Department.

Other initiatives include distributing take home Naloxone kits and hosting Naloxone administration education for City staff who have frequent encounters with people who consume drugs. Additionally, an agreement has been established between Police and the *Rapid Access Addictions Clinic*, whereby Police can arrange same day appointments when they encounter someone consuming drugs, if deemed appropriate.

4. Business Support and Engagement

The City has developed resource materials for businesses to address social issues such as homelessness and the opioid crisis and has produced information webinars available on the City's YouTube channel and linked from the City's website page on Downtown Livability at www.newwestcity.ca/downtownlivability. Updates for a variety of initiatives underway and opportunities for businesses to learn or provide feedback are routinely shared in the City's monthly *Invest New West* newsletter, which has approximately 950 subscribers. Regular communication with the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association has been occurring and, through them, its membership. Economic Development staff regularly connect one on one to businesses through both in-person and digital means.

The *Canadian Mental Health Association* (CMHA) hosted an engagement session in October 2022 for local business owners, Tourism New Westminster and New West

Chamber of Commerce members regarding the new *Peer Assisted Care Team* program.

Another CMHA workshop - *De-escalating Crisis at Work* - was offered virtually in October 2022 to businesses, in partnership with the Downtown New Westminster Business Improvement Association. This session offered practical tips and tactics for front line staff and business operators on how to manage people in crisis should they come into the workplace. Approximately 20 businesses were in attendance. Additional workshops to support and train business owners in de-escalation techniques for people experiencing mental health crisis in and around their business will be held in early 2023 to build local capacity to support those with mental health challenges in the community.

An information session was held by City staff on December 5, 2022 where downtown businesses and residents were invited to attend and learn more about the actions underway as well as an opportunity to ask questions of key staff. The session was scheduled over 6 hours (2pm to 8pm) allowing flexibility for business operators and residents to attend. Twelve people attended: 3 neighbourhood residents, 4 business operators, 4 business association representatives, and 1 prospective business owner. In addition, the Mayor and 4 City Councilors attended. The primary concerns/questions staff heard were:

- A need for increased and timely communication of available resources (3 attendees)
- Clarification of the roles of the City, Province, and social service providers (2 attendees)
- Proactive and consistent garbage and human waste collection (4 attendees)

Attendees also expressed appreciation for the session's depth and breadth of information presented. As a result, staff are working to secure a location in the Downtown to set up the information session presentation boards on a temporary basis so that businesses that were unable to attend may review at their convenience. The presentation boards have also been added in a digital format to the *Downtown Livability page on the City's website* and has been shared in the most recent Invest New West newsletter.

The Downtown Livability Strategy also includes the Economic Development-related actions aimed at improving the Downtown economic base. For example, staff have introduced a new *Sidewalk and On-Street Patio Bylaw* to support businesses to expand their service offering.

Several other actions aimed at supporting businesses, such as *Business Licence Bylaw* update and fee review, *The Retail Strategy*, and collaborative marketing campaigns are all underway. Additionally, public realm improvements such as the reconstruction of the Fourth Street stairs and overall activation in this part of the Downtown are under review. Council will note that on the Regular Agenda of the December 12, 2022 Council meeting is a report titled: Downtown Livability – Public Realm Improvements and

Activation which provides the background, plan and next steps for the eastern portion of Front Street.

Included in the efforts aimed at improving the Downtown economic base is continued expansion of an expedited Tenant Improvement permitting process to help with revitalization, preparation of guidelines and an application checklist for property owners and tenants to procure permits for securing their entries in a manner that is consistent with Downtown livability objectives including street activation and safety (Attachment #3 for the draft checklist).

Moreover, there is increased outreach by Livability Coordinators who are regularly visiting businesses to provide an opportunity for in-person feedback from business owners and operators, along with proactively identifying esthetics or functional deficiencies such as graffiti, defaced or damaged signs and/or overflowing garbage bins in addition to the supports for the above noted homeless outreach.

5. Mental Health Response and Support

There are three mental health initiatives that are serving New Westminster: two are addressing the needs of those with severe and persistent mental health issues and one is serving those with complex care needs and the broader community. These initiatives are: the Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) Pilot Project; the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team; and the Integrated Homeless Action Response Team (IHART).

Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT)

The Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) Pilot Project is managed by the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (CMHA BC) and has a broad community reach. Support for this program is from the Provincial Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. This project now has Provincial support for 24 hours, seven days per week coverage. Council has led the advocacy for this project and has allocated part-time staff to conduct asset mapping of current mental health supports to assist the City with advocacy for future community mental health needs.

As this is a new model for the City and the Province, the City has worked diligently to remove barriers to implement this project, including advocacy for senior government funding, an integrated dispatch with 911, and helping to initiate and support it through Phase One of the Engagement Plan. When operational, mental health distress calls will be redirected to PACT, in which a mental health practitioner and a trained peer crisis worker will respond. The PACT team may respond with the support of Police and other first responders or on their own, based on the needs and the assessed risk. This should: lead to a more appropriate mental health response; move away from a criminal to a health response; and better connect those living with mental health challenges to community programs and supports. The project will be operational in late-December 2022/early-January 2023. CMHA BC has contracted support to professionally measure

the key success indicators for this project in order to ensure evaluation of the results. A youth mental health component will be included in 2023 with support from the Federal Government.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team

The New Westminster/Tri-Cities Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team provides flexible, community-based support for adults (19+) with serious and persistent mental illness and significant functional impairments who have not connected with, or responded well to, traditional outpatient mental health and rehabilitation services. Team members work closely with clients, along with family members or significant others, if appropriate, to create a plan to improve their quality of life and decrease their time spent in hospital. Team members include a coordinator, a psychiatrist, nurses, social workers, and a peer support worker. The ACT Team operates from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Integrated Homeless Action Response Team (IHART)

The New Westminster/Tri-Cities Integrated Homeless Action Response Team (IHART) works to stabilize and treat chronic health conditions, including mental health and substance use issues, with particular attention to those who are unsheltered and living in encampments and select supportive housing environments. It supports people's transition to new emergency shelter or housing in collaboration with BC Housing and social service organizations. Team members include a mix of nurses, allied health professionals, and clinical and peer support workers. IHART operates from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., seven days per week.

When all are fully implemented, those with severe and persistent mental health issues, including the unsheltered, will have enhanced access to supports, and, in time, congregate and supportive housing. This will reduce incidences related to mental health in public places, and help to ensure that those people who are receiving the assistance can more fully participate in the community and society.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City is trying to address the challenges in the Downtown in order to improve the livability for area businesses and residents, while serving the needs of the City's most vulnerable populations in a compassionate way. Many of these challenges fall under the jurisdiction and the mandate of the Provincial Government. Notwithstanding, several of the actions in the Strategy have been operationalized under existing City Departmental budgets and City staff work programs. In order to move forward, significant, guaranteed senior government funding is required on a long-term basis as the issues facing the Downtown are beyond the jurisdiction, mandate or fiscal capacity of the City.

City staff have been working to implement the actions detailed in this report through a combination of existing City resources and senior government grants. From a transparency perspective, as the City continues with its funding advocacy to both the Province and the Federal Government, in order to address the immediate issues in the Downtown, City staff will be making service enhancement requests in the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget for Council’s consideration.

The total financial implications to address the issues in the Downtown are estimated at \$4,392,000. These costs are broken down as follows:

- \$572,000 is for proposed 2023 Operating Budget Service Enhancements (0.33% Property Tax & balance from Development fees);
- \$2,840,000 is proposed from grants (\$200,000 secured and balance is unsecured/pending grant funding approval from other third parties)*;
- \$225,000 is for proposed 2023 Capital Budgets; and
- \$755,000 is from existing 2022 Approved Capital and Operating Budgets.

*unsecured grants includes a pending application for Building Safer Communities of \$1.8M which will span over multiple years.

Summarized Breakdown of the \$4.392M

\$1.627M Improved General Cleanliness & Enhanced Access to 24/7 Public Toilets:

- \$0.675M – Existing Approved Capital
- \$0.200M – Existing Secured Grant Funding
- \$0.332M – 2023 Proposed Service Enhancements (Operating Property Tax 0.3%)
- \$0.135M – 2023 Proposed Service Enhancement (Operating Development Fees)
- \$0.285M – Pending Grant Funding (Unsecured to Date)

\$0.830M - Enhanced Homeless Outreach and Added Emergency Shelter Capacity:

- \$0.075 M – Existing Approved Capital
- \$0.425 M – Pending Grant Funding (Unsecured to Date)
- \$0.105M – 2023 Proposed Service Enhancement (Operating Development Fees)
- \$0.225 M – Proposed Capital Budget

\$0.025M - Opioid Epidemic & Illicit Drug Use – Grant (Unsecured)

\$0.110M - Business Support & Engagement:

- \$0.005 M – Existing Approved Operating
- \$0.105 M – Pending Grant Funding (Unsecured to Date)

\$1.800M – Youth Mental Health Response & Other Support Programs – Public Safety Canada Grant (Unsecured)

Detailed Breakdown of the \$4.392M per Spend Line Items & Source of Funds

\$1.627M - Improved General Cleanliness and Enhanced Access to 24/7 Public Toilets:

- \$0.025M Garbage Receptacles – Solid Waste Annual Capital Program BU#12092
- \$0.130M ‘I’s on the Street’ Program – applied for grant (unsecured funds)
- \$0.200M Portable Toilets, Fencing, Servicing, 24/7 Attendants, Supplies – \$0.2M secured grant
- \$0.650M New Permanent Toilet – Approved Capital Budget BU# 12391– General Fund Reserve
- \$0.107M Street Cleaning staff (known as the “Beat” crew) – Permanent Operating - Property Tax Increase
- \$0.225M New Permanent Toilet and other Public Toilet Annual Operating Costs – Property Tax Increase (unsecured funds)*
- \$0.155M Specialist Human Waste Contractor & Street Cleaning – grant (unsecured funds)**
- \$0.135M – Senior Development Planner – Permanent Operating – Development Fees

***\$225,000 – 2023 Service Enhancement – Permanent Toilet Annual Operating Budget** - includes an internal staff position to serve as a public toilet coordinator, an external contracted cleaning service (preferably non-profit, community-based), cleaning materials, water and sewer rates, insurance, depreciation, repair and renewal for this new facility asset. The new internal staff position would oversee operation (staff, scheduling, procedures) of all public washrooms (including those in parks) and would be a public washroom specialist for the City, helping to manage, inform, strategize and implement public access to washrooms as a corporate response to the growing need for this service.

****\$155,000 – 2023 Service Enhancement - Specialized Human Waste Contractor** – in order to address the acute problem of higher risk waste, City staff are finalizing the procurement of a specialized waste contractor. The contracted service will provide a daily patrol for human, pet, and drug waste, in addition to providing a call-out service for emerging needs, and servicing portable toilets. After the \$200,000 Federal grant is

expended, and if no additional grants are secured, the City will need to keep funding this service.

\$0.830M - Enhanced Homeless Outreach and Added Emergency Shelter Capacity:

- \$0.140M – Outreach Program – grant (unsecured funds)
- \$0.180M – 24/7 Shelter & Sanitation (grant – unsecured funds)
 - 2 Sanitation Trailers
 - 6 Toilets, 4 Sinks, 4 Showers
- \$0.0M – IHART & ongoing Mental Health Practitioners, peer supports – non profits
- \$0.0M – Extreme Weather Support Shelters and Incremental Costs – EMBC
- \$0.0M – Supportive Housing 60-68 6th Street: 52 Units – BC Housing Project
- \$0.075M – Supportive Housing Project Manager – Approved Capital Affordable Housing Program BU#12401
- \$TBD – Additional Long-term 46 Actions
- \$0.105M – Downtown Livability Coordinator (Permanent via Development Fees)
- \$0.105M – Affordable Housing Planning Analyst – Temporary – Proposed Capital
- \$0.120M – Strategic Initiatives Coordinator – Temporary – Proposed Capital
- \$0.105M – Policy Analyst – Temporary – grant – unsecured

\$0.025M - Opioid Epidemic & Illicit Drug Use:

- \$0.025M – Pilot; worker with lived experience – Health Canada grant unsecured
- \$0.0M – Naloxone Kits – Fraser Health provides at no cost

\$0.110M - Business Support & Engagement:

- \$0.005M - 2023 Operating Budget – General Fund – Economic Development
 - Resource Materials
 - Webinars
 - Public Website Updates
 - Information Sessions – staff time
- \$0.105M – Downtown Livability Coordinator (Temporary via Grants) – (unsecured)

\$1.800M - Mental Health Response & Support:

- \$0.0M Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team – Not for Profit
- \$0.0M Integrated Homeless Action Response Team (IHART) – Fraser Health
- \$1.800M – Building Safer Communities; includes one-time funds for Youth Hub, for Dan’s Legacy Cafe, for PACT Coordinator Costs & Youth Program – grant funding (pending contract)*
- \$0.0M - PACT Program Efficiency to be quantified: Operating Budget – Property Tax
- \$0.0M – PACT Pilot Project: Canadian Mental Health Association BC and Province of BC

*Building Safer Communities is a 3 Year Grant – 2023 Implication is \$600,000

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to seek senior government funding to address needed services for the Downtown. Where funding is secured, the services and the costs outlined in this report will be funded via the senior government grants. If senior government funding is not secured, staff maintain that these services should be continued. From a fiscal transparency perspective, these added costs will be provided to Council as service enhancement requests in the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget.

To summarize:

The total 2023 financial implications to address with the issues in the Downtown are estimated at \$4,392,000:

- \$467,000 is for proposed 2023 Operating Budget Service Enhancements (0.33% Property Tax & balance from Development fees);
- \$2,840,000 is proposed from grants (\$200,000 secured and balance is unsecured/pending grant funding approval from other third parties);
- \$225,000 is for proposed Capital Budgets; and
- \$860,000 is from existing 2022 Approved Capital and Operating Budgets.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This is a high priority initiative. Several City Departments are working on the Downtown Livability Strategy and have collaborated in the writing of this corporate report.

OPTIONS

There are four options for Council's consideration; they are:

1. THAT staff be directed to submit service enhancement requests for the 2023 Operating Budget and the 2023 Capital Budget to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy;
2. THAT staff be directed to seek Provincial funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy;
3. THAT staff be directed to seek Federal funding to address the actions as contained in the Downtown Livability Strategy; or
4. That Council provide alternate direction.

Staff recommends Options 1, 2 and 3.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1: Downtown Recovery Strategy Motion

Attachment #2: Downtown Livability Strategy

Attachment #3: Front Street Gate/Shutter Application Checklist DRAFT

APPROVALS

The following staff contributed to this report:

Jen Arbo, Economic Development Coordinator, Office of CAO

Brad Davie, Assistant Deputy Chief, Fire Department

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning, CAPD

Gabe Beliveau, Manager of Operations, Engineering Department

Harji Varn, Director of Finance

Blair Fryer, Senior Manager, Economic Development and Communications

Jackie Teed, Acting Director, CAPD

Lisa Leblanc, Director of Engineering

Erin Williams, Acting Fire Chief, Fire Department

Serena Trachta, Manager, Inspections, CAPD

Denise Tambellini, Manager, Intergovernmental and Community Relations

This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer