

APPENDIX B – Outdoor Sheltering in Parks Temporary Support Services

MITIGATING IMPACTS OF SHELTERING

1. REQUEST DESCRIPTION

For the past five years, the City has approved annual investments to mitigate the negative impacts of outdoor sheltering in parks and public spaces. The purpose of the funding program is to address the need for increased public washroom cleaning, temporary infrastructure (ie. portable toilets, handwashing stations, etc), waste removal in parks and other public areas, security patrols, as well as bylaw enforcement. This program has expanded in recent years, due to the increasing number of individuals experiencing homelessness and mental health and addictions issues, who are living in City parks.

2. REQUEST RATIONALE

The City has experienced a particularly large increase in the volume of outdoor sheltering activity in the past year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, an estimated 250-270 shelters are erected in parks and other public spaces. As the level of homelessness has grown, concerns relating to safety and cleanliness in parks and public space have also increased.

City parks are not designed to accommodate sheltering and the expansion of this activity has led to various impacts, including:

- Debris and hazardous material such as hypodermic needles, broken glass, and biological hazards
- Conflicts between various other user groups and persons sheltering
- Damage to property
- Incidents of threats and harassment towards City staff by persons sheltering
- Criminal activity
- Risk of fire due to open burning for heat, cooking, drug manufacturing and consumption and presence of combustibles
- Damage to natural assets, such as trees, vegetation, garden beds, through cutting, digging, burning, and staking

Based on the experiences of the past year, staff are proposing additional resourcing to assist with managing the higher need for supports. The increased budget will allow for the following:

- Daily response to the impacts of sheltering activity.
- Expanded access for individuals sheltering to basic services (i.e. washrooms, water fountains, waste removal)
- Enhanced security services

3. SERVICE LEVEL IMPACT IF NOT APPROVED

The homelessness crisis is complex and the services identified are required to effectively respond to issues of safety and other risks. If the proposed budget is not approved, a reduction in the delivery of core services, such as those noted below, would be required to manage these impacts.

- Reduced street sweeping and washing
- Reduced pressure washing and sidewalk cleaning
- Reduced garbage collection
- Reduced parkade cleaning
- Reduced weeding and boulevard maintenance

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4. FINANCIAL IMPACT

Service Stream	2020 Budget	2020 Projected Actuals	2021 Proposed Budget	Notes
Sheltering Clean-Up in Parks	266K	560K	656K	Six staff seven days a week
Street Cleaning Services	0	150K	500K	Four staff seven days a week
Security Patrols	65K	352K	260K	24/7 mobile patrols to monitor park sites
Janitorial Services	30K	140K	140K	One staff seven days a week + Centennial Square extra cleaning
Portable Toilet Service (10 units)	8K	113K	114K	Hydrovac costs for toilet servicing and disposal of sharps
Temporary infrastructure (fencing, fountains handwashing stations, etc)	0	90K	70K	
Fleet	22K	22K		
Total	391K	1.4M	1.74M	

Due to the fact that a significant portion of the costs noted above are required because of the pandemic, staff will continue to seek reimbursement of expenses wherever possible from the province through Emergency Management BC (EMBC).

5. ONE-TIME OR ONGOING FUNDING

One-time

6. FTE REQUIRED

11 FTE's