



Memo

2019 November 18

To: Mayor Nenshi and Members of Council

From: Katie Black, Acting General Manager Community Services

Re: **Response to Administrative Inquiry re: Victoria Park Police Station (Councillors Farkas and Farrell)**

At the 2019 October 7 Strategic Meeting of Council, Councillors Farkas and Farrell put forward an administrative inquiry regarding the Victoria Park Police Station. The original inquiry included a number of questions directed to Administration (Part 1 – as detailed in this response memo) as well as a series of questions for the Calgary Police Commission about the decision to close the Victoria Park Police Station, costs of reinstating a downtown police station, their Service Optimization Review, potential opportunities for partners to support a reinstated downtown police station, and suggestions for possible Council advocacy efforts (Part 2). Part 2 of the inquiry was removed through a motion at the 2019 October 21 Combined Meeting of Council with the understanding that the Part 2 information would be discussed outside of the administrative inquiry process between the requesting Councillors and their Council colleagues who are members of the Calgary Police Commission.

The response below therefore provides the complementary information in response to each question in Part 1 of the inquiry as compiled by Administration with input from the Calgary Police Service and Calgary Police Commission. Information provided includes that available within the given timeframe and resource capacity intended for administrative inquiries, and also notes where further analysis would be required that is out of scope for the current inquiry.

1. Are there City of Calgary corporate land and lease-holdings in the Centre City which may be strategically deployed in order to assist the Calgary Police Service in the cost-effective reinstatement of a “brick and mortar” Downtown Police Station?

A preliminary assessment has identified five potential locations, each of which would require a comprehensive evaluation to determine feasibility:

- Fire Hall #1 – 140 6 AV SE
- Old Central Library / Police Admin. Building - 616 Macleod TR SE
- Former Calgary Economic Development location, Telus Convention Centre - 731 1 ST SE
- Former Greyhound Building – 1660 9 AV SW (requires significant lifecycle upgrades)
- NW Travellers Building – 515 1 ST SE (currently leased)

Similar to the Calgary Police Services' previous location in Victoria Park, third-party leasing could be explored.

While a full assessment of options would need to be undertaken, the Calgary Police Service cautions that substantial investment would be required for security, IT and other aspects for a police facility even if the space was free or low-cost.



Memo

2. *Are there opportunities for Civic Partners or Wholly Owned Subsidiaries to assist?*

The Calgary Police Service notes that police agencies are required by law to remain arms-length from private corporations; further assessment may be needed to determine what relationships or agreements would be possible between the CPS and The City's Civic Partners and Wholly Owned Subsidiaries. Any potential appropriate role for these organizations in the establishment of a new downtown police station would need to be explored on a case-by-case basis. Should there be a Council request to move forward with further analysis, the Civic Partners operating in the downtown area – including the Calgary Public Library, Repsol Sport Centre, Calgary Arts Development Authority, Arts Commons, Calgary Convention Centre Authority, Platform, Calgary Economic Development, Fort Calgary, and Tourism Calgary – could be invited to participate in analysis such as the impact of the closure and benefits of a new location on their operations, and the broader economy and community.

3. *Is The City of Calgary incurring costs as a result of the closure of the Victoria Park Police Station Closure?*

An analysis of costs directly resulting from the police station closure would be challenging. Costs could include such things as increased patrol by Community Peace Officers and increased surveillance by Corporate Security at City buildings, but it would be difficult to definitively link these to the police station closure specifically. Analysis that considers the impact of additional factors would be required; that work is outside of what is available within the boundaries of this administrative inquiry response. If further investigation is requested, Administration would connect with multiple partners and stakeholders which could include the Calgary Police Service, Calgary Community Standards, Calgary Fire, Corporate Security, and others.

4. *What are the forecasted policing needs to ensure the success of the Rivers District, considering the approved public investment (Green Line, Event Centre, BMO Expansion) and the anticipated growth of the area?*

The Calgary Police Service noted that they had not been consulted on the anticipated growth of this specific area, other than an invitation to submit concerns about the Green Line after the project was approved. CPS is currently engaged in a review that considers facility needs city-wide, with the results of that review anticipated to be available by the fall of 2020. Ongoing consultation with CPS on related City initiatives will continue to be a valuable planning component.

5. *How much tax revenue does the Beltline and Central Business District generate for the City budget?*

Property taxes are billed and collected on a city-wide basis and are not associated with a particular ward or geographic area within the municipal boundary. This is the result of a number of factors:

- Geographic distribution of property tax revenue and operating expenses are not criteria for the allocation of City operating and capital resources;
- Assessment and tax systems have not been configured to collect or report property tax information on a geographic basis;
- Clear definitions of geographic boundaries (e.g., "Beltline") within the municipal boundary do not exist for financial reporting purposes.



Memo

Significant changes to existing systems and processes, or data analysis on a one-time basis, would be required to provide this information, which would require additional staff and financial resources as well as a reprioritization of existing and planned work which is outside of the intended resources for an administrative inquiry.

6. *Would the reinstatement of a Downtown Police Station assist in Council's strategic priorities and other work, such as execution of Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction?*

The Calgary Police Service contributes to the achievement of Council and citizen priorities, and is an engaged partner on the Community Action on Mental Health and Addiction Strategy (CAMHA); however, it would be a challenge to determine the potential impact of a reinstated downtown police station on the CAMHA work due to the multi-faceted approach and many inter-connected factors. CPS maintains a strong downtown presence through patrol officers in vehicles, on foot, and through the bike unit. Addressing the root causes of disorder and offending behavior requires cross-sector and cross-governmental community collaboration. Police enforcement contributes to the management of these challenges, but cannot solve complex health and social issues.

While a police presence in the Centre City will likely continue to be important in terms of policing operations, perception of availability to citizens, and availability to connect with community organizations, there is no analysis at this point that demonstrates the impact of a physical building versus the current approach to police operations.

7. *Are there any other opportunities available, such as through funding sources or in-kind contributions, to assist with the reinstatement of a Downtown Police Station?*

Administration does not anticipate increased availability of funds from other orders of government or other partners or stakeholders in any form, including grants or in-kind contributions, which could contribute to the substantial costs of reinstating a downtown police station.