

## **FUNDING FOR DRUG COURTS - PROPOSED CITY OF CALGARY ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Canadian drug treatment courts (DTC) were created in response to large numbers of offenders being jailed for drug-related offences or re-offences due to underlying drug dependency. The Calgary Drug Treatment Court (CDTC) opened in 2007 and brings together treatment services for substance abuse with the criminal justice system to more effectively deal with drug addicted offenders.

The CDTC has demonstrated its effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for both program participants and the wider community. However, current funding challenges are limiting the ability of the program to provide services into Calgary and are hindering the establishment of new programs needed in other communities in southern Alberta. The CDTC serves clients from across southern Alberta which puts additional pressure onto the program.

Administration has undertaken a preliminary investigation into how The City of Calgary could advocate for the work of the DTCs. As a result, Administration is proposing to advocate for greater federal and provincial funding to support the long-term viability of drug treatment courts and the critical roles such programs play in supporting those affected by drug addiction as well as the systems involved.

In support of this advocacy, Administration is proposing submission of a resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) for consideration by either the FCM Board or as part of the 2018 FCM Annual Convention.

### **ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee recommends that Council direct Administration to prepare a resolution for submission to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities requesting the Government of Canada to support and expand the Drug Court Program.

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY**

On 2006 November 13 (CPS2006-66), Council approved annual funding from Crime Prevention Investment Plan projects including initial funding for the Calgary Drug Treatment Court.

On 2005 November 07 (CPS2005-67), Council approved and adopted the People-Places-Partnerships Crime Prevention Investment Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

Drug treatment courts (DTC) were created in response to large numbers of offenders being jailed for drug-related offences and re-offences due to ongoing drug dependency. First established in Canada in 1998, DTCs bring together treatment services for substance abuse and the criminal justice system to more effectively deal with drug addicted offenders. They attempt to deal with the root causes of offenses and are intended to provide alternatives to custody for simple drug possession.

In 2004, The Government of Canada (GoC) established the Drug Treatment Court Funding Program (DTCFP) as part of the Treatment Action Plan of the National Anti Drug Strategy. The

## **FUNDING FOR DRUG COURTS - PROPOSED CITY OF CALGARY ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

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GoC has committed an ongoing, annual amount of approximately \$3.6 million to DTCFP (Canada-wide). DTCs are also funded through provincial funding and some private donations.

The Calgary Drug Treatment Court (CDTC) began operations in 2007. The City of Calgary has provided some initial funding to the Calgary Drug Treatment Courts Society through the Crime Prevention Investment Plan (CPIP). These seed funding allocations to the CDTC concluded in 2017 March.

Since opening, the CDTC has regularly reported effective outcomes for program participants including reduced drug-dependency and lower rates of recidivism. Beyond these individual and community benefits, there are direct cost savings to government. For instance, a 2016 report stated that "...data show(s) that 69.4% of CDTC graduates have no new convictions since graduation", which lowers rates of incarceration along with related costs. The average cost to keep an inmate incarcerated for a year, for instance, is \$117,788 per year. Cost savings are also realized at the municipal level: data provided by the Calgary Police Service (2015) shows that 75.5% of program graduates have three or fewer contacts with police following graduation with an average of 20.7 contacts by participants prior to program entry.

Funding for DTCs remains a challenge. The Government of Canada's DTCFP is currently fully subscribed. Funding requests to the DTCFP must come from the provincial government. Allocation is then up to the provincial government.

In Calgary, a temporary halt in admissions was necessary in 2015 following the announcement of a funding reduction by the Government of Alberta. CDTC has been unable to meet demand for approximately the past 2.5 years. This is a result of both increased demand for services, and decreased funding resulting in reduced program capacity. The CDTC continues to seek an increase in funding from both the federal and provincial governments to sustain the current level of operations. CDTC is also well positioned to increase the number of program participants if the funding were available.

In conjunction with the ongoing funding challenges being faced by DTCs, the opioid crisis and high rate of methamphetamine use in Calgary is increasing the demand for service.

### **INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS**

Despite the demonstrated effectiveness of DTCs, the CDTC has expressed concern that long-term funding commitments are not being made by the orders of government responsible for justice, corrections, health and addictions and mental health.

While the funding of the DTC Program rests with the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta, there is opportunity for The City of Calgary to advocate for the increased funding commitments to the program. Expansion of the DTC Program would align with the Government of Canada's "Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy" which is a balanced and health-focused approach to drug policy, involving:

- a strong foundation in evidence;
- the restoration of harm reduction;
- prevention;

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- treatment; and
- enforcement.

Following the 2017 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference, Administration sought to identify opportunities to work with the FCM to advocate for The City of Calgary interests. One opportunity identified was to engage the FCM on the potential for The City of Calgary to propose a FCM resolution with respect to the funding for DTCs. Preliminary discussions with both the FCM and other City Administration indicated support for a resolution that would support expansion of the DTC program in conjunction with increased funding.

Pending Council approval of this report, Administration would work with the FCM and the CDTC to develop a proposed FCM Resolution. Following submission, the proposed resolution could be considered by either the FCM Board or voted upon at the 2018 FCM Annual Convention. The deadline for submission of a proposed resolution to FCM is 2018 January 09.

### **Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication**

Preliminary discussions with Calgary Drug Treatment Court Society (CDTCS) have occurred in preparation of this report. Further engagement with the CDTCS will be required should the recommendations of the report be approved.

### **Strategic Alignment**

The City of Calgary Municipal Development Plan includes policies that are "...aimed at promoting individual and community health and promoting a good quality of life by...nurturing vibrant, active, healthy, safe and caring communities". Expected outcomes from a potential expansion of the Drug Court Program could serve to increase the health and safety for Calgary residents.

This report also aligns with the Calgary Police Service Crime Prevention and Reduction Continuum.

### **Social, Environmental, Economic (External)**

Reduced drug-dependency can generate specific individual, family and community benefits such as family stability and cohesion and community participation.

Expansion of the CDTC Program has the potential to reduce drug dependency and drug-dependency related crimes in Calgary. As a consequence, there is the potential to reduce policing expenditures associated with drug-dependency related crimes.

### **Financial Capacity**

#### **Current and Future Operating Budget:**

All operating costs associated with this report can be addressed within current approved budgets.

#### **Current and Future Capital Budget:**

There are no capital costs associated with this report.

**FUNDING FOR DRUG COURTS - PROPOSED CITY OF CALGARY ADVOCACY STRATEGY**

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**Risk Assessment**

Increased funding as a result of advocacy for Drug Treatment Courts could see funding for other programs or projects cut or reallocated. These risks can be mitigated by continuing advocacy efforts for all projects that require federal or provincial funding.

Increasing the number of drug treatment courts in Alberta without a commensurate increase in funding could see allocations to individual programs such as the CDTC program reduced.

**REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Drug treatment courts have proven effective at reducing drug-dependency and addressing drug-dependency related crimes. Expansion of the DTC Program would be beneficial to The City and citizens. While funding of DTCs rests with the federal and provincial governments, there is opportunity to The City of Calgary to advocate for the expansion of the DTC Program.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

None