

Status of the Annualization and Unfunded Police Positions

Edmonton Police Commission - Recommendations

Recommendation:

That the Edmonton Police Service Operating Budget be increased by \$6.36 million, on an ongoing basis, to fund 40 FTEs for downtown revitalization, with funding from _____.

Report Summary

This report provides information concerning the status of annualization, unfunded police positions and implications for the Edmonton Police Service multi-year staffing plan.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 16, 2015, Agenda Review Committee meeting, the April 14, 2015, Edmonton Police Commission report CR_1973 was re-routed to the April 14, 2015, City Council meeting.

At the November 26, 2014, City Council Budget meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration work with the Edmonton Police Commission to provide a report, after the provincial budget is delivered, and prior to the setting of the mill-rate, on the status of the annualization (page 500 of the budget) and the unfunded police positions (p. 501 of the budget) and implications for the multi-year staffing plan.

Report

At the time of the writing of this report, the expected date for delivery of the provincial budget was March 26, 2015. If the provincial budget is delivered prior to the meeting, the Edmonton Police Commission will include the impact of the Provincial Budget, if any, on the Edmonton Police Service during its presentation. The Edmonton Police Commission requests that the source of funds be determined at the April 14, 2015, City Council meeting, during discussions of the 2015 Operating Budget Update.

This report will provide information to answer further questions regarding the Edmonton Police Service 2015 Operating Budget.

1. What is the status of the annualization, as outlined on page 500 of the operating budget document?

The motion relating to the positions on page 500 was carried and states:

“That the Police Services 2015 Operating Budget Growth in Policing service package for 35 FTEs be approved, and the 2015 portion be funded with \$2.437 million from the tax levy.”

As a result, the Edmonton Police Service will proceed with the recruitment of the 35 positions. The salary costs for those employees will be annualized, adding a further \$2.551 million to the 2016 Budget submission.

2. What is the status of the unfunded police positions as outlined on page 501 of the budget?

In addition to positions mentioned in question 1 (above), the Edmonton Police Service proposed 49 additional new positions in the 2015 budget; nine positions to address security on the expanded LRT network, and forty positions to maintain safety and security in a significantly expanded downtown entertainment zone.

The forty positions requested for the downtown entertainment zone remain a top priority for the Edmonton Police Service. Keeping the downtown secure, ensuring that visitors feel safe, and maintaining a positive reputation for the new downtown developments are all organizational and civic priorities. The combined number of new events, new licensed establishments and new housing and office units in the downtown area will be substantial (currently estimated at a 14% increase), and the projected demand for service will exceed the current downtown police service delivery model.

The forty positions requested to provide service would have been allocated as follows:

- One Staff Sergeant in charge of the Shelter District Beats
- Four Sergeants, two each, for the Jasper Avenue Entertainment Beats and Shelter District Beats
- 28 Beat Constables (14 Entertainment and 14 Shelter)
- Six to augment the Public Safety Compliance Team
- One for Extra Duty Policing to assist with major event management.

Reallocation from other areas of the city is not a viable option as call volumes in other areas of the city are expected to continue to increase as well. Because of this, alternate ways of providing the downtown entertainment zone with police service is currently being explored.

The Edmonton Police Service, over the past several years on a yearly basis, examined and eliminated those programs that contribute low value to service delivery. Meeting the goals of policing the downtown revitalization area will be done by adjusting existing Edmonton Police Service programs to reallocate police officers from other programs to new roles in the downtown area. Decisions as to what services will be adjusted will be made over the coming months.

The Edmonton Police Commission requests that City Council reconsider the proposal for these 40 positions during the setting of the mill rate. Significant lead time is required to ensure that these positions are in place prior to the completion of the major downtown developments underway including Rogers Place. This will result in \$2.407 million required in 2015 with annualization of \$3.953 million in the 2016 Operating Budget for a total of \$6.36 million.

3. What are the implications of this on the Edmonton Police Service Multi Year Staffing Plan?

The Edmonton Police Service Staffing Plan outlines the numbers of new employees required over the coming five years to keep up with demand. As it is an evolving plan, its numbers are updated each year. Factors such as call volumes, response times, population growth and police-to-population ratios are taken into consideration as the plan is updated.

Because Council elected to not support a portion of the Edmonton Police Service staffing request in the 2015 budget, there are two options open to the Service. It can either modify the staffing plan to incorporate the unsuccessful requests from the 2015 proposed budget into the 2016 proposed budget, or it can make changes to its current operational model by moving existing employees into areas of greater need. This leaves areas of lesser need below optimal levels of police support.

If this request is not reconsidered, the Edmonton Police Service plans to bring the request back for consideration in the 2016-18 budget process. This will add to the previously identified positions for 2016 and beyond.

Corporate Outcomes

This report contributes to the corporate outcome "Edmonton is a safe city" by providing options for police staffing to ensure downtown safety and security.

Budget/Financial Implications

Related to question 1, Council has approved the 35 FTEs identified in the Growth in Policing service package. The related annualization of \$2.551 million will be added to the Edmonton Police Services Operating Budget in 2016.

Related to question 2, there are 40 FTEs identified for Downtown Revitalization. If Council decides to fund the 40 FTEs, the total cost of the positions is \$6.36 million with a tax impact of 0.6%.

Justification of Recommendation

Funding for the 40 FTEs for downtown revitalization will help ensure that Edmonton's downtown remains safe and secure for visitors and residents.

Others Reviewing this Report

- T. Burge, Acting Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer