

# Open Streets Strategic Initiative Update

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## Recommendation

That the April 9, 2019, City Operations report CR\_6993, be received for information.

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the March 5, 2019, Urban Planning Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That Administration return to Urban Planning Committee with an update on report CR\_4360 (Sustainable Development) - Open Streets Strategic Initiative.

## Executive Summary

Open Streets programs consist of temporary closures of roadways to motor vehicles to reimagine how streets are used. The events have gained popularity worldwide as they provide an opportunity for community interaction and a unique form of active transportation.

In 2017, City Council approved funding for Paths for People, a non-profit pedestrian and cyclist advocacy organization, to bring three Open Streets events to Edmonton with five-kilometre long road closures. The City initially provided \$20,000 for planning purposes; however, due to board and volunteer turnover that limited capacity for Paths for People, no events were scheduled.

In February 2019, Paths for People approached Administration for assistance with a single event this upcoming summer. Their proposal is a smaller scale event on Jasper Avenue in August. Paths for People would plan and implement the event with support from Administration for the coordination of the road closure. The cost estimate for the civic services required for the event is \$58,000. Additional program and delivery costs need to be confirmed by Paths for People.

## Background

Open Streets programs, also known as Ciclovias, allow community members to gather, socialize, walk, run, bike, skate, dance or participate in other activities on selected streets by temporarily closing streets to motorized traffic. Local governments, non-profits, or coalitions can undertake these events and receive funding from a variety of sources, including public funds, private investments, and charitable donations.

The Open Streets concept originated in Medellin, Colombia, and since its inception many international cities have adapted the practice. Open Streets events have been held in over 90 cities around the world, including Seattle, Bogota, San Francisco, Ottawa and Winnipeg. Common themes for the events are:

- Designated routes take advantage of a city's natural and physical assets including parks, public spaces and community hubs. Events range from under one kilometre to over ten kilometers.
- Locations can remain consistent from event to event or move around the city to serve more communities.
- Most new initiatives begin as annual events, and may eventually become monthly or weekly events.

### **Edmonton Open Streets Initiative**

Discussions to create an Open Streets event in Edmonton were initiated in April 2016 through a request from Paths for People, a non-profit pedestrian and cyclist advocacy organization. The goal of Open Streets Edmonton was to pilot three events in 2018 to promote active and healthy living, demonstrate the value and need for active transportation, educate safe behaviours for all road users, allow citizens to interact with each other, and experience local businesses and community destinations.

Following discussion with Paths for People about the initiative's purpose and requirements for success, Administration provided a report, Open Streets Strategic Initiative (CR\_4360), in March 2017. City Council approved support for up to three Open Streets events of up to 5 km in length, with Paths for People responsible for planning and implementation.

In March 2017, funding in the amount of \$270,000 was requested to cover organizational expenses, including up to \$138,000 in civic service costs for the three events. City Council approved an initial \$20,000 grant to Paths for People to begin planning activities. The funding agreement allowed for the release of an initial \$18,000 with a \$2,000 holdback to be released once Paths for People provided a report on their progress.

Paths for People worked with Administration to explore a number of possible routes in the Old Strathcona area. However, none of the Open Streets events came to fruition in 2017 or 2018 as Paths for People indicated that, due to a number of organizational changes in their board and staff, they did not have the capacity to plan and deliver the events.

### **Potential 2019 Event**

In February 2019, Paths for People approached the City to propose a five hour Open Street pilot event on Sunday, August 25, 2019. The proposed route includes the full closure of Jasper Avenue between 103 Street and 109 Street, along with 108 Street from 99 Avenue to Jasper Avenue and 104 Street from Jasper Avenue to 102 Avenue.

The civic services costs for the proposed event are estimated at \$58,000 and includes Parks and Roads Services (\$10,000), Edmonton Police Service (\$35,000), Edmonton Transit Services (\$8,000) and a unified event command (\$5,000).

Should the event move forward, Paths for People would be responsible to plan and implement the event (programming, promotion, volunteers, first aid, etc.) with support from civic services to close and secure the proposed route.

The previous contract in place with the group for 2017-2018 has expired, and would need to be replaced should funding for another event be approved.

## Budget/Financial

Paths for People have indicated that some of the initial planning funds which were advanced (\$18,000) remain, however Administration has not yet received a formal event proposal nor financial reporting from the initial advance.

## Corporate Outcomes and Performance Management

| Corporate Outcome(s): Healthy City                                   |   |                   |           |
|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| Outcome(s)   | Measure(s)  | Result(s)         | Target(s) |
| Edmonton's public spaces, festivals and events increase its vibrancy | Attendance numbers for the event                                | N/A - pilot event | 5,000     |
|  | Number of partnerships established to support event programming | N/A - pilot event | >5        |

## Others Reviewing this Report

- R. Kits, Acting Deputy City Manager, Financial and Corporate Services
- C. Owen, Deputy City Manager, Communications and Engagement
- R. Smyth, Deputy City Manager, Citizen Services
- S. McCabe, Deputy City Manager, Urban Form and Corporate Strategic Development
- B. Andriachuk, City Solicitor