



STAFF REPORT

Title: Cold Lake John Howard Society - Homelessness Estimation Project

Meeting Date: October 15, 2019

Executive Summary:

The Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project, conducted by the Cold Lake John Howard Society (CLJHS), April 2018, was to raise awareness about housing and homeless issues in the community of Cold Lake. The Project, aimed at a better and more comprehensive accounting of the number of homeless in the community, applied a data collection i.e. survey approach. The data compiled was intended to help inform support services and potential future strategic directions in Cold Lake related to homeless interventions and prevention. Additionally, the report would serve as a quantitative baseline for further grant applications related to prevention and/or intervention.

Homelessness is the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it (within the community in which they currently reside). It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.

Council requested for a debrief on the findings of the report. This report is prepared to brief Council on findings of the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project.

Background:

Financial support for the Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project was provided through grants from the City (Cold Lake Family and Community Support Services Strategy Grant) and the Allard Foundation. The City provided funding in the amount of \$88,500 over two (2) years.

The results of the estimation project have been summarized by the Cold Lake John Howard Society (CLJHS) in the attached report. Noted in the report, Cold Lake Homelessness Estimation Project is small (35 surveys completed). The project hoped to have 725 surveys completed. Further, "the number of completed surveys is likely too small for an accurate count of the number of community members that are homeless."



The Alberta Rural Development Network Rural Homelessness Estimation Project recommends the “each community should repeat the entire estimation process once every two years. It is important to estimate homelessness on a regular basis to identify the homelessness trends and to provide support in order to reduce homelessness in the community.”

In reviewing the Evaluation of the Homelessness Estimation Survey Process held within CLJHS report, there are fifteen (15) evaluation comments respecting the survey process. The comments point to challenges in completing the survey.

It is the position of Cold Lake and District Family and Community Support Services that the completion of another community survey, whose process takes into consideration and additionally implements the recommendations made from the debrief, in search of a much more comprehensive picture of homelessness in our community is recommended. Further, these recommendations should be considered as imperative and not as optional to the host organization. Another round of funding may be possible through the ARDN or the FCSSAA in future, or by way of a Community Strategy Grant through Cold Lake and District FCSS.

In light of the self-admission by the Cold Lake John Howard Society in their report April 1, 2018, administration would recommend outcome modeling be used to validate survey expectations prior to Council considering any grant request for a homelessness estimation project.

Alternatives:

No specific alternative are being articulated at this time.

Recommended Action:

That the Corporate Priorities Committee of Council accept this report as information.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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