
Street Activity Steering Committee – Request to Amend Panhandling Bylaw No. 7850 and Street Use Bylaw No. 2954

Recommendation

That the information be received.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to a submission from the Chair of the Street Activity Steering Committee to review Panhandling Bylaw No. 7850 and Street Use Bylaw No. 2954.

Report Highlights

1. Due to a trend in more aggressive panhandling and panhandling in groups, existing Panhandling Bylaw No. 7850 (Panhandling Bylaw) may require review to address the current needs within Saskatoon.
2. Street Use Bylaw No. 2954 (Street Use Bylaw) also requires review to address current needs within Saskatoon.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Quality of Life by ensuring Saskatoon is a safe, welcoming, and well-managed people place. This goal is supported, through the Community Support Program (CSP), by reducing and preventing crime in the city, increasing public perceptions of safety, and identifying health and safety as top priorities.

Under the Strategic Goal of Quality of Life, this report also addresses the long-term strategy to reduce and prevent crime and provide protective services in the Downtown core and neighbourhoods.

Background

The Street Activity Steering Committee (SASC) receives reports from the CSP every second month. The CSP reports on its activities and identifies trends or challenges they are experiencing. The SASC has seen an increasing trend in undesirable street activity and an increasing frustration among businesses, the Business Improvement Districts (BID), and the CSP in being able to effectively deal with it. Specifically, the increase in aggressive or coercive panhandling and people panhandling in groups is a rising trend that is having an undesirable impact.

At its April 13, 2015 meeting, the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development, and Community Services (Committee) received a letter and presentation from the chair of the SASC (see Attachment 1). The letter and presentation recommended a number of changes to the Panhandling Bylaw (No. 7850) and Street Use Bylaw (No. 2954). Committee resolved that the Administration report back

regarding the recommendations put forward by the SASC regarding review of Bylaws 7850 and 2954.

Report

The Panhandling Bylaw

Through BID members' concerns and reports from the CSP supervisor, the SASC has requested changes to the Panhandling Bylaw (see Attachment 1) that would prevent panhandling in areas where people feel vulnerable or where people are followed and repeatedly asked for money. The requested amendments and Administrative comments are summarized below:

1. Section 3
Expand the definition of "coercive" to include any form of panhandling which is not stationary.

Administrative Comment: The Panhandling Bylaw review in 2012 was extensive. There are a number of considerations to this request that require further review and stakeholder consultation.

2. Section 6 (2) currently states that "no person shall panhandle on a street, sidewalk, or other public place within 10 m of" (a specific list of uses such as a doorway to a bank). It has been requested that the list of uses be expanded to include:
 - doorway to any theatre, gallery, or performing arts venue; and
 - any parking pay station, on a public or private property.

Administrative Comment: The parking pay stations are new, and customers are vulnerable as they work through the instructions and the multiple payment options.

3. Section 6 (4) – currently requires an 8 metre distance from doorway to a liquor store or a beer and wine store. It has been requested that the list of uses be amended to include any businesses licensed to sell alcohol beverages.

Administrative Comment: Adding licensed establishments is an extension to the liquor, beer, or wine stores that are already regulated.

4. Section 5
Add wording to indicate that panhandling is illegal inside a business or on private property.

Administrative Comment: The SASC believes that the requested bylaw amendments will help manage the streets and ensure that all users are being respected.

The Street Use Bylaw

Through BID members' concerns and reports from the CSP supervisor, the SASC is requesting additional options to keep people moving along and prevent groups of people from congregating outside a business and intimidating other users of the sidewalk by blocking any other use of the sidewalk in that area. There have been several attempts to amend the Street Use Bylaw, but it has not happened to date.

The Planning and Development Division and the Transportation Division support the need to update the bylaw. Resources will be allocated in 2017 to undertake revisions to the bylaw.

Options to the Recommendation

Committee may choose to follow an alternative to the recommendation in which case further direction is required.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Planning and Development Division, Transportation Division, and the SASC, were consulted and have reviewed this report. Formal consultations with the various BIDs is required.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations; a communication plan is not required at this time.

Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

Administration will be engaging with the BIDs and other stakeholders on proposed amendments to the Panhandling Bylaw. A further report to Committee will follow in 2017. A review and report to Committee on the Use of Streets Bylaw will also occur in 2017.

Public Notice

Public notice, pursuant to Section 3 of Public Notice Policy No. C01-021, is not required.

Attachments

1. Letter and submission to Committee, April 2015

Report Approval

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Reviewed by:	Alan Wallace, Director of Planning and Development
Approved by:	Randy Grauer, General Manager, Community Services Department