

## **Downtown Clean and Safe Initiatives Overview**

**April 4, 2024**

Information Request Prepared for the Downtown Lawlessness Reduction Task Force

Intent is to be a working document, if there is additional information that would be helpful to the Task Force and Community we can seek out additional information and add to the document.

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## 1. Lethbridge Police Downtown Policing Unit (DPU)

### Program Description:

The 2024 Downtown Policing Unit (DPU) is composed of 1 Sergeant and 8 constables that operate in 4 teams. The DPU patrol on foot, bike when the weather permits and also the dedicated DPU Police vans.

Primary duties include:

- Visibility, engagement, problem solving, pro-active response and availability for calls for service;
- Interaction with citizens, business owners and vulnerable populations;
- Connection and dialogue with security guards deployed in the Downtown;
- Assignment of Downtown community problems for ownership, connection and follow up;
- Creation and implementation of projects to focus on recognized issues.

The Downtown is included in “10 beat” zoning structure of the police service, which will also have other members of Field Operations assigned. In addition to the DPU and 10 beat patrol members, other members may be dispatched to assist if required.

### In-scope Activities:

Attending calls for service and taking a strong proactive role through foot and bike patrol.

Working close with the Crime Suppression Team and Priority Crimes Unit targeting illegal and negative behavior.

DPU works closely with the City of Lethbridge to enforce bylaws such as the Public Spaces Bylaw and the Encampment Strategy.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Cannot represent any specific group or business within the community.

### Program Opportunities:

DPU collaborates with the Property Crimes Unit, Crime Suppression Team, Community Peace Officers, The WATCH and multiple community agencies.

### Program Limitations:

Criminal Code and Provincial Legislation guide enforcement and policing activities/projects.

### Funding Details:

Annual LPS Budget

## 2. Crime Suppression Team

### Program Description:

The goal, or mission, of the Crime Suppression team is to reduce violence and disorder, improve safety and enhance the quality of life for citizens of Lethbridge. The team consists of a Sergeant and 5 Constables who are part of the Criminal Investigation Section. They are on a rotational shift and can be called out after hours as the need arises. CST has the ability to operate in both covert and overt capacities.

### In-scope Activities:

The Crime Suppression Team focuses on targeting enforcement action on individuals and groups demonstrating negative, unwanted behaviour, and are committing criminal offences within our community.

CST collaborates with outside stakeholders, partner agencies and with other units within the Service on a regular basis.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

CST does not provide contractual private security services.

### Program Opportunities:

CST has collaborated with the Downtown Beat Unit on short term projects.

### Program Limitations:

The application of law as outlined within the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure to the Charter of Rights of individuals are adhered to while conducting criminal investigations.

### Funding Details:

Annual LPS Budget

### 3. Lethbridge Police Community Peace Officers (CPO)

**Program Description:**

The Community Peace Officer Unit (CPOU) is composed of 1 Sergeant and 11 Level 1 Community Peace Officers (CPOs) that consists of 2 CPO Patrol teams.

CPOs are appointed under the Peace Officer Act of Alberta and subject to the terms of their appointment. Lethbridge Police Service CPOs are appointed for the purpose of preserving and maintaining the public peace with authority to execute warrants, enforce provincial statutes, municipal bylaws, two Criminal Code offences and also operate the Judicial Interim Release office in the Short-Term Holding Facility of the Lethbridge Police Service.

CPOs on Patrol monitor and maintain public safety within their authorized scope of authority by patrol vehicle, and on foot, through responding to calls for service, actively deterring crime by being present in the community and building relationships with citizens and partnerships with stakeholders.

CPOs are dedicated to the Downtown of Lethbridge.

**In-scope Activities:**

Responding to calls for service within the Downtown, Theft under \$5000, Mischief under \$5000, executing warrants, community engagement, non-injury accidents, Judicial Interim Release Hearings. Providing information on safety and CPTED studies (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) to local businesses.

**Out-of-Scope Activities:**

Criminal Code investigations that are not within the enhanced authorities. Cannot represent specific groups or businesses.

**Program Opportunities:**

Collaborating with the Downtown Policing Unit, The WATCH, community partners and groups.

**Program Limitations:**

Government rules and guidelines, Peace officer Appointment (CPO Policy & Procedure).

**Funding Details:**

Annual LPS Budget

## 4. Watch Program

### Program Description:

The Watch Program is a volunteer-based initiative of The Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) with the objective of enhancing the community as a safe and friendly place for everyone to live, work, shop and enjoy, through social outreach, connection and intervention. Members of the Watch manage a range of issues and events that historically involve police intervention, but in reality, are not part of core police functions and most do not require police involvement. In managing these kinds of events and activities in place of the police, capacity is created for officers to manage incidents that involve criminal activity.

### In-scope Activities:

The Watch acts as the eyes and ears of social and community services agencies and our emergency service providers. They also connect people with Government of Alberta and local private support agencies and organizations. Watch teams connect people with detoxification and treatment services or housing and shelter, they arrange transportation, help people access services, assist businesses in managing negative behaviours in their area and a whole host of other activities to serve and help everyone. The Watch provides a highly visible deterrence to negative behaviours and crime, and a willingness and capacity to intervene in support of those who may be victimized in some way by crime. The Watch also acts in time of medical emergency providing lifesaving first aid and Naloxone when needed.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

- The Watch are not security
- They have a “hands off” approach
- No arrests
- Operate in downtown core
- Do not transport individuals but will coordinate with DOT team to do this.

### Program Opportunities:

The Watch currently is in discussions with Community Social Development to provide outreach services to at risk population during daily interactions and prior to Tier III of encampment enforcement.

### Program Limitations:

The Watch program is limited in areas they cover. Presently there are 5 zones that run from river bottom between 5 Ave North to 6 Ave South to Mayor Magrath Drive South. The other area of limitation is The Watch is a hands-off approach with no authorities under the law.

### Funding Details:

Annual LPS Budget

## 5. Regulatory Services

### Program Description:

The Regulatory Services department performs duties surrounding select bylaw compliance, as well as ancillary duties. Our primary responsibilities encompass overseeing and enforcing bylaws pertaining to minimum property standards, unsightly properties, business licensing, animal control, weed control, snow removal, taxi operator licensing and occasionally assisting other business units with their respective bylaw(s). Throughout 2023, the Regulatory Services department addressed a total of 1955 complaints. The Regulatory Services department also manages the Rattlesnake Relocation Program, Municipal Prosecutions Program and City Hall Security. Additionally, the department oversees the Lethbridge Animal Shelter and contracts for animal shelter operations and enforcement.

### In-scope Activities:

The following bylaws are a core function and within the scope of Regulatory Services:

- Business License Bylaw 5658
- Dog Control Bylaw 5235
- Escort Bylaw 5045
- Minimum Property Standards Bylaw 5747
- Snow Removal Bylaw 3896
- Unsightly Property Bylaw 5630
- Weed Control Bylaw 3595
- Wild and Domestic Animals Bylaw 3383

Currently, the Regulatory Services department has been tasked with exploring opportunities to support other business units with their property related bylaw matters (i.e., Transportation, Water & Wastewater Services, Waste & Recycling and Planning & Design).

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

- Bylaws not within our core business activities or ancillary responsibilities
- Enforcing provincial legislation and criminal code offences
- Verifying personal identity or criminal history (i.e., No authorization to police records and management systems)
- Powers of arrest or ability to detain individuals
- Dealing with mental illness, substance use disorder and high-risk offenders
- Any activities posing an imminent safety risk to Bylaw Enforcement Officers

### Program Opportunities:

Recently, Bylaw Enforcement Officers started conducting regular patrols of the downtown core and other areas of high transient activity to address private property related complaints to ensure vacant properties remain secure. As part of this effort, we are collaborating with the Lethbridge Police Service, Lethbridge Fire Department, Encampment Response Team and other agencies to strengthen these coordination efforts. Furthermore, we have implemented a new prioritization system in responding to the challenges faced by each group more effectively.

**Program Limitations:**

*Note: Regulatory Services does not consider the following a limitation:*

Regulatory Services, Bylaw Enforcement Officers are under the jurisdiction of the municipal government with approximately two years of training to achieve full proficiency and expertise tailored to align with the department's core responsibilities. If the Regulatory Services department is tasked with broadening its enforcement authority beyond primarily addressing land-based complaints, we would require access to policing infrastructure, police officers, support staff and other resources. A transition of this nature would require a significant investment of both funding and time; a non-viable solution to address immediate challenges in the downtown core. Furthermore, this could result in a gap of City services given our core responsibilities do not fall within the scope of a policing agency. While "limited authority" within Regulatory Services may be considered a program limitation, layered levels of enforcement are a functioning reality within Alberta, where each level of authority has a specific role.

**Funding Details:**

Regulatory Services - General: \$1,170,698

Animal Control & Contractual Services: \$657,708

Rattlesnake Mitigation Program: \$16,000

Animal Welfare & NOKA: \$65,000

Business Licensing Revenue: \$1,157,000

Animal Licensing and Fee Revenue: \$228,100

- Bylaw Enforcement Officers: 3 FTE Positions and 2 Seasonal Term Positions

- Administration & Bylaw Clerks: 3 FTE Positions

*\*The number of positions listed above does not include contractors (i.e., Animal Control Officers and Rattlesnake Mitigation Specialist) or upcoming new hires\**



## 6. Encampment Response Team (ERT)

### Program Description:

In alignment with the City of Lethbridge's Encampment Strategy, the ERT is a year-round response to encampments on public lands to balance the needs and protection of the dignity of the most vulnerable while maintaining public safety, health, order, and safe and enjoyable parks and green spaces. Response is based on public reporting through a 311/online portal and includes a risk assessment and coordinated response.

### In-scope Activities:

Receive reports that are made through 311 and triage accordingly. This involves two staff attending to reports of encampment(s) and debris (evidence of sleeping rough). As part of the triage process, outreach services and connection to social supports are offered, hazards are removed when possible, Clean Sweep is dispatched and a coordinated response with Lethbridge Police Service is completed, when appropriate.

Data collection and analysis is completed, which also forms part of the updates to various stakeholders, Council, and the public.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Act as law enforcement to remove individuals or issue fines/tickets  
Acting as a representative of private property

### Program Opportunities:

- Agent Status for private properties that routinely have encampment activity (i.e Lethbridge College, University of Lethbridge, etc.)
- Additional staff to ensure a timely response during peak season
- Update/modernize the Parks Bylaw

### Program Limitations:

Due to safe work practices, two staff are required to conduct all triages of encampments and with only two staff hired response can see delays in peak season dependent on sick or vacation leave, etc. The Encampment Strategy is for public spaces, not for private property.

### Funding Details:

The Encampment Strategy and the associated response is currently funded by the following:

- \$250,000 in one-time from the Municipal Stabilization Reserve (MRSR);
- \$500,000 in annual on-going from the Municipal Stabilization Reserve (MRSR)

The budget includes - 2 full time encampment response positions, 1 full time housing specialist, LPS resources, and additional resources include but not limited to vehicle, biohazard, training, PPE, contracted supports, etc.

## 7. Lethbridge Outreach Programs (Encampment Support)

### Program Description:

Those experiencing homelessness, mental health and/or addiction challenges, require multifaceted support. Outreach teams are key in helping move individuals into the housing and recovery continuums through an approach best for the individual. Program provides those residing within encampments/sleeping rough connection to resources.

In 2023, this was competitively procured and awarded in two components – Streets Alive Outreach and Blood Tribe Department of Health Street Medicine Pilot. Both ran from Spring to October 31, 2023.

### In-scope Activities:

Provide a timely and coordinated response in alignment with the strategic goals outlined in the City of Lethbridge Encampment Strategy. The Outreach Program team members travel throughout the City of Lethbridge to engage with individuals in encampments and experiencing homelessness with the goal of connecting them to stable shelter and housing options and other related services to support them in exiting homelessness and improving their overall wellbeing. Outreach teams will continually provide service and housing referrals, resources, and basic first aid and will provide targeted supports during the day of a coordinated debris cleanup and/or encampment closure.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

- Direct food provision

### Program Opportunities:

- Better connection and synergy with the Watch Program

### Program Limitations:

- Transportation of clients is limited to the availability of staff, and complexity of clients with overall safety in mind.
- Budget Initiative identified 2 distinct teams – outreach mobile team and Indigenous outreach mobile team; since budget approval and subsequent encampment strategy approval this approach has been tweaked.

### Funding Details:

\$153,460 (2023) / \$260,000 (2024-2026) in annual on-going from City Operating Budget (C-11.2 - Outreach Programs)

## 8. Diversion Outreach Team (DOT)

### Program Description:

Provide transportation support for persons vulnerable to homelessness or other street behaviours and who may be exhibiting symptoms of public intoxication or drug use.

Through mobile outreach, the DOT team works daily to mitigate problematic situations in the Lethbridge downtown area and in other identified hotspots in the community of Lethbridge by providing transportation in the DOT passenger van and referrals to community support services as needed. This includes diverting calls to emergency services (Lethbridge Police Service & Lethbridge EMS). DOT actively refers individuals accessing their services to other community supports and works from a harm reduction approach to actively reduce the effects of addictions and homelessness on our community.

### In-scope Activities:

Divert emergency services by responding to calls from concerned citizens and businesses for street-related behaviors through non-coercive engagement and attempt to educate the community about the most appropriate alternatives to dealing with intoxicated or drug-affected individuals; Prioritize support and referrals for individuals experiencing addiction and other high-risk situations such as homelessness, mental/physical health issues, and engagement in the sex trade. Transport and/or coordinate transportation for individuals to appropriate services such as intox/detox, shelters, routine appointments when possible, discharge from hospital, etc. in an effort to reduce inappropriate system use (EMS and Police).

Provide overdose prevention and care as needed.

Work in partnership with Sage Clan, AAWEAR, AHS Addiction and Mental Health Outreach and other walking outreach services in the community.

Utilize the Population Supports Navigators for population-specific system navigation whenever needed.

Make connections and provide support to key businesses in the City of Lethbridge including the downtown and around the Lethbridge Shelter and Resource Centre.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Cannot act as security or as a representative on behalf of a property owner. Individuals that are being transported must provide their consent.

### Program Opportunities:

Enhanced service delivery by providing extended service hours, additional staff and vehicle(s) to limit service interruptions and limit delays in response.

### Program Limitations:

DOT will not enter confined locations, such as washrooms, to engage with participants.

DOT must obtain verbal consent for service from participants. If after interacting with them, the participant refuses service or is unable to verbally respond, referrals will be made to the appropriate emergency service.

DOT is a hands-off service. Beyond providing minimal assistance to participants being escorted to the van, staff are unable to lift, carry or restrain anyone. Staff are required to be primarily hands off in service delivery, and are not able to carry or restrain individuals. They may help individuals who are willing to accept services so long as they can bear weight on at least one leg.

Does not provide follow-up services following transportation.

Individuals will only be dropped off at locations that are considered safe shelter within the City of Lethbridge, these include:

- Lethbridge Shelter
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Private Residences (upon confirmation)

Note: In all cases, DOT will need to confirm that the individual is allowed to be on the site, either with staff at the location or the property owner.

- Transportation to Chinook Regional Hospital will only be conducted if medically cleared and referred by a Medical Professional.

Operates Monday to Friday: 7:00AM – 10:00PM and Weekends 7:00AM – 7:00PM

**Funding Details:**

\$400,000 (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025) from City Operating Budget  
Supplemented by Federal Reaching Home funding where possible.

Positions: 1.00 FTE Team Lead // 6.21 FTE Diversion Outreach Team Workers

## 9. Clean Sweep Program (CSP) – Main Program

### Program Description:

The CSP is a contracted service through the Downtown BRZ, that seeks to make a positive contribution to Downtown Lethbridge. The main program offers individuals experiencing homelessness the opportunity to engage in employment related activities such as cleaning up garbage, sweeping sidewalks, shoveling snow, etc. CSP Participants are provided with an hourly stipend, supported to develop employment, financial and literacy skills, and based on individual readiness are supported to transition into regular employment.

### In-scope Activities:

#### Downtown Clean and Safe Program

- Ensure that a high level of cleanliness is maintained in the downtown with specific attention on the downtown district
- Cleaning up garbage and litter, sweeping, and general cleaning of sidewalks, lanes, and curbs on a year-round basis
- Pressure washing sidewalks and street furniture (Benches, etc.)
- Graffiti removal from private and public infrastructure with landowner permission
- Snow removal from priority public areas (festival square, sidewalk entrances to back lanes, sidewalk ramps, around parking meter kiosks, public art)
- Leaf collection and basic landscaping (watering flower planters)
- Other related tasks as agreed upon by BRZ Executive Director and City of Lethbridge

#### Hot Spot Program

- In response to calls received for service in identified hotspot locations, and as deployed by the CSP Foreman, CSP Stipend Team Workers provide additional cleaning support to these areas within the City
- Cleaning up garbage & litter, sweeping, and general cleaning of sidewalks, lanes and curbs on a year-round basis

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Cleaning of private properties that are outside of the downtown area

### Program Opportunities:

The ability to have contract cleaning with private property owners

### Program Limitations:

- Graffiti removal – temperature and equipment

### Funding Details:

\$425,000 (January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024) from City Operating Budget  
Positions: 1.00 FTE Clean Sweep Manager and 2.00 FTE Clean Sweep Foreman

## 10. Clean Sweep Program (CSP) – Encampment

### Program Description:

The CSP will assist in managing issues associated with encampments including biohazards and drug related paraphernalia. The CSP Foreman will be responsible for responding to encampment incident calls and clean-up days including cleaning up garbage and debris at the encampment site. The CSP Foreman and Team Workers will attend to an encampment site only after occupants has departed, and the area is vacant or during a scheduled encampment response where Lethbridge Police Service (LPS) are present. The Foreman will be the last individual at the encampment site once the CSP Team has completed the removal of items. These services add a direct benefit to the downtown zone it serves, and the wider community.

### In-scope Activities:

- The City of Lethbridge’s Encampment Response is triaged through 311 and is a coordinated response with several other partners
- The Foreman will work collectively with The City of Lethbridge and other key service providers to organize and support encampment clean-ups and removals
- The encampment response will be escalated to LPS if an occupant(s) refuse to leave the encampment, present violent or threatening behavior, or if illegal activity is occurring
- The Foreman manages matters associated with biohazard waste (urine and feces) in public spaces

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Responding to reports that are on private property, and reports that are determined to be “mess-in-lane”

### Program Opportunities:

Responding to reports that are on private property, under strict guidelines

### Program Limitations:

Limited to responding to reports in public spaces

### Funding Details:

Part of CSP’s main program

## 11. Clean Sweep Program (CSP) – Needle Debris

### Program Description:

Drug/needle debris being found in public spaces has resulted in anxiety within the community relating to the perceived risk of injury and transmission of blood borne diseases, not to mention the visual impact that needles and debris have on the perception of safety. To combat these issues a needle collection program was implemented in 2017 which includes a needle collection hotline (8:30am-9pm everyday except holidays), collection of needles from needle boxes and sharps containers, walking outreach, and community education and awareness.

### In-scope Activities:

The service provider will employ multiple strategies to ensure effective collection and disposal of drug related debris throughout the City of Lethbridge. These strategies shall include, but are now limited to:

- Regular removal of contents from the permanently installed needle collection boxes
- Distribute sharps containers and dispose of used drug equipment (public locations only) as required to ensure effective collection of drug debris where permanent needle boxes are not available
- Will work collaboratively with Alberta Health Services to ensure coordination of services and programming so that individuals are equipped with appropriate collection/disposal materials
- Maintain a separate and distinct community hotline for citizens to call when they identify a location(s) where drug-related debris can be found. This line will operate daily between the hours of 9:00 am and 9:00 pm seven days a week
- Engage in general drug related debris collection as required. This shall include regularly scheduled sweeps of locations known to be high volume drug activity areas

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

Collection of debris on private properties

### Program Opportunities:

Expand to private properties

### Program Limitations:

Limited to public spaces due to operational restrictions and funding

### Funding Details:

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025 - \$115,000 – Government of Alberta Needle Debris Mitigation Grant

Positions: 1.00 FTE Needle Debris Foreman and 0.63 FTE Needle Debris Sweepers (5 Sweepers x 1 hour/day)

## 12. Downtown Safety Education Program

### Program Description:

This program involves education initiatives for businesses and non-profits in the downtown related to safety, security, and community issues. This will be done in both print and digital formats as well as through monthly seminars. This education program is one of 12 initiatives identified in the City's Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy.

### In-scope Activities:

Safety education sessions are hosted by the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, City of Lethbridge and the Downtown Business Revitalization Zone. This initiative, which began in 2019, addresses the need identified by businesses to have more information and education about initiatives that impact their operations, including safety resources, wellbeing initiatives, and urban revitalization projects. This program was expanded in 2022 to include topics that promote education and information about emerging community issues.

### Out-of-Scope Activities:

The program's purpose is to educate the public on issues faced in the downtown area. This is not meant to provide training e.g. CPR, naloxone administration, etc.

### Program Opportunities:

Dependent on resources, the education sessions could be in locations throughout the community. This would increase the number of speakers, attended and as a result, increase the success of the program.

### Program Limitations:

When initially launched the sessions attracted over 75 people, but has since decreased significantly. Current challenges with content and attracting audience under current format.

This program, while available to the wider community, is focused on issues in the downtown area.

### Funding Details:

\$48,000 – City Operating Budget (C11.3 – 2023-2026 OB)

- \$12,000/annually



### 13. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Grant

**Program Description:**

The purpose of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Grant is to provide City of Lethbridge funds to support commercial property owners and/or their tenant(s)/business owners with permanent property improvements that enhance security and crime prevention measures. This program is a 50% matching grant of eligible, pre-approved, pre-tax expenses up to a maximum grant of \$5,000.

**In-scope Activities:**

Project shall consist of permanent security enhancements such as exterior security lighting, fencing, shutters, shatter-proof glass, bars, gates or security cameras. This list is not all-encompassing. Other improvements may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Project shall take place on private property located within the Downtown, Warehouse District, or 13 Street North (front-facing properties between 1 Ave N and 9 Ave N). Applicant must have an ownership interest in the eligible property and/or be a commercial tenant with a current City of Lethbridge business license.

**Out-of-Scope Activities:**

Providing funding to households for CPTED measures.

**Program Opportunities:**

None identified

**Program Limitations:**

Limited to commercial properties.

Ineligible expenses include: a. Ongoing operation, general maintenance and life cycle costs; b. Non-permanent finishes and equipment including rentals; c. Construction equipment and related hardware, tools, machinery; d. Construction insurance and permits; e. Administration, financial reporting, fundraising, preparing the application, and similar activities; and f. Expenses incurred prior to date of grant application approval.

**Funding Details:**

- \$428,400 - City Operating Budget (C11. – 2023-2026 OB)
  - \$254,600 in 2023 (\$50,000/yr in grant + admin expenses)
  - \$56,100 in 2024 (admin expenses)
  - \$57,900 in 2025 (admin expenses)
  - \$59,800 in 2026 (admin expenses)
- Additional \$100,000 top up provided from previously allocated and unspent Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy (DCSS) funding.