



City of Prince Albert

RPT 2024-209

TITLE: Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Program

DATE: July 4, 2024

TO: City Council

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Program be approved for eighteen (18) months, from August 1, 2024 to January 1, 2026; and,
2. That a comprehensive review of the program be completed by Quarter 2 of 2026, to be submitted for Executive Committee for consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On June 3, 2024, City Council initially considered the Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Program. The goal of the program is to provide a financial incentive to property owners to remove boarded or derelict structures, or to clear a site that generates negative activity, is unsafe, or is a nuisance to the neighbourhood. The incentive is to be funded by the Housing Reserve, and any funds that are awarded will be repaid by the property owner through the redirection of their property taxes until the total amount is repaid.

This report details the circumstances and criteria that Administration intends to review, some of which are:

- the economic value of the property compared to the cost to remedy the issue; is it reasonable to fix the property or not,
- the type and severity of calls or complaints received by Bylaw, Police, the Building Division or Parks Division, and
- the condition of the landscaping and trees on a site; large dead and diseased trees represent a considerable risk to homeowners and their neighbours.

Administration is seeking approval of the program for eighteen (18) months and that a review be completed and submitted for Council consideration by quarter 2, 2026.

BACKGROUND:

On June 3, 2024, City Council considered RPT 24-158, titled "\$1 Lot and Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Programs". See attached for a copy of the report.

To summarize the June 2023 report, the traditional methods for managing issues like boarded or derelict properties have become problematic for neighbours and Administration as they require a significant amount of time and resources, which have become difficult to afford and are quite slow; a portion of the time it takes to manage the problem properties in one neighbourhood is equivalent to every working hour of one of the City's two Bylaw Officers and processing Orders through the courts takes months over and above the time it took to get to that step. In an effort to encourage people to be more proactive in managing these issues, the City has created an incentive program to help offset the cost of demolition.

The goal of the Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Program is to incentivize the removal of boarded or derelict structures and dead or diseased trees that are unsafe or cause a nuisance to the neighbourhood. The value of the incentive is up to \$10,000 for the removal of structures and up to \$1000 for the removal of dead or diseased trees. The funding is provided as a waiver of fees at the City Landfill or paid directly to the landscaping or tree removal company that completed the work; the program requires that applicants utilize licensed, professional services to complete the necessary work. See attached for a copy of the program application and information.

PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:

To ensure that this program is utilized as intended, Administration has developed a scoring matrix to assess each application. See the last page of the program application attached.

As part of the overall review, Administration will review the economic value of the property and compare that to the results of the matrix review, which includes:

- the approximate cost to remedy the issue; is it reasonable to fix the property or not,
- the type, severity and frequency of calls or complaints received by Bylaw, Police, the Building Division or Parks Division, and
- the condition of the landscaping and trees on a site; large dead and diseased trees represent a considerable risk to homeowners and their neighbours.

Once each application is evaluated, a total score is tallied and if it meets the appropriate criteria, funding will be provided.

Also, it is important to keep in mind that anyone can have a problem property, and it can be for a wide variety of reasons. Regardless, the goal is to correct them and re-establish some peace of mind and safety for a homeowner or neighbourhood.

Seeing the recommendation above, the uptake of this program and the general circumstances that it seeks to remedy require review after one (1) year to determine if it has been successful or if program updates are required.

CONSULTATIONS:

Prior to preparing this program, the Planning Division consulted with the Building and Bylaw Divisions, and the Public Works, Parks/Rec/Culture, and Financial Services Departments to finalize the scope of the program and establish the review criteria.

COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:

Once approved, Administration will finalize the program literature and post it on the City website, prepare information for the City billboard and a media release, and it will be distributed directly to property owners by staff when they attend a property that may benefit from the funding.

“The City of Prince Albert is offering a financial incentive to encourage property owners who have a boarded or derelict building or site to remove the problematic structure(s). Funding may also be provided to offset the cost to remove large dead or diseased trees. Property owners are required to apply for the funding and the proper permits before any work is completed as there are program terms and conditions. The incentive is funded by the Housing Reserve and any funds that are awarded will be repaid by the property owner through the temporary redirection of their property taxes, until the total amount is repaid.”

BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This program is being funded by the Housing Reserve, the current balance of which is \$275,660.22. Any funds that are awarded will be repaid by the property owner through the redirection of their property taxes, until the total amount is repaid.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

There are no privacy, policy, legal or environmental considerations, or options to the recommendation to consider with this report.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

In order to build a better City, it is important to accept that some issues may not resolve on their own and municipal support is required. While there are situations where properties are neglected for the wrong reasons, some may become so due to circumstances that are not within a homeowner's control. The peace, quiet and dignity of a neighbourhood are invaluable, so providing financial assistance that is not funded by ratepayers to reestablish this is also invaluable.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:

One of the primary features of an Official Community Plan is the establishment of goals and policy statements to encourage behavior, actions, activities, etc. that all support the growth and vitality of our city, the way we've planned it. Support for the vulnerable, in many different ways, features in numerous places throughout the OCP and it is necessary in ensuring the community foundation we build upon is strong. Programs like this provide resources to remedy issues that can be difficult, if not impossible, for some to afford. And, providing resources to ensure that our residents, our community foundation, are strong, is imperative.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

ATTACHMENTS:

- RPT 24-158
- 2024 Derelict Property Demolition Incentive Program

Written by: Kristina Karpluk, Planning Manager

Approved by: Director of Community Development, Financial Services and City Manager