

## Appendix E



### Housing Standards Enforcement Team Update

<b>Date</b>	September 15, 2020
<b>To</b>	Mayor's Housing Commission
<b>From</b>	City Planning & Community Development
<b>Service Area</b>	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
<b>Item No.</b>	MHC20-5

#### RECOMMENDATION

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That Mayor's Housing Commission receive and file this report.

#### ISSUE

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This report provides an overview of Regina's Housing Standards Enforcement Team (HSET) and updates the Commission on enforcement activities by the Commission since 2019. The report is in response to questions raised by the Commission at its June 16, 2020 meeting.

#### IMPACTS

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##### **Policy/Strategic Impact**

The work done by HSET is aligned with Goal 13 of the Comprehensive Housing Strategy, which calls for improving compliance with safety and property maintenance standards.

#### OTHER OPTIONS

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That this report be submitted to City Council for information.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

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None with respect to this report.

## DISCUSSION

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HSET was established in 2004 to coordinate inspection and enforcement related to deteriorated and unsafe housing conditions. HSET was suspended in 2016 for evaluation and revision due to a decline in referrals, possibly because of the previously low vacancy rate and fear of eviction if a tenant initiated an inspection. Following community outreach, HSET was relaunched in the spring of 2018 and is comprised of members from the following agencies and City of Regina (City) branches:

- Bylaw Enforcement – Enforcing the *Regina Community Standards Bylaw No. 2016-2* pertaining to housing standard deficiencies, such as property maintenance for both interior concerns, as well as those identified on the exterior. Although ticketing for maintenance deficiencies is not provided for under the *Regina Community Standards Bylaw No. 2016-2*, Orders to Comply are issued for violations and demolition or prosecution in extreme cases may be pursued. Often the branch will hire contractors to perform the work as required if the owner is non-compliant. The Bylaw Enforcement Officer III is responsible for the coordination and record keeping of the team.
- Development Services – Building Standards – Enforcing the *Building Bylaw No. 2003-7* and *Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act (UBAS Act)*, which delegates Administration of minimum building standards to local authorities. The inspector investigates concerns that are structural in nature, permits, as well as fire separation and the many other items addressed under the UBAS Act. They issue Orders for Engineer Reports and Demolitions. In addition, they can prosecute for failing to comply with an Order. The branch may also have contractors complete the work as required.
- Regina Fire and Protective Services – Enforcement of the *National Fire Code* and the *Fire Bylaw No. 2018-49* is the primary responsibility of the Fire Inspector. Orders are issued for a variety of different violations. Prosecutions can be sought after and fines can be issued.
- Saskatchewan Health Authority – Environmental Health – Enforces the *The Public Health Act, 1994*. This inspector is the only inspector that may “placard” a dwelling; that is to declare a dwelling as unfit for occupancy. They address a wide variety of concerns. Common concerns include infestations, mold, lack of plumbing and lack of heating. Placard Letters are the equivalent of an Order and are all encompassing of each branch and agency concerns being addressed prior to removal of the placard.
- Regina Police Service – These members do not serve an enforcement role, rather one of safety for the team. They enter dwellings and structures prior to the rest of the team entering, looking for the number of people, indications of criminal or gang activity, weapons and dangerous drugs and drug paraphernalia. They de-escalate

situations as required.

- Ministry of Social Services – Eligibility Unity – This team member supports clients by helping to find emergency placement for them as required. Often, the workers are notified by a team member of pending inspections so that they may be aware and better prepared to respond to an emergency displacement if required. They are valuable in being able to provide methods of contact with those clients that may not have consistent access to a telephone or email account.

### Conditions Initiating an HSET Inspection

A referral or request for initiating an HSET response must meet certain criteria. This includes:

- Deficiencies in more than one of the areas of address, which include structural, safety and sanitation. If a report is received of only one of those areas being compromised, it is referred to the agency responsible for the specific area of concern.
- Details are required. Vague or general descriptions may be considered if further communication is successful.
- The dwelling must be tenant occupied.
- Permission to enter must be granted by the tenant or the owner.
- The tenant must indicate or confirm the concerns if not being reported by them personally.
- The person making the referral must have witnessed firsthand the environment and conditions inside of the dwelling.

Some cases are unfounded. Some cases have minimal concerns but much more often the inspection results in investigations in which Orders and actions are required. Not all the team members may have to issue Orders at each location.

### HSET Statistics

In 2019, HSET had a total of 57 cases. In total, 43 orders were issued and achieved compliance in 39 instances. To date, in 2020 HSET has had 32 cases and of those, 45 orders were issued and compliance was achieved in 19 instances. A breakdown of HSET activity for 2019 and 2020 including number of referrals and demolitions is provided in Appendix A.

Note that due to COVID-19, HSET has suspended inspections; therefore, the statistics for

2020 are not consistent with those anticipated in the beginning of the year. Inspections will resume when all agencies and branches have been given the authorization for team members to enter occupied dwellings.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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None with respect to this report.

Respectfully submitted,



Director, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

Respectfully submitted,



Executive Director, City Planning & Community Development

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A - Summary of HSET Statistics