

DATE OF MEETING | February 19, 2020 |

AUTHORED BY | DAVID STEWART, SOCIAL PLANNER |

SUBJECT BRITISH COLUMBIA POVERTY REDUCTION GRANT APPLICATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Finance and Audit Committee with information and request direction regarding an invitation to partner with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) on a grant application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program to conduct a regional Social Needs Assessment and Strategy. |

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council adopt the following resolution:

“That the City of Nanaimo supports the Regional District of Nanaimo as the primary applicant to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action grant program for a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy and supports the Regional District of Nanaimo to receive and manage the grant funding on its behalf”.

BACKGROUND

The Regional District of Nanaimo is preparing a grant application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program for a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy. The RDN is inviting the City of Nanaimo along with other member municipalities and the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee to partner with the RDN in order to expand the scope and increase the regional benefit of the project.

Individual local government applications are eligible to receive up to \$25,000. A regional application is eligible for up to \$150,000. Although individual municipalities are eligible for a \$25,000 grant by coordinating at a regional level, the Region would be eligible for a \$150,000 grant. The grant will supplement an existing \$60,000 RDN project budget for consulting fees and public engagement for a comprehensive social needs assessment.

On 2020-JAN-23 the Gabriola Island Local Trust Committee voted to participate in the study and support the RDN as the primary grant applicant. Prior to the grant application deadline on 2020-FEB-28, all three other RDN municipalities will be considering a partnership in this grant application at their respective council meetings.

DISCUSSION

The overall purpose of a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy is to improve the wellbeing of all citizens, including those living in poverty. The Social Needs Assessment and Strategy is intended to address social needs throughout the region, including electoral areas and municipalities. The project would be organized in two phases. Phase 1 is an assessment of the current status of community wellbeing needs and an analysis of capacity to meet those needs, and phase 2 is a development of a strategy to address gaps identified in phase 1. The strategy will build on and be coordinated with the City's current Asset Mapping and Social Impact Assessment project being undertaken by the Health and Housing Task Force in partnership with the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition. The project will provide a valuable regional lens to understand social needs and capacity across rural and urban communities.

Successful grant recipients will be advised within 60 days of the grant deadline (before 2020-APR-28) and projects must be completed within one year from the date of grant approval (approximately 2021-APR-28).

OPTIONS

1. That Council adopt the following resolution: *That the City of Nanaimo supports the Regional District of Nanaimo as the primary applicant to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action grant program for a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy and supports the Regional District of Nanaimo to receive and manage the grant funding on its behalf.*
 - The advantages of this option: The project fulfills the City's need for a poverty reduction and wellness strategy. The City's participation in the study will not only financially benefit the grant application but will support the RDN in preparing a more complete social needs assessment and strategy. As the largest city in the Regional District of Nanaimo, the City's participation in the study is important to ensure the study truly reflects regional social needs. The strategy will build on and be coordinated with existing social asset mapping and impact work and support the *Liveability* objectives of the Strategic Plan.
 - The disadvantages of this option: While the majority of the project coordination will be done by RDN Staff, the City of Nanaimo's participation in the Social Needs Assessment and Strategy will require some Staff time, primarily from Staff within the Community Planning Section which could otherwise be spent on other community and social development projects.
 - Financial Implications: By adopting a resolution confirming the City of Nanaimo's willingness to participate in the Strategy, the RDN is eligible for an additional \$25,000 of funding. The City is not requested to provide any additional funding to support the project. By participating in the study, the City may be eligible for future poverty reduction implementation grants.

2. That Council direct Staff to notify the RDN that the City of Nanaimo does not want to participate in a joint application for UBCM's *Poverty Reduction Planning and Action grant program for a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy.*
 - The advantages of this option: Not participating in the study will free up Staff resources to pursue other community and social development projects.

- The disadvantages of this option: By not participating in the study, the City will miss out on an opportunity to participate in a regional assessment of our community's social needs. The City will therefore not be able to formally provide insight into the project to ensure Nanaimo's social needs are accurately reflected in the final report.
 - Financial Implications: If the City chooses not to participate in the study, the RDN would not be able to apply for an additional \$25,000. This project would provide the City with the ability to get a more comprehensive assessment and analysis at no cost beyond agreeing to partner as the lead agency as the RDN would assume the majority of Staff time to undertake the project.
3. That Council provide alternate direction.]

SUMMARY POINTS

- The RDN is preparing a grant application to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program for a Social Needs Assessment and Strategy.
- The RDN is inviting member municipalities to partner with the RDN in order to expand the project scope, increase the regional benefit, and increase the amount of eligible grant funding.
- The Social Needs Assessment and Strategy is envisioned to address social needs throughout the region, including electoral areas and municipalities.
- The project would fulfill the City's commitment to undertake a poverty reduction strategy.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: RDN Request for Municipal Resolution |

Submitted by:

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