

DATE OF MEETING July 15, 2020
AUTHORED BY DAVID STEWART AND KARIN KRONSTAL, SOCIAL PLANNERS
SUBJECT **BC HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PLAN H GRANT APPLICATIONS**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Finance and Audit Committee with details regarding two active applications for BC Healthy Communities Plan H Grants.

BACKGROUND

The Plan H program supports local government engagement and partnerships across sectors for creating healthier communities. The Plan H program is administered by BC Healthy Communities Society and funded by the Government of BC. The goal of Plan H is to support the Province's health promotion strategy by providing funding to local governments through the implementation of a number of grants and in-kind supports.

Plan H is currently accepting applications for the following two grant streams:

- Community Connectedness Grant (\$5,000)
- Healthy Community Engagement Grants (\$15,000)

In order to meet funding deadlines, the City of Nanaimo has applied for both grants to support two separate projects that fit with Council endorsed plans/planning processes. This report will provide details regarding the City's applications for both the Community Connectedness Grant and the Healthy Community Engagement Grant.

Community Connectedness Grant

Community Connectedness grants of up to \$5,000 each plus in-kind supports are available for up to 15 local governments working with health authorities and other partners to better understand priority areas and local needs and to take action to improve community connections in their community or region. Encouraging community connectedness is especially important during the current COVID-19 health pandemic; as Plan H notes, "fostering connection to others within community is important, even during public health emergencies calling for folks to be physically apart in order to combat the negative long-term health outcomes of loneliness and isolation."

The City of Nanaimo has partnered with the Nanaimo Age Friendly Community Society (NAFCS) to submit an application for a Community Connectedness Grant. NAFCS originally formed as the Nanaimo Seniors Task Force in 2018 to work with the City on the development of the Age-Friendly City Plan. The plan was adopted by Council on 2019-JUL-22 and includes the following nine area objectives:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Social Participation
5. Health and Community Services
6. Respect and Social Inclusion
7. Civic Participation, Volunteerism and Employment
8. Communication and Information
9. Food Security

Since that time the City has been working with NAFCS to support the implementation of the Age-Friendly Plan with respect to the nine area objectives. NAFCS recently received a \$5,000 grant from the United Way which they used to develop an interactive website with resources and activities for seniors which meets the objectives and strategies for the plan areas that address Social Participation, Health and Community Services, Social Inclusion as well as Communication and Information.

To build on these efforts the City has submitted an application with support from NAFCS for a \$5,000 Community Connectedness Grant to further improve access to information on local resources available to seniors.

Healthy Community Engagement Grant

The Plan H Healthy Communities grant program supports local governments in BC as they work with partners to create conditions that enable healthy people and places. More specifically, the grants are intended to “support communities and regions as they take multi-sectoral action to explore, learn, and initiate equitable community engagement strategies.” The 2020/2021 funding stream, which provides up to \$15,000 per successful application, focuses on Healthy Community Engagement.

The Healthy Community Engagement grant stream supports projects that:

- Create or build on healthy community engagement processes by working to empower the public in decision-making processes;
- Demonstrate multi-sectoral partnerships between local governments, health authorities and key community stakeholders;
- Apply an equity lens by considering who will benefit as well as who might be left out of project activities, and work to reduce barriers to inclusive participation;
- Aim for upstream action to prevent poor health outcomes by addressing social and structural determinants of health; and,
- Are sustainable and build healthy communities that last beyond the duration of the grant period.

The City of Nanaimo is currently undertaking a coordinated strategic policy review, REIMAGINE NANAIMO. The City has applied to the Healthy Community Engagement grant stream for a \$15,000 grant to broaden and diversify community participation in this process.

DISCUSSION

Community Connectedness Grant

Many seniors face barriers related to social isolation. Those barriers are exacerbated for seniors experiencing poverty, mental or physical health challenges, lack of transportation options and other social and cultural factors. Seniors with limited social networks and access to technology or media are often not aware of the supports available. Challenges for seniors accessing information about available supports have increased as a result of COVID-19.

The Community Connectedness Grant, if received, will be used to support the City and NAFCS in developing a dialogue with seniors in order to reduce social isolation, encourage social participation and promote communication and information sharing among seniors. The goal of the proposed grant is to establish a dialogue between seniors and agencies with a mandate to support seniors and to connect with and educate seniors on how to access necessary services within the community. Work plan actions include the following:

- Design and develop a brochure to assist seniors in finding relevant information;
- Sponsor a paper directory of services and facilities, building on existing work by *Helpseeker.org* and *seniors101.ca* which include both for-profit and not-for-profit agencies, to be distributed to seniors and seniors' service agencies.
- Work with senior service providers, both non-profit and for-profit, to ensure accurate information is passed on to seniors and establish a dialogue between senior clients and service providers.
- Distribute the brochure and directory in residential areas and primary locations where seniors go (e.g., medical clinics, pharmacies, shopping centres).
- Create a video tutorial to assist seniors in accessing online resources, such as *Helpseeker.org* and *BC211*.

If the application is successful, the \$5,000 grant will be awarded to the City, with the City responsible to receiving the funds and reporting. Funds will be distributed to NAFCS to cover printing and publishing costs and to hire a student to assist with the video production and brochure design. City Staff will provide oversight and assist with mapping of seniors locations, outreach and communications where needed. The majority of the work plan will be carried out by NAFCS volunteers.

Healthy Community Engagement Grant

The City of Nanaimo's coordinated strategic policy review, REIMAGINE NANAIMO, is the process through which the City will create or update its major policy documents. Community engagement is a core component of this process, as we seek to ensure that new and existing policy reflects community priorities. If we are successful in obtaining this grant, the funding will be used to broaden and diversify community participation in this process. We are particularly interested in engaging groups that have traditionally been hard to reach through City planning processes, such as youth, LGBTQ2S communities, new Canadians, Indigenous community members and those with lived or living experience with homelessness.

Should the City be successful in our application, we would seek to collaborate with peer groups, non-profit agencies and Indigenous governments on how to engage with these diverse groups in a culturally safe and respectful manner. We would distribute some of the funds through

stipends and honoraria for this assistance and participation. We would also seek to collaborate with existing networks, such as the Community Action Team, and build on the dialogue started during the Design Labs undertaken by the Health and Housing Task Force. The funding would also be used to build capacity in peer and youth communities by identifying leaders and providing them with training and resources to undertake small-scale engagement events.]

Next Steps

Successful grant applicants will be notified in August 2020. The projects would be expected to occur between Fall 2020 and Fall 2021, with a final report due to the funder on 2021-SEP-30. If the City is successful on one or both grant applications, the funding will be included in the amended 2020-2024 Financial Plan |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City of Nanaimo has partnered with the Nanaimo Age Friendly Community Society to apply for a \$5,000 Plan H Community Connectedness Grant to connect with and educate seniors on how to access community services.
- The City of Nanaimo has also applied for a \$15,000 Plan H Healthy Community Engagement Grant to broaden and diversify community participation in the REIMAGINE NANAIMO process.
- If the City is successful in obtaining one or both of these grants, project activities will be completed by Fall 2021 and the funding will be included in the City of Nanaimo's amended 2020-2024 Financial Plan.

Submitted by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community Planning |

Concurrence by:

Laura Mercer
Director, Finance

Bill Corsan
Director, Community Development

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services