

DATE OF MEETING MARCH 29, 2021

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**SUBJECT STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES' SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with information on various initiatives for application under the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program and to obtain a Council resolution. |

### **Recommendation**

1. That Council endorse the activities identified in Appendix A for funding in an application under the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program and commits to providing overall grant management; and
2. That Council commits to funding, if required, site servicing costs for the Temporary Housing Units from the Housing Legacy Reserve Fund if grant application is successful.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Strengthening Communities' Services Program is a shared funding program provided by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.

\$100 million is being allocated to this program, and the City of Nanaimo is eligible for funding up to \$2.5 million. The application deadline is 2021-APR-16.

To be eligible for funding, proposed activities must meet one or more of the following intended program outcomes:

1. Improved health and safety of unsheltered homeless people living in public or private spaces, including reducing risk of COVID-19 transmission.
2. Reduced community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods where unsheltered homeless populations are seeking temporary shelter and services.
3. Improved coordination among the eligible applicant and health/social services providers, Indigenous organizations and others working on housing, homelessness, and service provision.
4. Increased capacity of eligible applicants to work with homeless persons and Indigenous organizations towards culturally safe and trauma-informed responses.

In addition applications must demonstrate:

1. The evidence of need in the community (unsheltered homeless population estimates, housing needs reports etc.).
2. The solutions proposed are temporary and address increased urgent and immediate needs without creating long-term financial obligations.
3. Include new activities or expansion of existing activities with costs incurred after 2020-SEP-17.
4. Be capable of completion within one year of grant approval.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) who is administering this grant program expressed to City Staff that they are looking for multi-faceted approaches to achieve program outcomes. City Staff were advised that we can submit for multiple eligible activities as one application package and funding can be approved for all or a portion of the full submission.

## **DISCUSSION**

Below is a list of projects that have been compiled by City staff for Council consideration. Costing will be refined as the City completes the application. Appendix B provides a table showing how the proposed projects align with the direction of City policies including the Health and Housing Action plan recently endorsed by Council on 2021-FEB-22.

### 1. Temporary Housing Units and Shelters

This proposed project is for up to four scattered site housing spaces in rented single family houses, purchase of CSA approved temporary housing structures for up to 10 people and a temporary weather shelter with a focus on priority populations. Locations are still to be determined. Service delivery will foster culturally safe, person-centered, trauma-informed care for the stabilization and transition of individuals into appropriately matched housing, health and community support. An outreach team comprised of one manager and two support workers will provide this. This team will support continued outreach services, wrap around support for four houses and outreach integration support in collaboration with shelter staff assigned to the temporary weather shelter. Site servicing may be required for the temporary housing structures depending on selected location. Site servicing is not an eligible expense under the grant program therefor these costs would need to be funded by the City or a community partner.

Cost Breakdown:

Outreach Team Costs:	
Outreach Manager	\$120,000
Outreach Support Workers	150,000
Program costs/supplies	10,000
<b>Total Outreach Team Costs</b>	<b>\$280,000</b>

The outreach team costs are based on 8 hours/day for a one year duration.

Scattered Housing:	
Up to 4 houses	\$ 190,000

Housing costs include rent, City utilities, electricity, and internet for one year

CSA Approved Temporary Housing Structures:

2 structures	\$280,000
Staffing and operations	195,000

Total Temp Housing Structures Cost	\$475,000
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The staff and operations budget is for one year. Location still to be determined.

Temporary Shelter Costs:

Staffing and operations	\$225,000
Minor renovations to space	100,000

Total Temporary Shelter Costs	\$325,000
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The staff and operations budget is for one year. Location still to be determined.

2. Rent Bank

2021	\$ 90,603
2022 to June 30 <sup>th</sup>	45,000

Total	\$135,603
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The City currently has a rent bank budgeted for 2021 funded from the Housing Legacy Reserve. This program is a short-term or temporary homelessness prevention tool that helps to provide housing stability for low to moderate income rentals through a repayable loan and is administered by the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society. We can apply to recover the 2021 cost of this program and extend this program 6 months into 2022.

3. Housing First Rent Supplement

2021	\$ 35,000
2022 to June 30	17,500

Total	\$ 52,500
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The City currently has a rent supplement budgeted for 2021 from the Housing Legacy Reserve. This program provides a supplement directly to landlords of private market housing to assist individuals at risk of becoming homeless. Funding is based on an individual's income and community service providers generally refer individuals receiving these supplements to the program. We can apply to recover the 2021 cost of this program and extend this program 6 months into 2022.

4. Youth Rent Supplement

July 2021 – June 2022	\$ 46,000
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This program is not currently funded but has been identified as a need in the community. This program would operate similarly to the Housing First Rent Supplement but will target youth transitioning out of the foster care system.

#### 5. Shower Program

2020 Sept 18 – Dec 31	\$ 13,000
2021	50,000
2022 to June 30 <sup>th</sup>	26,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 89,000</b>

This program is currently budgeted for 2021 from the Housing Legacy Reserve and provides hot showers, washrooms, toiletries and clean towels to those in need. The City can apply to recover a portion of 2020 costs, 2021 costs and extend this program 6 months into 2022.

#### 6. Urban Clean-up

2020 Sept 18 – Dec 31	\$ 11,000
2021	56,000
2022 to June 30 <sup>th</sup>	29,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 96,000</b>

This program is currently budgeted in 2021 and funded from general revenue. The City can apply to recover a portion of 2020 costs, 2021 costs and extend this program 6 months into 2022.

#### 7. Community Connect – City's Share

2020 Sept 18 – Dec 31	\$ 78,100
2021 to June 30 <sup>th</sup>	147,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,100</b>

This program is currently budgeted in 2021 and is funded from the Special Initiatives Reserve. Community Connect was a pilot program through a partnership with City Bylaw, RCMP, and the Old City Quarter (OCQ) Health and Safety Alliance, and was partially funded by the OCQ property owners. The City can apply to recover their share of the cost of this program incurred since September 18<sup>th</sup>. The pilot project is budgeted to end June 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### 8. Downtown Security

July 2021 – June 2022	up to \$400,000
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The City currently provides security in the downtown core during the day with the presence of bylaw officers. In the evening, a private security company protects the downtown parkades and key City infrastructure. In 2021, the City has budgeted \$134,800 for downtown security which provides 16 hours of coverage a day (2 patrollers each providing 8 hours of coverage). The City would explore increasing and/or expanding the coverage in the downtown area to 2022-JUN-30.

9. Portable Toilets - SARC, Prideaux, Oliver Woods

2021	\$ 34,000
2022	17,500
Total	\$ 51,500

Currently these portable toilets are budgeted in 2021 as part of our Pandemic Response and are being funded from the Special Initiatives Reserve. The City can apply to recover the 2021 costs and extend the program 6 months into 2022.

10. Cultural Services (e.g. community-based cultural programming, cultural safety and trauma-informed training)

July 2021 – June 2022	\$ 25,000
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This program will provide cultural services funding to support community-based cultural programming and may include cultural safety and trauma-informed care capacity building. Ideally, this would be coordinated through Snuneymuxw First Nation.

11. Temporary Full Time Social Planner Position

July 2021 – June 2022	\$112,000
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This proposed project would hire a temporary full-time liaison role to support the coordination of proposed grant activities. Coordination with multiple agencies and indigenous leaders will help inform and design early incubation activities of the Systems Planner Organization specific to homelessness response efforts. A dedicated position will also improve response to critical and urgent needs in the community.

Total Estimated Cost of Proposed Projects:

Temporary Housing Units and Shelters	1,270,000
Rent Bank	135,603
Housing First Rent Supplement	52,500
Youth Rent Supplement	46,000
Shower Program	89,000
Urban Clean Up	96,000
Community Connect	225,100
Downtown Security	400,000
Portable Toilets	51,500
Cultural Services	25,000
Temporary Social Planner	112,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>2,502,703</u></b>

## **OPTIONS**

1. That Council endorse the activities identified in Appendix A for funding in an application under the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program and commits to providing overall grant management; and

That Council commits to funding, if required, site servicing costs for the Temporary Housing Units from the Housing Legacy Reserve Fund if grant application is successful.

- The advantages of this option: This project addresses an urgent need in Nanaimo to provide housing for unsheltered homeless populations and manage community impacts. Supports the implementation of the 2021 Health and Housing Action Plan.  
The disadvantages of this option: Some of the temporary housing locations have yet to be finalized.
- Financial Implications: There are no apparent financial implications should the project stay on budget.

2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff for a project to submit an application to the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program.

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program is accepting applications to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.
- This program provides 100% funding up to \$2.5 million.
- Allows the City to apply for funding for projects that support implementing the 2021 Health and Housing Action Plan.
- Application deadline is 2021-APR-16.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A: Proposed Activities for Strengthening Communities' Services Grant Program

Appendix B: Summary of Projects and Links to City Policy Priorities

### **Submitted by:**

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### **Concurrence by:**

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