

DATE OF MEETING April 4, 2022

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SUBJECT AGENTS OF CHANGE PROJECT APPLICATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To inform Council of the Agents of Change Project and seek Council's endorsement for the City of Nanaimo's participation in the project.

Recommendation

That Council direct Staff to participate in the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada's Agents of Change Project and receive \$15,000 in funding to support running a volunteer climate mitigation engagement program in partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo.

BACKGROUND

Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada is part a global network of more than 1,750 local and regional governments' committed to sustainable urban development, originally known as the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. ICLEI was established to support local governments in taking local action on "low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development".

In January 2022, ICLEI launched the Agents of Change Project. The project was created to help build volunteer engagement programming in municipalities across Canada that contribute to climate mitigation efforts. The project will help local governments engage residents in their local climate action planning progress by:

- Designing local government-led and supported volunteer engagement programs;
- Identifying collaborators and stakeholders within their communities;
- Recruiting and supporting volunteers;
- Developing and delivering training programs for volunteers; and,
- Providing \$15,000 each to 10 municipalities to support the hard costs of program set-up.

The Agents of Change Project will run from January 2022 to March 2023. More information on the project is included in Attachment A.

The City of Nanaimo submitted a joint application on 2022-FEB-24 with the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) for a behaviour change program that will help local residents understand their

ecological impact and make sustainable lifestyle choices. ICLEI Canada informed staff on 2022-MAR-14 that although the program was oversubscribed by 100%, the City was selected as one of the 10 successful participating municipalities across Canada. As the lead applicant, the City will receive the \$15,000 in funding and manage the project with the support of RDN staff and community volunteer organizations.

DISCUSSION

The following local volunteer groups provided letters of support for the application:

1. Nanaimo Climate Action Hub
2. Community Climate Circles
3. Nanaimo Green Faith Circle
4. First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo
5. Nature Nanaimo
6. Mid-Vancouver Island Electric Vehicle Association

Should Council and the RDN proceed with the project, all of the above groups will be invited to participate. ICLEI Canada will work with City and RDN Staff to identify and invite additional relevant groups during the program design stage.

City and RDN Staff will gain access to experts and best practices in the field and work with peers to design a tailored volunteer engagement program in spring/summer 2022 and launch the program in fall/winter 2022.

The project requires the volunteer program to be impact oriented, meaning it should be targeting actions to reduce emissions identified in City's emissions inventory and prioritized in our local climate action plan. The current draft City Plan includes the City's emissions inventory, reduction targets and strategies as well as policies that aim to encourage community members to adopt climate mitigation and adaptation actions.

It is expected that project participants would plan to continue the local volunteer program beyond the program launch phase of the Agents of Change Project. Participation of this project may create community expectations that the City would continue the program after spring 2023. Staff will evaluate the program's effectiveness and provide a recommendation to Council for its continuation and as needed the anticipated staff time and funding for ongoing program operation after spring 2023.

OPTIONS

1. That Council direct Staff to participate in the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Canada's Agents of Change Project and receive \$15,000 in funding to support running a volunteer climate mitigation engagement program in partnership with the Regional District of Nanaimo.
 - The advantages of this option: Participation in the Agents of Change Project will be funded by ICLEI Canada. The project will connect the City with the training and start-up support needed to establish a tailored volunteer program. Staff will receive one-on-one support from ICLEI staff, access to experts, networking opportunities

- with other local government Staff, and materials to establish and support a local volunteer engagement program.
- The disadvantages of this option: The project includes an estimated Staff time commitment of approximately 20 days (140 hours) over a 15-month period. This time could otherwise be committed to other City priorities. The project will be led and primarily run by the Sustainability section.
 - Financial Implications: ICLEI will provide a total of \$15,000 to the City to help cover the hard costs of establishing a local volunteer engagement program and running it until spring 2023. No funding will be provided directly to any volunteer groups or the RDN. Program participants are expected to provide matching funds via cash or in-kind support. The City and the RDN have indicated shared in-kind support through staff time with an estimated \$10,000 staff time from the City and the remaining staff time from the RDN. The Final 2022 – 2026 Financial Plan will be updated to include this funding.
2. That Council direct Staff to not participate in the ICLEI Canada's Agents of Change Project.
- The advantages of this option: Staff will have more capacity to work on other sustainability priorities.
 - The disadvantages of this option: By not participating in the Agents of Change Project the City will miss an opportunity to connect directly with experts and peers in the field and receive support in building knowledge and capacity among Nanaimo's local volunteers to address climate mitigation challenges.
 - Financial Implications: By not participating, the City would not be eligible to receive the \$15,000 in funding.
3. That Council provide alternative direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City of Nanaimo and Regional District of Nanaimo have submitted a successful application to participate in the ICLEI- Canada's Agents of Change project and is eligible to receive \$15,000 in funding.
- The project was created to help build volunteer engagement programming in municipalities across Canada that contribute to climate mitigation efforts.
- Staff will work with local volunteer organizations to build a program to help residents make climate mitigation lifestyle changes.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Agents of Change Brochure |

Submitted by:

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Concurrence by:

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