

DATE OF MEETING NOVEMBER 20, 2024

AUTHORED BY CHARLOTTE DAVIS, ACTING DIRECTOR PARKS AND FACILITY OPERATIONS

SUBJECT JAPANESE CANADIAN LEGACIES SOCIETY – LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT GRANT

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To seek the Finance and Audit Committee’s approval to proceed to work with the 7 Potatoes Cultural Society by supporting them in submitting a grant application totaling \$1,000,000 to the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society’s Legacy Infrastructure Project Grant for a project that would be constructed on City owned land at Beban Park.

Recommendation:

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council:

1. Direct staff to provide support to the 7 Potatoes Cultural Society for their grant application;
2. Provide a letter of support for the project;
3. Agree the City would be responsible for the project construction and ongoing maintenance, if the grant application is successful; and
4. Enter into an agreement with 7 Potatoes that guarantees the use of the land for the project, if the grant application is successful.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of Japanese Canadian Legacies Society’s (JCLS) Legacy Infrastructure Project Grant program is to provide “support to key building renovation or construction projects that preserve and honour the legacy of Japanese Canadians from BC who were impacted by the historic events before, during and after WWII.” Funding is restricted to Japanese Canadian organizations with the capacity to produce and manage large scale projects.

In 2024, the City of Nanaimo was granted \$400,000 under this funding stream for the creation of a Japanese Heritage site on Nanaimo’s waterfront. In 2024, another grant in the amount of \$250,000 was awarded by JCLS to the Central Vancouver Island Japanese Canadian Culture Society (7 Potatoes) for the renovation of room six at Beban Social Centre that will see the space transformed into a cultural and performing arts space. Staff continue to work with the 7 Potatoes on both of these projects.

Later in 2024, the JCLS opened up additional funding opportunities and in October the City of Nanaimo partnered again with 7 Potatoes on submitting a grant application to the Legacy Community Projects Grant for funding of up to \$500,000 to create interpretive landscape and signage features in Nanaimo’s public space. The result of that application is expected to be known in mid December.

This current application would be the fourth application to the JCLS involving a City of Nanaimo/7 Potatoes partnership. The 7 Potatoes is required to be the applicant to the grant however, as the land owner, if successful in receiving the grant, the City of Nanaimo would be responsible for the project construction and its maintenance thereafter.

The grant application deadline is 2024-DEC-01. Funding will be announced by February 14, 2025. Legacy Infrastructure Projects must be completed by 2027-MAR-01.

DISCUSSION

Nanaimo's City Plan identifies many empowerment goals and policies related to acknowledging the past, committing to working together in collaboration, and embracing the rich cultural fabric of our city to unify community spirit. Specifically, the Integrated Action Plan (IAP #140) identifies working with the Japanese Canadian Community to create interpretive landscape features in Nanaimo's public space.

Working with the 7 Potatoes, it is proposed to create a new gathering space at Beban Park for cultural activities including drumming and the celebration of festivals such as Obon Odori. This site would also create a tangible legacy project to permanently share knowledge and help tell the story of the pre-war, wartime, and postwar experiences of Japanese Canadians from B.C. There is potential to tie this project to the renovation of room six at Beban Social Centre if determined that is the best use of the grant funds within the goals of the existing Beban Park Masterplan (IAP# 95). This project is not funded in the 2024-2029 Financial Plan or the 2025-2029 Draft Financial Plan and would be dependant on grant funding being awarded.

To date, City staff have worked with the 7 potatoes on developing a draft concept for the project as well as developing a draft project budget. Both items are required as part of the grant application. It is also a requirement that the application must come from a Japanese Canadian organization and since the landowner is the City a legal working agreement with the municipality is included with the application. Due to time constraints staff is recommending that Council provide a letter of support for the project that indicates that if the grant application is successful the City would enter into an agreement with the 7 Potatoes over the use of the land where the project is to be constructed. Similar to the Licence of Use Agreement created for the use of room six at Beban Social Centre, this agreement would cover the City's ongoing commitment to the project in terms of maintenance and the provision of insurance coverage.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City is actively pursuing other revenues such as grants to help offset the costs of Parks, Recreation & Culture projects. If successful in receiving the grant funds, the allocated funding would be turned over to the City of Nanaimo as Project Manager for the construction process. No match funding is required however, there would be considerable efforts in terms of staff time and also use of the land at Beban Park which is of significant value.

In delivering the project, all financial risk would be assumed by the City of Nanaimo. As with any project, there is potential for risk including project delay and cost over runs.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council:
 1. Direct staff to provide support to the 7 Potatoes Cultural Society for their grant application;
 2. Provide a letter of support for the project;
 3. Agree the City would be responsible for the project construction and ongoing maintenance, if the grant application is successful; and
 4. Enter into an agreement with 7 Potatoes that guarantees the use of the land for the project, if the grant application is successful.
 - Advantages of this option: This project has the potential to meet some of the goals within the Beban Park masterplan and the assist the City in creating important cultural space that would also help tell the story of BC's Japanese Canadians during the time of WWII.
 - Disadvantages of this option: Significant staff time and resources are required to complete this project.
 - Financial Implications of this option: All financial risk is assumed by the City of Nanaimo. The 2025 – 2029 Financial Plan would be amended if the grant application is successful.

2. That the Finance and Audit Committee provide alternate direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- If the recommendation is approved, the City will support the 7 Potatoes to submit an application to the JCLS's Infrastructure Project Grant.
- This potential project could see the creation of a new outdoor cultural space at Beban Park to facilitate cultural activities such as drumming, and also serve as a tangible legacy project to permanently share knowledge about the wartime experiences of Japanese Canadians from B.C.
- With City support, the 7 Potatoes will apply for up to \$1,000,000 in funding.
- Funding announcements are expected 2025-FEB-14.

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