

DATE OF MEETING December 11, 2024
AUTHORED BY ROSALIE SAWRIE, SOCIAL PLANNER
SUBJECT **SOCIAL PLANNING GRANTS 2025**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present to the Finance and Audit Committee the recommended Social Planning Grant allocations for 2025.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the 2025 Social Planning Grants recommendations of \$85,000, and that the grant allocations be as follows:

Applicant Name: Take a Hike Foundation **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Take a Hike Nanaimo Program

Applicant Name: Volunteer Nanaimo **Recommend:** \$13,500
Project: Youth Network

Applicant Name: Island Crisis Care Society **Recommend:** \$25,000
Project: Rising Hope Community Kitchen

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Alliance Church **Recommend:** \$8,000
Project: Food Bank Client Café – Kitchen Upgrades

Applicant Name: Haven Society **Recommend:** \$15,000
Project: Safe Futures for Youth – Violence is Preventable

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Community Kitchens Society **Recommend:** \$7,000
Project: Cultivate and Cook

Applicant Name: Nanaimo Family Life Association **Recommend:** \$6,500
Project: Kitchen Socials

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo has been providing financial support to non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, and recognized faith groups through social planning grants since 2001. Initially, funds were distributed as either Social Development Grants or Community Services Grants. A total of \$85,000 was allocated annually and distributed through calls for proposals in both spring and fall. The criteria for these grants were developed by the Social Planning Advisory

Committee (SPAC) which dissolved in 2015 and was replaced by the Community Vitality Committee the following year.

By 2017, the grants were rebranded as Social Response Grants (\$60,000) and Community Vitality Grants (\$25,000). This restructuring aligned the grant programs with Council's strategic priorities and the Official Community Plan. A single annual call for proposals replaced the biannual process.

Despite this change, both grants shared the same application and assessment criteria; however, they were categorized into two streams, the Social Response Grants for larger-scale projects and initiatives, and the Community Vitality Grants for smaller-scale projects and initiatives. The lack of clear funding thresholds or definitions for "larger" and "smaller" scopes was confusing for applicants. Applications were evaluated based on the same overall granting assessment criteria, regardless of the stream. To address this confusion, Staff eliminated the distinction between the two streams for the current application cycle. Now, all applications are evaluated using unified criteria to simplify the process and enhance clarity for applicants. This approach ensures that projects are assessed equitably while reducing administrative and applicant ambiguity. A total of \$85,000 is still available for distribution through the Social Planning Grants program. |

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Social Planning Grant program is to assist organizations in responding to social issues with initiatives that support community vitality and wellbeing, enhance social cohesion, address the root causes and effects of poverty, and foster social equity and inclusion. Applications for the Social Planning Grants program should align to the desired outcomes and policies in *City Plan*, in particular, the *City Plan's* goal for 'A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing & Livability'.

To be considered, applications must include the project name, a brief summary, including a timeline, location, staffing requirements, target market or audience, potential programming, and community partnerships. In addition, the application requires a description of expected outcomes, a plan for evaluating progress, and a detailed budget of project revenue sources (e.g. donations and other funding requests) and expenses. Funding will not be allocated for projects or programs outside the City of Nanaimo, or for ongoing operational expenses incurred during the organization's normal course of business.

19 Social Planning Grant applications have been received for the 2025 funding cycle, a decrease from 23 applications received in 2024. The total requested amount for the 2025 Social Planning Grant programs was \$306,390 (Attachment A). Applications have been evaluated based on merit, relevance, feasibility, and potential impact relative to the 2025 Social Planning Grants program's assessment criteria (Attachment B). |

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve the 2025 Social Planning Grants recommendations of \$85,000, and that the grant allocations be as follows:

Applicant Name: Take a Hike Foundation **Recommend:** \$10,000
Project: Take a Hike Nanaimo Program

Applicant Name: Volunteer Nanaimo **Recommend:** \$13,500
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- The advantages of this option: Seven recommended projects, determined to have higher merit based on fulfilling the assessment criteria of the Social Planning Grants program, will receive full or partial funding.
- The disadvantages of this option: A number of organizations who submitted Social Planning grant applications will receive no funding, or less funding than requested.
- Financial Implications: The recommendation allocates the full \$85,000 Social Planning Grants program budget.

2. That Council provide alternate direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City received 19 Social Planning Grant applications with a total requested amount of \$306,390 for 2025.
- The total budget for the 2025 Social Planning Grants is \$85,000.
- Staff are recommending that the full \$85,000 available be awarded to seven of the eligible projects.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: 2025 Social Planning Grants Program - Applications Received

ATTACHMENT B: [Link to "2025 Social Planning Grants Assessment Criteria"](#)

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