

FOR: COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: March 2, 2026

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC SAFETY

SUBJECT: **BC AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To obtain a Council resolution supporting a grant application to the B.C. Healthy Communities Age-Friendly Communities funding program.

Recommendation

That Council approve a grant application to the Age-Friendly Communities program for \$15,000 in funding to support the development and distribution of a Seniors Emergency Preparedness Information Guide.

BACKGROUND

The Age-Friendly Communities (AFC) Grant Program funded by the BC Ministry of Health and delivered through BC Healthy Communities supports projects that create safer, more accessible, and more inclusive communities for older adults.

In an age-friendly community, older adults have the support they need to live active, social, and independent lives in their home community. Since 2007, the Province of BC has supported this approach through the AFC Program. Funding provided by this program helps communities prepare for an aging population so that older adults can stay active and involved where they live.

The AFC grants offered include a planning stream and a project stream, and local and Indigenous governments are welcome to apply for either stream.

The AFC planning funding stream provides funding up to \$25,000 to carry out an age-friendly assessment and create an age-friendly action plan. The planning funding stream provides 100% funding for eligible work.

The AFC project funding stream provides up to \$15,000 in funding to put age-friendly actions or projects into place that were identified in the community's assessment and action plan. The project funding stream provides 100% funding, and matching funds are not required.

The grant application deadline is **2026-MAR-12**. Applicants will be advised of the status of their application in June 2026.

DISCUSSION

Staff propose applying to the AFC Grant Program to support the development of a Seniors Emergency Preparedness Information Guide, a project that directly advances age-friendly, equity focused and resilience building goals identified across *City Plan*, the *Integrated Action Plan (IAP)* and the *Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan*. The project includes the following components:

Communication Goals

- Provide accessible, evidence-based emergency preparedness information by leveraging existing best-practice resources from trusted provincial agencies.
- Ensure inclusivity and cultural responsiveness by collaborating with community partners to translate materials into the most commonly spoken languages in Nanaimo.
- Strengthen community reach and engagement by working with established service providers and local networks to distribute emergency preparedness guides to residents through channels they already use and trust.

Project Components

- Design and production of a small, user-friendly printed guide for seniors, consistent with the *Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan* direction to make resource materials accessible, portable and widely available to senior-serving agencies.
- Translation of key information into languages commonly spoken in Nanaimo, aligning with *City Plan* policy C3.5.16 on accessible emergency information.
- Emergency preparedness content, including:
 - Voyent Alert registration
 - Emergency contact information
 - Grab-and-go bag essentials
 - Heat-relief strategies and at-home cooling techniques
 - Locations of heat-relief centres and cooling infrastructure(These elements directly support *City Plan* policies C3.5.11 and C3.5.17 by enhancing personal preparedness, self-reliance, and neighbourhood resilience.)
- Equity-focused design, ensuring materials are accessible to low-income, isolated and vulnerable seniors, consistent with *IAP* actions on equitable access to information (C3.3.8) and climate/emergency education (C1.2.2).
- Collaboration with Snuneymuxw First Nation (SFN) and community agencies for distribution and outreach, which supports *City Plan* policy C3.5.12 and aligns with the *Nanaimo Age-Friendly Plan's* emphasis on partnership-based approaches.

This project will:

- Improve emergency readiness for seniors, especially those living alone or experiencing social isolation
- Address communication gaps identified through community risk mapping
- Strengthen relationships with community partners and SFN
- Advance age-friendly, culturally safe, and linguistically inclusive communication tools

In 2019, Council adopted the *Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan*, which outlines strategies to improve accessibility, social inclusion, mobility, housing, outdoor spaces, and communication for older adults. A key priority of the plan is ensuring that seniors have access to timely, clear, and culturally accessible

information. These goals are reinforced through *City Plan* and the *IAP* both of which embed age-friendly principles.

The need for this work has been further underscored by recent provincial and local findings. In 2022, the BC Chief Coroner identified that older adults, especially those living alone, face significantly higher risk during extreme heat events. In response, the City partnered with Resilience Planning in 2023 to map vulnerable populations. Key recommendations from that analysis included improving in-home heat-relief communication materials, creating a heat-relief map, enhancing emergency-preparedness resources, strengthening collaboration with community partners and Snuneymuxw First Nation, and translating materials into commonly spoken community languages.

This grant application directly addresses these identified needs and advances the goals of the *Age-Friendly City Plan*, *City Plan*, and *IAP* by improving emergency preparedness information for seniors and strengthening community resilience.

Financial Implications

The development and distribution of a Seniors Emergency Preparedness Information Guide is not included in the 2026-2030 Financial Plan and is contingent on a successful grant application. Should the grant application be successful, the 2026-2030 Financial Plan would be amended to include this project.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The *Age-Friendly City Plan* and *City Plan* were shaped through broad community participation including over 12,500 residents in the ReImagine Nanaimo process, to identify barriers, improve livability, and guide policy and investment priorities, while the *IAP* translates these overarching goals into a practical library of actions for implementation across departments. The Extreme Heat Risk Mapping and Planning Project adds a focused, equity-based layer of engagement drawing on insights from 169 participants, community service providers, and SFN members to recommend immediate, spatially targeted, and long-term strategies to protect heat-vulnerable residents during extreme weather events.

The project will be delivered using an equity and inclusion-focused communication approach, including:

- Engagement with senior-serving agencies
- Translation of key materials
- Distribution through neighbourhood associations, community centres, libraries, and health partners
- Outreach through existing City communication tools and emergency preparedness workshops

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY PLAN

The report is aligned with the following City goals:

- A Green Nanaimo: Resilient and Regenerative Ecosystems
 - C1.2 Climate Adaptation & Hazard Mitigation
- A Connected Nanaimo: Equitable Access and Mobility

- A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing and Livability
 - C3.3 Intergenerational Living
 - C3.5 Emergency Management
- An Empowered Nanaimo: Reconciliation, Representation and Inclusion
 - C4.2 Equity & Inclusivity
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: Thriving and Resilient Economy

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The report is aligned with the following Council Strategic Framework priorities (tick all applicable goals, consult [Council's Strategic Framework](#) for more details):

- Implementing City Plan Action Plans and Key City Management Plans
- Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges
- Maintaining and Growing Current Services
- Capital Projects
- Communicating with the Community
- Governance and Corporate Excellence

OPTIONS

1. That Council approve a grant application to the Age-Friendly Communities program for \$15,000 in funding to support the development and distribution of a Seniors Emergency Preparedness Information Guide.

- The advantages of this option: This project improves emergency readiness for seniors while advancing goals and objectives in *City Plan*, *the Integrated Action Plan* and the *Nanaimo Age-Friendly City Plan*. It also strengthens collaboration with community partners and Snuneymuxw First Nation, supporting a more coordinated and inclusive approach to community well-being.
- The disadvantages of this option: Staff time will be needed to manage project development, coordinate with partners, and complete all associated grant reporting requirements.
- Financial Implications: This project is contingent on a successful grant application. The 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan will be amended at a later date to include the project if the grant application is successful.

2. That Council provide alternate direction.

KEY MESSAGES

- Staff are seeking Council approval to apply for \$15,000 in funding under the Age-Friendly Communities project stream.
- The Age-Friendly Communities Grant Program supports local projects that improve safety, inclusivity, and resilience for older adults.

- The proposed Seniors Emergency Preparedness Information Guide will improve emergency readiness, enhance social wellbeing and meet the needs of older adults.
- The grant application deadline is 2026-MAR-12.

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