



Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of December 5th, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** November 29th, 2019
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business and Community Relations
Subject: City of Victoria Governor General's Youth Legacy Fund

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council recommend to the Victoria Foundation Board to fund \$8,265 for the Centennial Square Youth at Risk Art Project from the Governor General Youth Legacy Fund.
2. That Council forward the recommendation to the daytime Council meeting of December 5, 2019 for ratification.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 2006 to honour Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean's visit to Victoria, the City made a donation of \$10,000 to be held in perpetuity as the City of Victoria Governor General's Youth Legacy Fund. The City added another \$5,000 in February 2012 following Governor General David Johnston's visit in September 2011. Current funds available are \$8,265 and no projects have been funded since 2011. The Victoria Foundation Board has the authority to release the funds to a registered charity with recommendations from City Council.

The City of Victoria in partnership with seven social service agencies engaged youth at risk in Centennial Square over the past six months to support youth in connecting with long term employment and housing. Using art as a tool for engagement and connection, the youth expressed interest in creating a collaborative mural together for display in the Square and a desire to run their own business to gain employment skills in a no risk, no fail approach to ensure long term success in career development.

Based on the youth's input, staff reached out to artists with backgrounds in street art and youth mentorship to work with youth on their creative ideas. Over the summer months, the artists and youth collaborated on a 4 foot by 9 foot mural entitled "Everything You Throw Away Goes Somewhere". The mural depicts the garbage and pollution in the ocean to raise awareness about this issue.

Youth, artists and the social service partners would like to continue an ongoing weekly drop in art session through fall and winter to culminate into two new collaborative murals painted this summer for public display. Funding is required to support the continuation of this free program. In consultation with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, the registered charity could receive the funds to continue the Youth at Risk Art Project.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's recommendation to fund the continuation of the Youth at Risk Art Project in Centennial Square.

BACKGROUND

In spring 2019, a Centennial Square Working Group meeting was held to discuss the Square and how to collectively work together towards making Centennial Square a vibrant and animated public space as well as assuring we are taking care of our most vulnerable citizens. There is a desire to ensure Centennial Square is a welcome and safe place for everyone and how we could work together towards solutions.

Following the meeting, Culture staff recommended a follow up discussion with social service providers to find innovative ways to engage youth currently hanging out in the Square and hear from youth about what programs they would be interested in and experiences in Centennial Square.

In partnership with seven social service organizations and led by the Coalition to End Homelessness Youth staff, the City worked throughout the summer on a number of initiatives driven from feedback gathered from the 30-40 youth in the Square. Drop in doodling sessions, bbq's and mural making were the key deliverables from the first six months of engaging with youth. A mural with a climate action focus was completed and will be installed in Centennial Square in January 2020.



"Everything you Throw Away Goes Somewhere"

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

This youth driven approach begins with connecting on a very casual basis with the youth with the intention to collect a variety of opportunities and an inventory of ideas that will then be available to youth if and when the right moment arises. For example, the art engagement approach could range from art development to becoming an artist, to going to college or university or simply that creativity is good for anxiety reduction and allows for and contributes to having a 'better day'. There is no predetermined outcome for youth who will participate. The focus is on youth-centred and youth-driven activity beginning with casual engagement but with an intention of relationship building and ultimately supporting the young people to get where they want to go in life.

Verbal reports and data provided from the Victoria Police Department, indicate a drop in violent incidents and police visits to Centennial Square since youth consultation and programming began this Spring.

To build off the momentum this year, staff recommend continuing the weekly drop in art session hosted at the Coalition through the fall and winter months. The sessions will culminate towards large scale collaborative mural projects for public display. Time, space and resources for ongoing engagement and consultation with youth will be required to ensure this continues to be a youth-driven project.

The goal is to see movement toward the youth fully taking over the planning and implementation of all of the activities with support from partnerships and City staff.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

OPTION 1 (RECOMMENDED): Recommend to the Victoria Foundation Board to fund \$8,265 for the continuation of the Youth Art Project in Centennial Square from the Governor General Youth Legacy Fund.

OPTION 2: Request staff to find alternative sources of funding via partnerships and grants to continue the program.

OPTION 3: Discontinue the youth program in the Square.

2019 - 2022 Strategic Plan

The Youth at Risk Art Project is consistent with achieving outcomes for the following objectives in the 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Objective #5: Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City
- Strategic Objective #8: Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

Impacts to Financial Plan

No impacts to the 2020 Financial Plan.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Section 16: Arts and Culture

16 (A) Victoria is a place where artists are able to thrive and where people from all walks of life enjoy formal and informal opportunities to create and enjoy the arts, culture and entertainment activities.

16 (D) That the arts are accessible to a broad diversity of people and groups.

16.6 Encourage broad access to arts and culture facilities, events and activities for people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and lifestyles.

16.13 Encourage and enable community-led public art programs with support from City staff and professional artists.

CONCLUSIONS

Creativity is a very powerful tool to engage youth and marginalized people. It can provide enjoyable, therapeutic and low barrier pathways for new connections in the community and help find innovative solutions to complex social and civic issues.

Respectfully submitted,

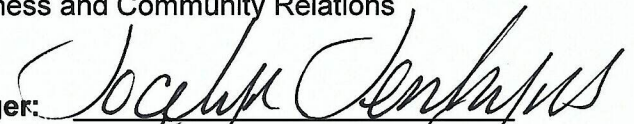


Nichola Reddington
Senior Cultural Planner



Kerri Moore
Head of Business and Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Nov 27, 2019