



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of May 14, 2020

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** May 1, 2020
From: Kerri Moore, Head of Business & Community Relations
Subject: My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program – New Category of Community Recovery & Resiliency

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approves:

1. The new interim category of Community Recovery & Resiliency and the updated policy for the 2020 *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program*
2. A rolling intake from June to December 2020, giving the City Manager the decision-making power to approve the grants following the usual staff review process and report back at the end of the year

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a new interim category of Community Recovery & Resiliency for the 2020 intake of the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program*, for Council's consideration.

Many of the City's neighbourhood organizations, and community and seniors' centres have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with grassroots initiatives and assistance programs. City staff have turned their attention to community recovery and how the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* can assist residents in the coming months.

PURPOSE

This report presents a new interim category of Community Recovery & Resiliency for the 2020 intake of the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* for Council's consideration for approval.

BACKGROUND

In December 2015, Council approved a new grant program aimed at facilitating community initiated placemaking and activity projects. The program was developed to support strong, connected neighbourhoods through funding for projects and activities that bring neighbours together and empower them to shape their local area. The City provides up to \$5,000 for placemaking projects to match the equivalent contribution from the neighbourhood and up to \$1,000 matching funds for community development activities.

On January 14, 2020, Council directed staff to report back on the implications of creating a mural stream within the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program*. Murals as placemaking projects are already funded through the grant program up to a maximum of \$5000 per mural and to date 17 murals have been created. Rather than amending the policy, staff recommend encouraging murals as a placemaking activity within their promotions (online, print, etc.) for all future intakes of the grant.

In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a world pandemic and the City of Victoria has taken many important measures to support residents, local business and the not-for-profit sector facing hardship during this time. Victoria's residents have also responded to the pandemic with grassroots initiatives to support each other. Many of the City's neighbourhood associations, community centres and seniors' centres have participated in these actions.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The March 1, 2020 spring intake launch of the 2020 *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* was suspended by staff on March 20th due to the pandemic. Staff propose re-opening the program to include a new interim category of Community Recovery & Resiliency to reinforce community actions that support residents due to the impacts to COVID-19, as well as assist in the recovery period.

The traditional process for the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* intake would need to be adjusted by re-opening the grant program in June and introducing a rolling intake until the end of December. For this year only, staff are requesting that Council allow the City Manager to approve the grants after the internal adjudication process and provide an interim report in September and a full report at the end of this fiscal year. A rolling intake with an expedited approval process would allow for a more nimble response to community needs.

Examples of what recovery and resiliency proposals could look like include:

- Formation of mutual aid groups at the block or neighbourhood level (beyond Block Watch)
- Engage ongoing neighbourhood response teams to provide tangible and emotional support to isolated individuals (e.g. seniors)
- Create/enhance more recreational opportunities to ease isolation and keep people active
- Create and promote more online connected youth groups/communities
- Support for programming that promotes public health and community conversation
- Design and build more sophisticated placemaking projects that offer both public and separate space

Should the pandemic continue, Council could consider extending the interim category of Community Recovery & Resiliency into 2021.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

Option 1 (Recommended):

For the 2020 intake of the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program*, approve

- 1) the proposed new category of Community Recovery & Resiliency and changes to the grant policy; and
- 2) a rolling intake giving the City Manager the decision-making power to approve the grants following the internal adjudication process

Option 2 - Council to provide alternative direction to staff.

Accessibility Impact Statement

There are no accessibility concerns related to the proposed recommendations in this report.

2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan

The new category of Community Recovery & Resiliency of the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* supports the objective and/or the action and outcome statements of the Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Objective 8: Strong Liveable Neighbourhoods

Impacts to Financial Plan

As part of the 2020 Financial Plan, \$136,955 for the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* was approved.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The new category of Community Recovery & Resiliency of the *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* supports the following OCP objective:

Community Wellbeing

- 15 (d) That strong partnerships build the capacity of individuals and the community.
- 15 (e) That all citizens have the opportunity to participate in civic affairs.

CONCLUSIONS

Many of the City's neighbourhood organizations, and community and seniors' centres have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with grassroots initiatives and assistance programs. The new category of Community Recovery & Resiliency for the 2020 *My Great Neighbourhoods Grant Program* will further assist them in their recovery efforts. An expedited approval process will allow for the funds to be dispersed in an efficient and timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,



Kerri Moore
Head of Business & Community Relations

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:



Date: May 8, 2020

List of Attachments

Appendix A: Updated *My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program* policy