
BACKGROUND

In December, 2015, Council approved a new grant program aimed at facilitating community-initiated placemaking projects. The policy and guidelines were approved on May 12, 2016 and the program was open for applications from May 24 to July 24, 2016.

The program was developed to support strong, connected neighbourhoods through funding for projects and activities that would bring neighbours together and empower them to shape their local area. The City provided up to \$5,000 for placemaking projects to match the equivalent contribution from the neighbourhood. The matching contribution could be a combination of volunteer labour, donated services, materials and supplies and other funds raised. A budget of \$120,000 was approved in 2016 for this program.

Applications were received for projects that included community garden improvements, murals and artwork and historical markers. The 2016 grant program projects are to be complete within one year (November, 2017). The current status of the projects is as provided in Appendix A.

During the 2016 grant intake period, staff received feedback from applicants on the program. In conjunction with a review of practices in other cities, meetings were held with neighbourhood organizations, applicants and staff to discuss prospective improvements to the program. Some of the suggested changes were administrative, such as improving the application and budget form for greater clarity and making it clear if any permit fees would be applicable.

Community organizations also expressed an interest in broader qualifying criteria that would allow activities to be funded. Given that activities can contribute to building community and that the budget was not fully allocated, staff recommended this change.

Staff preferred to have greater consideration for project lifecycle maintenance and decommissioning at the agreed end of project life. It was also suggested that there be clearer guidelines for community art projects (see Appendix B). Staff recognized a benefit to having mandatory meetings with applicants to ensure that they would meet grant criteria before submission. Staff also sought to improve the number of applications through greater promotion efforts and conceived of a Neighbourhood Ideas Fair to share information and ideas.

These recommended program improvements were presented and approved by Council on April 1, 2017 and the grant policy was amended accordingly (see Appendix C).

The program remains open to all not-for-profit organizations including community and neighbourhood associations and schools. Individuals, informal organizations and businesses may also apply for funding by partnering with a local not-for-profit group. The not-for-profit group is required to submit the application and, if approved, receives the funding and is the responsible party for ensuring the project meets agreed conditions.

The projects must be located within the City of Victoria to be eligible for funding.

2017 GRANT PROGRAM

The Neighbourhood Ideas Fair was held prior to the spring 2017 grant intake period (April 24 – June 4). It was held at City Hall and included a range of demonstration materials and speakers from City staff to community development organizations (e.g. Building Resilient Communities, Victoria Foundation) and trades people (e.g. Fineline Road Markings, Festilights). During the remainder of the intake period, staff encouraged neighbourhood associations to consider projects and promote the opportunity within their neighbourhoods. Staff worked closely with prospective applicants to shape their projects and gather required information.

The fall intake period took place from September 11 – October 15, and was promoted via a neighbourhood specific poster campaign, social media, community centre newsletters, the City's website and Neighbourhood Association meetings. Staff also presented to Victoria Highschool leadership groups for prospective applications.

Five applications were received from Fairfield Gonzales, four from James Bay, three from Fernwood, three from Hillside Quadra and two from Downtown. Single applications were also received from Burnside Gorge and North Park. There were no applications received from Rockland, Oaklands, North Jubilee and South Jubilee for this intake.

The total amount of matching funds requested is \$46,779, or approximately 92% of the remaining funds allocated for this program (\$50,630).

Summary tables of the Placemaking and Activity applications are listed below. The complete applications for Placemaking are attached in Appendix D and for Activities in Appendix E.

Table 1 Recommended Placemaking Grant Submissions				
	Applicant	Neighbourhood	Request	Project
1	James Bay Neighbourhood Association	James Bay	\$3,675	Fisherman's Wharf mural
2	James Bay United Church		\$5,000	Michigan Street Gathering Place
3	James Bay Community Project		\$5,000	Little Gardeners Playspace
4	Fernwood Community Association	Fernwood	\$3,500	Butterfly Project
5	Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group		\$3,250	Coast Salish Mural
6	Glenlyon Norfolk School	Hillside Quadra	\$3,980	Quadra Village Neighbourhood Mural
7	Resident Group sponsored by Quadra Village Community Association		\$768	Wark Street Commons Revitalization
8	Building Resilient Neighbourhoods	Fairfield Gonzales	\$5000	Block Connector Emergency Container
9	North Park Neighbourhood Association	North Park	\$5,000	Community Mural
10	Downtown Victoria Business Association	Downtown	\$5,000	Lower Johnson Street Parklet
			\$40,173	

Table 2 Recommended Activity Grant Submissions				
Applicant		Neighbourhood	Request	Project
1	Theatre Inconnu	Fairfield	\$1,000	Birds on Parade
2	Fairfield Gonzales Reconciliation Circle		\$1,000	Celebrating Indigenous Stories
3	Group of residents sponsored by Quadra Village Community Association	Hillside Quadra	\$1,000	Victoria Bicycle Music Festival
4	Treelane Estates sponsored by Burnside Gorge Community Association	Burnside Gorge	\$1,000	Multicultural Festival
5	Group of residents sponsored by James Bay Neighbourhood Association	James Bay	\$766	Lewis St. Historical Plaques
6	Groups of residents sponsored by Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group	Fernwood	\$900	Road Hockey Tournament
7	Downtown and North Park Residents Associations	Downtown/ North Park	\$940	Community Gardens
			\$6,606	

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

An interdepartmental team worked collaboratively to review the applications and provide comments and feedback. As well, a sub-committee of the Art in Public Places committee reviewed the art applications consistent with the guidelines. Due to the mandatory pre-application meetings, the quality of applications was much higher and the review period by staff was substantially reduced.

The addition of a fall intake for 2017 has resulted in the My Great Neighbourhood grant program initially being over-subscribed for the first time in its two year existence. Combined with the spring intake for 2017, there has been 28 placemaking and 14 activity grant applications for a total of 40 applications overall. Due to staff recommending two of the Placemaking applications be withdrawn for further development, the My Great Neighbourhood Grants program will be 97% subscribed for 2017 for an overall total of \$116,149. Compared to 2016 figures, when 22 applications were funded for a total of \$97,630, this represents an increase of 55% in applications and 16% in funding. With the success of adding a second fall intake per calendar year, staff will continue with the bi-annual format in order to allow the greatest number of applicants the opportunity to forward submissions for consideration.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan

The applications received support the objectives and/or the action and outcome statements of the Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Objective 2: Engage and Empower the Community
- Objective 3: Strive for Excellence in Planning and Land Use
- Objective 7: Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness;

- Objective 8: Enhance and Steward Public Spaces, Green Spaces and Food Systems; and
- Objective 10: Nurture Our Arts, Culture and Learning Capital.

Impacts to Financial Plan

The \$120,000 for this grant program was approved as part of the 2017 Financial Plan. Through the first intake, Council awarded \$69,370. Should Council approve the recommended grant awards totaling \$46,779 for this intake, the remaining funding would be \$3,851. It is recommended that this funding be set aside for the launch event for the 2018 grant intake.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

The My Great Neighbourhoods Grants program supports several of the OCP's broad objectives, including:

Placemaking

- 8 (d) That social vibrancy is fostered and strengthened through human scale and design of buildings, streetscapes and public spaces.
- 8 (g) That a sense of place is developed and enhanced through urban design features.

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.

Arts and Culture

- 16 (a) That Victoria is a creative and vibrant city.
- 16 (f) That art in public places is supported and enabled as a public good and an expression of community identity.

Accessibility Impact Statement


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

Respectfully submitted,



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Downtown Programs Liaison

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:


Date: Dec 1, 2017

List of Attachments

Appendix A: 2017 Spring Grants awarded

Appendix B: 2016 Spring Grants progress

Appendix C: City of Victoria 2017 Great Neighbourhood Grant Policy

Appendix D: 2017 Fall intake applications