

Report Date: October 18, 2016
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Meeting Date: November 16, 2016

TO: Standing Committee on City Finance and Services

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability in
consultation with the General Manager of Community Services

SUBJECT: The Greenest City Fund: Updates and Revisions

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve the revised Greenest City Fund framework, which has approved annual grant funding of \$250,000 within the annual Operating Budget.
- B. THAT subject to recommendations C and D, Council authorize the City to enter into an agreement (“MOU”) with the Vancouver Foundation to govern the administration of the Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grant from 2017-2020 (inclusive).
- C. THAT the MOU be on such terms as are generally described in this Report and such other terms as are approved by the City Manager.
- D. THAT the Director of Legal Services be authorized to sign the MOU on behalf of the City but that no legal rights or obligations will be created unless and with such MOU is executed and delivered by the Director of Legal Services and the Vancouver Foundation.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council’s approval to adopt the revised Greenest City Fund framework, which will support citizens and community organizations to implement sustainability projects within the city of Vancouver.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The original Greenest City Action Plan was adopted by Council in July 2011 and included 125 high-priority actions, of which 80% are complete. One of the actions identified in the Greenest Action Plan was establishing a Greenest City Fund program.

On April 17, 2012, Council approved a partnership with the Vancouver Foundation to administer and co-fund the Greenest City Fund. The overall contribution from the City was \$1.0 million, which was matched by \$1.0 million by the Vancouver Foundation. In total, the \$2.0 million grant program spanned four years, with approximately \$0.5 million of grants distributed each year. The source of the City’s funding contribution was the Parking Sites Reserve.

On November 3, 2015, Council approved the second phase of the Greenest City Action Plan, which includes 51 new high-priority actions and 19 advocacy items across the ten goal areas. One of the priority actions, under the Lighter Footprint goal, was to continue and expand the Greenest City Fund.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the aforementioned recommendations.

REPORT

Background

From 2012 to 2015 the Greenest City Fund enabled action within the community to help meet the City's Greenest City targets related to carbon reduction, waste management and supporting healthy ecosystems. During that time, \$1.0 million in funding was provided by the City of Vancouver, with matching funds provided by the Vancouver Foundation. The Vancouver Foundation, through three grant streams, distributed the funding as follows:

- Generation Green Grants for youth-led projects (<\$10,000)
- Greenest City Neighbourhood Small Grants for residents (<\$1,000)
- Greenest City Community Grants for charitable organizations (<\$50,000)

As of February 2016, 573 projects have been funded through the three Greenest City Fund streams. Of those projects, 63 were Community Grants, 478 were Neighbourhood Small Grants and 32 were Generation Green Grants (Table 1). Registered charities and individuals were eligible to apply, per project, for funding for up to 75% of their project budget to a maximum of \$50,000. Projects took place for one to three years.

| Grant Type | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Generation Green Grant | 12 (\$66,397) | 7 (\$50,500) | 7 (\$32,790) | 6 (\$55,020) |
| Neighbourhood-Small Grant | 121 (\$73,345) | 116 (\$64,052) | 125 (\$66,500) | 114 (\$73,193) |
| Community Grant | 17 (\$391,500) | 12 (\$279,943) | 19 (\$445,300) | 15 (\$429,500) |

Table 1. Number of Greenest City Fund projects funded from 2012-2015 across the three grant streams.

The philosophy of the Greenest City Fund was to support innovative projects that produced tangible outcomes across all Greenest City Action Plan (GCAP) goal areas. The Greenest City Fund also aimed to leverage funding outside of the City. The Greenest City Fund supported a number of highly successful initiatives, including:

- Project Green Bloc - this project engaged the neighbourhood of Riley Park to reduce their ecological footprint by 12% following Lighter Footprint strategies.

- HUB's Build-a-Bicyclist Program - HUB, formally known as the Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition, delivered bicycle skill courses and bikes to low-income individuals who were looking to use cycling as a regular form of transportation.
- Ocean Wise - Engaging the Chinese and Asian Seafood Sector - taking the successful Ocean Wise program this project built capacity to engage with the Chinese and Asian seafood sector on sustainable commercial fisheries.

The formal Greenest City Fund partnership with the Vancouver Foundation ended on December 31, 2015 with an understanding that Vancouver Foundation would administer the 2016 Neighbourhood Small grants while the City developed a framework for the updated Greenest City Fund.

The partnership was a great success in inspiring citizens and organizations to take action with respect to Greenest City 2020 goals. Over time, however, the mandate of the Greenest City Fund has evolved and grown in response to the City's comprehensive sustainability policy framework that includes the Greenest City Action Plan as well as the Renewable City Strategy, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the Healthy City Strategy. Further, internal capacity at the City has increased over time such that staff are now better able to manage a sustainability granting program.

On February 24, 2015, an annual grant budget of \$250,000 per year was added and approved as part of the 2015 Operating Budget with the intention to support the Greenest City Fund.

Strategic Analysis

The revised Greenest City Fund Framework

Since completion of the Vancouver Foundation partnership, there has been interest from the community in continuing the Greenest City Fund. Uptake in the funding program was consistent, from year to year, and project outcomes were tangible, contributing to Greenest City 2020 targets. Since the formation of the Greenest City Fund program, the City has adopted the Renewable City Strategy, the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the complementary social sustainability plan, the Healthy City Strategy. This suite of strategies rounds out the City's comprehensive approach to sustainability enabling a broader range of projects to take place in the community. The revised Greenest City Fund will reflect and support an expanded range of projects to address new sustainability strategies in addition to the Greenest City Action Plan.

Staff regularly receive funding requests from the community which requires a transparent and accountable process to manage such requests. The revised Greenest City Fund grant process will provide such transparency and accountability with criteria-based applications, weighted project evaluation, quarterly grantee reporting, and annual reporting to Mayor and Council. The "Green Grant" webpage on vancouver.ca will be revised to inventory project summaries by year so that the public and other organizations can learn about projects and be inspired to take action.

To ensure continuity of programming, this year, during the transition from the 2015 Greenest City Fund program to the revised 2017 Greenest City Fund program, applications for Greenest City 2020 projects were accepted through the Vancouver Foundation's Health and Social Development grant stream as a temporary approach until the transition was complete. 2016 funding recommendations will be presented to Mayor and Council for consideration as part of Social Policy's December 2016 council report.

Moving forward, the Greenest City Fund's new vision will be to support sustainability projects that take place in Vancouver and that will reduce the community's carbon footprint, reduce waste and enhance the health and resilience of our citizens, community and natural environment. To support green ideas generated and implemented by the community, the Greenest City Fund will be comprised of two grant streams: the Greenest City Grant (\$205,000) and the Greenest City - Neighbourhood Small Grant (\$45,000).

Greenest City Grant

The Greenest City Grant program will provide \$205,000 per year in support of projects and programs that aim to establish, test or scale up ideas or actions that support the Greenest City Action Plan. Unlike the Community Grant under the old Greenest City Fund framework, applicants will be encouraged to make a more blended impact with their projects by addressing other civic strategies, such as the Renewable City Strategy, the Climate Change Adaptation plan and the Healthy City Strategy in their application where possible in order to offer projects with multiple co-benefits.

As part of the Greenest City Grant, youth led and/or youth-centric projects will be strongly encouraged. In 2015, the Vancouver Foundation merged the Generation Green Grant with the Community Grant and found that youth-centric projects still took place as they had in the past but with less administrative challenges. Looking to the future, the Greenest City Grant will be a "one-stop shop" for organizations interested in seeking funding to support projects that address the Greenest City Action Plan.

Greenest City Grant applicants must be a registered charity or a registered BC society. Organizations from outside of Vancouver may apply but projects and their benefits must take place in Vancouver. Applicants may apply for, per project, up to 50% of the project's budget to a maximum of \$100,000 (the typical grant amount is expected to be between \$35,000 and \$45,000). Projects may be one to three years in length.

Staff will directly manage the Greenest City Grant as staff have the expertise to manage the grant and work with proponents to support projects that reflect the City's sustainability policy framework. Social Policy currently administers approximately \$8 million dollars of grants in-house. Utilizing their considerable expertise, the Greenest City Grant will be administered by Social Policy with content expertise provided by the Sustainability Group, Social Policy and, other departments as needed. Applications for grants will be open in January and a workshop will be held in mid-January to prep applicants. Grant recommendations will be brought forward to Mayor and Council in early April and project results presented to Mayor and Council on an annual basis as part of Greenest City Action Plan updates. A high-level schedule of the proposed 2017 Greenest City Grant program is described in Table 2.

| Activity | Timeline | Agent |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Application | January 2 - February 6, 2017 | Applicant |
| Application Workshop | January 11, 2017 | Applicant & City of Vancouver staff |
| Application review | February 27 - March 10, 2017 | Social Policy & Sustainability Group |
| Final approval | April 2017 | Mayor & Council |
| Result reporting | July 2018 | Sustainability Group |

Table 2. Proposed 2017 Greenest City Grant program schedule.

Greenest City-Neighbourhood Small Grant

As per the Vancouver Charter, the City of Vancouver cannot award grants to individuals. With this in mind, staff have reached out to the Vancouver Foundation and, with Council's endorsement (**Recommendation B**), the Vancouver Foundation will continue to administer the Greenest City-Neighbourhood Small Grant from 2017 to 2020 (inclusive) as it successfully did from 2012-2015 in partnership with the six Vancouver Neighbourhood Houses. The grant will be a simple one-step process administered by the six Vancouver Neighbourhood Houses with administrative support from the Vancouver Foundation. This approach is consistent with how the grant was successfully administered between 2012 and 2015. The philosophy of this grant is to support and build grassroots action with respect to the Greenest City Action Plan as well as the Renewable City Strategy, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the Healthy City Strategy.

Every December, from 2017 to 2020, as part of Social Policy's grant report for Mayor and Council's consideration, \$35,000 will be made available from the Greenest City Fund to the Vancouver Foundation to support the Greenest City-Neighbourhood Small Grant, as well as \$10,000 to support the six Neighbourhood Houses that will administer the grants. The Vancouver Foundation has agreed to match that dollar amount on an annual basis as well so that \$70,000 in grants will be awarded to Vancouver citizens on an annual basis. Vancouver residents will be eligible to apply for grants of \$500-\$1000. The Foundation will also match the \$10,000 in support of the Residential Advisory Committees.

As has been the practice in recent years, applications will be open late February to mid-April and advertised on the Vancouver Foundation's website as well as the City of Vancouver's. From mid-April to mid-May the Neighbourhood Houses will set up Resident Advisory Committees to review and select projects to support. Projects that are supported will be free, accessible and welcoming to all. With the exception of community gardens, projects involving infrastructure building, upgrading or maintenance will not be eligible. To ensure transparency and accountability as well as to document success, Vancouver Foundation staff will report out on project outcomes to the Sustainability Group each January. The Sustainability Group will include these results in annual Greenest City Action Plan update report.

Implications

Financial

Funding of \$250,000 for the Greenest City Fund was first introduced and approved as part of the 2015 Operating budget. This is now an annual Operating grant budget.

For 2016, the \$250,000 will be allocated to support Greenest City Grant recipients who will be brought forward to Mayor and Council for approval in December 2016.

Starting in 2017, \$205,000 will be allocated to Greenest City Grant recipients, who will be brought forward to Mayor and Council for consideration in April 2017. The remaining funds will be allocated to the Vancouver Foundation, on an annual basis, with \$35,000 to support Greenest City-Neighbourhood Small Grant recipients, and \$10,000 to support the six Neighbourhood Houses that will administer the grants.

Environmental

Given the creativity and interest within the community in participating in the Greenest City Action Plan there is great potential to positively impact Vancouver's current and future ecosystems through the revised Greenest City Fund.

CONCLUSION

The Greenest City Fund successfully ran from 2012 to 2015 supporting 573 projects in the City of Vancouver. This model is unique to Canada as well as North America in its multidisciplinary approach and recognition of a definition of sustainability that incorporates ecological, social and economic aspects. To achieve our Greenest City 2020 goals citizens and organizations must be inspired and enabled to make systemic changes that will lower our carbon footprint. The revised Greenest City Fund will continue to provide those opportunities in a way that is transparent, accountable and pragmatic, with direct oversight by City staff.

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