



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: August 28, 2006
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Meeting Date: September 12, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Director of Social Planning
SUBJECT: Capital Grant for Collingwood Neighbourhood House Rooftop Garden

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve a Capital Grant of \$20,000 to Collingwood Neighbourhood House Association towards the construction of a garden on the rooftop of Collingwood Neighbourhood House, conditional on funding from other sources, sufficient to complete this project, being secured by year-end 2008. Source of funding is the unallocated 2005 Capital Budget for City-owned Childcare, Social Services and Cultural Facilities.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

Approval of a grant requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to recommend approval of a capital grant for construction of a rooftop garden to Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

BACKGROUND

Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) is a City-owned, multi-purpose social service facility located at 5288 Joyce Street. CNH was created in 1985 with the mandate to develop leadership and provide support for social, educational, cultural and recreational services within an atmosphere of multiculturalism and inclusiveness. Collingwood Neighbourhood House offers over 132 programs and services and supports 32 ventures, initiated by neighbourhood residents. The facility provides licensed child care, youth services, settlement services, family programs, computer services, recreational programs, and projects related to community development. One of the distinct characteristics of the neighbourhood house is to increase the capacity of individuals and the community to meet its own needs through support, identification and the exchange of resources between neighbourhood residents.

In October, 2002, Collingwood Neighbourhood House and community members developed the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute in response to increasing poverty, depleting resources, and the need to address issues of hunger and healthy eating in the community. The Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute works in collaboration with CNH to achieve the goal of offering support to increase capacity in the community to meet food needs through healthy growing, distribution and consumption of food. CNH is the sponsor of the Renfrew-Collingwood Food Security Institute, offering organizational and administrative support, allowing the Institute to carry out its community focused initiatives and increase food security in the Renfrew-Collingwood Community.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House was designed and constructed to accommodate a rooftop garden. The structural needs of a rooftop garden have been put in place, including the correct weight bearing requirements, outdoor water and electrical outlets and good drainage. Currently the rooftop patio has temporary planter boxes that have been used for food production.

DISCUSSION

The proposed rooftop garden is an initiative of the Renfrew Collingwood Food Security Institute and will be located on the second floor of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

Like other projects approved under the City-owned Childcare, Social Services and Cultural Facilities Capital Grant budget, this project represents an improvement to a City-owned building. (If this was a stand-alone community garden, it would be funded via Community Amenity Contributions or other sources.)

The original construction of Collingwood Neighbourhood House included design elements to accommodate a rooftop garden. The landscape architect has taken into consideration and addressed the issues that could arise with the addition of a rooftop garden at Collingwood Neighbourhood House. Issues regarding how the rooftop garden may affect the structure of the building have been considered in its design by ensuring the protection of the building envelop and a waterproof membrane. Safety concerns of the site have also been considered to provide a safe environment for those using the garden, including children, seniors, and people with physical disabilities.

There has been significant involvement by community members and partners throughout the entire process, from the design phase to implementation of the temporary rooftop garden and initial design of the permanent garden. The building of the temporary garden of 305 square feet of growing space has involved about 180 youth in the process, from cutting wood, loading and unloading, digging dirt, and building the planters. The initial design phase of the planning for the permanent garden has involved over 75 people, including youth, parents, and children.

The rooftop garden will be primarily a food growing garden, with the purpose of providing food to people/groups like the youth day care, seniors, kids' kitchen and a breakfast program for the homeless. Parents and children participate in planting, food growing practices, and harvesting the food in the end.

The garden can also assist in bringing people together from a variety of backgrounds who are passionate about celebrating and growing food. A goal for CNH is to find new leadership, recruit new volunteers and bring together community members who have not yet been involved in community initiatives. The impact of the rooftop garden, with the focus on community involvement and leadership, will create a sustainable movement and increase support for other food-growing initiatives.

Costs and Funding

The estimated cost of the construction of a rooftop garden for Collingwood Neighbourhood House is \$83,486.

Hard Construction Costs (incl. 10% contingency)	\$48,689
Soft Costs	\$34,797
TOTAL	\$83,486

CNH is requesting \$20,000 in funding from the City of Vancouver and will apply for the remaining \$63,486 needed to complete the project from other sources that fund capital projects (including McLean Foundation, Endswell Foundation and VanCity Enviro Fund) once funding from the City of Vancouver has been confirmed.

As the funding from other sources has not yet been confirmed, staff are recommending that the City grant be contingent on all funding from other sources being secured. Approval of the City funding, at this time, will help ensure that the other funding is also approved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are sufficient financial resources remaining in the unallocated 2005 Capital Budget for City-owned Childcare, Social Services and Cultural Facilities for this grant of \$20,000.

CONCLUSION

The City supports the important role that Neighbourhood Houses play in strengthening neighbourhoods. The rooftop garden also contributes to the City's work in the area of food policy and movement towards sustainability.

With a \$20,000 Capital Grant for a rooftop garden, Collingwood Neighbourhood House would be able to further the City's goals in these areas

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