



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 5, 2007
Author: J. Sheel/
C. Underwood
Phone No.: 604.871.6241
RTS No.: 7003
VanRIMS No.: 13-6200-30
Meeting Date: November 29, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: 2008 Street Cleaning Grants

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a grant of \$75,000 to Family Services of Greater Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action for supplementary cleaning of sidewalks, lanes and public spaces in downtown Vancouver, with funding of \$60,000 from the 2008 Street Cleaning Operating Budget and \$15,000 from the 2008 Streets Operations Maintenance Budget.
- B. THAT Council approve a grant of \$115,000 to 'Save Our Living Environment' for supplementary cleaning of sidewalks, lanes and public spaces in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, with funding of \$75,000 from the Capital Financing Fund (Solid Waste Capital Reserve) and \$40,000 from the 2008 Street Cleaning Operating Budget.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Engineering Services recommends approval.

COUNCIL POLICY

In December 2006 Council adopted the Project Civil City initiative. This initiative supports projects which result in cleaner streets, increased civic pride, and build partnerships between communities. Grants for street cleaning services which support the marginalized population contribute to achieving the goals of Project Civil City.

In May 2007, Council approved a grant to Greater Family Services of Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action for micro-cleaning of streets and lanes by marginalized youth. Funding was provided from the 2007 Street Cleaning Operating Budget.

In each of the past nine years, Council has approved annual grants to Save Our Living Environment (SOLE) for micro-cleaning of streets and lanes in the Downtown Eastside. For 2007 funding was provided from the Capital Financing Fund (Solid Waste Capital Reserve) and the Street Cleaning Operating Budget.

Approval of grants requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval for street cleaning grants of \$115,000 to Save Our Living Environment (SOLE) and \$75,000 to Family Service of Greater Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action (SYJA) so that they can continue to provide supplementary street cleaning services, and job support and life skills training opportunities for youth and adults with employment barriers in 2008.

BACKGROUND

Save Our Living Environment (SOLE)

SOLE is a non-profit urban environmental group active in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). The Society sponsors several projects at 39 East Hastings Street, including the United We Can Bottle Depot. A primary objective of the Society is to create self-sustaining enterprises that focus on caring for the urban environment, while also creating income and job training opportunities for people of the inner city. The program employs residents from the DTES with barriers to traditional employment, giving them valuable job-training, enhanced self-esteem and improved life skills.

For the past nine years the City has provided grants to SOLE (\$50,000 per year 1999-2002, \$60,000 per year 2003-2004, \$75,000 per year for 2005-2006 and \$115,000 per year for 2007) to supplement street cleaning services provided by the City. SOLE utilizes the grant each year to provide job training and employment to individuals with traditional barriers to employment by performing micro-cleaning of streets and lanes in the DTES. Micro-cleaning involves daily litter collection on foot with the use of brooms, shovels and wheeled carts. As a result of the City's grant, SOLE is able to provide employment opportunities and leverage funding through Business Improvement Associations, Movie Production Companies, other levels of government, and through special events within the DTES.

SOLE has approximately 50 stable employees with a range of assorted barriers that clean lanes and sidewalks. As a result of this opportunity, some of the SOLE staff no longer require income assistance. SOLE's total pool of active work participants is sustained at 100 people, many of whom participate in the lane cleaning program. This program now covers approximately 65 blocks and several parks.

Family Services of Greater Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action (SYJA)

SYJA is a social enterprise committed to homeless or at risk youth, age 24 and under, with barriers to traditional employment. They offer a range of services including prevention, counselling, pre-employment job training and employment opportunities. They take a unique approach with reaching out to youth, such as providing locker facilities and pet kennels in order to allow individuals to utilize their services, including casual, temporary, and part-time employment.

SYJA has an established community enhancement program (micro street cleaning initiatives, needle sweeps, and graffiti removal) for its youth through partnerships with Business Improvement Associations, the Vancouver Port Authority, Canadian Pacific Railway, Waste Management and Vancouver Coastal Health. With support from these organizations and businesses, they are able to receive matching funds which more than doubles the amount of funding provided by the City.

Last year was the first year the City provided SYJA with a grant for street cleaning. This \$60,000 grant was awarded to SYJA by Council in May 2007 based on the submission and evaluation of grant applications received from various Vancouver social enterprises. Accordingly, the grant enabled SYJA to provide approximately seven months of street cleaning service in the Downtown.

DISCUSSION

Success of Street Cleaning Grant Program

The success and value of street cleaning grants to the City and the community in terms of social and environmental benefits has proven to be significant.

Since the City first started providing grants to SOLE for micro-cleaning of streets in 1999, SOLE has been extremely successful in their ability to provide employment and life skills training to residents within the DTES who have barriers to traditional employment. This program also helps build capacity, provides its participants with stability and enhanced self-esteem, and results in increased community pride through clean streets and lanes. Further, SOLE has also consistently demonstrated they have the necessary resources and capabilities to provide a high standard of workmanship and good value to the City.

The 2007 grant of \$60,000 to SYJA was also a success. SYJA was able to provide life skills and job training, and employment opportunities to more than 70 youth through the street enhancement program. As a result, some of these youth have and will be able to find long term employment and housing. The City's street cleaning grant allows SYJA to sustain their current program and extend it to more youth in need. In 2007 SYJA provided about 4200 hours of employment to youth through their street enhancement program. This resulted in

3300 bags of litter being cleaned up from over 150 blocks of streets and sidewalks in the downtown.

2008 Street Cleaning Grant

For 2008, SOLE is requesting a grant of \$115,000 (the same funding level as in 2007). \$15,000 of this grant is allocated for waste disposal costs, with the understanding that any unused portion of this allocation can be spent on additional lane and sidewalk cleaning in the inner city. The grant will allow SOLE to continue operating at their existing level in the DTES while providing exceptional value to the City.

SYJA is requesting a grant of \$75,000 in 2008. The increased funding (\$15,000) will be used to sustain the program over a full 12 months in 2008, compared to seven months in 2007. SYJA will primarily work within the downtown core; however, other commercial areas with high pedestrian traffic will be monitored by the City for supplemental cleaning. SYJA and Engineering Services will continue to regularly review priority areas for micro-cleaning services and SYJA's work will be adjusted accordingly, as required.

Work covered by street cleaning grants to SOLE and SYJA includes:

- Supplemental, micro-level lane cleaning using brooms and shovels.
- Litter collection from sidewalks and private spaces visible and used by the public, such as alcoves, entrances, vacant lots and loading bays.
- Manual removal of trapped litter, weeds and plant debris from sidewalks, boulevards, gutters, and street drain surfaces within the downtown core.
- The collection and separation of inappropriately discarded syringes as part of a monitored needle collection system coordinated by the City and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

Grant Program Review

In 2008 staff will continue to monitor the success of this grant program, and will review additional options and alternatives for engaging other social enterprises and marginalized individuals in similar capacity building programs. For example, there are other social enterprises that may also benefit from additional funding while providing the same good value to the City. There may also be opportunities for expanding the program to other areas of the City and for developing new partnerships for street cleaning work. Findings and recommendations resulting from this review will be reported to Council later in 2008.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This report recommends a total street cleaning grant in 2008 of \$190,000 consisting of \$115,000 to SOLE and \$75,000 to SYJA. Source of funding includes \$75,000 from the Capital Financing Fund (Solid Waste Capital Reserve), \$100,000 from the 2008 Street Cleaning Operating Budget and \$15,000 from the 2008 Streets Operations Maintenance Budget.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation in this report will result in improvements to the cleanliness of sidewalks, lanes and other spaces accessible to the public. Those improvements will enhance the safety, aesthetics and liveability of the City, benefiting residents, businesses and visitors.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Micro-cleaning services provided by social enterprises such as Saving Our Living Environment and Family Services of Greater Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action improve the appearance and safety of City streets, while providing sustainable social benefits and employment to people with barriers. This in turn provides a sense of pride and self-esteem which better enables marginalized youth and adults to seek, obtain and maintain employment.

CONCLUSION

Street cleaning grants to Save Our Living Environment and Family Services of Greater Vancouver - Street Youth Job Action for supplemental street cleaning services will continue to benefit marginalized residents by providing job and life skills training. They will also continue to benefit the City by improving the cleanliness of the public realm. This grant program is an excellent example of a sustainable solid waste management initiative since all three pillars of sustainability (environment, economic and social) are addressed.

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