



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: July 6, 2010
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Meeting Date: July 22, 2010

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets
FROM: Managing Director of Social Development
SUBJECT: Homelessness Action Week 2010

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the allocation of a \$10,500 grant to the following organizations to engage and educate citizens on the solutions to homelessness by implementing events and initiatives for the homeless during the fall and winter months (including Homelessness Action Week October 10-16, 2010):

- Carnegie Community Centre Association: \$1,500
- Watari Youth, Community and Family Services: \$2,000
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House: \$4,000
- Kitsilano Community Centre Association: \$1,000
- Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society: \$2,000

Source of funds to be the Homeless Action Plan, within the Community Services Group (Housing Policy) 2010 operating budget.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

Council's housing priorities are low and modest income families with children, seniors, low-income singles living in downtown rooming houses and hotels, and those with mental or physical disabilities.

In June 2005 Council adopted the *Homeless Action Plan* which identifies three priorities to address homelessness: improved access to income, more supportive housing and expanded mental health and addiction services.

In July 2009, Council approved funding for a Mental Health and Addictions Plan which includes the implementation of a public health initiative.

Approval of grant recommendations require eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

This report provides information on Homelessness Action Week 2010 (October 10th - 16th) and recommends approval of funding for a series of events to take place during this fall and winter.

BACKGROUND

This is the fifth anniversary of Homelessness Action Week (HAW) - a province-wide initiative that brings attention to and engages citizens in addressing housing and homelessness issues in their communities. Coordinated through the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, the City has played an integral role in initiating and supporting HAW since its inception. The City's support has cemented a legacy of tremendous community involvement and the nurturing of partnerships to ensure success. The goal of this year's HAW is to build on previous success and to encourage even broader participation. A number of organizations are developing their budgets now for the fall events.

DISCUSSION

The Vancouver Homeless Count conducted earlier this spring showed that three quarters of the homeless were accommodated in shelters (up from half of those counted in 2008), and fewer homeless individuals were found on the street (just over half the number in 2008). This outcome is largely due to the success of the City's low-barrier HEAT/Winter Response shelters opened as a result of Council's commitment to ending street homelessness by 2015. The low-barrier shelters provided nutritious meals and connections to housing and health services.

Homelessness Action Week 2010 provides an opportunity to build on these successes and further nurture partnerships - with senior governments, the private sector, non-profit service providers and citizens. Many organizations have begun their planning to build awareness and take action on these important issues.

Homeless Action Week 2010

HAW 2009 was bigger and bolder than previous years - HAW 2010 will build on this success and further strengthen and broaden our community partnerships.

The three objectives of the City's involvement in a bigger and broader HAW 2010 are to:

1. Engage citizens to address homelessness.
2. Take action to raise awareness of the causes and solutions to homelessness.
3. Increase the provision of direct services to the homeless through more Vancouver Connect events.

1. Engaging citizens to address homelessness

HAW 2009 engaged more than 100 volunteers contributing their time to over 15 events which would not have been possible without the involvement and partnership among all levels of government, the private sector, service providers, non-profit and faith-based organizations.

As shown, a number of organizations are planning events and activities for HAW 2010, as well as throughout the fall and winter. HAW 2009 was the first year the City provided support to organizations for these events. Staff will report back with recommendations for a more formalized grant program to support these types of initiatives in the future as part of a future update of the Homelessness Action Plan.

2. Raising awareness of the causes and solutions to homelessness.

Building on the success of 2009, HAW 2010 will continue to actively engage citizens on the causes and solutions to homelessness. This year is unique because the launch of HAW 2010 coincides with World Homeless Day (10/10/10). The idea for World Homeless Day emerged during discussions amongst members of the World Homeless Forum (www.homelessforums.org/) that took place in Australia earlier this year. Vancouver and municipalities across the region will join the international community in calling for an end to homelessness.

This year's theme is affordable housing and a call for a national affordable housing strategy will be the centre of the campaign. Activities being developed for 2010 include community forums, public service announcements, posters, transit shelter ads, and more use of innovative social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

The Homeless Action Week website www.stophomelessness.ca continues to be the "go to" source for all HAW related events and initiatives across the Metro region. As October draws near, the number of events grows exponentially and all are listed on the website. The website is regularly updated and frequent visits are encouraged to ensure viewers have the most up to date information on events and happenings in their city and neighbourhood. Staff will update Council in early October as planning for events in Vancouver are finalized.

3. Increasing the provision of direct services to the homeless through more Vancouver Connect events.

Mayor Robertson kicked off Vancouver Homeless Connect 2009 which included over 50 volunteers, 35 service providers and other partners including Mount Equipment Coop, VanCity, Vancouver General Hospital, Gather and Give, YWCA (Crab Tree Corner), the Foodbank, the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness, StreetoHome, and the DVBI who helped provide direct services (and referrals) to almost 500 individuals.

HAW 2010 will be bigger and broader with the City committing up to \$13,000 from the Homeless Action Plan for two unique Homeless Connect events: Gathering Place Homeless Connect and an additional large Vancouver Homeless 2010 Connect event that will expand our capacity to manage a larger number of volunteers and service providers, and finally, to increase the number of attendees served.

Finally, this report recommends building bigger and broader partnerships through the provision of funding to support neighbourhood-based activities. Organizations being recommended for funding are highlighted in the table below.

Event	Organization/ Neighbourhood	Date	Funding 2010	Funding 2009
<p>Carnegie Community Centre Association (Alley Health Fair): This is the third year this highly successful Fair is being organized. The Fair is a fun, interactive event that celebrates healthy living possibilities among Downtown Eastside residents. In 2009, more than 700 people attending and took part in activities and obtained services and food - including nutritious smoothies created by the Mayor using a bike to power the blender.</p>	Carnegie Community Centre Association /DTES	Mid-September	\$1,500	\$1,300
<p>Watari Youth, Community and Family Services (Under One Umbrella): This is the fourth annual Under One Umbrella event that will provide direct (health and social services, food, haircuts, etc.) services to the homeless in the Grandview Woodlands neighbourhood.</p>	Watari and Under One Umbrella Society/Grandview Woodlands	January 2011	\$2,000	\$2,000
<p>Collingwood Neighbourhood House This year's projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revising the Teacher's Guide on Homelessness, adding information that's relevant to Renfrew-Collingwood's homelessness situation. • Creating materials to promote a class-by-class competition seeking the best idea for addressing homelessness in Renfrew-Collingwood. • Updating mapped information on local services and programs for the homelessness and creating a resource sheet to inform service providers on procedures and information on responding to a homeless person in need. 	Renfrew-Collingwood Homelessness Committee	HAW 2010	\$4,000	\$5,000
<p>Kits Community Centre Association (Shower Program): The Kits shower program has been operating for a number of years, supported by staff from the Kits Community Centre and volunteers.</p> <p>This year, the program will host a mini connect event and engage the broader community on issues facing the homeless.</p>	Kitsilano Community Centre Association, St. Augustine's Catholic Church, and Grace Vancouver Presbyterian Church/Kits	HAW 2010	\$1,000	\$1,000
<p>Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society A number of service providers in South Vancouver) have formed to</p>	Marpole Place, Pacific Community Resources	HAW 2010	\$2,000	

<p>develop a shower program in the area. During HAW, this Committee will organize a mini Homeless Connect event and lunch for people who are homeless in South Vancouver</p>	<p>Society South Vancouver/ Richmond Community Outreach Program (COP), Wilson Heights United Church, Marpole Business Improvement Association, Kerrisdale/Oakridge/Marp ole Community Policing Office, South Vancouver Community Policing Office, Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre, and Vancouver Coastal Health</p>			
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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The projects identified in recommendation A will be provided grants from the Homeless Action Plan, within the 2010 Community Services Group (Housing Policy) operating budget.

As part of the Homelessness Action Plan update, staff will report back on the creation of a more formalized grant program to support these types of local community-based initiatives to ending street homelessness

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Homeless Action Plan suggests that one of the ways we will know that we have been successful is that all sectors of the community are involved and playing a role to end homelessness. Homeless Action Week provides a unique opportunity to educate and make people aware of the causes of homelessness including the impact of living with mental health and addictions. This report outlines ways in which the City will support neighbourhoods to get involved in implementing appropriate solutions in neighbourhoods across Vancouver.

CONCLUSION

This report provides information on planning underway for Homelessness Action Week 2010 and recommends Council provide grants for four neighbourhoods-based projects to engage Vancouver residents in solutions to homelessness.

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