



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 22, 2012  
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Meeting Date: May 29, 2012

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Managing Director, Social Development  
SUBJECT: 2012 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) Grants

### *RECOMMENDATION*

- A. THAT Council champion Vancouver's 2012 Homeless Action Week (HAW) by supporting neighbourhood-based responses to homelessness.
- B. THAT Council approve an allocation of \$30,000 in grants to the following organizations to create awareness and engage citizens on awareness and solutions to homelessness through a variety of events during Homelessness Action Week (HAW) on October 7-13, 2012, and over the coming fall and winter months:

1. South Vancouver Neighbourhood House	\$2,950
2. Collingwood Neighbourhood House	\$1,650
3. Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Association	\$3,000
4. La Boussole Francophone Community Centre	\$2,950
5. MPA Society	\$2,800
6. Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society	\$2,990
7. Vi Fineday Family Shelter Society	\$2,950
8. Pacific Community Resources Society	\$2,800
9. The Parish of St. Faith's	\$2,910
10. NEC Native Education Society	\$3,000
11. Union Gospel Mission	\$2,000

Source of funds to be the Community Services Group Operating Budget 2012 - Street Homeless Budget.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to report back on October 2, 2012 to proclaim Homelessness Action Week (HAW) 2012 and to showcase actions and events being planned.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

The 2012 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) is the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Metro Vancouver campaign aimed at raising awareness and building local capacity for solutions to homelessness. This report recommends that the City support 11 community organizations to host events primarily during HAW, but also throughout the year to promote HAW and connections with their local homeless populations. The \$30,000 in grants will come from the Community Services Group Operating Budget - Street Homeless Budget.

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

On July 28, 2011, Council endorsed the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 which includes three strategic directions:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing;
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life; and,
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

The 3-Year Action Plan 2012-2014 identifies priority actions to achieve some of the Strategy's goals. The priority actions that relate to this grant request are to demonstrate leadership in research and innovation to create improved housing options for our diverse population.

Over the past several years, the City has been involved in reducing homelessness through a variety of measures including community grants, the development of supportive and social housing, relocation services for those who are homeless (Tenant Assistance Program and Carnegie Outreach team) and involvement with the regional homeless committee.

The Vancouver Charter requires a resolution passed by eight affirmative votes from Council for the approval of grants.

### ***CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

Homelessness Action Week is an important opportunity for the City to engage and support our community partners to raise awareness and generate solutions on local homelessness issues. The approval of these grant requests would support the City of Vancouver's commitment to end street homelessness by 2015, through neighbourhood-based solutions and partnerships. The City Manager therefore recommends approval of this grant to support these important initiatives.

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

## *REPORT*

### *Background/Context*

During October 7-13, 2012, the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Metro Vancouver HAW will engage citizens and draw attention to the need to solve homelessness in their communities. It will be coordinated through the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness (RSCH), and the City has played an integral leadership role in initiating and supporting HAW since its inception. HAW is promoted through the website, [stophomelessness.ca](http://stophomelessness.ca) and the focus is on "Let's keep building on what works". Despite the steady increase in homelessness from 2002 to 2009, this population has remained unchanged in Vancouver over the last three years.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for a variety of community and grassroots initiatives that will support positive and engaging events taking place during Vancouver's HAW 2012 (October 7-13, 2012). The City has recognized the importance of supporting community involvement and partnership activity through the provision of small grants which have continuously grown. In 2009, the City provided \$9,300 to four community groups. In 2010, the City provided \$10,500 to five community groups. In 2011, the City provided \$25,000 in grants to nine community groups. These funds contributed to uniting over a thousand people in a common goal to raise awareness and create solutions to the issues of homelessness in Vancouver. Staff are recommending an increase in grant funding to \$30,000 to ignite even more community passion to solve homelessness, reach out further than in previous years and engage an even greater number of participants.

This year, HAW 2012 will have a stronger impact as more neighbourhoods have registered an interest in being involved and developing organic responses to neighbourhood-based issues. Planning has also begun for a number of other events and activities in Vancouver. Staff will report back on October 2, 2012 to give Council an opportunity to proclaim HAW and to provide more information on those events still in the planning phase. A key aim of this year's HAW is to use HAW as a platform for year-round efforts to increase awareness in communities and neighbourhoods on how to address homelessness.

### *Strategic Analysis*

#### **Vancouver Homeless Count 2012**

Homelessness emerged as a growing problem in the early 1990's. The impact of new supportive housing, the opening of temporary, low-barrier shelters and outreach teams have had a very positive effect. Since 2010, the number of people experiencing homelessness has remained unchanged and the number of street homeless has begun to decline. Vancouver's 2012 Homeless Count results will be addressed in an upcoming report to Council.

#### **HAW 2012 - Let's Keep Building on What Works**

HAW 2012 builds on the success of partnerships between the City, the Province and other partners to reduce homelessness through a diversity of responses over the last few years. Some of the key drivers for success are highlighted below.

**Partnerships** - Success would not be possible without partnerships with the Province of BC, the many dedicated community groups, non-profit agencies we work with such as

Streethome, Vancouver Coastal Health and many others. Through the strength of our partnerships, there are real improvements in the lives of Vancouver's homeless citizens with results showing a decline in the numbers of homeless living on the streets.

**Low-barrier Shelters** - HEAT and Winter Response shelters continue to play a critical role in moving people inside. An increase in low-barrier shelter beds targeted to locations and neighbourhoods where there were significant street homeless populations resulted in a number of street homeless moving into shelters and onto permanent housing. In addition, BC Housing's shift in shelter policy to provide 24/7 access, increased staffing, 3 meals per day, mental health and primary health care assessments/services and supports, and allowing people to stay until housing became available has had a significant impact.

**New Supportive Housing** - Since conducting the City of Vancouver's first homeless count in 2010, approximately 450 new units of supportive housing (5 of the 14 BCH/COV sites) have been opened. It will be important to continue working with the funders and the non-profit operators to ensure as many homeless people get into these buildings as possible.

**Expanding our Reach** - More and more neighbourhoods across the City and region are becoming involved in efforts aimed at ending homelessness. Homelessness creates unimaginable human suffering for the individual and negatively impacts our communities. Individuals struggling with homelessness live in every part of our city and as demonstrated by the breadth of HAW grants recommended in this report, neighbourhood responses to this issue are having marked impacts.

**Increased Housing Options and Best Practices Research** - At Home/Chez Soi is a federally funded research demonstration project investigating mental health and homelessness in five Canadian cities including Vancouver. The project will provide evidence about what services and systems could best help people who are living with a mental illness who are homeless. The project has housed 290 people who were homeless or at-risk of homelessness with severe and persistent mental illness. The National Film Board of Canada has developed a series of films by a local film maker documenting the success of this program, which will be featured during HAW this fall.

**Renovating Single Room Occupancy Hotels** - The Provincial purchase of 23 SROs provided over 1400 units of supported and social housing. Thirteen of these SROs will be improved through a renovations plan currently being developed as a result of a federal private-public-partnership (P3) initiative.

**Targeted Outreach Programs** - The Provincial Homeless Intervention Program (HIP) targets housing and wrap-around services to the chronically homeless which has had a significant impact on providing individuals with the support they need to access services and move inside. The City of Vancouver continues its support to homeless people and those at risk through its Tenant Assistance Program, and in partnership with BCH, through the Carnegie Outreach Team.

## HAW 2012 Grants

The goals for Vancouver's HAW 2012 Grants include:

1. Creating innovative solutions to local homelessness and support new approaches and opportunities to prevent or eliminate homelessness.
2. Building the capacity of neighbourhoods to raise awareness and respond to issues of homelessness.
3. Building healthy, safe and inclusive communities in neighbourhoods across the city.
4. Supporting existing and creating new partnerships and leverage opportunities to address homelessness and affordable housing needs.

These four goals are aligned with the priority actions of *Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 Strategic Direction 3: Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability*. The priority actions speak to research and innovation, improvements in health and safety, and partnering opportunities for prevention and elimination of homelessness. Community groups are important partners in helping to achieving these desired outcomes. The provision of HAW grants enables the City to develop new relationships with non-profit community groups and nurture existing ones.

To this end, there was a formal call for proposals to host events or projects in support of the spirit of HAW, in and around the week of HAW 2012. This year the total available funds are \$30,000 from which a group may receive a maximum of \$3,000. This is the largest amount of funds allocated to HAW grants since the City began allocating HAW grants in 2009. Grant applications were available online for one month. Non-profit community groups were invited to make an application that supported the four HAW 2012 grant goals listed above.

Social Development received a total of 13 grant applications and recommends approval for 11 grants. Of the two applications not being recommended, one did not meet the goals of the grants as closely as the others and the other did not meet the eligibility criteria. The table in Appendix A summarizes the applications received and the recommended level of support for each.

### Sneak Peak - Additional HAW Events

Community involvement, public engagement and unique and inspiring events have grown with each successive HAW. Staff are in the early planning stages for a number of exciting and inspirational events for this year. Personal stories of overcoming mental health and addiction issues and/or struggles with homelessness humanize this very tragic issue. Staff are planning to highlight these stories through a film series which may include a newly released National Film Board documentary of the At Home/Chez Soi project. Staff are also working with VPL on showcasing books about homelessness through readings and discussion.

Staff will report back these and other events and activities currently in the planning phase on October 2, 2012. This meeting will also provide Council an opportunity to proclaim October 7-13<sup>th</sup> as HAW 2012.

## *Implications/Related Issues/Risks*

### *Financial*

This report recommends Council approve \$30,000 in grants to 11 non-profit organizations, with the Community Services Group Operating Budget 2012 - Street Homeless Budget as the source of funds.

### *Social Implications*

Homelessness is devastating not only to the individual but also to our communities. It involves severe human suffering and represents a waste of individual potential. It also poses significant costs to our health and social services and criminal justice system. Targeting our limited resources for more proactive social objectives would positively impact the quality of life of all Vancouver citizens.

The newly adopted Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 identifies the need to lead and support our partners and leverage other partnering opportunities. HAW 2012 is a positive platform to connect with new partners and support partners to create new solutions to homelessness at a community level. HAW spans not only the City of Vancouver but the region and promotes healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods by engaging all residents to raise awareness about homelessness issues amongst those in their community. This report highlights ways in which the City can support its community organizations and neighbourhoods to get involved in implementing solutions to homelessness across Vancouver.

### **Communications Plan**

Housing Policy staff are working with Corporate Communications to draft a comprehensive Communications Plan for HAW 2012, including a social media strategy.

### **CONCLUSION**

This report seeks Council approval of \$30,000 in grants to support a variety of grassroots initiatives to support positive and engaging events taking place in Vancouver's HAW 2012 (October 7-13, 2012).

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## APPENDIX A

2012 Vancouver's Homelessness Action Week Grants					
Event	Agency	Date of Event	2012 Request	2012 Recommendation	2011 Grant
<b>Homelessness Action Project:</b> Creation of a resource guide of local housing and homelessness services available to that in need, in South East Vancouver neighbourhoods, as well as a plan for a neighbourhood response to the issue.	South Vancouver Neighbourhood House	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$2,950	-
<b>Community Meal and Outreach/Awareness Project:</b> Networking dinner for staff and volunteers from service providers and community organizations to improve referral knowledge to assist in the prevention of homelessness.	Collingwood Neighbourhood House	HAW 2012	\$2,700	\$1,650	\$2,250
<b>Homelessness in Action: Quit Talking and Start Acting!</b> DTES Women's Centre participants would lead and organize a series of dialogues culminating in a community event to share their stories, experiences and solutions to homelessness.	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Association	Fall 2012	\$3,000	\$3,000	-
<b>Building Bridges:</b> Provide at least 10 presentations and brochures to Francophone and French immersion schools with facts & info about the realities of homelessness in Vancouver and challenges the homeless face. Invite children and youth to help prepare, serve and share a meal for La Boussole clients.	La Boussole	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$2,950	\$3,000
<b>Perceptions: Dispelling Myths of Homelessness Through a Younger Generation:</b> Collaboration between Westside high school students and MPA clients (adult men and women who either are or were homeless and have been diagnosed with a mental illness) in an art therapy project aimed at changing the face of homelessness and facilitating an understanding of who the homeless are.	MPA Society	HAW 2012	\$2,800	\$2,800	\$2,924

2012 Vancouver's Homelessness Action Week Grants					
Event	Agency	Date of Event	2012 Request	2012 Recommendation	2011 Grant
Deliverables include a book of art and a PowerPoint presentation that can be shared widely.					
<b>Marpole Homeless Connect Event:</b> Provide the homeless and those at risk of homeless in the Marpole area with meals, clothing and services.	Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society		\$3,000	\$2,990	-
<b>Honouring the Past on the Journey to Create the Future:</b> Four workshops and a community dinner to celebrate the 25 year anniversary of the shelter, and to share best practices and knowledge and how this can be applied during crisis and personal struggles to end homelessness. The events will bring together shelter residents, service providers, non-profit organizations and community members. A brochure will also be created to share information about the shelter and to support fundraising activities.	Vi Fineday Family Shelter Society	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$2,950	\$2,700
<b>Youth Homelessness: We CAN Solve it Together:</b> Provide homeless/in need youth food boxes and resource/care packages and pillows decorated with words and images of strength and caring. Youth and staff at Burrard Youth Community Resources Society will decorate the pillows and prepare and deliver the food boxes and care packages.	Pacific Community Resources Society	HAW 2012	\$2,800	\$2,800	-
<b>Take a Bite out of Winter:</b> Provide a community meal and clothing to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in Marpole. In collaboration with Marpole Place Neighbourhood House Homelessness Committee, they will also create a resource guide of available food, housing, supports and other resources in the community.	The Parish of St. Faith's	HAW 2012	\$2,910	\$2,910	-



2012 Vancouver's Homelessness Action Week Grants					
Event	Agency	Date of Event	2012 Request	2012 Recommendation	2011 Grant
<b>Working Together to Promote Health, Safety and Affordable Independent Living:</b> An event that brings students (some who are homeless - many which are at risk) together with Aboriginal service providers and community partners for information and resource sharing, food and cultural celebration.	NEC Native Education Society	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$3,000	
<b>Eastside Stride:</b> Creation of a walking tour of the DTES available through an iPhone App or by trained tour guides (one from a social service agency and the other struggles with homelessness).	UGM	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$2,000	-
<b>We Are Here - Flags that Connect Us:</b> Create small flags with the words "We Are Here" and hang them around Metro Vancouver. The flags are to inspire a sense of common ground through mutual history and love of community.	UGM	HAW 2012	\$3,000	\$0	-
<b>New Westminster Homeless Connect Event:</b> Services and resources provided to the homeless.	New West Homelessness Coalition	<i>Does not meet eligibility criteria</i>			-
<b>2011 Grants</b>	5 other societies that did not apply in 2012 were awarded grants in 2011.				\$14,126
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$35,210</b>	<b>\$30,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>