



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: May 17, 2013  
Contact: Dennis Carr  
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RTS No.: 10143  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: June 25, 2013

TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: General Manager of Community Services  
SUBJECT: Grant to Atira Women's Resource Society for Eight Hospice Rooms  
(100 East Cordova Street)

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council approve a grant of \$40,000 to Atira Women's Resource Society (Atira) for the construction of an 8-room hospice addition for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, who are at the end of their lives due to serious physical or mental illness, addiction and other poverty related illnesses at 100 East Cordova Street [Block 9 Plan LMP45079 District Lot 196 NWD Parcel B, Group1. PID: 024-756-989]; source of funding to be the 2012-14 Capital Plan for New Non-Market Housing Projects (Capital from Revenue) to be added to the 2013 Capital Budget.

FURTHER THAT the grant be subject to the issuance of a Building Occupancy Permit for the 8-room hospice addition at 100 East Cordova Street.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report seeks approval of a capital grant of \$40,000 (\$5000 per room) to Atira for the construction of an 8-room hospice addition for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, who are at the end of their lives due to serious physical or mental illness, addiction and other poverty related illnesses at 100 East Cordova Street. The construction of these rooms is consistent with Council's Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

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

On July 28, 2011 Council endorsed the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 which includes:

- Strategic Direction 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing
- Strategic Direction 2: Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods that enhances quality of life, and;
- Strategic Direction 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 optimize the City's use of capital grants to lever and support housing partnerships, and to strengthen the focus of the Urban Health Initiative on homelessness, with an emphasis on improving health, safety, food security, employment, and social supports.

The approval of grants requires eight affirmative votes of Council.

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

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

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

Council policy is to preserve and maintain a stock of market rental housing, and to maintain and increase the stock of affordable and social housing in the city. The City's social housing priorities are the homeless, those at risk of homelessness, low and moderate income families with children; seniors on fixed incomes or in need of support; SRO residents; and the mentally ill and physically disabled.

In situations where the development of non-market housing projects are not viable, or where a City contribution will assist in addressing the issue of street homelessness, or meeting the needs of low income and core-need households, Council has provided capital grants to non-market sponsors. Such contributions help ensure the projects can proceed, and help ensure that rents in these properties can be reduced to be affordable to persons on income assistance or who are otherwise low-income/core-need income households.

#### ***Strategic Analysis***

Atira is a not-for-profit organization with a broad range of social service and property management experience in Vancouver. They provide housing, advocacy and support to women for the Bridge Housing Society's building at 100 East Cordova. The building currently provides permanent housing for 36 residents and has a 12 suite emergency shelter. The Downtown Eastside Women's Centre occupies the main floor and basement. Operational funding for the project comes from BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health.

The hospice floor addition is being achieved with the existing building envelope of Bridge Women's Housing at 100 East Cordova through the conversion of a surplus

common amenity area on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor into eight single rooms, six of which will share three bathrooms between them and two of which will have their own bathrooms. Typically the City provides a grant of \$10,000/door for self-contained units and \$5,000/door for rooms.

The hospice floor will also have an accessible tub room, clinic or exam room, common kitchen and residents' lounge. All eight units will rent to women who are homeless/at risk of homelessness and on fixed incomes and who are in need of palliative supportive housing. Rooms will rent at \$375/month or maximum shelter allowance, whichever is greater.

The focus of care in this program will be supportive, promoting comfort and ensuring respect for women with chronic illnesses who are further marginalized when their health deteriorates and they are no longer able to live independently. Aspects of care in this supportive housing setting may include managing pain and other symptoms of illness, providing physical, social, psychological, cultural, emotional, spiritual and practical support, as well as, maximizing quality of life. A harm reduction and woman-centred approach will be used in providing these supports. The goals of the program are to provide women with deteriorating chronic health conditions who are homeless and/or otherwise marginalized with stable supported housing in the Downtown Eastside and to allow women from the Downtown Eastside the choice of dying in their community, surrounded by their support networks and friends and to reduce the number of emergency room visits and hospital admissions by this specific population.

Staff recommend that Council approve a grant of \$40,000 (\$5,000 per room) to Atira. The recommended contribution of \$5,000 per room is a standard contribution amount offered by Council for the construction of transitional supported sleeping units to non-profits facing a funding shortfall. Subject to Council approval of this grant, Atira will be able to secure the necessary financing and cover the funding shortfall.

### ***Financial Implications***

The total construction cost of the 8 hospice room addition is estimated at \$694,000. Should the \$40,000 grant be approved, the City's contribution would be approximately 5.8% of the overall construction costs with a leverage ratio of approximately 17 to 1 (i.e. \$17 leveraged for every \$1 contributed by the City).

The source of funds for the City's grant \$40,000 to Atira is the 2012-14 Capital Plan for New Non-Market Housing Projects (Capital from Revenue) to be added to the 2013 Capital Budget. Release of the grant is subject to the issuance of a Building Occupancy Permit for the 8-room hospice addition at 100 East Cordova Street.

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***CONCLUSION***

This report seeks approval of a capital grant of \$40,000 to Atira for the construction of an 8 hospice room addition at 100 East Cordova Street for Women who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and who are at the end of their lives due to serious physical or mental illness, addictions and other poverty related illnesses.

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