



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 24, 2014
Contact: Ethel Whitty
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Meeting Date: July 23, 2014

TO: Standing Committee on Planning, Transportation and Environment
FROM: General Manager Community Services
SUBJECT: 2014 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) Grants

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council champion Vancouver's 2014 Homelessness Action Week by supporting neighbourhood-based responses to homelessness.
- B. THAT Council approve an allocation of \$40,000 in grants as outlined in Appendix A to create awareness about and engage citizens on solutions to homelessness through a variety of events during Homelessness Action Week (October 12-18, 2014) and throughout the year; source of funds to be the 2014 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.
- C. THAT Council approves a grant in the amount of \$35,000 to support the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, towards their second annual conference which will be held in Vancouver from November 3-5, 2014; the source of funding being:
 - a \$20,000 in-kind contribution in the form of rental of the Orpheum Theatre; and
 - a \$15,000 cash contribution from the 2014 Community Services Operating Budget.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to report back by September 30, 2014 to proclaim HAW 2014 and to showcase actions and events being planned.

REPORT SUMMARY

The 2014 Homelessness Action Week (HAW) is the 9th annual Metro Vancouver campaign aimed at raising awareness about and building local capacity for solutions to homelessness. This report recommends that the City support 16 community organizations to host events during HAW and throughout the year to promote HAW and connections with their local homeless populations. The \$40,000 in grants will come from the 2014 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness. The report also recommends a grant of \$35,000 towards the second annual Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference which will be taking place in Vancouver in November 2014.

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 enhance housing stability and improve the health, safety, food security and social supports for the homeless and those at risk.

Council approved the *Homeless Action Plan* in 2005 which identifies three priorities to address homelessness: improved access to income, more supportive housing and expanded mental health and addiction services. The City has been involved in addressing homelessness through a variety of measures including community grants, the development of supportive and social housing, relocation services for those who are homeless and partnerships to support people maintaining their housing.

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

Ending homelessness is a Council priority. Earlier this year, Council appointed a new Director of Homelessness Services. This new coordinated approach to homelessness, including the participation of neighbourhoods across the city, is important to raising awareness on the causes of and solutions to homelessness.

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

REPORT

Background/Context

2014 HAW Theme - Opening Doors, Opening Hearts

The 9th annual Homelessness Action Week will take place across various Lower Mainland municipalities from October 12th to 18th, 2014. In previous years, Homelessness Action Week has been coordinated across the region through the Metro Vancouver Homelessness Secretariat (MVHS).

This year, because of changes to federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding criteria, the MVHS is no longer coordinating HAW or providing support. All HPS funding is now targeted for Housing First Initiatives and HAW does not fit the criteria. Homelessness Action Week will once again take place in municipalities across the region, but each municipality will be responsible for coordinating and funding its own HAW at the local level, with regional coordination occurring through the Council of Metro Vancouver Community Homeless Tables. As such, notwithstanding the withdrawal of the Federal Government as a funding partner, Homelessness Action Week will continue to provide a unique opportunity regionally and locally to engage citizens, the media, and the private and non-profit sectors on the causes of and solutions to homelessness.

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 in Vancouver during HAW and throughout the year, including \$35,000 in grant and in kind support to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness national conference which will be held in Vancouver in November 2014. The City of Vancouver has played an integral leadership role in initiating and supporting HAW since its inception and has strived to generate more events, activities and interest each year since 2009:

- In 2009, the City provided \$9,300 to four community groups (RTS 08283)
- In 2010, the City provided \$10,500 to five community groups (RTS 08788)
- In 2011, the City provided \$25,000 to nine community groups (RTS 09325)
- In 2012, the City provided \$30,000 to eleven community groups (RTS 9581)
- In 2013, the City provided \$35,000 to eighteen community groups (RTS 10135)

Community interested in HAW has grown since 2009, and grant funds have contributed to uniting Vancouverites in a common goal to raise awareness about and create solutions to the issues of homelessness in Vancouver. This year \$46,000 in grant requests was received from 18 non-profit societies. Staff recommend allocating \$40,000 to fund 16 of these requests (see Appendix A).

Staff has also begun planning other events and activities and will report back in September, 2014 to provide Council an opportunity to proclaim October 12th to 18th, 23, 2014 as HAW and to provide Council with more detailed information on these events. A key aim is to use HAW as a platform for year-round efforts to increase awareness in communities and neighbourhoods across Vancouver on how to address homelessness.

Strategic Analysis

HAW 2014 builds on the success of partnerships between the City, the Province and other private and not-for-profit partners to reduce homelessness through a diversity of responses. Some of the key drivers for success are highlighted below.

Partnerships - HAW 2014 builds on the success of partnerships between the City, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health and other private and not-for-profit partners, such as Street To Home, to reduce homelessness through a diversity of responses including:

Low-Barrier Shelters -partnerships with BCH resulting in low-barrier shelters such as the *HEAT* and Winter Response shelters have played a critical role in moving people inside.

New Supportive Housing - The City/BC Housing MOU supportive housing sites will continue to have a significant impact on achieving our goal of ending street homelessness with a policy of requiring the units be tenanted with individuals directly experiencing street or sheltered homelessness (50%) currently living in Single Room Occupancy Hotels (30%), and at risk of losing their housing (20%). Vacated SROs are also aggressively being backfilled with street and sheltered homeless.

Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency - The creation of the recently approved Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency is a key step in the work to meet the targets contained within the Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021. Its creation will enhance the City's ability to expedite the delivery of a larger number of more affordable housing options for a target range of residents who are currently struggling to find affordable housing options. The Agency is a new vehicle designed to leverage partner innovation, equity and financing toward meeting these goals. The Agency's key targets include the creation of 2500 affordable housing in the areas of non-market rental (social housing including supportive housing if partners are

available to deliver support services), innovative renewal and replacement programs for SRO's and the existing affordable rental stock in the city as well as piloting strategies for affordable home ownership.

Health and the Lived Environment - The Healthy City Strategy being developed by the City plays an integral role in supporting and engaging individuals who are homeless as well as those who are successfully housed. Some HAW events will engage housing providers to showcase their programs and their successes in supporting homeless individuals and will feature some of the supportive housing outcomes during HAW.

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. As demonstrated by the breadth of HAW grants recommended in this report, neighbourhood responses to this issue are having marked impacts.

Expanding Our Homeless Outreach Team And Services - A restructuring of the Carnegie Homeless Outreach Program to incorporate the COV tenant assistance response and work city wide with shelter and outreach service providers has resulted in more effective placement of homeless individuals in permanent housing. In the six months from January to June of 2014, the team secured housing for 209 individuals of the 458 who self-referred; 68 placements for those living in temporary winter shelters of the 187 who registered with us; and 27 places for those who we discovered sleeping outside, in our 5:00 AM search, out of the 67 who have registered and agreed to accept help finding housing. We expect to continue with the trend in the coming months.

Renovating Single Room Occupancy Hotels - The Provincial purchase of 13 SRO hotels provided over 1400 units of supported and social housing. These SRO hotels will be improved through renovations as a result of the Federal P3 initiative. Work is underway with completion scheduled for 2015. The COV provides a grant of \$5000 per unit to landlords of market SROs who upgrade their rooms. This is in line with the DTES Local Area Plan target of improvements in the living conditions in SROs.

National Conference on Homelessness - November 2014 Partnering to support the Canadian National Conference on Ending Homelessness will allow Vancouver to showcase local success stories, and to learn about issues and solutions unique to other parts of the country.

2014 HAW Grants

The goals of Vancouver's 2014 HAW Grants include:

1. Creating innovative solutions to local homelessness and supporting new approaches and opportunities to prevent or eliminate homelessness.
2. Building the capacity of neighbourhoods to raise awareness about 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 leveraging opportunities to address homelessness and affordable housing needs.

These four goals are aligned with the priority actions of the *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 achieve desired outcomes and HAW grants enable the City to develop new relationships with non-profit community groups and nurture existing ones.

A formal call for proposals to host events or projects supporting the four HAW goals during the week of HAW 2014 and throughout the year resulted in 18 applications totalling 46,000 in requests. Total available funds are \$40,000 from which a group may receive a maximum of \$3,000. Grant applications were available online.

Of the 18 applications, this report recommends approval of 16 grants that were reviewed and assessed according to the following criteria:

- Projects had to be designed to directly benefit people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within local neighbourhoods.
- Organizations had to:
 - Be a registered non-profit society based in Vancouver
 - Have a proven track record for delivering projects, services and/or hosting events
 - Demonstrate a strong level of partnership with a range of key local stakeholders
- Priority was given to projects that leveraged funding from other sources.

Applicants that had received HAW grants in the past were eligible to apply but each organization was only eligible to receive one grant. Projects being recommended for funding provide unique opportunities for capacity and skills development, awareness raising and direct access to resources and services for the homeless and those at risk.

Personal stories of overcoming mental health and addiction and/or struggles with homelessness humanize this very tragic issue. Several of the grants being recommended in this report support giving voice to homeless individuals through dialogue, panel discussions, video, writing, and the visual arts. Other grants provide the opportunity for homeless people and those at risk to connect with a range of service providers in their communities.

Of note are two organizations, Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society and The Parish of St. Faith's, who have received funding since 2012 for connect-style events in their local neighbourhoods. In 2012, they each received \$2900, and in 2013, \$1,800. This year, because of their success at creating community partnerships and leveraging donations and in-kind support, they have requested only \$900 and \$750 respectively. They stand out as models of the way in which community members can work together to address homelessness at the local level, and of the way in which HAW projects and events can, over time, become increasingly self-sustaining.

Overall, interest in the grants this year was strong and, while all applications met some of the eligibility criteria, those being recommended in this report more strongly supported the goals and criteria set out in the proposal call. Staff will work with the unsuccessful applicants to build capacity for next year.

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. As well as the events being planned by community grant recipients, City staff is in the early stages of organizing exciting and inspirational events for this year's HAW.

"Much Ado about Something": Raising awareness about homelessness through the art of theatre

The City has partnered with RainCity Housing and Support Society and local artist/actress/director Luisa Jojic to bring together people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds to learn, create, transform, and educate through the art of classical theatre. Individuals who are vulnerably housed, formerly homeless or homeless and people who are higher income and housed will be recruited to participate in the project and create and act in the play. This diverse group of participants will develop the script together, using Shakespeare's texts from various plays, soliloquys and sonnets that address issues related to homelessness. The project will culminate in two performances during HAW in October that will stimulate dialogue and new understandings around issues of homelessness.

Connect Events

Since 2009, the City has hosted Homeless Connect Events. These events provide homeless and those at risk of homelessness with direct services, such as haircuts, foot care, food, health and dental services, access to income assistance and BC Housing staff, etc. Annually, COV sponsored Connect or Connect-style events have taken place at the Carnegie Community Centre (Carnegie Alley Health Fair) and at the Gathering Place Community Centre (Gathering Place Connect). This year the Evelyne Saller Centre and Kitsilano Community Centre will also host a Connect event. These four Connect events along with those organized by community groups that are recommended for grant approval (see Appendix A) will result in Connect events occurring across the city in different local neighbourhoods both during HAW and at other times of the year.

Communications Plan

Staff are working with Corporate Communications to draft a comprehensive Communications Plan for HAW 2014. An activities and events calendar will be created and posted on www.stophomelessness.ca as well as the City's website.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

This report recommends Council approve \$40,000 in grants to 16 non-profit organizations. The source of funds is the 2014 Community Services Operating Budget - Street Homelessness.

A further grant of \$35,000 is recommended for the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness towards their second annual conference being held in Vancouver in November 2014. This comprises a \$20,000 in-kind contribution for rental of the Orpheum Theatre, and a cash grant of \$15,000 from the 2014 Community Services Operating Budget.

Social Implications

Homelessness 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 for all Vancouver citizens.

The *Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021* identifies the need to lead and support our partners and leverage other partnering opportunities. HAW spans not only the City of Vancouver but the region and promotes healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods by engaging all residents in raising awareness about homelessness issues amongst those in their community.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council approval of \$40,000 in grants to support a variety of grassroots initiatives to support positive and engaging events taking place in Vancouver's 2014 Homelessness Action Week (October 12-18, 2014) and \$35,000 in grant and in kind support to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness for sponsorship of their second annual conference being held in Vancouver in November 2014.

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2014 Homelessness Action Week Grant Applicants and Recommendations					
Recommending					
Event	Agency	Date of Event	2014 Request	2014 Recommendation	2013 Grant
1. Marpole Homeless Connect: Provide the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the Marpole area with access to a meal, services and clothing, and engage the Marpole community in the issue of homelessness.	Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society	Thurs Oct 16	\$900	\$900	\$1,800
2. Take a Bite Out of Winter: Provide a community meal, clothing, meal vouchers and updated version of the Community Resource Guide for People in Need or Crisis to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, and raise awareness about homelessness in Kerrisdale/Oakridge/Marpole/Dunbar area.	The Parish of St. Faith's	Sat Oct 18	\$750	\$750	\$1,800
3. Empowering Voices on the Street: Individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness participate in a 6-day intensive writing and storytelling workshop led by Ricochet Media and "The Story We Be" Community Education Model, culminating in a public event and publishing of writing.	(Re)inform Media - Ricochet Media		\$3,000	\$2,415	--
4. Community Open House: Thanksgiving community dinner for homeless, at risk and housed community members, panel discussion on homelessness, tour of AMCS, access to service providers and care kits for homeless and those at risk, diaper drive for low-income and marginally housed mothers and children. Packed lunches delivered to DTES community.	Aboriginal Mother Centre Society	Thurs Oct 16	\$3,000	\$3,000	--

Event	Agency	Date of Event	2014 Request	2014 Recommendation	2013 Grant
<p>5. WON: Welcoming Our Neighbours: Intergenerational project with youth and seniors in Mount Pleasant creating welcome care packages and hosting a community barbeque for new residents of the Vancouver Native Housing building at Broadway & Fraser and the Biltmore Hotel, and people in the neighbourhood who are homeless and at risk. A community dialogue circle will be held to dispel myths about homelessness.</p>	Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House	Oct 6-18	\$3,000	\$3,000	--
<p>6. Photo 101 - The Documentary: The production of a 30-minute documentary of UGM's Photo 101 program for low-income community members with lived experience of homelessness and/or addictions. A public screening of the film will occur during HAW to breakdown stereotypes, show the beauty of the DTES, and allow the audience a glimpse into the lives of local people who have struggled with homelessness, poverty and/or addiction.</p>	Union Gospel Mission	Wed Oct 15	\$3,000	\$2,415	\$2,000
<p>7. SRO Tenants Convention: A convention for tenants of DTES privately-owned SRO (Single-Room Occupancy) Hotels to learn about the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw, their rights under the Residential Tenancy Act, actions they can take to improve conditions, and advocacy, organizing and leadership skills. The goal is to prevent homelessness by supporting tenants to advocate for improved low-income housing.</p>	Carnegie Community Action Project	Oct 17 and 18	\$3,000	\$3,000	--

Event	Agency	Date of Event	2014 Request	2014 Recommendation	2013 Grant
8. Capturing the Voices of Homelessness: Community volunteers (community police officers, seniors, church members, business owners, residents, etc.) will partner and collaborate with people who are homeless in Kitsilano and Fairview to photograph and document in writing the stories and experiences they want to share. Photos and writing will be displayed at a local art gallery, with an opening night community event. The project will culminate in a shared community meal.	MPA Society	Week of HAW	\$3,000	\$3,000	--
9. Kensington-Cedar Cottage Connect: A day-time event to provide the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage area with access to a meal, community services, and a welcome care kit.	PLEA Community Services Society of BC	Oct 15 OR Oct 17	\$2,520	\$2,520	\$2100
10. Megaphone's Vendor Writing & Reading Project: A week-long intensive writing workshop with Megaphone's homeless and low-income vendors led by award-winning author Michael Christie. Written pieces will be published in Megaphone's October issue. A public reading will be held at the VPL Central Branch.	Street Corner Media Foundation	During HAW week	\$3,000	\$3,000	--
11. Intentional Rental Communities - "The Roommate Project": A series of discussions in Mount Pleasant to explore housing models for youth coming out of care, youth coming out of corrections, LGBTQ youth and Aboriginal youth. A consultation group within Mt. Pleasant will be created to work towards creating a transitional model of housing for youth based on peer support.	Pacific Community Resources Society	Over next 12 months	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2360

Event	Agency	Date of Event	2014 Request	2014 Recommendation	2013 Grant
12. Sharing our Strengths - supportive resources for all: Information sessions, support groups and a Homeless Resource Fair will be held for DTES women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to discuss and share knowledge on housing issues, including tenant rights and responsibilities, safety in unsafe environments, housing loss prevention, population-specific housing options, and provision of resources.	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre Association	During HAW week	\$3,000	\$3,000	--
13. World Café: Sex Workers talk Housing: Using the World Café model, marginalized Sex Workers will discuss their experiences within the housing system and develop recommendations to be tabled in a report to assist policy makers in developing housing that meets the needs of the Sex Work community.	Providing Alternatives Counselling & Education (PACE) Society		\$3,000	\$3,000	--
14. Oppenheimer Park Community Art Show: A 6-week art exhibition at Gallery Gachet featuring work by artists who use the Park frequently, many of whom are homeless or at risk of homelessness. During the process of art-making, the artists will be provided with direct social and peer support through Oppenheimer Park's partners and other resources.	Gallery Gachet Society	Sept - Oct 2014	\$3,000	\$3,000	--
15. Connecting the Ends: Providing homeless and those at risk of homelessness in the West End, Yaletown and the Downtown South with access to a meal, services and a care kit.	St. Paul's Anglican Church	Tues Oct 14	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,500
16. Under One Umbrella: A day-long service fair for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with up to 40 community service providers. Annual attendance over 7 years has been approximately 500.	Watari Youth, Family and Community Services Society	March 2015	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$2,500

NOT RECOMMENDING					
Event	Agency	Date of Event	2014 Request	2014 Recommendation	2013 Grant
17. Sleep Out: Student Edition: An educational fundraising event hosted by Secondary Schools across the Lower Mainland to benefit Covenant House Vancouver youth in the Crisis Shelter. The project will educate and engage schools, students and their communities on youth homelessness and social issues, with an experiential component whereby senior students 'sleep out' (supervised) on school property.	Covenant House	Oct 2014	\$3,000	\$0	--
18. Cantonese Crash Course for Front Line Service Providers: A 6-class Cantonese language course so front-line service providers can better serve the low-income / marginally housed Cantonese speaking population of the DTES.	Vancouver International Centre for Contemporary Asian Art		\$3,000	\$0	--
			Total request	Total recommended	
			\$46,330	\$40,000	