



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 30, 2016
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: July 26, 2016

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Engineering Services
SUBJECT: Transportation Research and Innovation Funding

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a grant of \$90,000 to the University of British Columbia and its partners to support their study to document health and economic benefits of sustainable development and transportation investment in the Lower Mainland. Source of funding is the Innovation Fund.
- B. THAT Council approve a grant of \$150,000 to the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility to conduct an evaluation of the changes to the Arbutus Greenway (with a specific focus on children, youth and older adults). Source of funding is the 2016 Engineering Operating Budget.
- C. THAT Council approve a grant of \$100,000 to the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association to activate three unique laneway projects that encourage better public realm by creating more interesting and inviting spaces. Source of funding is the Pay in Lieu: Green Transportation reserve.
- D. THAT Council approve a grant of \$280,000 to Simon Fraser University to conduct research on transit ridership levels, employee commuting patterns, and workplace performance, of different configurations of the worker transit discount program in the downtown Vancouver hotel sector. Source of funding is the 2016 Engineering Operating Budget.
- E. THAT, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the Vancouver Charter, Council deem the University of British Columbia, Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, and

Simon Fraser University (the "Applicants") to be, contributing to the culture, beautification, health, or welfare of the City,

FURTHER THAT the grant be subject to the Applicants executing and delivering a grant agreement on the terms generally outlined in this Report and otherwise satisfactory to the City Engineer and City Solicitor, such agreement to be executed by the City Solicitor on behalf of the City,

- F. THAT, no legal rights or obligations are created by the approval of Recommendations A through E above unless and until an actual grant agreement is executed and delivered by the City and the Applicants.

Recommendations A, B, C and D authorize grants and require eight affirmative votes for approval.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report recommends four grants totalling \$620,000 to be allocated to:

- 1) the University of British Columbia (\$90,000), and
- 2) the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility (\$150,000), and
- 3) the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (\$100,000), and
- 4) Simon Fraser University (\$280,000).

The funding will build upon the City's existing partnerships with academic research institutions and the downtown business community that will help develop evidence based research on transportation and public space investments.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

These initiatives are in support of Council priorities which have been approved by Council through the following reports:

- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011)
- Transportation 2040 (2012)
- Healthy City Strategy (2014)
- Engaged City Task Force Report (2014)
- Renewable City Strategy (2015)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

This report recommends four grants be approved to leverage funding for a variety of unique projects that align well with existing policy identified in many City plans, including the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, Transportation 2040, and the Healthy City Strategy. The primary focus of these studies is on the planning, design and management of our transportation network and the associated benefits of making decisions that support sustainable transportation modes. In addition, they provide an opportunity to investigate the health and social impacts, which will help shape our future decision-making policies.

All four of these proposals build upon existing relationships within the academic and business community, which have all previously demonstrated innovative work with high quality results. The information provided below outlines the scope and intent of the different projects.

University of British Columbia - Benefits of Transit and Active Transportation Investment

The Health and Community Design Lab at UBC, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health and MODUS, is proposing a study to develop evidence that documents health and financial benefits of sustainable development, transit and active transportation investment in the Lower Mainland. The study will link the My Health My Community Survey with a highly detailed walkability, land use, and transportation systems database. This study will support the evaluation and documentation of relationships between built environment features and health outcomes in the Lower Mainland for different demographic groups.

Building on the City of Vancouver's effort to create a healthy, sustainable, equitable city, the "Health and Economic Benefits of Sustainable Development and Transport Investment Study" will provide the City evidence on how to redesign urban neighbourhoods to reduce chronic disease and its associated financial impacts. The study responds to the growing concern of rising health care costs and housing affordability. The study will show that increasing the supply of walkable environments can help promote public health and offer health care cost savings. By helping decision makers conceptualize and plan future healthy communities, Vancouver builds on its reputation as a sustainable city.

Work is expected to begin in August 2016 and conclude with a final summary report in December 2017.

Centre for Hip Health and Mobility - Arbutus Greenway

The evaluation project proposed for the Arbutus Greenway by the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility aims to characterize the physical and social environment for implementation of the Arbutus Greenway Project with specific attention to the health, mobility and social connectedness of those who reside in proximity to it. The proposal is to be conducted in three distinct phases, as outlined below.

Phase I (summer 2016): engage children, their parents and older adults living along the Arbutus Greenway. Through focus groups and key informant interviews the project team will discern resident's perceptions of their neighbourhood (e.g. safety, accessibility, and aesthetics) and generate ideas for key changes that they envision will either enhance or inhibit their moving about in, and engaging with their community. The project team will present their findings from these 'consultations' to inform staff discussions regarding concept plans for development of the Arbutus Greenway. This is a similar process to the one undertaken prior to development of the Comox-Helmcken Greenway.

Phase II: Before (Fall 2016) and after (Phase III; Fall 2017) development of the Arbutus Greenway the project team will conduct focus groups, key informant interviews (walkabouts) and conduct surveys to discern children, youth, their parents and older adult's perceptions of their neighbourhood (e.g. safety, accessibility, aesthetics) and to evaluate change in these measures over time.

Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association - Activated Alleyways

Over the last several years, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) has demonstrated leadership in public space creation and activation. The VIVA Granville event series (2010-2015) and the organization's Perch Program (established in 2013), which provides free seating on publically accessible private property, have yielded important lessons in the art of placemaking.

Experiments in placemaking are further encouraged within the DVBIA's recently published Re-Imagine Downtown Plan. One of the plan's directions calls for the creation of a connected series of activated alleyways. The purpose of these activations is to creatively test ways to make laneways more interesting and inviting to people on foot, as spaces to explore and spend time in, while maintaining the corridors' core utility and service functions.

The DVBIA has engaged the services of HCMA Architecture + Design to jointly develop an engagement and design process and to implement up to three DT alleyway transformations this summer to coincide with the Pro Walk, Bike, Place Conference. The aim is to have the proposed laneway transformations, each with its own distinctive theme, remain in place on a semi-permanent basis.

Simon Fraser University - Employer Transit Discount Study

This is a proposal to the City of Vancouver for experimental research on the outcomes of the Vancouver hotel worker transit discount program, including examination of results of changes in travel behaviour resulting from changes in the level of the transit discount coverage. The study will include downtown Vancouver hotels, with a mix of union and non-union hotels, with and without transit discount program coverage.

The study will be coordinated with the City's existing travel survey contractor to conduct three rounds of work surveys and produce a report analysing the reported outcomes, which will ensure comparability between this data and the City of Vancouver Travel Panel Survey. The proposal is based on feedback on earlier drafts of the proposal discussed with hotel union, City and TransLink staff. If approved, work will begin in July 2016 and is expected to be complete in July 2018.

Strategic Analysis

University of British Columbia - Benefits of Transit and Active Transportation Investment

The Health and Economic Benefits of Sustainable Development and Transport Investment study proposed project budget is \$360,000. The project team has also applied for a grant with the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. The City of Vancouver is proposing to support \$90,000 for this study, funded by the City of Vancouver Innovation Fund, with potential in-kind staffing resource contributions through Engineering Services and Planning and Development Services.

As outlined in Table 1 below, the University of British Columbia - Benefits of Transit and Active Transportation Investment project aligns with the criteria for the Innovation Fund.

Innovation Fund Criteria	Project Alignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Aligns with Council Priorities ▫ Supports transformation and innovation in meeting City goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011) ✓ Transportation 2040 (2012) ✓ Healthy City Strategy (2014) ✓ Engaged City Task Force Report (2014) ✓ Renewable City Strategy (2015)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Demonstrates clear outcomes & transformation toward CoV goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear timelines and deliverables ✓ Trusted local partners leading the projects

Table 1: Innovation Fund Criteria

Centre for Hip Health and Mobility - Arbutus Greenway

The total cost to complete the study is \$400,000 and the project team is requesting \$150,000 over the next two years.

The Phase I and II evaluation of outcomes related to development of the Arbutus Greenway is \$200,000, of which \$100,000 will be supported from external sources (Canadian Institute for Health Research funding). The remaining \$100,000 for Phase I and II is proposed to be funded by the City of Vancouver 2016 Engineering Operating budget.

To complete Phase III of the project (another \$200,000), the team is seeking an additional \$50K from the City of Vancouver 2016 Engineering Operating budget and will leverage the balance of \$150K from other sources (two grant applications are in process to support this work).

Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association - Activated Alleyways

Thirty-six property owners in three retail districts have contributed a combined \$100,000 to complete three alleyway installations this summer and the DV BIA is funding the project management and hiring of a design contractor. The DV BIA is seeking \$100,000 from the Pay in Lieu: Green Transportation reserve to support the project. The Pay in

Lieu: Green Transportation reserve was established by Council in 2009, to reserve funds collected in lieu of parking facilities for public realm improvements that support walking and cycling.

After the launch of the laneway activations, staff intend to work closely with the DVBI and use this as an opportunity to observe the transformation and benefits for active transportation modes and also monitor how the more traditional laneway activities (e.g. loading) are impacted.

Simon Fraser University - Employer Transit Discount Study

Now that the Compass Card has been fully implemented and TransLink has initiated their Transit Fare Review, it is an opportune time to undertake a study that explores the responsiveness to employer transit fare discounts. The information gathered from this study will be influential to how the City, TransLink and major employers will all collaborate to help meet key City transit objectives and supporting effective fares that encourage transit use.

The project team is requesting \$280,000, to be funded by the City of Vancouver 2016 Engineering Operating budget and is conditional on TransLink subsidizing the cost of the discounted passes (approximately \$300,000 over two years) for the hotel staff.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

The total project funding requirement is \$1,612,000 which includes the proposed financial contributions by the City of \$620,000 broken down by initiative as follows:

Funding Applicant	Total Project Funding Requirement	CoV Contribution	Innovation Fund	Pay in Lieu: Green Transportation Reserve	2016 Engineering Operating budget
University of British Columbia	\$360,000	\$90,000	\$90,000		
Centre for Hip Health and Mobility	\$400,000	\$150,000			\$150,000
Downtown Vancouver BIA	\$200,000	\$100,000		\$100,000	
Simon Fraser University	\$652,000	\$280,000			\$280,000
TOTAL	\$1,612,000	\$620,000	\$90,000	\$100,000	\$430,000

The \$620,000 financial contribution from the City will be in 2016, as follows:

Source of Funds	Amount
2016 Innovation Fund	\$90,000
Pay-In-Lieu: Green Transportation Reserve	\$100,000
2016 Engineering Operating Budgets	\$430,000
TOTAL	\$620,000

Environmental

These projects all uniquely align with sustainable transportation initiatives that will help encourage people to walk, bike, and take transit, as well as help the City better understand the benefits associated with our transportation and public space investments. They are consistent with recommended actions identified in many City policies, including the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, Transportation 2040, and the Healthy City Strategy.

CONCLUSION

The City of Vancouver has the opportunity to leverage the expertise and resources of universities and health researchers to help advance a variety of studies that will advance the City of Vancouver’s understanding of land use and transportation decisions and how this decision making can make lasting impacts to people’s health and well-being. Additionally, the leadership of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association will help the City to begin delivering on an action identified in our Transportation 2040 plan to activate laneways and further improve the public realm in the downtown.

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City of Vancouver Innovation Fund:

Increasingly, more opportunities exist to work with other parties to leverage expertise, funding, and access to various in kind resources in order to focus on strategic areas important to the city. This form of leverage allows the City to continue to advance its policy priorities at a lower cost to taxpayers.

The Innovation Fund is expected to build on the City's experience in leveraging funding and expertise with outside agencies, other levels of government, private sector, universities and not-for-profits to advance key City priorities through aggressive leveraging of external partners.

Some examples of these types of unique opportunities would include: Enhancing the success of our urban aboriginal residents; enhancing our local economy with an emphasis on social enterprise particularly in the green sector; innovative child care programs for children at risk; cultural programs which enhance the community and create local jobs for artists; enhancing the involvement of our seniors in community; enhancing our sport strategy through partnerships on significant sporting initiatives; sport for youth at risk; and others.

Guidelines for Accessing City of Vancouver Innovation Fund:

With the establishment of an Innovation Fund, one time innovative projects can be funded to advance key agendas in the city. Accessing the City of Vancouver Innovation is at Council discretion; however, the following guidelines have been established to optimize the use of the fund:

- Aligns with Council Agenda (Housing, Public Safety, Economy, Environment)
- Demonstrates clear outcomes
- Matching requirements - target leverage of 3:1 (minimum 1:1) 3rd party investment (cash and in-kind) to City funding
- Size of CoV contribution should enable a broad range of programs to be supported by fund (Guideline - maximum project size of \$250,000 recommended).
- Projects which are one-time innovative opportunities; maximum commitment for expenditure of funds - up to 2 years
- Supports transformation and innovation in meeting City goals; shines a spotlight on Vancouver