

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Project Application

ISSUE

Community Foundations of Canada is accepting applications for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) until March 9, 2021. The Administration is requesting City Council approval to apply for the Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons project.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons project be approved for application to the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative.

BACKGROUND

The Government of Canada is providing just over \$31 million for the CHCI. Community Foundations of Canada was selected by the Government of Canada to deliver the CHCI. Community Foundations of Canada will work with communities to identify and provide funding to selected local projects. The first intake for applications will close on March 9, 2021 and a second round of applications will start in May 2021. Organizations can only submit one application per round.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

The CHCI supports communities to create and adapt public spaces, programming, and services to respond to ongoing needs arising from COVID-19 over the next two years. This initiative will fund small-scale infrastructure projects (between \$5,000 and \$250,000) that:

1. Respond to identified needs arising from impacts of COVID-19;
2. Create and adapt public spaces, and programming and services for public spaces in the public interest;
3. Demonstrate consideration of and connections with the community;
4. Serve the general public or a community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19; and,
5. Fall within the three Healthy Communities Initiative theme areas:
 - Safe and Vibrant Public Spaces;
 - Improved Mobility Options; and
 - Digital Solutions.

Eligible expenditures must be incurred between April 1, 2020 and June 30, 2022 and do not require matching funding by the City. Details of the program can be found on the Community of Foundations of Canada [website](#).

The Administration considered three projects, all requesting the maximum grant of \$250,000, in making the recommendation:

1. Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons – This program will provide a safe alternative to pressing conventional pedestrian pushbuttons for all users including visually impaired individuals. Instead of requiring the button to be pushed to activate the walk signal, touchless pushbuttons only require movement between 1-4 inches from the face of the assembly. A radar sensor within the unit will sense the movement and alert the traffic controller that a pedestrian is desiring to cross. An added benefit of the audible part of the pushbutton is that accommodation is easily made for visually impaired users. More information is provided in Appendix 1.
2. Boulevard Garden Program Expansion – This program expansion will help to implement and educate on the updated Boulevard Gardening & Maintenance Guidelines which are expected to be approved in April 2021. Updates will be proposed to address raised beds, inclusion of native plants, wildflower and native grasses, and the expansion to different categories of City-owned rights-of-way. The program would include education on the guidelines, how-to guides, videos, workshops, installation, and maintenance of demonstration gardens throughout the city and supply of garden materials for residents. More information is provided in Appendix 2.
3. Natural Areas Education and Citizen Science Monitoring Program – This is a new program that connects residents to natural areas through education and data collection. The program would include citizen science programming that enables residents to learn about natural areas and how to protect them while contributing data assists with the City's and community partner's efforts to protect these important ecological resources. It will use a mobile app to enable data collection in a consistent and socially distanced manner. The program will incorporate traditional knowledge alongside western knowledge of Saskatoon's natural areas, making the program more accessible to Indigenous residents. More information is provided in Appendix 3.

While all three projects generally meet the criteria of the initiative, the Administration is recommending the Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons project be approved for application through CHCI due to the safety risks associated with not accelerating this project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If approved, an increase to the capital budget will be required which will be funded from the CHCI.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

NEXT STEPS

The Administration will report back if the Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons project is approved, requesting an increase to the budget for the existing capital project using the funds from the CHCI.

Additionally, the Administration will report back before the second round of applications with a recommendation of the project being applied for, which may include the projects identified in this report that were not recommended in this initial first round.

APPENDICES

1. Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbuttons
2. Boulevard Garden Program Expansion
3. Natural Areas Education and Citizen Science Monitoring Program

REPORT APPROVAL

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