

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative Round Two Project Application

ISSUE

Community Foundations of Canada is accepting applications for round two of the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI) until June 25, 2021. The Administration is requesting City Council approval to apply for the Downtown Public Washroom Project.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend to City Council that the Downtown Public Washroom 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 through two rounds of applications. 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 City of Saskatoon's (City) application in round one was for the Touchless Accessible Pedestrian Pushbutton project, with results expected to be received by May 14, 2021.

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 Foundations of Canada [website](#).

The Administration considered six projects, requesting grants ranging from \$100,000 to the maximum grant of \$250,000, in making the recommendation:

1. Downtown Public Washrooms – COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for access to safe and clean public washrooms for all. This project would work with community-based organizations, businesses, and others in the downtown to determine appropriate locations for public washrooms and develop a plan for accessibility including ongoing community support programming associated with the washrooms. Funding would also be used to implement recommendations from the plan. Ongoing operational funding would be required over time to support long-term implementation. 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 and 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, 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.
4. Winter City Design Guidelines – As a winter city, many months of the year are spent hiding from the cold and snow instead of embracing it. By improving the design of buildings and outdoor spaces, the City can encourage more outdoor activities year-round, enabling the community to come together, even when pandemic guidance/rules like physical distancing require that people stay apart. Building and open space design can impact comfort and accessibility in winter through design features such as capturing sun for warmth, protection from wind, and consideration of how people use light. This project would develop guidelines for developers and the City to use at the beginning of the design process. More information is provided in Appendix 4.
5. Forestry Farm Park and Zoo Pathway Project – The community continues to utilize the Meewasin walking paths that connect to the Forestry Farm Park which is no cost if entered when walking/riding a bike. Currently, the path is dirt/gravel and not accessible in its current state. The project will allow full connection to the Meewasin paths and allow full accessibility to the superintendent's house. More information is provided in Appendix 5.

6. Urban Design Bubbling Over – This project is a programmable lighting installation in a back alley in the heart of Saskatoon’s Downtown that will provide visual interest at all times of day and in all seasons, particularly during the dark winter months. The design responds to the character of its location, which is surrounded by restaurants, concert venues, pubs, and innovative workplaces. It is designed to bring back a sense of joy and playfulness during and after this period of anxiety and hardship. The installation will also bring visitors to a mural created by Indigenous artists through the Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Program already present in the alley, making this a space to celebrate Saskatoon’s Indigenous peoples as a foundation of the community. More information is provided in Appendix 6.

City Council could select any of the projects listed as they are viable and potentially eligible for the program. However, the Administration is recommending the Downtown Public Washroom Project for application through CHCI. During COVID-19, public washroom access was closed and businesses were required to restrict access to their facilities. Public washrooms became more challenging for the general public and especially for vulnerable persons who have few options. COVID-19 highlighted the urgency of this need to ensure access to safe and clean public washrooms for all citizens.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If approved, an increase to the capital budget will be required which will be funded from the CHCI. This funding will provide a plan and recommendations, along with initial implementation for public washrooms using best practices. The plans can then be used for further implementation by City Council in future budget cycles.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

NEXT STEPS

The Administration will report back if the Downtown Public Washroom Project is approved, requesting an increase to the budget for the existing capital project using funds from the CHCI.

APPENDICES

1. Downtown Public Washrooms
2. Boulevard Garden Program Expansion
3. Natural Areas Education and Citizen Science Monitoring Program
4. Wintercity YXE – Winter City Design Guidelines
5. Forestry Farm Park and Zoo Pathway Project
6. Urban Design Bubbling Over

REPORT APPROVAL

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