



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**COMMUNITY & EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Community and Emergency Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	April 13, 2015
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program (CES14026(a)) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Carmen Rachelle Bian (905) 546-2424 ext. 2187 Suzanne Brown (905) 546-2424 ext. 4711
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community & Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

That \$25,000 be approved from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project # 2051255204) to pilot the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program for one year beginning June, 2015

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In October of 2010, Hamilton City Council approved the earmarking of \$2 million to support the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, a partnership initiative of the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Best Start Network. To date, ten of the eleven identified neighbourhoods have completed neighbourhood actions plans, totalling 421 distinct actions.

Building on the success and momentum from work in these 11 neighbourhoods, in June 2014 Council approved Report CES14026 which contained a number of recommendations that would begin to expand the capacity of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy success. One recommendation gave direction, "That staff explores the development of a city-wide Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants program and report back to the General Issues Committee in the first quarter of 2015 on the results and next steps."

With Council approval, staff began their research focussing on the work of the City of Seattle. The City of Seattle has had matching grant programs since 1988 and a full review of these programs was conducted in 2012. Staff had the opportunity to consult with current City of Seattle staff as well as Jim Diers, the first Director of Neighbourhoods when the City of Seattle began its initial work with neighbourhood matching grant programs as well as other neighbourhood development initiatives.

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A number of Canadian cities with neighbourhood matching grants programs were also identified. Significant consultation with staff in Edmonton, Kamloops, Abbotsford, London, Waterloo and Kitchener took place. Based on this research, and in consultation with the Neighbourhood Action Strategy partners; Hamilton Community Foundation, Best Start Network and the Social Planning and Research Council, the purpose, eligibility criteria, applicant process, and an interdepartmental review team approach to assess applicants to the proposed Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program pilot project were developed.

If approved, the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program will provide one-time matching funds up to \$1,000 maximum per project/activity to support neighbourhood and place-based grassroots initiatives across all neighbourhoods in the city. The total budget available for the pilot will be \$25,000.

The Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program will:

1. Actively involve the community and build neighbourhood connections.
2. Support neighbourhood groups and/or place-based grassroots initiatives in the city to change neighbourhood spaces build community, and build capacity.
3. Leverage the City's financial support with 100% matching community contribution from volunteer labour, donated materials, donated professional services and/or cash.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial:

Resources will be allocated in the amount of \$25,000 from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Fund (Project # 2051255204) to be used for the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program. As of January 2015, \$1,294,108.00 has been allocated from the \$2M fund.

Given that this pilot program is open to informal and formal groups (Business Improvement Associations, Neighbourhood Associations, incorporated non-profit organizations etc.), applicants will acknowledge their responsibility to appropriately use city funds and accept the liability of returning any unspent dollars should their funded activity/event not take place or significantly change.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with Report CES14026(a). It is anticipated that the workload associated with this pilot will be absorbed within existing staffing resources.

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Legal:

Application templates and funding agreements will be developed in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy, a partnership initiative of the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation, was established in 2010 to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods better and healthier places for all residents.

Since its inception, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy has engaged with 11 identified neighbourhoods to develop unique neighbourhood action plans. Currently, there are 421 distinct actions from 10 of the 11 completed neighbourhood action plans, with the pre-planning process underway in the 11<sup>th</sup> neighbourhood. Upon completion of each neighbourhood action plan, residents have presented their plans to the General Issues Committee to unanimous endorsement.

During the first update of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, presented in October 2013, it was suggested that the early successes of the City's neighbourhood initiative should lead to an expansion of this work. In June 2014, Council approved Report CES14026 which contained a number of recommendations to begin this process. One of those recommendations was:

*That staff explore the development of a city-wide Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grants program and report back to the General Issues Committee in the first quarter of 2015 on the results and next steps.*

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

Not applicable.

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) was consulted and is in favour of the recommendation in Report CES14026(a). The Hamilton Community Foundation currently funds four community development workers and a portion of a manager's salary, as well as the Neighbourhood Small Grants program. The Small Grants Funding Program funded by the Hamilton Community Foundation and administered through the Social Planning and Research Council provides up to \$5,000 to encourage and facilitate resident engagement in the defined eleven neighbourhood/hubs. Community developers working with these hubs assist resident groups in developing their ideas, completing their applications, and facilitates its submission for approval to either the Community Planning Team or a sub-committee set up to review these applications.

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The Manager of Finance, Administration and Revenue Generation was consulted and provided advice regarding the financial recommendation.

The Social Planning and Research Council were consulted and are in favour of the recommendation. They will work with the Neighbourhood Action Strategy staff to ensure full transparency in terms of grants being approved.

Risk Management was consulted and there are no issues with Report CES14026(a).

The Director Finance, Administration, and Revenue Generation was also consulted in Corporate Services, who is responsible for the City's City Enrichment Fund. There are no issues with Report CES14026(a) as the mandate of this pilot program falls outside of City Enrichment Fund.

Legal Services was consulted and they will review draft terms and conditions for the application form and any potential funding agreement.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION**

### Context:

Inspired by the work of Jim Diers who presented to General Issues Committee in October 2013, city staff began to explore the idea of neighbourhood matching grant programs. The City of Seattle created their Neighbourhood Matching Fund (NMF) program in 1988 to "provide neighbourhood groups with City resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen their own neighbourhoods. All projects are initiated, planned and implemented by community members in partnership with the City. Every award is matched by neighbourhoods' or communities' resources of volunteer labour, donated materials, donated professional services or cash.

As part of the Seattle Department of Neighbourhoods, NMF promotes collaboration between the City and the community. Community building is core to project success: the process of bringing people together and building relationships is as important as project results. Since 1988, the Fund has awarded more than \$49 million to more than 4,000 projects throughout Seattle, generated an additional \$72 million of community match, and engaged more than 86,000 volunteers who have donated over 574,000 hours (retrieved from <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/nmf/>, April 11, 2014). The City of Seattle conducted a review of their matching grant programs in 2012. Staff had the opportunity to discuss the lessons they learned so that they could be applied and adapted to a City of Hamilton Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program.

Based on the positive experience of the City of Seattle and a desire to expand upon the successes of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, staff identified a number of potential objectives of the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program:

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1. Provide neighborhood groups with financial resources for community-driven projects that enhance and strengthen the quality of life within Hamilton neighborhoods;
2. Leverage community assets that exist in Hamilton neighbourhoods to obtain 100% match of city funds;
3. Build a stronger sense of community by engaging a broad range of diverse people living in Hamilton neighbourhoods to work with their neighbours on proposed projects;
4. Encourage neighbourhoods to work to engage as many of their residents as possible; and,
5. Promote collaboration between the City and the community.

Although the City of Seattle experience assisted in shaping initial ideas for the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program, staff looked for cities across Canada that had neighbourhood matching grant programs. While initially it seemed like Canadian examples focussed solely on parks, neighbourhood beautification, environment, or safe communities, there were examples that some cities had expanded upon these areas to include other aspects of vibrant neighbourhoods (Cities of Abbotsford, Kamloops, and Edmonton). These aspects included capacity building workshops for residents, funding for special events, neighbourhood recognition events, newsletters etc. Three Ontario cities, London, Waterloo, and Kitchener, currently have neighbourhood matching grant programs and staff were able to consult with them about their programs and lessons they have learned to date.

Proposed City of Hamilton Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program Pilot Project:

The Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program will:

1. Actively involve the community and build neighbourhood connections.
2. Support neighbourhood groups and/or place-based grassroots initiatives in the City to change neighbourhood spaces, build community, and build capacity.
3. Leverage the City's financial support with 100% matching community contribution from volunteer labour, donated materials, donated professional services and/or cash.

The Neighbourhood Matching Grant Program will fund on a one-time basis activities/events under three broad areas: Changing Spaces, Building Community, and Building Capacity.

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1. Changing Spaces: *Projects or activities with the primary focus to renew or revitalize neighbourhood public and green spaces, contributing to neighbourhood pride, improving safety, or to enhance quality of life.*

Some examples of eligible projects could be: neighbourhood clean ups, community gardens, graffiti diversion/clean up, physical changes like lighting, parks etc., and public art.

2. Building Community: *Projects or activities that foster neighbourhood pride or build stronger relationships between neighbours/neighbourhood groups.*

Some examples of eligible projects could be: Special events for the neighbourhood, neighbourhood celebrations or other recognition events.

3. Building Capacity: *Projects or activities that empower neighbourhoods to be more actively involved in organizing, identifying, and coordinating around neighbourhood issues.*

Some examples of projects include: learning how to organize citizens in an informal/formal decision making group, acquiring skills to write and distribute a neighbourhood newsletter, or learning how to use social media to enhance neighbourhood communication.

#### Who is Eligible to Apply?

In order to maximize access to the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program, the eligibility criteria is flexible depending upon the level of funding being requested. For requests up to \$500, informal and formal groups may apply. Informal groups must be led by a resident and be working with a group with a minimum of three non-related members. Formal groups would be those with a formalized structure including guidelines for membership, decision making processes, etc. Some examples would be neighbourhood associations, business improvement associations, non-profit organizations etc. For requests greater than \$500, non-profit groups are able to apply on behalf of neighbourhood residents, or act as a fiscal sponsor for a neighbourhood group.

Since the Hamilton Community Foundation and City of Hamilton already provide small grant funding for the neighbourhoods supported through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, any informal/formal/non-profit group receiving or who have received Small Grant Funding from the Community Planning Team/Social Planning and Research Council for the SAME PROJECT are not eligible to apply to the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program. This will help to avoid duplication in funding and offer greater opportunity to access Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program across a broader range of neighbourhoods across the city.

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Applicant and Review Process:

Applications will be submitted to the Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division on the last day of each month<sup>1</sup>. Decisions will be made on submitted applications within four weeks after the application has been submitted. Assuming a program launch of June 1<sup>st</sup>, applications would be submitted by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Applicants could expect to hear back by July 30<sup>th</sup>. To ensure appropriate planning time, applicants are encouraged to apply at least one month in advance of their project/event start date. Applicants hoping to organize an event on city owned lands should anticipate extra time to go through all Special Event Advisory Team requirements.

Each application will be reviewed by a cross-departmental staff team. If approved for funding, successful applicants will be notified and payment issued.

Applicant Responsibility:

All applicants approved for funding will be required to submit a final report 30 days after their activity/event is done. This report will summarize the activity/event, objectives achieved, actual final budget figures etc., and any anecdotal stories or material to describe the activity/event.

Evaluation of Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program:

If approved, the pilot program will be evaluated and staff will report back to the Community and Emergency Services Committee on the results and outcomes. The evaluation criteria will include the number of neighbourhood residents engaged, success in meeting the matching funding component, the actual total value of the projects leveraged through city funds, and number of type of events by neighbourhood. At that time, staff will either recommend that the pilot be discontinued or that it continue and request stable operating funds for the program from Council.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Strategic Priority #1**

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

*WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.*

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<sup>1</sup> Except in the month of December when applications will be submitted on the first working day of the new calendar year when city offices are open after the Christmas shutdown.

**Strategic Objective**

- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

None