

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

TO:	Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 6, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program Extension (CES14026(b))(City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Suzanne Brown Director, Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program be extended 18 months to December 2017; and,
- (b) That staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee with an update on the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program extension prior to December 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April, 2015 Council approved the \$25,000 Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program (NEMGP) for one year beginning June 2015 (CES14026 (a)) from the Neighbourhood Action Strategy fund. The Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program provides funds up to \$1,000 maximum per project/activity to support neighbourhood and place-based grassroots initiatives across the City of Hamilton.

. As of March 31, 2016:

- Eight grant applications have been approved totalling \$7,322.
- Grants leveraged \$46,337 in donations, in-kind services and volunteer hours.
- Six applications were not approved due to ineligible expenses/ineligible applicant.
- \$17,678 remains within the allocated funding.

Staff is recommending that the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program be extended for an additional 18 month period through until December 2017. During this time, staff will explore new methods and venues to market the grant more

effectively. This extension will also provide time to assess the effectiveness of the program and report back to Council on future recommendations.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

As of March 31, 2016 a total of \$7,322 grant value has been awarded resulting in a balance of \$17,678. No new funds are being requested within report CES14026(b).

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with report CES14026(b).

Legal:

Application templates and funding agreements have been developed in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS), a partnership initiative of the City of Hamilton, the Best Start Network and the Hamilton Community Foundation, was established in 2010 to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods healthier places for all residents. In October of 2010, Hamilton City Council approved \$2 million to support the Neighbourhood Action Strategy for neighbourhood development.

During the first update of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy presented to General Issues Committee in October 2013 (CM11007(c)), it was suggested that the early successes of the City's neighbourhood initiative should lead to an expansion of this work across the city of Hamilton. In April 2016, Council approved the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program as one such city-wide initiative (Report CES14026(a)). The Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program duplicates the success of the Hamilton Community Foundation's Small Grants Program developed to support the work of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy Neighbourhoods. The Small Grants Program has successfully created large scale community engagement across all eleven neighbourhoods and assisted to implement a number of actions on the Neighbourhood Action Plans.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS:

There are no policy implications to report CES14026(b).

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Consultation has been undertaken with the NEMGP Review Team. The following divisions/Departments and one organization are represented on the committee:

- Neighbourhood Action Strategy, Recreation, and Employment and Income Support (Community and Emergency Services Department) – was consulted and are in agreement with extending the pilot.
- Tourism and Culture (Planning and Economic Development) – was consulted and are in agreement with extending the pilot.
- Parks and Cemeteries, Strategic Planning (Public Works) – was consulted and are in agreement with extending the pilot.
- Social Planning and Research Council – was consulted and are in agreement with extending the pilot.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

Although the numbers of approved applicants to date has been low, this slow uptake is similar to the experiences of other municipalities offering similar neighbourhood matching grant programs, such as the City of London, Region of Waterloo and City of Kitchener. To date, the NEMGP pilot program has seen the following the results:

- As of March 31, a total of 15 requests for funding were received by the NEMGP.
- Of those 15 requests, nine applications were approved for funding.
- Of the six requests denied: four were ineligible activities, one was an ineligible applicant, and one applicant withdrew their request
- 117 residents were involved in planning/implementing their approved activities/projects
- 1,435 estimated number of residents participated in the approved activities/projects
- 1,209 volunteer hours contributed to plan/implement approved activities/projects
- Grants issued of \$7,322 leveraged activities/projects valued at an estimated \$46,337 in donations, in-kind services and value attributed to volunteer hours.

Approved applications were received from formal neighbourhood associations (Durand, Ainslie Wood, Corktown, Rosedale, Crown Point, Gage Park), informal groups and non-profit organizations, along with one application that targets Wards 1-4.

The applications were submitted to one of three granting streams: Building Capacity, Building Community and Changing Spaces. Each request for funding is reviewed by the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Program team and approved by consensus. Criteria used for approval include:

1. Eligible applicant/activity
2. Resident involvement in planning/implementation and number of citizens engaged

3. Ability to achieve the match.

Funded activities included a movie night, promotional post cards, branded t-shirts, a community cinema, a Halloween haunt, a winterfest activity, neighbourhood walks, Monarch awards, and a community art mural. Two of the ineligible applicants were referred to the City of Hamilton's Clean and Green program and another to the Beautiful Alleyways Initiative.

When the program was launched in June 2015, a web presence was created on the City of Hamilton website. The web link and program information was circulated to staff in the Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division, Senior Management Team, City Councillors, NAS community developers, NAS planning teams, neighbourhood associations, and the Hamilton Funders Network. However, staff have identified that there are opportunities to market the program to a broader audience and in more creative ways not utilized to date such as use of social media and proactive presentations with potential applicants.

Staff recommends that the Neighbourhood Engagement Matching Grant Pilot Program be extended through December 31, 2017. During this period, staff will to seek creative opportunities to market the NEMGP across the city while also continuing to access existing networks. This extension will provide staff with the time to increase the number of approved grant applications with the goal to expend the allocated funding, assess the effectiveness of the program and to make a recommendation to Council on the future of NEMGP.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

None

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

2.2 Improve the City's approach to engaging and informing citizens and stakeholders.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None.