



Corporate Report

NO: R230

COUNCIL DATE: November 24, 2008

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: November 18, 2008
FROM: General Manager, Planning and Development FILE: 5080-01
SUBJECT: Grant Application in Support of an Age-Friendly Community - Accessibility

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Resolve to support the Age-friendly Community Planning project that will engage seniors in dialogue about transportation issues and opportunities for seniors in Surrey; and
3. Authorize the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities ("UBCM"), the Focus on Senior's Committee and the Social Planning Advisory Committee.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with information on the Age-friendly Community Planning Grant application that has been submitted to the UBCM and to recommend that Council adopt a resolution supporting the project.

BACKGROUND

The idea of undertaking a project to engage seniors in a dialogue on transportation issues and applying for a UBCM grant to enable this dialogue, was proposed to the City by Surrey's two seniors' planning tables - the Surrey Seniors Planning Table and the South Surrey Seniors Planning Table. The proposed project is intended to build on and enhance the work of these two local seniors planning tables. On November 14, 2008, the City of Surrey submitted an Age-friendly Community Planning Grant Application to the UBCM

requesting \$10,000 (attached as Appendix I) to support the above-referenced consultation process.

The Surrey and South Surrey Seniors Community Planning Tables consist of local community members, service organizations, agencies and businesses who have come together to facilitate seniors' mobility, leadership, and involvement in the community with the goal of making Surrey a supportive and inclusive place for seniors to live healthy and engaged lives. The Surrey Table (North and Central Surrey) began in May 2008 and the South Surrey Table began in September 2008. The United Way of the Lower Mainland currently funds both Tables. Diversity Community Services Society hosts the Surrey Planning Table and Peace Arch Community Services hosts the South Surrey Table.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the Age-Friendly Community Planning project is to increase the participation of seniors at the local level by engaging them in dialogue on the issue of transportation options for seniors in Surrey.

Accessible and affordable transportation options are essential to help older people stay active and engaged in their communities. Accessibility refers to the ease of reaching destinations and may include factors such as the affordability, reliability, safety, and frequency of public transportation. Many older adults face isolation from community and essential services due to transportation barriers posed by physical ability, health issues, finances, and other factors such as unfamiliarity with the transportation system or safety concerns. Recent, local dialogue and surveys in South Surrey have shown that transportation needs for seniors are an issue of concern. In response, the Surrey Seniors Community Planning Table and the South Surrey Seniors Community Planning Table propose to work in partnership with the City of Surrey, to engage with seniors in the following activities:

- **Community consultation and learning:** holding community dialogues to discover issues and opportunities related to transportation for seniors in Surrey
- **Community mapping:** documenting where seniors live and where they need to go, and then comparing this information with transit routes.
- **Supporting access:** implementing new innovations or expanding current community responses such as “bus buddy” programs for new Canadian seniors or seniors unfamiliar with the transit system; and
- **Exploring opportunities:** exploring options for innovations in transportation in support of improving the mobility options for seniors.

Project Partners include the City of Surrey, Surrey Seniors Planning Table, South Surrey Seniors Planning Table, Fraser Health Authority and Peace Arch Community Services. TransLink is also being invited to be a partner on the project.

The total project budget for the project is \$16,100. A grant of \$10,000 has been requested from the UBCM. The City's in-kind contribution of meeting space is included in the budget. City staff from Social Planning and Transportation Engineering will support the initiative, on an as-needed basis, by providing information and advice on planning and engineering issues. Community Leisure Service staff will also participate in the initiative.

Corporate Priorities

The Age-Friendly Community Planning project supports the following corporate priorities:

- Plan for the Social Well-Being of Surrey Residents ("Social Plan") - The Social Plan recommends that the City "maintain and expand consultation with the community on issues related to the social-well being of Surrey residents". The Age-Friendly Community Planning project will contribute to the implementation of the Social Plan by encouraging senior's engagement in learning about, discussing and identifying solutions for improving seniors' accessibility through transportation options.
- Transportation Strategic Plan - The Age-Friendly Community Planning project is consistent with the Transportation Strategic Plan's objective of "improved accessibility". The Plan notes "a robust and continuing dialogue with the public will improve the City's understanding of what their needs and expectations are." The proposed project will facilitate such a dialogue with seniors throughout the City of Surrey.
- Sustainability Charter - Engaging seniors in dialogues on accessibility and transportation options fits with the vision and recommended actions outlined in the Sustainability Charter.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council pass a resolution supporting the Age-Friendly Community Planning project. This initiative will create opportunities for seniors in Surrey to learn about and share their perspectives and ideas on improving seniors' accessibility. The project also represents an opportunity for the City to support and partner with the newly established community-based seniors' roundtables in Surrey.

Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

AM/kms