

NO: **F009**

COUNCIL DATE: **January 23, 2012**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **January 17, 2012**

FROM: **General Manger, Investment &
Intergovernmental Relations
General Manager, Finance & Technology
Crime Reduction Strategy Manager**

FILE: **1855-04**

SUBJECT: **Applications for Funding under the Provincial Civil Forfeiture Program and
Information about the Federal Proceeds of Crime Program**

RECOMMENDATION

The Investment & Intergovernmental Relations Department, the Finance & Technology Department and Crime Reduction Section recommend that the Finance Committee recommend that Council:

1. receive this report as information, and
2. authorize the submission of an application for a grant under the Provincial Civil Forfeitures Program for the following projects (as generally described in this report):
 - a. The Child Advocacy Centre (Sophie's Place); and
 - b. A Wire Theft Reduction Program.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information on funding opportunities available through the Provincial Civil Forfeitures Program and the Federal Proceeds of Crime Program. This report responds to a request by the Public Safety Committee at its meeting on October 24, 2011. The report also identifies projects that qualify for funding.

BACKGROUND

Overview of Provincial Civil Forfeitures Program

Civil forfeiture involves the Province taking physical assets from individuals who have acquired such assets using the proceeds of unlawful activities. The Province has employed civil forfeiture as a means to deter unlawful activity since 2006. The Government can forfeit non-real estate assets valued under \$75,000 through an administrative process. All other assets can be acquired through a court process. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General administers the program through the BC Civil Forfeiture Office (BCCFO).

The assets that are gained through this process are sold and the funds are put in reserve to support grants to local governments for programs targeted at crime reduction. Grants totaling approximately \$1.5 million have been distributed under this Program since it began in 2006. Each funding round identifies a theme. The last round of funding focused on programs and projects that were targeted at preventing sexual exploitation.

In past years, grants have typically ranged from \$25,000 to \$40,000. This year the BCCFO is considering increasing the amount of each grant that it provides.

Grants are available for crime prevention programs that include one of the following purposes:

- Compensation of eligible victims;
- Prevention of unlawful activities; and
- Remediation of the effect of unlawful activities.

Capital projects are not eligible.

The BCCFO is currently seeking approval through the Treasury Board to release additional funds and expects that grants will be available in the spring of 2012. When funds are released, an official funding announcement will be made by the Solicitor General's office.

Overview of Federal Proceeds of Crime Program

The Seized Property Management Directorate (SPMD) of Public Works and Government Services Canada is responsible for the Federal Proceeds of Crime Program. This Directorate manages assets seized or restrained under specific sections of the *Criminal Code*, the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and the *Proceeds of Crime (Money-Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act*.

Sentencing of convicted offenders under federal law can include the forfeiture of the offenders' assets in certain circumstances. The proceeds of disposal, net of all costs associated with the management of assets, are shared with the involved Province or Territory in accordance with the *Forfeited Property Sharing Regulations*.

The Province of British Columbia usually retains the proceeds it receives under this Program. A grant program to access federal proceeds of crime, similar to the provincial civil forfeiture program, has not been created.

DISCUSSION

Staff has been in discussion with staff of the Civil Forfeiture Office (CFO) with a view to better understanding how to go about applying for funding under their Grants Program and to discuss potential projects. The CFO has indicated that support for one or more of the following projects may be reasonable under the Program:

- The enhancement and operation of the Child Advocacy Centre (Sophie's Place);
- The development and implementation of an enhanced Wire-Theft Reduction program.

The following sections provide a brief description of each of the above-referenced projects:

Child Advocacy Centre – Sophie’s Place

The Child Advocacy Centre (Sophie’s Place), to be located in Surrey’s Child Development Centre at 9460 – 140 Street, will open February 1st 2012. Sophie’s Place will provide physically, mentally and sexually abused children up to the age of 12 with professional, compassionate and nurturing service from doctors, police and counselors, all under one roof, in a child-friendly setting. The CAC offers professional support services including such things as a pediatrician, a child psychologist and a trauma counselor, among other services.

Wire Theft Reduction Program

Metal and wire theft is a significant problem for the City of Surrey from both a service delivery perspective and a financial impact perspective. The City of Surrey estimates its losses from wire and metal theft in excess of \$2.5 million in 2011. An application for funding under the Program would be focused on the following means to combat the theft of metal and wire from City structures:

- Awareness campaigns;
- Engaging neighbourhoods and community associations in wire loss prevention activities;
- Conducting metal and wire theft reduction training (internal and external stakeholders); and
- Investigation and assessment of other measures to prevent or deter metal/wire theft.

Next Steps

Staff is working with the CFO in developing an appropriate application for each of these projects and will submit such applications when a new round of funding under the Program is announced, which is expected in the spring of 2012.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

An application for funding under the Civil Forfeiture Program will support the goals and objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter; more particularly, the following action items:

- Action item SC5: “Create a child and youth friendly city;” and*
- Action item SC11: “Address crime and public safety”.*

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that the Finance Committee recommend that Council authorize the submission of an application for a grant under the Provincial Civil Forfeitures Program for each of the following projects (as generally described in this report):

- The Child Advocacy Centre (Sophie's Place);
- A Wire Theft Reduction Program.

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