

NO: **R116**

COUNCIL DATE: **June 17, 2013**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **June 5, 2013**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **1850-01**
General Manager, Planning and Development
General Manager, Finance and Technology

SUBJECT: **Community Enhancement Partnership Program – Proposed Facade
Enhancement Grant Category**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, the Planning and Development Department and the Finance & Technology Department recommend that Council:

1. receive this report as information; and
2. approve changes to the Community Enhancement Partnership Program (CEPP) by adding a Facade Enhancement Grant category as a one-year pilot as generally described in this report with funding to a maximum of \$50,000 to support this category during the one-year pilot, which amount is available in the approved 2013 operating budget.

BACKGROUND

In January 2010 Council adopted the Community Enhancement Partnership (CEP) Program, which is focused on providing financial support for projects targeted at community engagement and neighbourhood beautification. Under the CEP Program, individual residents and/or community groups may apply to the City for a grant under either of two separate categories; these being:

- **Small Project Grants** - to support in planning, organizing and implementing projects intended to directly improve the physical aesthetic appeal of a neighbourhood; or
- **Activity and Celebration Grants** - to support projects that build community relationships through celebration and activity.

The CEP Program Guidelines are attached to this report as **Appendix 1**. The CEP Program has an annual budget of \$25,000.

A Grant Selections Committee has been established with representatives from various Departments and is responsible for assessing applications that are received under the CEP Program on an ongoing basis. Thirty (30) CEP Program grants have been approved to date by City Council.

The two existing CEP Program grant categories have been successful in encouraging community participation in beautification projects and in building community spirit and civic pride in communities across the City.

Staff has noted that there is a need in some areas of the City for commercial streetscape renewal; particularly, in the Town Centres. In view of this circumstance staff undertook some research into what other cities in Canada have done to assist in commercial area renewal. The following sections provide some information about programs that have been implemented in other areas of Canada to incent building owners to enhance building facades with a view to renewing business areas in these other cities.

City of Edmonton

The City of Edmonton has a successful Facade Improvement Program that has a \$650,000 annual budget. Under the program a building owner can apply for a cost-sharing grant of up to \$25,000 to improve the facade of an existing commercial building. The program was initiated 10 years ago and targets specific zones as specified by Council (business revitalization zones) from time to time. The program includes a part time community worker to market the program and assist owners in making application.

City of Toronto

The City of Toronto has a Commercial Facade Improvement Program which provides funding to property owners and tenants to re-design, renovate or restore commercial building facades within 60 eligible Business Improvement Areas. The grant covers 50% the cost of eligible facade improvements to a maximum of \$10,000 for mid-block buildings and \$12,500 for corner properties. Improvements on any property must have a minimum value of \$5,000 to be eligible for a grant (i.e., grant amounts under \$2,500 are not available under the program).

Windsor Business Improvement Area

The Downtown Windsor BIA offers a maximum \$10,000 matching (50/50) grant for facade improvements in the area covered by the BIA.

Red Deer Business Improvement Area

The Downtown Red Deer Business Association offers a maximum \$5,000 matching (50/50) grant facade improvements in the area covered by the BIA. In addition to the available BIA grant funding, Community Futures Central Alberta has come on board offering the opportunity for businesses in Red Deer to apply for a loan matching the grant amount received through the Facade Improvement Program. If approved for funding under the BIA's program, businesses can apply for a low interest (prime plus 2%) 3-year loan through Alberta Community Futures.

DISCUSSION

Staff is proposing that the City's CEP Program be augmented on a one-year pilot basis to include a Facade Enhancement Grant category that will act to incent the owners of commercial buildings to invest in facade renovations and upgrades on their properties as a means to enhance the appeal of business areas in the City. This will make these business areas more attractive as areas for investment by others. The grants provided under this category are proposed to be matching grants to cover a portion of the costs of the improvements that are undertaken by a building owner. Staff is proposing that the one-year pilot program be available to the owners of buildings in the areas of Newton, City Centre and Fleetwood as highlighted on the map that is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

It is projected that such grants would result in building improvements that would make streets a more interesting and appealing environment, and attract people and businesses to the areas within which the grants are approved.

The proposed Facade Improvement grants are intended to:

- Make city streets a more inviting and interesting place to walk and shop;
- Build civic pride within the local business community;
- Contribute to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors in Surrey; and
- Promote the marketability of local business areas.

Under this grant category the City will reimburse the grantee 30% of the costs of eligible improvements to a maximum of \$3,000 per premise.

The following are the criteria that are proposed in relation to the consideration of applications under this proposed CEP Program category:

1. Grants will be available for any existing building:
 - a. That is located within a Target Area (as specified by Council);
 - b. Is a building used for business purposes including not-for-profit businesses; and
 - c. Is for improvements to the front yard area and the building facade on the property's frontage and that are consistent with the approved Development Permit the property where a Development Permit has been previously approved by City Council.
2. The applicant must be either the property owner or a designated person who has written authority from the property owner to submit an application to the City.

Grants would be available to:

- Undertake general cleaning of the building exterior by repainting, repairing damaged areas of the facade and restoring exterior signage;
- Coordinate a building facade with neighbouring buildings and the unique character of the business area within which the building is located; and
- Add visual interest and variety at the sidewalk level to enhance pedestrian friendliness.

Eligible improvements under this new CEP Program category would include:

- Restoration of exterior finishes and/or repainting of exterior facades;
- Repair and/or replacement of frontage windows and doors;
- Exterior lighting;
- Repair and/or replacement of signs and other fixtures;
- Installation and/or repair of awnings;
- Addition of patio areas and/or permanent landscaping elements; and
- Removal of barriers to access for people with disabilities and mobility challenges.

The 2013 approved budget has an allocation of \$50,000 that is available for grants under this new category of grants within the CEP Program.

In relation to each grant that is approved, the owner of the building for which a grant is being awarded will be required to enter into an agreement with the City that will document the terms and conditions under which the City will provide the grant and the responsibilities of the owner in relation to the use of the grant funding.

As is the case with all grants under the CEP Program, a report complete with a recommendation regarding the awarding of a grant will be forwarded to Council in relation to each application that is received by the City under this new grant category. As such, Council approval will be necessary for each such grant.

Next Steps:

Subject to Council approval of the recommendations of this report, the CEP Program Overview and Guidelines as contained in Appendix 1 of this report will be updated to include this new category of grants based on the information and descriptions provided in this report. Staff will also disseminate information about this new category of grants to the owners of businesses and to business associations in those areas of the City within which such grants will be available.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The CEP Program assists in achieving the goals of the City's Sustainability Charter by encouraging social connections, volunteerism, community ownership and citizen engagement, in alignment with the Socio-Cultural Action items SC6, SC7, SC8 and SC13 as referenced in the Charter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve changes to the Community Enhancement Partnership Program (CEPP) by adding a Facade Enhancement Grant category as a one-year pilot as generally described in this report with funding to a maximum of \$50,000 to support this category during the one-year pilot, which amount is available in the approved 2013 operating budget.

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Attachments:

- Appendix 1: Community Enhancement Partnership Program Overview and Guidelines
- Appendix 2: Map of Business Areas within which Applications for CEP Program Facade Improvement Grants will be Considered



Community Enhancement Partnership Program (CEPP) Program Overview and Guidelines

The Community Enhancement Partnership Program (CEPP) is an initiative of Council to encourage neighbourhood projects and activities that beautify our streets and public spaces.

Through the Program, residents, groups and businesses can apply to the City for a grant to plan, organize and implement small beautification projects, activities and celebrations. Successful applicants match their requested grant amount with contributions of volunteer labour and services, donated materials, and/or cash. The Program is a partnership in which the applicant and the City contribute equally towards the applicants proposed project.

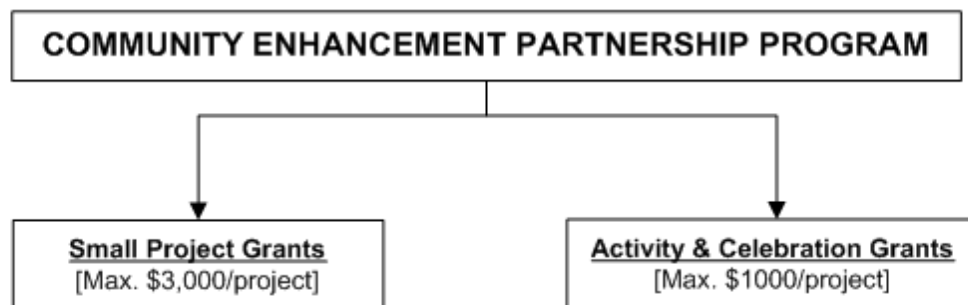
FUNDING CRITERIA & ELIGIBILITY

Grants are available to all Surrey residents, students, community groups, organizations or associations. Small businesses will also be considered for street or landscaping beautification projects. All applications must encourage neighbourhood participation without discrimination. Projects must be undertaken within the geographic boundaries of Surrey. All applicants must demonstrate their project or activity will:

- focus on “beautifying and celebrating Surrey”;
- generate a public benefit in an inclusive and cooperative manner;
- involve members of the community in the project;
- commit to overseeing the project and any resulting maintenance;
- have broad neighbourhood support; and
- fall within one of the Project Grant Types listed below.

PROJECT GRANT TYPES

The Program has two separate grant categories as illustrated below.



i) **Small Project Grants**

Small project grants have a maximum amount of \$3,000 per project. They are offered to support planning, organizing and implementing projects that physically improve the appearance of the City. As examples, a neighbourhood garden, boulevard landscaping, community pathway, floral tree plantings, decorative lighting display or a neighbourhood entrance feature would fall under this category. Creativity is encouraged.

Projects in this category must be completed within twelve (12) months of a grant being awarded.

ii) **Activity & Celebration Grants**

Activity and celebration grants have a maximum amount of \$1,000 per project. They are offered to support community activism and celebration. Projects should engage, educate and celebrate community members. As examples, a neighbourhood festival or block party, a street clean-up day, a property owner awards program or a neighbourhood improvement campaign would fall under this category.

Projects that create opportunities to develop neighbourhood organization and promote community leadership, such as citizen engagement workshops or anti-graffiti training seminars, are also encouraged.

Projects in this category must be completed within six (6) months of a grant being awarded.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT & RECOGNITION

For awarded projects, photos must be submitted to the City as a permanent record and for potential posting on the City's website and within local newspapers. All projects under the Program will be eligible for Civic Beautification Awards and/or plaque or site markers.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Awarded projects may be subject to inspection by City staff during project work and upon completion.
- Applicants that have failed to undertake projects, as outlined on submitted applications, may be eliminated from consideration for future grant opportunities.
- Applicants are required to abide by all Municipal, Provincial and Federal laws and regulations.
- The City of Surrey reserves the right to remove any physical installations or improvements on public land at any time.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Each application will be evaluated by a grant evaluation committee using the following evaluation criteria and within available funding.

Evaluation Criteria

Overall Community Enhancement Program Objective

- Project corresponds with the objective to “beautify **and** celebrate Surrey”.

Project Proposal & Feasibility

- Provides a clear description of what the project is and why it is proposed.
- Provides a clear public benefit.
- Is well planned with a realistic timeline and a clear beginning and end.
- Has a reasonable budget.

Community Building

- Community contribution is documented, demonstrating broad community participation and support for the project.
- Encourages inclusive community participation and provides opportunity to bring people together.
- Encourages interaction between different groups, such as different ethnic groups, tenants, seniors and business owners.
- Encourages collaboration between all age groups, particularly youth and adults.

Outcomes

- There is a clear understanding of how the community will be improved as a result of the project, with anticipated outcomes clearly documented.
- Project is designed for low maintenance and the applicant and stakeholders commit to project maintenance, with the majority of maintenance undertaken by the applicant.



Grants will **NOT** be awarded to/for:

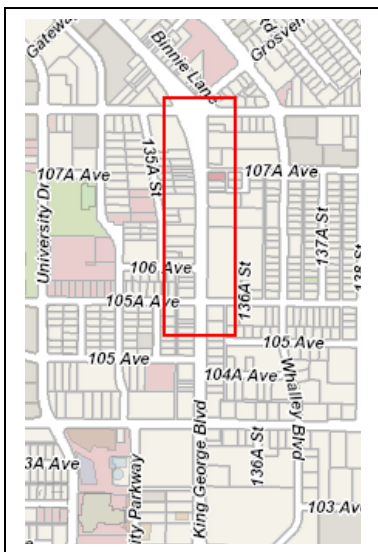
- The purpose of private gain.
- Government agencies, political or partisan groups, formal business associations, universities, exclusive clubs or associations, newspapers and non-Surrey-based organizations (based or originating).
- Applicants who have failed to document a community contribution.
- Applicants who have failed to successfully carry out or maintain a project for which a grant was previously awarded.

Grants must **NOT** be used to:

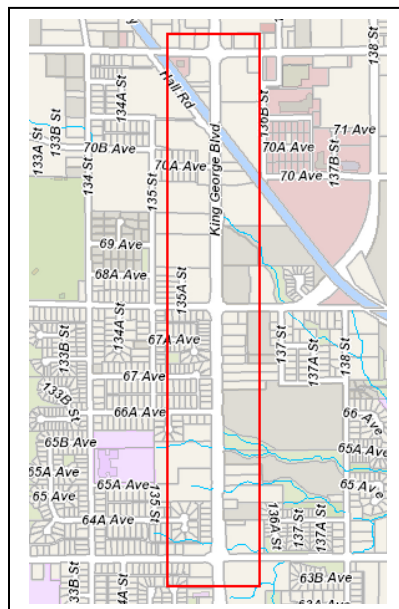
- Duplicate an existing public or private program.
- Support ongoing programs or services.
- Replace funding lost from other sources or provide gap funding.
- Pay for the applicants operating expenses that are not directly related to the project for which the grant is awarded.
- Purchase land or buildings.
- Pay for out of City travel expenses.
- Pay for expenditures or financial commitments made before the organization's grant application was submitted.

APPENDIX 2

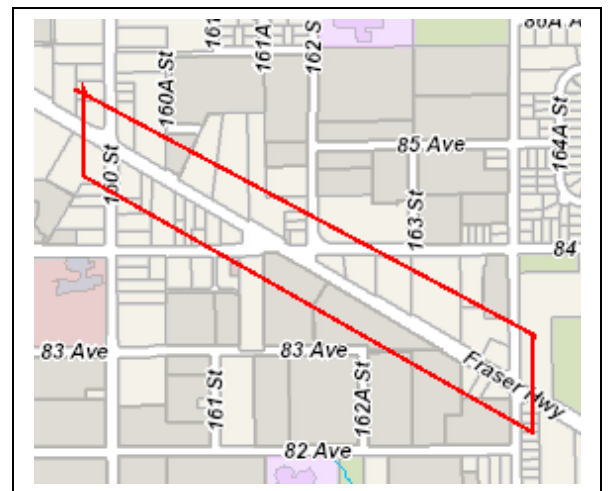
MAP OF BUSINESS AREAS WITHIN WHICH APPLICATIONS FOR CEP PROGRAM FACADE ENHANCEMENT GRANTS WILL BE CONSIDERED



A - City Centre- 105A - 108



B - King George Blvd
64th - 72nd Ave



C- Fraser Highway - 160th-164th