

NO: **F003**

COUNCIL DATE: **JANUARY 12, 2015**

FINANCE COMMITTEE

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **December 16, 2014**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture
General Manager, Finance and Technology**

FILE: **1850-01**

SUBJECT: **Façade Enhancement Grant Funding**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department and the Finance & Technology Department recommend that the Finance Committee recommend that Council allocate \$25,000 from the 2015 Council Initiatives Fund to the 2015 Façade Enhancement Program.

BACKGROUND

In 2013, Council approved the creation of the Façade Enhancement Grant Program (Appendix I). The grants are intended to provide financial support to encourage commercial building owners to invest in facade renovations and storefront upgrades with the City providing matching grants for up to \$3,000, or 30% of the costs of the improvements. The program provides an incentive to make streets more interesting and appealing, attracting businesses, visitors and residents to the area.

In 2013 and 2014, this program was funded from \$60,000 of unused carry-forward funds in the Community Enhancement Partnership (CEP) grant account. Council recently allocated this unused funding to the Phoenix Society for the development of outdoor amenities including a community garden at the Rising Sun Social Innovation Centre in City Centre. As a result, additional funding will be needed in the CEP program in order to continue funding the Façade Enhancement Grant. It is anticipated that there will be a high demand for the grant in Newton and Cloverdale in 2015 and 2016, and \$25,000 is being requested to cover this initiative on an annual basis.

Facade and storefront enhancement proposals are reviewed on a case by case basis by a staff review committee and then forwarded to Council for approval.

DISCUSSION

Since the inception of the Façade Enhancement Program, three projects have been undertaken by businesses that have benefited from a cumulative total of \$ 6,875 in grants from Council. These projects have been undertaken near King George Blvd and 108 Avenue in City Centre, and have helped to improve the look and feel of the area. Although modest, the improvements have encouraged a sense of pride and engagement in the local business community. With the support of the BIA in Newton, a similar result is anticipated for Newton Town Centre.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department and the Finance & Technology Department recommend that the Finance Committee recommend that Council allocate \$25,000 from the 2015 Council Initiatives Fund to the 2015 Façade Enhancement Program.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation and Culture

Vivienne Wilke, CGA
General Manager
Finance and Technology

Appendix I - Façade Enhancement Grant Program Information

APPENDIX I- FAÇADE ENHANCEMENT GRANT INFORMATION

The CEP Facade Improvement Grant is intended to:

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

Successful projects strive to improve the exterior appearance, design and function of a building by:

- Undertaking general cleaning of the building exterior by repainting faded and peeling paint, repairing damaged areas of the facade and restoring exterior signage;
- Coordinating facade improvements with neighbouring buildings and the unique character of the neighbourhood business area; and
- Adding visual interest and variety at the sidewalk level by emphasizing active storefronts

Examples of eligible projects:

- Restoration of exterior finishes and repainting
- Repair or replacement of storefront windows and doors
- Exterior lighting
- Removal and disposal of roll-down grilles, broken signage and fixtures
- Installation and repair of awnings
- Installation of signs that are uniquely designed and integrated into building architecture
- Addition of patio areas and permanent landscaping elements
- Removal of barriers to access for people with disabilities and mobility challenges

Facade and storefront enhancement proposals are reviewed on a case by case basis by a staff review committee and then forwarded to Council for approval.