

NO: R111

COUNCIL DATE: May 16, 2016

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **May 3, 2016**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture** FILE: **5000-20**
Fire Chief
General Manager, Finance and Technology

SUBJECT: **Funding Request - Celebrating Elders in our Communities: *Triple "E" Elder Bank***

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department, Surrey Fire Department and Finance and Technology Department recommend Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Approve financial support for the Seniors Volunteer Project from the Council Initiatives Fund in the amount of \$75,000 to develop a comprehensive seniors volunteer strategy of engagement that is evidence-based, embedded within current and new programs and partnerships, and driven by the vision of seniors as an essential community resource as described in Appendix "I" of this report.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of and to seek funding for the Seniors Volunteer Project that will position older adults as a valuable, untapped resource to our community.

BACKGROUND

The City of Surrey has entered into a joint initiative with the Provincial Government that will enable seniors in Surrey to share their skills, experience and wealth of knowledge in a Seniors Volunteer network that will be accessible by the general public. This project will augment the City's current volunteer resources network as well as compliment the work of staff carrying out the recommendations from the Age-Friendly Strategy for Seniors.

Initial planning for this innovative citizen engagement project was initiated by MLA Darryl Plecas, Councillor Barbara Steele, Surrey Fire Chief Len Garis and Dr. Martha Dow of the University of the Fraser Valley, Centre of Social Research. The findings from Dr. Dow's research acknowledged 'that volunteering increases social, physical, and cognitive activity which, through biological and psychological mechanisms, leads to improved functioning' (Anderson, 2014). The project will focus on three main components:

- **Community Education:** It is important that there be a meaningful education strategy to maximize recruitment and continuous improvement. Agencies and organizations currently working with seniors are best positioned to understand the particularities of seniors with respect to language, culture, housing, diversity and consequent needs associated with these factors.
- **Recruitment:** Implementation of this project will pay attention to key motivational factors for seniors as they consider volunteerism. The volunteer opportunities need to be meaningful and accessible for all seniors to experience a greater benefit from volunteer engagement.
- **Volunteer Activities:** Members of the entire community, from all age groups, will be accessing the talents of the Seniors Volunteer bank which will in turn increase the profile of the program which will increase recruitment opportunities.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department will lead the implementation of the project that will enable the City to engage with our existing network of seniors and leverage our current volunteer infrastructure. This project will elevate Surrey as one of the first communities to increase opportunities for older adults to make contributions to their community in a meaningful way.

DISCUSSION

A Seniors Volunteer Project Manager position will be created to develop and implement a comprehensive municipal strategy of engagement that is evidence-based, embedded within current and new programs and partnerships, and most importantly, driven by the vision of seniors as an essential community resource.

The Seniors Volunteer Project Manager will work closely with Council's Seniors Advisory & Accessibility Committee and the Age-Friendly Strategy staff working group. The Seniors Volunteer Project Manager will also report quarterly to the Senior Management Team on performance measures and statistical data including utilization and satisfaction of volunteers as part of the successful and measurable outcomes of this Project.

Budget Considerations

Through MLA Peter Fassbender, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development the City of Surrey has secured \$300,000 for this 3-year pilot project that will reach out to older adults and capture their wealth of knowledge. In addition to the 2016 Council Initiative Funding recommended in this report, the City has committed to matching the Province's contribution and will incorporate the remaining matching funds (\$112,500 for 2017 and 2018) in the next 5-year Financial Plan. The status of the Council Initiative Fund is documented in Appendix "II" attached to this report including the allocation recommended in this report.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The Seniors Volunteer Project reflects SC12, "Adapting to Demographic Change" and SC8, "Municipal Outreach, Public Education and Awareness", SC18 "Community Economic Development" of the City's Sustainability Charter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council approve financial support for the Seniors Volunteer Project in the amount of \$75,000 from the Council Initiatives Fund that will develop a comprehensive municipal strategy of engagement that is evidence-based, embedded within current and new programs and partnerships, and driven by the vision of seniors as an essential community resource.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture

Len Garis
Fire Chief
Surrey Fire Service

Vivienne Wilke, CPA, CGA
General Manager
Finance and Technology

Appendix "I" Pilot Demonstration Projects – Celebrating Elders in our Communities: Triple "E"
Elder Bank

Appendix "II" Status of the Council Initiative Fund



Pilot Demonstration Projects Celebrating Elders in our Communities: *Triple "E" Elder Bank*

The aging of Canada's population has been well documented and discussed at length in regard to the implications for health care, leisure, social assistance, and quality of life among other factors. It is this reality that has prompted an overdue and much needed discussion of the often marginalized place that seniors hold in our society and the concomitant recognition that this cohort of B.C.'s population has tremendous untapped contributory potential in economic, political, social and cultural terms. The fiscal and social landscape painted by this demographic reality mandates a new and progressive approach that more explicitly acknowledges the research indicating an inverse relationship between quality of life measures and economic costs associated with senior citizens.

While there is clear evidence that seniors benefit from volunteering in terms of social relationships and the development of social networks (Collom, 2008), as well as improving physical and social well-being (Anderson et al., 2014; Grimm et al., 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2015; Wilkinson et al. 2013), there is equally compelling evidence to indicate that individuals who engage with seniors in meaningful ways shift to more positive attitudes toward seniors (Guttell, 2006). Additionally, it is acknowledged "that volunteering increases social, physical, and cognitive activity (to varying degrees depending on characteristics of the volunteer placement) which, through biological and psychological mechanisms, leads to improved functioning" (Anderson, 2014).

The City of Surrey is proposing a new position of Elder Coordinator (see attached Seniors Volunteer Project budget) to oversee a comprehensive municipal strategy of engagement that is evidence-based, embedded within current and new programs and partnerships, and most importantly driven by the vision of seniors as an essential community resource.

The Triple "E" Elder Bank is designed to promote more meaningful engagement of seniors in the community. The program would be operated by the City of Surrey (and ideally other municipalities around the province). Seniors as a potential volunteer pool is not a new concept and most communities in B.C. have an active senior volunteer base operating in a variety of capacities. However, discussions over the last decade have engaged with more progressive models of community engagement for seniors that incorporate opportunities that are more connected to their identities. This direction necessitates a reconceptualization of retired individuals in a manner that acknowledges their pre-retirement lives and offers a continuation of their journey as opposed to a fork in the road (Kaskie et al., 2007).

While all forms of peer-based, familial and community engagement can be positively related to seniors' health (on all of its dimensions), there is evidence to indicate that formal volunteer programs outweigh informal volunteer opportunities in their impact on various mental health issues such as depression (Li and Ferraro, 2005). It is clear, in cases where seniors are engaged in working toward greater visibility and recognition, that their agency and consequently their social power are magnified (Martinson, Minkler and Garcia, 2013). The Elder Coordinator will begin work on the concept of the Elder Bank.

Community Education: there is an important role for local community organizations in Surrey in educating potential "E" Citizens about the bank. It is important that there be a meaningful education strategy to maximize recruitment and continuous improvement. Agencies currently working with seniors are best positioned to understand the particularities of seniors with respect to language, culture, housing, diversity and consequently needs associated with these factors.

Recruitment: Implementation of this initiative must pay attention to key motivational factors for seniors as they consider volunteerism (Petriwskyj, 2007). In an analysis of these factors it was found "that specific motives for volunteering – to feel useful and productive and to fulfill a moral obligation – were significant predictors of frequency of volunteering" (Morris, 1994). In thinking about recruitment, the breadth of potential recruits to the bank needs to be acknowledged to maximize the accessibility for participants. This is particularly important given the evidence that individuals from lower socio-economic status accrue greater benefit from volunteer engagement (Morrow-Howell et al., 2008) and yet may also be the least likely to apply. One of the greatest challenges facing existing programs and the development of this program is to maximize accessibility (Pettigrew et al., 2015).

Volunteer Activities: Members of the community, from all age groups, will be accessing the talents of E-Citizens which in turn will increase the profile of the program which will increase recruitment opportunities.

Website

The Bank would be an online resource whereby community members interested in becoming "E" Citizens would be able to access information about the program, and application requirements and forms. Community members interested in utilizing the Bank for assistance would be able to find an appropriately qualified "E" Citizen opportunity and connect. It is critical to remember that while the "E" Citizens are seniors, all community members will have access to the bank.

Community Education

The most critical objective of this project is to contribute to a shift in the culture of communities that doesn't challenge the social construction of seniors as part of a silver tsunami; therefore the perpetual need to educate community members both about their role as potential E-Citizens and consequently about the integral value of elders is both foundational to the program in terms of recruitment and to this profound shift in our socio-cultural beliefs.

“E” Citizen

Elder Bank volunteers would be given “E” Citizen status and be able to access a variety of forms of recognition including: discounts at local businesses,

It is anticipated that this affirmation will have a number of positive impacts associated with recruitment, community education, sustainability, and ultimately contribute to the broader cultural shift.

Status of Council Initiatives Fund



2016 FINANCIAL PLAN
COUNCIL INITIATIVES

Description	Amount	Allocation to date	Remaining
Carried Forward from Prior Year	2,800		
2016 Proposed Budget	<u>250,000</u>		\$ 252,800
My Neighbourhood, My futures Initiative (year 4 of 5)		40,000	
Surrey Poet Laureate (Year 2 of 3)		10,000	
SFU Surrey Campus Open House		15,000	
City of Surrey Busary		10,000	
Seeds Business Awards		4,000	
PICS Diversity City Sponsorship		5,000	
Bridal Week Vancouver		5,000	
100 Year Journey Gala Sponsorship		6,000	
Pride Festival		5,000	
Seniors Volunteer Project (Proposed)		75,000	
Allocations for 2016		<u>\$ 175,000</u>	<u>\$ 77,800</u>