

NO: **R010**

COUNCIL DATE: **January 27, 2020**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **January 21, 2020**

FROM: **General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **5000-01**

SUBJECT: **Application for a Union of BC Municipalities Age Friendly Communities Grant**

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to submit an application to the Union of BC Municipalities (“UBCM”) 2020 Age Friendly Communities Grant Program for a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to install hearing loops systems, an accessible sound system for use by people with hearing aids in Council Chambers.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council support for the City applying for a grant under the UBCM Age Friendly Communities Grant Program to cover the project costs related to the installation of hearing loops in Council Chambers at City Hall. Council approval of this application is a requirement of the Age Friendly Communities Grant Program application criteria.

BACKGROUND

The UBCM Age Friendly Communities Grant Program is provincially funded and intended to assist local governments in BC to best support aging populations, develop and implement policies and plans, or undertake projects that enable seniors to age in place, and facilitate the creation of age friendly communities. Since 2005, the provincial government has provided over \$7 million to support the program. To date, over 150 communities in BC have completed projects or been approved for funding, including local governments and First Nation Communities.

DISCUSSION

Hearing loops are an assistive technology which use FM radio waves to allow for sound to travel from a microphone directly to someone’s hearing aid or cochlear implant. 75% of hearing aids on the market offer the feature to make this possible and 100% of cochlear implants. The device allows for an enjoyable listening experience for a user by completely removing background noise.

Staff have prepared an application for funding in the amount of \$15,000 from the UBCM Age Friendly Communities Grant Program. This initiative will enable the City to cover project costs related to installing the hearing loops system in Council Chambers at City Hall. The grant will cover all costs related to the purchase and installation of the hearing loops system.

Hearing Loops Background

Hearing loops are currently installed in the following facilities around the City:

- Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre – Multipurpose Room
- Guildford Recreation Centre - Upstairs Multipurpose Room
- Fleetwood Community Centre – Large Hall
- Newton Seniors Centre – Large Hall
- Cloverdale Recreation Centre - Upstairs Multipurpose Room
- South Surrey Recreation and Arts Centre – Gym #3

Following the implementation of the Accessible Canada Act and the BC Accessibility Act, it is anticipated that the hearing loops system will be a future requirement. Installing this system now will put the City in line with the anticipated requirements and will create capacity for residents with hearing disabilities to attend and fully participate in council meetings, forums, and performances hosted at Centre Stage.

Finance Review

The Finance Department has reviewed this report and has no concerns.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The application for a UBCM Age Friendly Communities Grant supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this initiative relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Inclusion and Health & Wellness. Specifically, the initiative supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO"):

- Diversity and Accessibility – DO 6: Residents with disabilities are supposed and able to participate fully in community life.
- Diversity and Accessibility – DO 2: Surrey is a caring and compassionate city that supports its residents of all backgrounds, demographics and life experiences.
- Health Services and Programs – DO 3: Surrey has the health services and programs to meet the current and changings needs of its diverse and growing population.
- Health Services and Programs – DO1: Surrey has a full range of high quality, community-based health and social services and programs that address health and wellness.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council authorize the submission of an application to the UBCM's 2020 Age Friendly Communities Grant Program for a grant in the amount of \$15,000 to support individuals with hearing loss in the use of a hearing loops systems in Council Chambers.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture

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