



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Briefing Note

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1845-20

**From:** Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Subject: Comox Valley Community Foundation Grant: Community Winter Response and Storage Solutions**

**PURPOSE:** To inform Council about a \$28,500 grant awarded to the City of Courtenay from the Comox Valley Community Foundation to enhance community winter response and storage solutions for individuals experiencing homelessness.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the April 10, 2024 Council meeting, the following resolution was adopted in response to the staff report, "Update on Temporary Shelter Housing Options":

*THAT Council direct staff to include storage options for the belongings of unhoused individuals in the next update on temporary housing.*

On July 31, 2024, as a measure to support washroom and storage access for people experiencing homelessness in the City of Courtenay, Council passed the following resolution (relevant parts listed):

*THAT Council allocate up to \$150,000 from the 2023 surplus towards the installation of a temporary washroom trailer and storage solutions (in the lot adjacent to the Connect); and*

*THAT Council direct staff to request operating funding contributions for the temporary washroom and/or storage facility from: BC Housing, Comox Valley Regional District (Function 451), Town of Comox, and other appropriate funders.*

## **DISCUSSION:**

At the October 2024 Council meeting, City staff provided an update on activity to move forward the resolutions made at the July 31, 2024 meeting. Five key developments were noted:

- The City, CVTS, BC Housing, and the surrounding community were engaged in preliminary discussions about improved washroom and storage facilities in the lot adjacent to Connect.
- A consultant had been hired to develop a site plan and oversee the installation of utility services (hydro, water, and sanitary while addressing concerns of nearby business owners).
- Funds for planning and equipment installation were being drawn from the \$150,000 allocated for this purpose.
- Operational funds were still required for the washroom trailer and the storage area.
- An application to the Comox Valley Community Foundation (CVCF) had been made in partnership with the Comox Valley Transition Society (CVTS) and the Comox valley Coalition to End Homelessness (CVCEH) to support implementation and operation of the storage area.

In fall 2024, the City in partnership with the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness applied to the CVCF Housing and Homelessness Supports grant stream. In December of 2024, the City received notice from the CVCF that the joint proposal to enhance community response to extreme weather conditions for individuals experiencing homelessness, was successful. The City was awarded a \$28,500 grant to support two specific activities:

- 1) Implementation of a storage program next to the Connect centre, offering temporary storage for the personal belongings of people seeking shelter. Eligible expenses include the purchase and installation of shelves and bins within the storage units, and the provision of paid peer support workers to assist with operationalization of the unit(s) over the term of the grant.
- 2) The provision of essential winter gear and emergency supplies including warm clothing, winter jackets, boots, hats, gloves, blankets, toiletries, first aid kits, and laundry passes for personal hygiene.

This 12-month project, commencing January 1, 2025 and concluding December 31, 2025 will be administered by the City in coordination with the Coalition to End Homelessness. Staff will establish and oversee agreements with three separate community agencies who have stepped forward to carry out the above activities – Comox Valley Transition Society (CVTS), the Indigenous Women’s Sharing Society, and Solid Outreach Society.

A summary of project outcomes and impacts will be shared with Council following the conclusion of the grant.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff do not anticipate any financial impacts as the grant covers all aspects of the activities therein.

**ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

This grant will be managed by Recreation, Culture, and Community Services staff as part of their current roles and responsibilities.

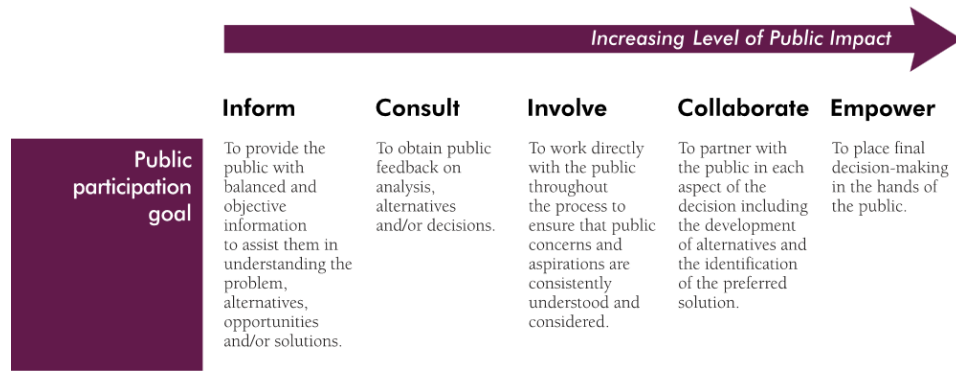
**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Continue working with community agencies to deliver day services. Explore role in the provision of social support services, including future of Connect Centre.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT Council receive the “Comox Valley Community Foundation Grant: Community Winter Response and Storage Solutions” briefing note for information.

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