



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 8100-20

From: Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Date: April 15, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support Request – Comox Valley Pride Society

PURPOSE: To seek Council endorsement for the Pride Society of the Comox Valley's 2026 *Local Festivals – Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage* (BCAH) grant application and to confirm the City's continued in-kind support of Pride Week.

The report further recommends that Council authorize a multi-year continuation of existing levels of in-kind support for Pride Week until the forthcoming Special Events and Hosting Policy is developed as prioritized through the Strategic Cultural Plan Implementation Strategy.

BACKGROUND:

Celebrating diversity is a longstanding tradition in Courtenay and the Comox Valley. Pride season refers to the wide range of Pride related events occurring annually June through September when 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and allies gather to celebrate resilience, talent and community contributions. Local Pride Week programming typically takes place in various locations throughout Courtenay toward the end of August. Local pride events are collaboratively planned and hosted by local organizations including but not limited to the Pride Society Comox Valley, the Queer Centre, the Comox Valley Art Gallery, elevate the arts, the Comox Valley Arts Council and Weird Church.

Pride Society of the Comox Valley (PSCV) was successful in receiving the federal BCAH grant in 2025 and has applied again for 2026. PSCV has submitted the Municipal Government Support Form (Attachment 1), prefilled with items previously provided by the City. For 2026, PSCV is the BCAH grant applicant and primary contact for Pride in the Park, with other community organizations contributing as Pride Week programming and delivery partners (e.g. Queer Culture who organizes the Pride Parade), where applicable.

The City of Courtenay has historically supported community led cultural events (especially those led by equity priority communities) through in-kind contributions such as road closures, traffic control, event permitting, and communications support. This approach reflects:

- longstanding community values,
- consistent municipal practice, and
- alignment with broader cultural inclusion objectives.

Community engagement for the Strategic Cultural Plan confirmed the community's desire for continued investment in grassroots cultural expression, relationship building with cultural organizations, and support for historically underrepresented communities, including 2SLGBTQIA+ residents.

DISCUSSION:

Support Letter Request

The City's in-kind contributions to community events (principally traffic management, public works setup/teardown, and communications support) enable cultural experiences that advance several Strategic Cultural Plan goals. The Plan highlights that arts and culture are essential to Courtenay's economic development, cultural tourism, social cohesion and community identity, and identifies municipal support as critical to strengthening the cultural ecosystem. In-kind assistance for events directly advances these objectives by reducing barriers to participation and enabling community partners to deliver culturally significant programming.

PSCV has requested the City's endorsement of their 2026 BCAH grant application and confirmation of continued in-kind support for Pride Week. Commitment of continued support until the City completes a Special Events and Hosting Policy also facilitates timely confirmations required for external funding applications and reduces administrative burden for both the City and organizers.

Should Council approve Option 1 of this report, staff would be enabled to provide a letter of support for PSCV's current and future grant applications, avoiding the need to return to Council for annual approvals so long as the level of in-kind support remains consistent with the 2026 commitment.

2026 Pride Week Program Overview (as provided by PSCV)

Following successful expanded programming in 2025, PSCV has again included these components in the 2026 submission. These components support inclusive and accessible gatherings:

1. Heritage Component
 - Indigenous Queer Art Exhibit with artist Q&A
 - Allyship Workshop (local Pride history; anti-hate and anti-discrimination strategies)
 - Queer Senior Pride Celebration (intergenerational gathering)
2. Performance Component
 - *Pride in the Park* featuring local drag performers, storytellers and choirs
3. Arts Component
 - Vendor booths showcasing 2SLGBTQIA+ artists
 - Art workshops led by members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ disability community

The BCHA grant will allow PSCV and their collaborating community organizations to continue to offer inclusive and accessible community gatherings while reducing their reliance on sponsorship funding, which has historically supported only the Pride in the Park event – not the aforementioned extended Pride Week programming.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Strategic Cultural Plan, 2024

Goal 2: Build Community Resilience Through Arts & Culture

- Objective 2.1: Use arts and culture to support community belonging and inclusion.

- Objective 2.2: Use arts and culture to engage communities on complex social challenges and support healing.
- Objective 2.3: Develop programming that appeals to a more diverse community.

Goal 3: Develop More Accessible & Affordable Cultural Spaces

- Objective 3.1: Increase availability of accessible and affordable spaces for arts and culture.

Goal 4: Bolster Community Arts

- Objective 4.1: Support capacity building for community-led arts organizations.
- Objective 4.3: Increase awareness of community arts and culture events.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In-kind expenditures to support Pride Week, which includes PSCV's Pride in the Park activations, are estimated at a value of \$10,000 to manage garbage collection (pre and post), provide traffic control services (including closure of the 5th St bridge), barricade setup and take down for Lewis Park and administrative support for event permitting.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

City staff from Operations, Recreation, Culture and Community Development, and Communications will be required to:

- coordinate permitting
- prepare and communicate logistical requirements
- support event organizers
- coordinate with BC Transit and other interest holders as needed

As the Strategic Cultural Plan implementation progresses the forthcoming Special Events and Hosting Policy will help formalize processes and expectations for municipal support.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

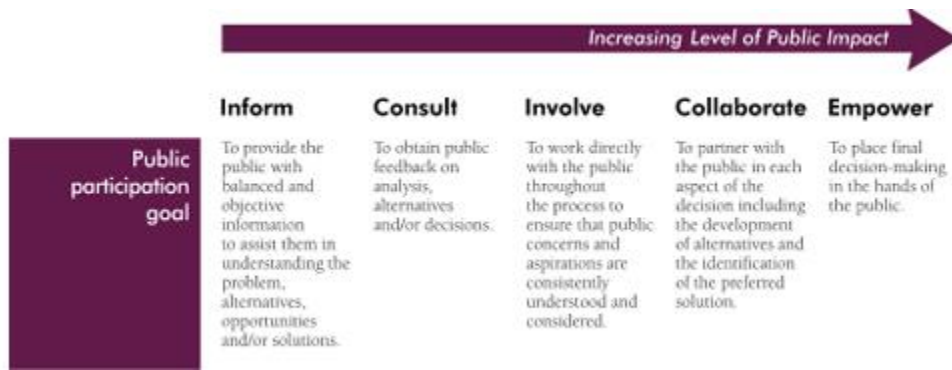
Supporting Pride Week programming aligns with the Equity and Community Well-being directions of the City's Strategic Priorities (2023–2026).

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Arts, Culture, and Heritage - Implement Strategic Cultural Plan

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff will inform the public in accordance with the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, ensuring event related impacts and opportunities are communicated clearly and proactively.



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council approve endorsement for Pride Society of the Comox Valley's 2026 BCAH grant application and in-kind support valued up to \$10,000 for Pride Week programming and authorize staff to provide letters of support for this and future Pride Week related grant applications until the Special Events and Hosting Policy is completed and approved by Council.
2. THAT Council approve endorsement for Pride Society of the Comox Valley's 2026 BCAH grant application and in-kind support valued up to \$10,000 for Pride Week Programming for 2026 only.
3. THAT Council receive this report for information.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Municipal Government Support Form (Pride Society of the Comox Valley)
2. Letter from PSCV (February 18, 2026)

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