



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BRIEFING NOTE

To: Council

File No.: 1845-20-SCS

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: September 13, 2023

Subject: **Strengthening Communities' Grant Extension**

PURPOSE: To inform Council and local government partners that the City of Courtenay has received approval for a one-year extension of the Strengthening Communities Grant (SCG) and the associated funds to continue to provide approved services through to June 30, 2024.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021 the CVRD was awarded a regional grant of \$1.093 Million through the Strengthening Communities' Services program to better support people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley. The City of Courtenay is administering the grant funds on the region's behalf.

At the May 31, 2023 Council meeting, staff informed Council that a request had been made for additional funding to support a one-year extension of the Strengthening Communities Grant funding with the support of local government partners. The funding request was for those activities previously approved under the SCG without another source of identified funding. This included staff and security at Connect for daytime services, peer outreach, community engagement, training, and rural outreach.

Staff has received confirmation that the extension request was approved. The City will receive an additional \$898,603 through the SCG to fund approved services through to June 30, 2024. This brings the total SCG funding received from April 2022 to June 2024 to \$1,961,763.

DISCUSSION:

The previous grant term ended June 30, 2023 and without confirmation of a grant extension or additional funding, grant funded services completed their planned work until such time as the extension request was approved or denied. With confirmed approval of a one year extension, including additional funds, staff will work with the grant advisory committee (with representatives from Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, Wachiay Friendship Centre and Comox Valley Transition Society) and service delivery partners to reinitiate previously approved grant funded services. It is important to note that the extension and additional funding is only eligible for previously approved grant activities.

The Strengthening Communities' Grant supports:

- **A Daytime Community Access Hub** that operates six days a week providing services focused on health, hygiene, personal safety, and administrative support to those in need.
- **Rural outreach on Denman and Hornby Islands** to facilitate connections to housing and support services.

- **A peer-based outreach team** to provide outreach and conduct cleaning and remediation activities around locations where support services are provided.
- **Community engagement and anti-stigma outreach activities**, including expanded community meal events hosted at Sunday Service for residents, local businesses and people experiencing homelessness.
- **Training and capacity building activities across municipalities** for local government and First Nation employees, politicians, outreach workers and volunteers focusing on trauma-informed

The funding and extension approval is for those activities previously approved under the SCG but without another source of identified funding. This includes staff and security at Connect for daytime services, peer outreach, community engagement, training, and rural outreach.

Staff will work with service agencies to amend service agreements to reflect the new term and funding for services provided up to June 30, 2024 and to support initiation of grant funding activities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The City of Courtenay will continue to administer grant funds on the region's behalf. While there is no direct financial impact to the City of Courtenay, the City has responsibility for administration of a total of \$1,961,763 in SCG grant funding.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

RCCS staff support the administration of the SCG through overall grant program management including service agreements and monitoring, monthly metric reporting, communications, and training and development, as well as stakeholder management and reporting, including producing a final report to UBCM.

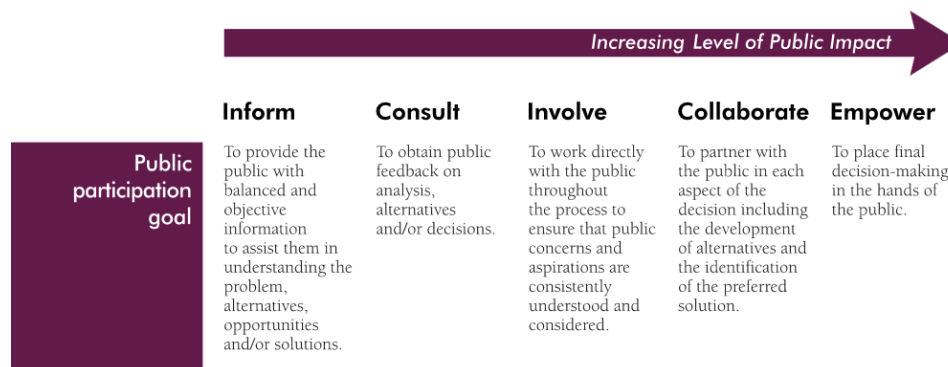
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

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:



NEXT STEPS:

Staff will work with partners to reinitiate grant funded activities as well as amend service agreements accordingly. Local government partners will be informed of the grant extension and additional funding and a Strengthening Communities' Grant Service Update will be provided in the coming weeks to report out on the last quarter of activities prior to the end of the previous term. For monthly progress updates, information on our social service partners, contact information and the SCG training and development opportunities currently being provided, please visit our website at www.courtenay.ca/scgrant.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council receive the "Strengthening Communities' Grant Extension" briefing note and forward notification of Grant Extension to regional partners.

Prepared by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.P.I., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)