



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 7710-01

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: February 28, 2024

Subject: Research Proposal – College and Community Social Innovation Fund Grants

PURPOSE: To request Council’s support for Courtenay Recreation to partner with Langara College and the British Columbia Parks and Recreation Association (BCRPA) in a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund¹ through the Government of Canada’s Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

BACKGROUND:

Courtenay Recreation has been approached by Langara College’s Department of Recreation Studies to partner on a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund. Additional project partners include BCRPA and the City of Burnaby. The research proposal will investigate access to public recreation, specifically as it relates to barriers that immigrant and racialized groups in British Columbia may face in accessing public recreation services. The project would explore a process in which interventions and initiatives can be co-created by immigrant and racialized communities alongside municipal recreation staff to increase accessibility and visibility of public recreation.

The City of Courtenay was identified to provide representation of a smaller community to ensure research findings can be applicable to non-urban centres in Canada, as well as for its growing immigrant and racialized communities.

DISCUSSION:

The Department of Recreation at Langara College will be submitting a research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund to investigate the experiences of public recreation by immigrant and racialized communities, as well as explore strategies to enhance accessibility. The proposed project will be a partnership between Langara College, BCRPA, the City of Burnaby and the City of Courtenay. The project is proposed to occur over a period of three years (2024 to 2027) with the following major project objectives:

1. To identify whether immigrant and racialized communities conceive and define recreation differently from native-born citizens currently working in public recreation;
2. To identify successful interventions and programs currently supporting access, and the gaps and barriers that immigrant and racialized communities face in accessing public recreation in British Columbia;
3. To explore the implementation of Belonging, Dignity, Justice, and Joy ([Davis, 2021](#)) as an engagement philosophy in the sustainable pursuit of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals within a community; and
4. To document a scalable and meaningful engagement process between interest groups where they co-create initiatives that increase public recreation access for equity deserving groups such as immigrant and racialized communities.

¹ [NSERC - College and Community Social Innovation Fund grants \(nserc-crsng.gc.ca\)](https://nserc-crsng.gc.ca/)

Courtenay Recreation’s role in the research project would require in-kind contributions in the form of staff time (interviews, focus groups, and the co-creation process), as well as provision of meeting space. There are no funding requirements of the City for participation in the research project.

Should Langara College be successful in receiving funding for the proposed project, work would begin in fall 2024 and would continue through to fall 2027. The phases of work include:

- Phase 1: Langara Ethics Review Board approvals: building detailed survey and focus group design.
- Phase 2: Preliminary Research: direct engagement with immigrant and racialized individuals and communities, as well as municipal recreation staff.
- Phase 3: Co-creation Process: Engaging immigrant/racialized communities and municipal recreation staff in a co-creation process to develop initiatives to increase access to public recreation
 - Prior to initiating this step, municipal recreation staff involved in the project would receive EDI training based on the findings from Phase 2.
- Phase 4: Data analysis and evaluation
- Phase 5: Creation and sharing of knowledge products as a result of the research project.

In order to participate as a partner in this research project the City of Courtenay is required to provide a letter of support that addresses the project, the City’s role in it, and the benefits that the expected outcomes will bring to Courtenay Recreation. If the research proposal is successful, Langara College will be notified in the summer of 2024.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

OCP, 2022

Goal 7: A City for Everyone:

Courtenay will ensure equity is integrated into planning and design considerations, so that everyone – including racialized people, newcomers, 2SLGBTQIAP, women, persons with disabilities, children, youth, and elders – are equal participants in the city and in city building.

Goal 9: Investing in Relationships:

The City of Courtenay will value the contributions of all its citizens, nurturing and practicing a culture of proactive involvement in local government reconciliation and all community decisions by creating new avenues for community participation and action.

Community Participation

CP 1 The City will take a proactive community participatory approach for the purpose of encouraging open dialogue and co-creating inclusive decision-making processes.

CP 8 The City will explore partnerships as strategies to achieve OCP vision, goals and policies. Partnerships will employ innovative and structured approaches to ensure all parties are involved and mutually supported to maximize individual and collective efforts.

Parks and Recreation

Objective 4: The parks and recreation system exemplifies leadership in reconciliation, climate action, equity, and community well-being through its services, programs, and partnerships.

Objective 5: Partnerships are in place to achieve parks and recreation objectives.

Social Infrastructure:

- SI 1 Develop and employ a locally-relevant framework for assessing social, equity, and health impacts in policy, development, program and service decisions.
- SI 2 Undertake a city-wide equity audit to identify social inequities and barriers to access in municipal service delivery and develop a strategy to inform decision-making processes related to planning and service allocation in the community. Ensure anti-discrimination, diversity, and inclusion form part of any new policies and programs as well as equitable access to all City services based on needs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Participation in the proposed research project does not have any financial impacts.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

Recreation, Culture, and Community Services will lead the City’s involvement in the proposed project. The scope of the project is limited to Courtenay Recreation and will require in-kind contributions of staff time and meeting space from 2024 through to 2027.

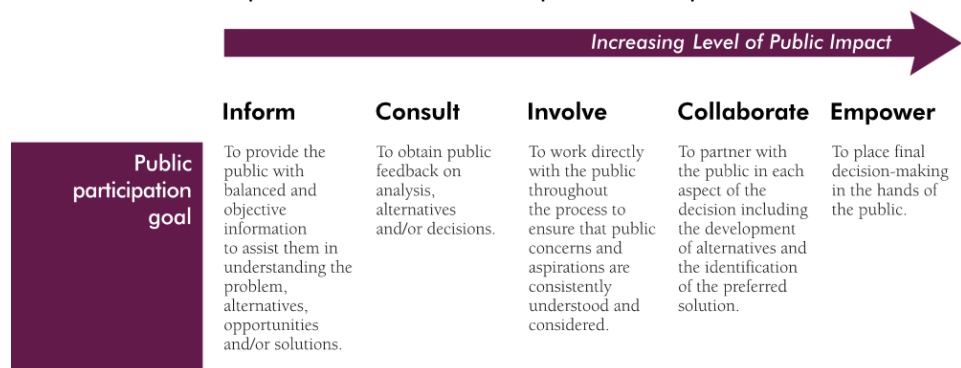
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Review City operations with a social equity, reconciliation and anti-racism lens and develop corporate policy
- Parks and Recreation - Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Langara College will lead any public engagement and communications efforts. Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation as required:



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to provide a letter of support indicating the City of Courtenay’s commitment to participating in Langara College’s Department of Recreation Studies research proposal to the College and Community Social Innovation Fund.
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

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