

# Report to Council



**Date:** March 25, 2019  
**File:** 0710-35  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Tanya Sletten, Community Development Coordinator  
**Subject:** Neighbourhood Grant Program Renewal

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community Development Coordinator dated March 25, 2019, with respect to the Neighbourhood Grant program;

AND THAT Council endorses the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Kelowna and the Central Okanagan Foundation to support the continuation of the Neighbourhood Grant program as outlined in the report dated March 25, 2019;

AND FURTHER THAT the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Memorandum of Understanding as attached to the report dated March 25, 2019.

## **Purpose:**

To seek Council approval to continue with the Neighbourhood Grant program through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Central Okanagan Foundation.

## **Background:**

Great cities are made up of strong neighbourhoods. In turn, strong neighbourhoods are made-up of connected and engaged residents. As the City of Kelowna strives to become the best mid-sized city in North America, it is important to recognize the vital role neighbourhoods play in building a safe, vibrant, and sustainable city. As such, in 2014 the City of Kelowna implemented a new initiative, the Strong Neighbourhoods program.

The Strong Neighbourhoods program aligns with Imagine Kelowna's goal of fostering resident driven solutions – unleashing our community's hidden talents to solve the tough challenges of the future.

At its essence the Strong Neighbourhood program is about community development. It's about empowering, inspiring, and involving residents to help create strong neighbourhoods. With this in mind, the Strong Neighbourhoods program has three main objectives:

- To empower residents with the skills and resources they need to transform communities into safe, welcoming, and inclusive places to live;
- To inspire leaders to bring neighbours together to share neighbourhood ideas, passions, skills and talents;
- To foster neighbourliness so neighbours feel connected to their neighbourhood and to their neighbours.

The Strong Neighbourhoods program offers a variety of programs and resources for residents to connect with one another and engage in neighbourhood based activities:

- Events
  - Neighbourhood events - Providing support for neighbours to host get-togethers
  - Community events – supporting school based or other community events
  - Park and Play – activates neighbourhood parks to encourage families to go outside and connect with others
- Grants
  - Neighbourhood Grants – empowers residents to work together on a project to enhance their neighbourhood
  - Youth Development & Engagement Grants - supports youth led projects (13-19 years old) to enhance their neighbourhood
- Recognition and Resources
  - Neighbour Day - an annual celebration to meet a new neighbour, get to know neighbours even better, tackle a neighbourhood project, or lend a helping hand to a neighbour in need.
  - Outstanding Neighbour Recognition – recognizes neighbours who make a difference and stimulate neighbourhood engagement.
  - Good Neighbour Toolkits – resources to help neighbours connect such as, conversation starter cards, 'Hello Neighbour' door hangers and neighbourhood safety pamphlets.

Since the inception of the Strong Neighbourhoods program, the program has had a significant impact:

- 58 Neighbourhood Events connecting 4,660 residents
- 44 Neighbourhood Grant projects connecting 4,600 residents
- 6 Youth Development and Engagement Grants connecting 570 residents
- 176 Park & Play events involving 18,000 residents
- 29 Neighbour Day events
- 18 outstanding neighbours recognized

### **Neighbourhood Grants**

The Neighbourhood Grant program offers matching micro-grant funds to support locally driven projects that are planned, implemented and managed by the neighbourhood. It is designed to empower residents and neighbourhood-based organizations to make their neighbourhoods even better places to live by actively enhancing drivers of attachment (aesthetics, leadership, safety, social offerings or relationships) while fostering a culture of connection and engagement.

Over the past four years, the Neighbourhood Grant program has supported 44 neighbourhood enhancement projects with \$36,173 of Neighbourhood Grant funding. Further, 456 residents have volunteered more than 4,540 hours of time towards enhancing their neighbourhood. More than \$20,000 worth of in-kind goods and services have been donated and more than \$36,000 has been contributed by the residents towards projects benefiting their neighbourhood. Additionally, grant organizers indicated that they met over 622 neighbours as a result of implementing their project and 93 percent indicated that they got to know their neighbours better through their project. Some examples of successful neighbourhood projects include the aeration of Belmont Pond, the nectar trail in the Glenmore neighbourhood and many little free libraries spread throughout the community.

There are many benefits of the Neighbourhood Grant program:

- Micro-grant programs enable a bottom-up approach to community development by providing opportunities for residents to creatively address the problems that concern them.
- By investing small grants in community-based groups, residents are empowered to respond to the health needs of their neighbourhood and help to improve quality of life.
- The interactions among and between neighbours in developing and implementing community based projects can have profound effects on an individual's sense of safety, wellbeing and belonging, and can shape community identity and resiliency.

The Central Okanagan Foundation (COF) has been a partner of this grant program since inception by fully funding the grants that are provided for these projects. In 2015, the City signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Central Okanagan Foundation to support the development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Grant program. The agreement was for a four-year term and is now due for renewal. COF has endorsed the continued collaboration with the City on this program.

Overall, the program has seen a lot of success and only one significant change is proposed moving forward. Based on the size, scope and impact of the projects that have been implemented, increasing the maximum grant amount from \$1,000 to \$1,500 would allow residents an increased capacity to achieve their goals. The annual fund will remain at \$15,000 but residents will be able to access a greater amount for each project, if justified. In the past, the fund has been undersubscribed with an average of just over \$9,000 administered each year (approximately 60 per cent capacity).

Updated Program Guidelines are attached for Council's information.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

The attached MOU outlines the responsibilities regarding funding and the administration of the grant. Key principles of the MOU include:

- The Central Okanagan Foundation will provide up to \$15,000 in funding per year to the Neighbourhood Grant.
- The funds received from the Central Okanagan Foundation are intended solely for the purpose of funding awarded grants.
- One year term with option to renew for three additional years, agreement automatically renews unless either party gives written notice at least 90 days prior to the anniversary of the agreement.
- The City is responsible for all the advertising, administration and management of the grant.
- The City will provide recognition of the funding support from the Central Okanagan Foundation in the Neighbourhood Grant promotional materials.

The Neighbourhood Grant and the collaboration with the Central Okanagan Foundation will continue to enhance citizens' quality of life by leveraging community partnerships to support social, cultural and environmental initiatives.

**Internal Circulation:**

Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager  
Communications Advisor  
Payroll & Internal Controls Manager  
City Clerk

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

The Central Okanagan Foundation will be invoiced up to \$15,000 at the end of the fiscal year based on the amount of funding administered.

**External Agency/Public Comments:**

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Central Okanagan Foundation. COF has endorsed the continued collaboration with the City

**Existing Policy:**

Community for All Action Plan  
Official Community Plan, Chapter 10  
Council Policy 360, Social Policy  
Council Policy 372, Engage Policy  
Imagine Kelowna Plan

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority  
Existing Policy  
Personnel Implications  
Communications Comments  
Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements  
Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by: T. Sletten, Community Development Coordinator

**Approved for inclusion:**

J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - Neighborhood Grant Guidelines  
Attachment 2 - Neighbourhood Grant Program Memorandum of Understanding  
Presentation – Neighbourhood Grant Program

Cc: Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
Divisional Director, Financial Services  
Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services